

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Volume XIX

London :
C. A. Hammond, 3 and 4 London
House Yard, Paternoster Row, E.C.4.
1930

Index.

	PAGE.
"Blessed are the Meek" - - - - - (A.M.)	193
Blessing of Moses, The - - - - - (T.W.B.)	6
Blood of Jesus, The - - - - - (M.H.)	181
Christian Liberty - - - - - (F.G.B.)	127, 144, 170
"Consider the Lilies How They Grow" - - (S.D.)	175, 198, 211
Cross and Its Consequences, The - - - - - (H.L.)	203
David's Victory over Goliath - - - - - (A.J.L.)	71
Encouragement - - - - -	159
Extract from a Letter, An - - - - - (J.S.)	166
Faithfulness of God, The - - - - - 138, 150, 178, 197,	218
Fellowship Meetings - - - - - (F.G.B.)	58
Form of a Servant, The - - - - - (J.G.B.)	35
Fragments - - - - - 19, 34, 39, 43, 119, 120, 123, 130, 159,	169
God's Righteousness and New Creation - - - - - (H.H.M.)	94
Grace Reigning - - - - - (H.H.)	161
"Hear Him" - - - - - (J.P.)	64
How to Know the Father's Will - - - - - (J.N.D.)	117
"If Any Man" - - - - - (T.R.)	61, 86
Illustrations of God's Faithfulness - - -138, 150, 178, 197,	218
In Memoriam - - - - - (W.M.R.)	41
Jesus Giving Sight to One Born Blind - - - - - (A.J.H.)	2
Job's Three Questions and Their Answers - - - - - (H.R.)	201, 221
Largeness, not Laxity - - - - - (W.K.)	104
Leaf out of a German Calendar, A - - - - -	39
Letter to the Editor, A - - - - - (G.K.)	184
Letter Written Many Years Ago to a Young Sister in Christ, A - - - - - (W.S.)	167
Love, Righteousness and Holiness as seen in God - (H.H.M.)	54
Many-Sidedness of the Gospel, The - - - - - (W.J.H.)	47
Mary of Bethany - - - - - (J.G.B.)	136
Master in Heaven, A - - - - - (A.F.G.)	151
Meat Offering, The - - - - - (J.N.D.)	78
Mercy of our God, The - - - - - (A.G.)	136
Momentous Appeal, A - - - - - (A.J.H.)	208
My Position Changed - - - - - (J.N.D.)	235

INDEX—(continued)	PAGE.
New Commandment, The - - - - - (G.V.W.)	37
Notes from a Bible Reading on Genesis i.—ii. 3 - - - (L.C.H.)	215
Notes from a Bible Reading on Genesis ii. 4—iii. 24 (L.C.H.)	237
Notes on Psalm 84 - - - - - (J.L.H.)	92
Our Words - - - - - (M.K.)	16
Perfect Obedience - - - - - (J.N.D.)	112
Propitiation - - - - - (***)	83
Propitiation and Substitution - - - - - (C.S.)	18
Psalm CXIX. - - - - - 114, 131, 147,	164
Remarkable Forecast, A - - - - - (***)	234
Remarks in a Bible Reading on the word "Faithful" (G.S.)	156
Salvation and Its Song - - - - - (W.J.H.) 67, 88, 106, 124, 141	
Salvation at Jericho, the City of the Curse - - - (E.R.M.)	44
Some Last Sayings of Our Lord - - - - - (A.J.H.)	21
Spiritual Worship - - - - - (J.N.D.)	177
The Death, the Blood and the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ - - - - - (T.R.)	188
The Strong Man Overcome: The Triumph of Grace - - - - - (T.W.B.) 81, 101, 121	
Times of Jeremiah, The - - - - - (R.)	9
True Grace of God Wherein Ye Stand - - - - - (J.N.D.)	24
Unity of the Gospel in the Acts, The - - - - - (W.J.H.)	29
Word for the Times, A - - - - - (F.G.B.)	1

VERSE.

Companionship - - - - -	80
Experience - - - - -	100
"Exhorting One Another" - - - - - (ANON.)	200
Faith in God above all Circumstances - - - - - (G.S.P.)	180
Gathered to Remember the Lord - - - - -	160
God Three in One - - - - - (C.H.V.P.)	120
"I Come Quickly" - - - - - (F.G.B.)	20
Jesus Lives! Jesus Comes! - - - - - (F.G.B.)	40
Our Substitute - - - - - (C.H.V.P.)	60
Serving the Living and True God - - - - - (A.S.O.)	220
Storm on the Lake of Galilee, The - - - - - (F.G.B.)	140
Waiting for God's Son from Heaven - - - - - (A.S.O.)	240

WORDS OF HELP

from the

SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

A Word for the Times.

IN the midst of all the confusion that exists in **Christendom, with its numerous sects, its new cults**—most of which are anti-christian—its unbelief in the Bible and other evils; **what a stay and comfort it is to the soul to know that the truth of God remains ever the same!**

What we want is *faith* to lay hold of it, and *grace* and *strength* to walk in the power of it, unmoved by all the winds of doctrine which the enemy raises up to deceive. The sure test for each and all is: Does this glorify Christ? Is it according to the written word?

No doubt it needs lowliness and a single eye, not to be caught by specious appearances, for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light when it suits his purpose to do so; but the christian who walks in humility before God, guided by the Holy Spirit through the word of God, will be kept in the evil day.

If the heart is satisfied with Christ, and finds in Him its joy and happiness, it will be kept from those “divers and strange doctrines” which are so prevalent now. It is striking to see, in looking at the “whole armour of God” (Eph. vi. 13-18), that it is all made up of *practical* things—truth in the inward parts, practical

righteousness in our dealings with others, our ways marked by peace, unwavering faith in God, complete salvation which gives us assurance of ultimate victory over the enemy, and praying always.

It is not much learning, nor is it any special knowledge of doctrine that can keep us in this evil day: God looks for *reality*, practical godliness and consistency in our everyday life. May He give us more grace, so to walk, consistently with the truth we profess.

F. G. B.

Jesus Giving Sight to One Born Blind.

(John ix.)

IT is not within the compass of human language to set forth in its divine perfection the grace of our Lord—the “Rich” One, the “Holy One,” the “Lord from heaven”—in His stoop down to this world of sinners, sent by the Father to be its Saviour. Yet our meditation on this holy theme is encouraged by the prayer of Ephesians iii. 19, that we may “know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

In His pathway of love and light, every step shines with heavenly lustre, and very beautiful are the rays which centre on the blessing with sight of this man born blind.

It has been justly observed that it was a greater wonder for the Lord of glory to stand still at the call of blind Bartimeus begging by the wayside than for the sun in the physical heavens to stand still at the adjuration of Joshua. That He, Who was the Light of the world, should pause before this beggar blind from birth to wait upon his need, without invocation or appeal, exceeds in wonder.

3

Dark, indeed, is the background provided by antecedent and attendant circumstances. The houseless Saviour (ch. vii. 53-viii. 2) had come early into the temple to teach; the religious chiefs having previously given orders for His arrest. Here, they bring before Him an adulteress, quoting Moses' command to stone such. This was in order to involve Him in conflict either with the law or the authorities, putting to death being unlawful for the Jews in their then state of subjection to the Gentiles (John xviii. 31). The blessed Saviour meets this craft by submitting the teachers themselves to the law with the searching words: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." These penetrative words letting in the light of God upon their consciences, they, one by one, slink out of His presence. He, the only One without sin had not come to judge but to save (John iii. 17; xii. 47); and was here manifesting the "glory that excelleth" of the ministry of grace (2 Cor. iii.).

Further cavillings draw out His profound utterance as to the divine glory of His Person—His identity with "I AM." But the Jews in the utter darkness into which they had fallen, only find in this the occasion for giving vent to their malice. Getting beyond the *principles* of law as to stoning a sinner they actually take up stones to cast at the Saviour!

He could have hurled them into the bottomless pit with more ease than they could hurl their stones at Him; but how then could He satisfy the yearnings of His heart for their deeper blessing? Hiding in the throng, He passes unobtrusively through their midst. "And as He passed by, He saw"—how precious are the words! No contradiction of sinners against Himself, no hard names, no railing, no murderous intentions or attempts on His life hinder Him from observing this poor, desolate, sightless man. Inestimably sweet

is the celerity with which He turns from the murderous malignity of men to the exercise of His divine power in grace to one beyond human aid. He tells His disciples, perplexed by birth-blindness, that the reason of it was to be found in a divine purpose of grace. It was the day of visitation (Lu. i. 68, 78; xix. 44). Was He not the Sent One for doing the Father's works as for speaking His words, albeit the ever-existing, the ever-immutable One? And here was the opportunity for such a work.

Nor must the detail of a miracle, the like of which the world had never seen until now, be overlooked. The clay, the washing at Siloam's pool, the interpretation, "Sent," tell out the blessed mystery of the Incarnation, the need, notwithstanding, of the washing of regeneration, the reception of Him as the Son sent by the Father. Forty times in this gospel does He speak of Himself as the Sent One: striking indication of His devotion as the elect Servant fulfilling the beautiful service of delivering from blindness and bondage marked out for Him in Isaiah xlii. 7; ministering to the delight of the One Who sent Him and raising a new song on earth.

What an inspiring example for those called to "follow His steps," sent into the world by Him! (John xvii. 18.) Well may they, as the apostle Paul, so profit by it as to adopt his words of admiring allegiance, "Whose I am and Whom I serve" (Acts xxvii. 23).

The blind man obeying the word of the Lord, receives his sight. Taken before the Pharisees, his simple honesty preserved him from endorsing their condemnation of Jesus Who had opened his eyes. Those blind guides had already agreed to excommunicate anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ. Yet who or what could have proclaimed it so fully as this work of God? Their obstinate refusal of evidence

5

helped on the man who had been born blind. He, faithful to the light he had, was given further enlightenment. But, speaking in his Benefactor's defence, he was cast by his inquisitors out of the synagogue, and shares with the Saviour reviling and utter rejection by the administrators of the Jewish economy.

Thrust out of the Jewish field, the Good Shepherd finds him. The erstwhile blind beggar is alone with Jesus, so near Him, and with seeing eyes (v. 37). He hears from His own lips the revelation of Himself as the Son of God. He believes and worships, evermore to have Him as the satisfying Object of his heart.

Both Blesser and blessed are in the outside place—"outside the camp." The Son of God, truly, is the Blesser! but He is also the willing Victim to suffer "without the gate" for the objects of His grace.

This was foreshadowed in the sin-offering for Aaron and his house (typifying the church) which was burnt (certain parts excepted) not on the altar, but outside the camp (Lev. xvi. 27). How vividly this speaks of the place which the Lord Jesus took before God for us when made an offering for sin. We sing, "Love bound Thee to the altar" and we adore Him for His immeasurable devotedness, the perfection of His Person as seen in the burnt-offering. But this sin-offering sets forth that separation of God from sin which is a necessity of His nature; Christ "made sin for us"; the withdrawal of Him Who is Light from the Holy One Who took the sinner's place in infinite amazing love.

But it was the blood of the sin-offering that was taken into the holiest of all. In virtue of His blood Christ now appears in the presence of God for us; and we have boldness to enter into the holiest.

How great is the salvation which brings, from spiritual blindness and beggary and the bondage of

sin and Satan, into association with Christ, the Son of God!

What a call, what an obligation, what an honour to "go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, confessing His name" (Heb. xiii. 13, 15, N.T.).

A. J. H.

The Blessing of Moses.

(Substance of an Address at the London Conference.)

ONE of the most remarkable chapters in the Old Testament is the 33rd of Deuteronomy. We are so accustomed to connect Moses with the law, and with the judgment incurred by those who broke the law, that it is a surprise for us to find that he closes his forty years of devoted service with a chapter of unmingled blessing. In the preceding chapter he had been commanded to teach the people of Israel a song, never to be forgotten, which should from age to age remind them of their unfaithfulness, and of its terrible consequences in judgments and chastisements; although the conclusion of the song held out hope of mercy: He "will be merciful unto His land and to His people" (v. 43). He also was shut off from entering the land, because he had trespassed against the Lord at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, when he spake inadvisedly with his lips (Num. xx. 12; Ps. cvi. 33).

After pronouncing these judgments on the people and upon himself, he is given the precious privilege of announcing an unconditional blessing upon the twelve tribes. There is no "if" connected with these blessings, and the conclusion is: "Happy art thou, O

7

Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord" (v. 29).

That Moses should be the man used of God to pronounce this great cluster of blessings is a proof of the Lord's great kindness, gentleness, forbearance and faithfulness towards His servant. When we turn to the twenty-eighth chapter, and read of one threatening after another of crushing calamities, we are apt to think of Moses as a man of great severity, and easily forget that he was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3). But the Lord remembered the meekness of Moses, and the Lord remembered that he was willing to give up all his happiness for the sake of saving Israel from judgment, when he said: "Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Ex. xxxii. 32). We know the apostle Paul shared this thought of self-sacrifice (Rom. ix. 3). Of course it could not be; God could not accept the sacrifice of Moses nor of Paul, but in thus making Moses the one to announce a complete, unalloyed blessing for Israel in the latter days, He rewards richly his self-abnegation and his devotion to the welfare of the people of the Lord. What a happy close to the life of this faithful servant to be allowed to make known that all the terrors of the law and the execution of its just judgments would be followed by a time of grace and of pure blessing!

Is there not a deep and important lesson for us to learn in the fact that the man who executed the severe judgment of Ex. xxxii. 28, whereby three thousand men were slain in one day, was the one who in verse 32 of the same chapter offered to sacrifice all in order to save Israel? Judgment is God's strange work, and it should be strange work for God's servants. Those who talk lightly of cutting off, or putting out, or

exercising discipline, are not in sympathy with the Lord. A true father feels the strokes he lays upon a disobedient son more than the son himself does.

God's object in giving the law was to show man his utter incapacity to keep it, and then He manifests His grace in final blessing; and thus we see how suitable it is that the Lord enabled Moses to end his life's testimony with: "Happy art thou, O Israel."

The ultimate end of discipline in the New Testament is also blessing. God must condemn evil in us as well as in others, but chastisement, and even the exclusion of children of God, is meant for their welfare. In the extreme case mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 5, where a wicked person was to be put away out of their midst, it was: "For the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The object of discipline is to produce contrition and then restoration and blessing, besides guarding the Lord's name from dishonour; and we should keep this in mind when the Lord uses us to exercise discipline where evil has manifested itself. If we remember that God's object is finally to bless, even the one who is under discipline, our conduct will be such, that those who receive the correction will feel it is done, not only to purge out leaven from God's assembly, but also for their good.

We so often fail because we harbour a legal spirit. There was no one more legal than Moses, at the right time: but in his heart he suffered with the people of God when they were chastened.

Daniel and Ezra included themselves in the guilt that had called for judgment on their nation. Sometimes we essay to exercise discipline upon others, but do not feel that we ourselves have failed and have not been in diligent prayer and intercession for them. It is no good thinking that we can purge out evil from

an assembly by legality ; we often try without succeeding, because we omit intercession and prayer. The priest had to eat the sin-offering of the people (Lev. vi. 26).

This act of eating the sin-offering signified full identification, to make another's sin one's own. Alas, how few of us seem to have sufficient priestly energy to enable us to make another's sin or trespass our own ! If we would first judge ourselves in the spirit of Gal. vi. 1, we should not be likely to offend the sensibilities of those upon whom we are called to exercise discipline.

I do feel thankful that God finishes His testimony through Moses in such a gracious manner.

May we all enter more into what God is in His wondrous grace as well as in His absolute holiness.

T. W. B.

The Times of Jeremiah.

THE ministration of the prophets, in the varied exigencies of Israel, unfolds the grace and forbearance of the living God. The periods at which God raised them up, and the consequent character of their service, make the history of each very interesting ; but of all the times during which the prophets prophesied, none are more painfully so than those of Jeremiah. It is not in the amount of good done that Jeremiah stands before us as pre-eminent ; on the contrary, results of labour are nowhere found so small, perhaps, as from the labours of that prophet.

The ministry of Moses was one that told wonderfully on the condition of God's people. He found them

under the galling yoke of Pharaoh — He left them within sight of the promised land. Joshua left them in possession. The history of the varied deliverers before the days of Samuel, gives us an account of victories obtained. Each one left some footmarks in the track, to say that he had passed that way. So, afterwards, with the prophets; Elijah's and Elisha's days were marked times of God's goodness to an unfaithful people; but if we ask what were the results of Jeremiah's prophecies, we see nothing but desolation and ruin, and by and bye lose him himself in the great confusion. At the same time, we see incessant service, unwearied faithfulness, so long as there remained a part of the wreck to be faithful to.

. Others who had gone before, had foretold what the disobedient and rebellious ways of Israel would lead them to, but it was the lot of Jeremiah to be on the ship when it went to pieces. He warned and warned again of the rocks that were ahead; but Israel heeded not. Up to the last moment, he was used of God to press home on their consciences their sad condition—but without avail; and even after the captivity, he remained to guide the wayward remnant of those left in the land, but only to experience the same obstinacy and determination on their part to be ruined.

The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. Now this was a period of blessing—of revival. It was in the eighteenth year that the Passover was kept, of which it was said: "And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet." Jeremiah would have had his share in that joy.

I have often thought how much depends on the start of a Christian; how easily the heart sympathizes with what is around, whether baneful or healthful. To have the lot in early life cast among the fresh provisions of

II

God's house, and amid the energies of His own Spirit, will give advantages to such a soul which are not the common lot of the church of God.

Such were Jeremiah's first days, the days of Josiah, he was cradled in blessing, such, too, as had not been tasted in Israel, since the days of Samuel. But he has to lament the death of Josiah. These joys so fresh were of short duration. There is, however, an intimate connection between the joys of communion and faithful warfare. There will be little of the one without the other. Jeremiah had drunk of the sweet draughts of blessing which had been so richly provided, and he was therefore able to feel the bitterness of the cup which Israel had to drink. The last chapter of 2nd Chronicles, shows how prominent as a prophet he was. His words were despised, and the result was the casting off for a season of God's people. One of the services of Jeremiah during this period was to break the fall (if I may so express my thoughts) of Israel. Careful reading will show how tenderly the prophet applied himself to the then existing wants of the people; and it is wonderful to see the compassion of God, as exhibited by him. Jonah regretted that God's judgment did not fall upon Nineveh—but the solitudes of Jeremiah were those of the tender parent, who would fain prevent the calamity befalling a disobedient child, but failing in this, carries still the parent's heart, parent's tears, to soften the rebellious woes of that child.

How often do we, in our intercourse with our brethren, act otherwise! If I see wilfulness and disobedience, I warn; I tell the consequences it may be; I press home with diligence those warnings; all are unheeded, the calamity comes worse perhaps than I foretold; how ready is the heart then to triumph in its own faithfulness, and the poor victim of his own rashness is left to himself, while in a kind of triumph, I

tell him, “ ’tis all deserved.” The heart of Jeremiah could say: “But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall *weep* in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall *weep sore* and run with tears, because the Lord’s flock is carried away captive” (ch. xiii. 17). *Such hearts, such ministry are needed now.*

It is in the book of this prophet that we have the history of that part of Israel which was not removed out of the land. Jeremiah’s service did not close even when the city was taken, and the wall broken down. The heart that—like the prophet’s—is true to God and His people, will always have something to do. The special place he held was to seek to draw the people into repentance, to warn; he was unheeded, and the judgments of God fell. No sooner had the captives been borne away, than quite another field of duty arose before him; and one would have supposed that what had just happened would have made him a welcome guest in the house of the poor deserted Israelites. In chapter xlii., we see this new labour that Jeremiah found. The destroying flood had swept away all he had formerly been among, the kings, the priests, the princes, the temple, the vessels; the glory of Israel had departed.

How often have we seen, that when services have been apparently disowned, the servant retires. When we have been labouring for an object, we find suddenly all dashed from our hands, like a goodly vessel, before the world and for ourselves; our labour is in vain, and the heart faints and grows weary. Never was a more complete failure than that that was before the eye of the prophet. His heart alone remained whole amidst it all; he was ready for fresh service.

The remnant muster to him; their confession seems honest, their hearts seem true. “Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant

13

(for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us); that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do" (ch. xlii. 2, 3). Jeremiah had had experience of the human heart; ready to act as aforetime, he says, "Whatsoever thing the Lord will answer you, I will declare it unto you." After ten days the answer was given to the same company (ver. 9, to the end of the chapter). The leaning of the hearts of the people was towards Egypt. There is something in Egypt, with all its bondage, that the heart naturally clings to. The remnant, wearied with the struggles they had passed through, sought for rest to the flesh. "Would God we had died in Egypt!" every now and then oozes from the hearts of Israel. There is something in Egypt (type of the world) to attract all our hearts, something that the flesh values; and no wonder, when we can say, "No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread." *This repose of death may the Lord keep us from!*

The disappointed heart is in danger of turning back here. When the people came to Jeremiah, their words were, "That the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing we may do." God had provision for this time of need. *There never was a time when the Lord would not bless them that trust in Him*—there was never a place, however desolate or forlorn, where God could not meet His afflicted ones. His word was, "If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up; for I repent Me of the evil I have done unto you. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon," etc. "And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land."

The prophet's words are despised; and notwithstanding the threats if they returned to Egypt, they are soon gone, once more to contend against the judgments of God. Once more Jeremiah finds himself despised. Unable to keep them by promises of blessing, or to deter them from going into Egypt by threats of judgment, the power of unbelief has set in so strongly, that spite of the warnings, Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, swept the land, and along with the rest Jeremiah himself, into the land of Egypt. But even here we find him with a word from God. The people, once back in Egypt, were soon burning incense unto other gods. When once we get into a current, it will carry us far beyond our intentions. This remnant hoped to reach Egypt, that they might no more see war, or hear the sound of the trumpet, or suffer hunger; but they went into all the idolatry of that people. How often have we seen the same in principle! In all the periods of Israel we shall not find a more hardened state than that into which the remnant sunk; see their reply to Jeremiah, ch. xliv. 15-19. Here we appear to lose the prophet; and might he not say, "Surely I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought" (Is. xlix. 4).

I think we may lose blessings, if we do not follow on in the track of God's grace to His people; but if we do, we must keep side by side with Jeremiah. Others had their service away in Babylon. God remembered His own there; but in following with this prophet, we learn the inexhaustible grace there is in God, where there is a heart to trust in Him, while we see, at the same time, the evils of the human heart becoming greater and greater as that goodness is put forth.

What varied scenes did this man of God pass through, from the time when with joy he partook of the passover in the days of Josiah, till he saw the utter

15

desolation, which he so pathetically describes in his Lamentations — *Oh, for hearts like his!* “Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water, for the destruction of the daughter of my people” (Lam. iii. 48).

As we have before observed, those who beforetime had served their generation by the will of God, saw around them the fruits of their labours. In none of them, however, do we see the same measure of tenderness of heart. God had reserved Jeremiah for his day, and had given him the heart for his work—a heart sorely tried, but one that could weep for Israel’s woes. This prophet was the expression of God’s heart towards Israel too. “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?” (Hos. xi. 8) was Jehovah’s language; and His prophet was there as the proof of God’s grace.

On looking back on the history of the Church of God, we see a constant raising up of one after another to step in to meet the Church’s wants. The Spirit of God acts according to His knowledge of present needs. Sometimes instruments (not marked either for correctness of knowledge, or even purity of walk, I mean when judged by the Word as to their associations) have been much used of God. In the latter days of Christendom, I doubt not, but that however lavish the hand of God may be in giving hearts like that of Jeremiah, to meet the wants of His saints, the apostasy will be so dark, that labour therein, even of the most devoted character, will scarce leave a trace of itself. The nearer we draw to the end will, on the one hand, be the arduousness of service, and on the other, the profitless of it, too, to human eye. R.

Our Words

OUR words are part of our acts and they have a predominant place in the life of every one of us. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment: for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 36-37). Our words manifest what we are, what we think, what our heart is, and the treasure of our hearts for "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (v. 34). The word of God tells us the importance for the children of God of watching our words: "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Prov. xiii. 3). "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps. cxli. 3). If we are told to watch and be sober, this also applies to our words.

If we could at the end of the day recall every word we have uttered, should we not be confounded? How many useless words! how little are we different from the world! What have we said for the Lord, or about Him? "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17). Oh, that we would every evening think over our words before the Lord, and confess to Him how much we have failed.

A hasty word so easily provokes anger, and so it is written: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James i. 19); and also: "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! and the tongue is a fire" (James iii. 5, 6). "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. xv. 1), and "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect

17

man, able also to bridle the whole body'' (James iii. 2). Even the apostle Paul himself at Jerusalem had to admit that he had failed in word when he said to the High Priest : "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall" (Acts xxiii. 3).

Among the numerous exhortations putting us on our guard in relation to our words, we may quote Col. iii. 8-10 : "But now ye also 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 ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

If the word of God tells us what we should put off, seeing that we have put off the old man, it also shows us what the new man should produce. Its character should above all be gentle and meek : "Let your moderation (gentleness, N.T.) be known unto all men" (Phil. iv. 5). "Gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" (Tit. iii. 2). "And the servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient (forbearing, N.T.), in meekness instructing those that oppose" (2 Tim. ii. 24). "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. iii. 15). Meekness characterised the men of God : "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3) ; as also was David, even towards Saul, his deadly enemy. What a precious gift of God is speech which we use to speak of Christ, to tell of His love, to testify, to exhort, to teach and to make known the word of God ! "A word spoken in due season, how good it is" (Prov. xv. 23).

Let us fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus, the perfect model, Who could say : "For I have not spoken of

(from, N.T.) Myself; but the Father Who sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John xii. 49). What perfect dependence! and this is the secret of faithfulness of walk; no will of our own, but entire dependence upon the Father (Is. l. 4).

M.K.

Propitiation and Substitution.

IT is important to notice the difference between propitiation and substitution. The two goats on the day of atonement illustrate this distinction (Lev. xvi.). They both doubtless point to the one sacrifice of Christ; the first, whose blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat, represents His offering Himself as a propitiation to God for the whole world, the second, upon whose head the sins of His people were confessed, as the substitute of those whose sins He bore.

These different aspects of His death should never be confounded. In scripture they are always distinct. The death of the Lord Jesus glorified God, and maintained His throne in righteousness in proclaiming mercy to all (Rom. iii. 22). But those spoken of who believe in God "that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for *our* offences, and was raised again for *our* justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25), they (not the world) are declared to be accounted righteous before God: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). All this is strictly limited to those who believe God.

The scripture never speaks of Jesus as the substitute for the world; nor does it say that He died for *their* sins, nor that He was raised again for *their* justifica-

tion. He is the substitute for His people (Is. liii. 5, 11, 12; Rom. iv. 24; Heb. ix. 28). "Once offered to bear the sins of *many*," not *all*. Otherwise all must be saved. He is the propitiation for the whole world (1 John ii. 2). Note that here the words "*the sins of*" are in italics, and have been added by the translators though not in the original. John iii. 15, 16; Acts x. 43; xiii. 39, etc., clearly show that salvation can now be proclaimed righteously to all, but only those who believe have it, and can say that the Lord Jesus bore their sins as their substitute on the cross.

If the Lord bore the sins of all, then none could be condemned. To speak of universal redemption is simply to forget what redemption is. Can an unconverted man say: "In Whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"? (Eph. i. 7). Universal redemption would give unbounded licence to sin. Fancy an unconverted man living in sin, having redemption and the sins he is living in all forgiven! c.s.



Propitiation.—Christ also hath once suffered for sins,

Substitution.—The Just for the unjust,

Reconciliation.—That He might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18).

“I Come Quickly.”

HE has said “I’m coming quickly”—
 And we long to see our Lord;
 From His Father’s throne descending,
 By His own alone adored;
 And as myriads gather round Him,
 Called to meet Him in the air,
 To the Father’s house He’ll bring them,
 His blest home above to share.

Yet how long He too has waited
 For that blissful day to come,
 To possess His blood-bought people
 And to share with them His home!
 In that cloudless land of glory,
 We shall there behold Him shine,
 As we ever learn the fulness
 Of His grace and love divine.

With what songs of praise ascending
 We shall fill those courts above,
 As we then behold His glory
 In a scene where all is love;
 O what joy to see Him honoured!
 As all heaven shall acclaim
 That the Crucified is worthy
 Of the crown, the throne, the Name.

Let us sing, then, “Come, Lord Jesus,”
 We have learnt to know Thy grace,
 And Thy bride is waiting, watching,
 Still to see her Bridegroom’s face;
 Then when clothed in robes so spotless—
 All the gift of perfect love—
 We shall praise, and praise for ever!
 In the glory-land above.

By the late F. G. BURKITT.
From “Hymns of Grace and Glory.”

Some Last Sayings of Our Lord.

(John xvi. 33 ; Matt. xxvi. 18 ; Rev. iii. 11 ; xxii. 20).

THE last sayings of deeply-loved ones and the last sayings of great teachers are justly cherished.

Thus the five chapters, xiii. to xvii., of the Gospel of John are ever prized by the Lord's people as among the choicest portions of Holy Writ, to which they turn for comfort as well as to learn their Lord's desires and commands.

How rich, indeed, is the treasury of golden utterances that came from the lips of the ordained Lamb of God as He passed from the last typical passover to the altar to be, Himself, the Sacrifice to which all the sweet savour and sin offerings of the past had pointed! "Christ our passover . . . sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7 ; Eph. v. 2).

The outflow of His love in that precious stream of consolation and instruction will afford refreshment and delight to His own until the fulness of joy in His presence.

In those chapters our Lord gives a survey that is divinely comprehensive. The world's domination by Satan is unveiled; eternal life revealed; His service on high for His own promised; the Father's interest in them made known; the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father in His name to abide with them, declared; He, Himself, would remain the Object of their affections, in "a little while" to come again and take them to be with Him in the Father's house. Meanwhile, His disciples were to testify of Him, to suffer and share His rejection in the world. But, in His closing words, on the verge of Gethsemane's sorrow and conflict, He gives the amazing assurance that in Himself they would have peace. He was the Overcomer; they were therefore to be of good cheer.

Never more than then manifesting the reality of His humanity in the tenderness of His relations as Teacher and Friend, He could yet present Himself as the immutable basis of peace, the abiding resting-place for their hearts in their future times of stress while testifying for Him in a hostile world. He thus reinforces the precious promise He had given them before leaving the upper room: "My peace I give unto you."

It is with such strong consolation our beloved Lord has furnished His redeemed ones. And they readily identify Him with the Jehovah, the Rock of Ages (Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4; see margin) Who will keep in perfect peace the trusting ones whose minds are stayed upon Him. Consequently, they anticipate that time of blessing and appropriate the tranquillising assurance to their pilgrimage experiences.

Then follows quickly words of a totally different nature. Gethsemane is reached. All human sorrow is to be surpassed; the fiercest attack of Satan is to be made. Jesus takes three chosen disciples apart with the touching request, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch *with Me*" (Matt. xxvi. 38).

Did not the hearts of the chosen three leap within them at the honour conferred on them, the opportunity given them of proving their affection and loyalty in this hour of His deep need? Peter can now make good his declarations of vv. 33 and 35; John can answer to the signal grace shown to him at the supper (John xiii. 23). Alas! profoundly humiliating is the sequel. Not even the entreating, endearing word, "with Me," arrests from a shameful succumbing to the weakness of the flesh. Nor is this all. Another and yet another opportunity given only results in still more shameful surrender. About to take up the terrible question of sin and man's state, the patient Saviour, loving to the

end, laying down His life for His friends, seeks for sympathy from the choicest of His disciples, and they fail Him. Infinitely pathetic are the words in which He gives expression to His disappointment: "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" "Sleep on now, and take your rest."

In the present day, the general defection and the enemy's deadly activity call urgently for faithfulness. Great is our opportunity. May our beloved Lord's Gethsemane appeal burn into our hearts, and keep us, however soporific the Laodicean atmosphere, watchers with and for Him.

For such are found in the latter days of the church on earth (Rev. iii. 8, *et seq.*). A bright ray cleaves the darkness of her sad history and reveals saints obedient to His word and not denying His name. Having Christ as their centre, they walk in fellowship with Him, the Holy and the True; and this necessarily excludes what is of man. Although they have little strength they are keeping the word of His patience; and He opens a door for them which none can shut. But He lavishes His love upon them, His promises of reward, yea, His commendation.

May we be careful not to let slip the opportunity of thus being acceptable to Him—a rich compensation for loss in this world.

However His own may fail in watching, He is ever mindful of them, His eye is ever upon them. And precious is the encouragement He gives: "I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown." Shall we miss the privilege of soon laying that crown at his feet?

In Revelation xxii. our blessed Lord gives His last parting words to His bride—the crowning *au revoir* as it were. His next words to her will be the joyful summons and the welcome to His presence. For her He

has given all that He had (Matt. xiii. 45, 46; Eph. v. 25). For her He has served; for her He has suffered; for her He has waited long. With what patient eagerness He looks forward to the time when He will present her to Himself "without spot" and "glorious" (Eph. v.)—the time of His "exceeding joy" (Jude). His last words breathe out the intensity of His love and manifest His fidelity to His pledge (John xiv. 3).

She sees Him crowned with glory and honour awaiting further honours and glories. But though on high, He has used His personal name, Jesus (Rev. xxii. 16) supremely sweet to her ear. To this she earnestly responds, using the same hallowed and blessed name :—"Amen. Even so, come Jord Jesus." A.J.H.

The True Grace of God wherein ye Stand.

(1 Peter v. 12).

GOD is made known to us as the "*God of all grace,*" and the position in which we are set is that of "tasting that He is *gracious.*" How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is *gracious*! The natural feeling of our hearts is, "I know that thou art an austere man"; there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the *grace of God*.

There is sometimes the thought that grace implies God's *passing over sin*, but no, grace supposes sin to be so horribly bad a thing that God cannot tolerate it: were it in the power of man, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God, there would be no need of *grace*. The very fact of the Lord's being *gracious* shows sin to be so evil a thing that, man being a sinner, his state

is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but *free grace* will do for him—can meet his need.

We must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is, "*The God of all grace.*" The moment I understand that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what grace is. Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God . . . The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of *grace*. The great secret of growth is, the looking up to the Lord as *gracious*. How precious, how strengthening it is to know that the Lord Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died on the cross for me!

This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common everyday circumstances of life. Suppose, for instance, I find an evil temper in myself, which I feel it difficult to overcome; let me bring it to Jesus as my Friend; virtue goes out of Him for my need. *Faith* should be ever thus in exercise against temptations, and not simply my own effort; my own effort against it will never be sufficient. The source of real strength is in the sense of the Lord's being *gracious*. The natural man in us always disbelieves Christ as the only source of strength and of every blessing. Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, "I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ," but *He is gracious*; and knowing this, the way is to return to Him *at once, just as we are*, and then humble ourselves deeply before Him. It is only in *Him* and from *Him* that we shall find that which will restore our souls. Humbleness in His presence is the only real

humbleness. If we own ourselves in His presence to be *just what we are*, we shall find that He will show us nothing but *grace* . . .

It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is *in ourselves* as its ground of rest; it receives, loves and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is *His rest*. As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and our hearts being occupied with Him, they will be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this too will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our own hearts. Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him is sin, but then it is not thinking of my own sins, and my own vileness, and being occupied with them, that will humble me, but thinking of the Lord Jesus, dwelling upon the excellency in Him. It is well to be done with ourselves, and to be taken up with Jesus. We are entitled to forget ourselves, we are entitled to forget our sins, we are entitled to forget all but our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of *grace*, to continue practically conscious that we are not under law but under *grace*; it is by *grace* that the heart is "established" (Heb. xiii. 9), but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fulness of *grace*, that "*grace of God wherein we stand*," and to walk in the power and consciousness of it . . . It is only in the presence of God that we can know it, and *there* it is our privilege to be. The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of *our own* thoughts within us, and our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts of *God* about us, to the "*grace of God*."

Anything that I had the smallest possible right to expect could not be pure, free *grace*—could not be the “*grace of God*.” . . . It is alone when in communion with Him that we are able to measure *everything* according to *His grace* . . . It is impossible, when we are abiding in the sense of God’s presence, for anything, be what it may—even the state of the church—to shake us, for we count on God, and then all things become a sphere and scene for the operation of *His grace*.

The having very simple thoughts of *grace* is the true source of our strength as Christians; and the abiding in the sense of *grace*, in the presence of God, is the secret of all holiness, peace, and quietness of spirit.

The “*grace of God*” is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it, we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence, we shall only turn it to licentiousness. If we look at the simple fact of what *grace* is, it has no limits, no bounds. Be we what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are), in spite of all that, what God is towards us is LOVE. Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what *He is to us*, and this is *grace*.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil that is in us, and is the blessed revelation that, through Jesus all this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins—nay, than all the sins in the world—are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what *we* are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is LOVE.

In Rom. vii. the state described is that of a person quickened, but whose whole set of reasonings centre in *himself* . . . he stops short of *grace*, of the simple fact that, whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may, GOD IS LOVE, and only love towards him. Instead of

looking at God, it is all "I," "I," "I." Faith looks at God, as He has revealed Himself in grace . . . Let me ask you, "Am I—or is my state the object of faith?" No, faith never makes what is in *my heart* its object, but *God's revelation of Himself in grace* . . .

Grace has reference to what *God is*, and *not* to *what we are*, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the "*grace of God.*" At the same time, we must remember that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God—to sanctify us, by bringing the soul to know God, and to love Him; therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God's love had brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sin of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest development of God's grace . . . I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be": *that* is not the question. The real question is, whether *God* is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves, has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of *what God is*, we are off the ground of pure grace. . . . Is there distress and distrust in your minds? See if it be not because you are still saying "I," "I," and losing sight of God's grace.

It is better to be thinking of *what God is* than of *what we are*. This looking at ourselves, at the bottom is really pride, a want of the thorough consciousness that we are *good for nothing*. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God. . . . In looking to

Christ, it is our privilege to forget ourselves. *True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am too bad to be worth thinking about.* What I want is, to forget myself and to look to God, who is indeed worth all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say as in Rom. vii., "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no *good thing*," we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us then think about Him who thought about us with thoughts of good and not of evil, long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31).

J.N.D.

The Unity of the Gospel in the Acts.

"**T**HERE is one body and one Spirit"; there is also one gospel. As men everywhere are equally lost, and the riches of the Lord are equally towards all, so the glad tidings now preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven (1 Pet. i. 12) announces the same terms equally to all men.

The evangelical history in the Acts shows that, although during that period of thirty years or so, the message from God was presented in a great variety of ways and to a great diversity of persons, one gospel only was the theme of the various preachers. This remarkable unity arose from three chief causes: (a) its *origin*; (b) its *subject*; (c) its *power*.

(a) The gospel of God was not "of man." It flowed from a divine source, and was above human partiality.

God Himself was its origin. Moreover, (b) the Lord Jesus Christ was the lofty, inspiring, and soul-satisfying subject of the gospel. It knew nothing of "gods many and lords many," but proclaimed "the One God, and One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). Further, (c) the effective power of the gospel was God the Spirit. The preachers were all under His direction in their service. He spake through them, so that the saved were born again by the word and Spirit.

It is important to notice that these three elements of unity are all of God, and therefore above human control—which is an infinite mercy. That determined efforts were made at the very beginning to adulterate the gospel we gather from Acts xv. ; Gal. ii. ; 2 Cor. ii. 17, and other passages.

It would be an interesting and instructive occupation to trace in this history the controlling power of God, preserving the early preachers from the promulgation of any conflicting notions which they might have been tempted or disposed to introduce to suit their own fancies or the prejudices of their audiences. Think what contrasts were involved when the gospel was addressed to all men, extending from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. What human scheme could embrace all classes and races—the Jew and Gentile, the high and low, the Roman patrician and his household slaves, the philosopher and the unlettered, those zealous for the law of Moses and those corrupted by the gross evils of heathendom? Yet in the Book of the Acts we see that the gospel of the grace of God was comprehensive enough to cover the needs of all, and that the evangelists who "went everywhere preaching the word" wrought together harmoniously and effectively in the conversion and establishment of souls.

31

What was the subject of the preaching which brought men from Judaism and Gentilism into the church of God? We will briefly point out some of the main features found throughout the Book, leaving the reader to fill in the details. The fundamental theme of all the preachers was *the death, the resurrection, and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus*. Everything for God's glory and man's welfare rested upon this truth, however manifold the superstructure.

Accordingly, we find that this truth was specially proclaimed in Jerusalem, where the preaching began. Peter pressed this truth upon the Jews at Pentecost, causing many to feel their guilt (ch. ii.); and he did so again in Solomon's porch (ch. iii.). When arrested he declared before his judges that the Lord Jesus Whom they rejected was now made the Head of the corner and the only means of salvation (ch. iv.). Before the whole Jewish council, the apostles confessed themselves witnesses of the One Whom they, the leaders of the people, had hanged upon a tree, but Whom God had exalted to His right hand (ch. v.). Stephen, at the price of his martyrdom, declared to the same council that he there and then saw the Son of man (of Whom they had been the betrayers and murderers) standing at the right hand of God (ch. vii.). Philip preached Christ in Samaria, and pointed out the fulfilment of Isaiah liii. to the eunuch of Ethiopia (ch. viii.). Peter told Cornelius, the Roman centurion, of Jesus risen from the dead, the Lord of all, and the One Whom God had ordained to be the Judge of the living and the dead (ch. x.).

Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, whether preaching to Jews or Gentiles, does not differ in these particulars from Peter. In the synagogue at Antioch, he announces that the One promised in the Old Testament is now risen from the dead, and that in Him are "the sure mercies of David" (ch. xiii.). In Thessalonica

we hear of Paul reasoning with the Jews out of the scriptures about the sufferings of Christ and His resurrection (ch. xvii. 3). In his own hired house at Rome Paul is shown "teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. xxviii. 31).

What do these references to the preaching of the gospel show us? They combine to prove that in those early days the Lord Jesus Christ was set before men. Men everywhere were called to believe on Him Who had had been promised in the scriptures, Who had become God's Witness in Galilee and Judea, Who was crucified, slain, risen and glorified, Who is the judge of the quick and the dead. It is clear that throughout that period the servants of Christ were acting upon the Lord's own commission to them, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts i. 8). There were many witnesses, but only one testimony. Indeed, through them the Lord Himself came and preached glad tidings to those that were far off and to those that were nigh (Eph. ii. 17, N.T.; see Acts x. 36). There is thus a unity everywhere observable in the presentation of the gospel at the beginning.

Another feature illustrating the unity of the gospel is found in its effects upon those who received it. Everywhere repentance and faith were set forth as the accompaniments of the reception of the glad tidings. This feature is not peculiar to the preaching of either Peter or Paul, to the Jews or the Gentiles.

Peter urged repentance upon the Jews (ch. ii. 38; iii. 19). Paul testified of it to both Jews and Greeks (ch. xx. 21; xxvi. 20). Paul witnessed in Athens that God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (ch. xvii. 30), and Peter wrote that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). Peter announced that the Lord Jesus was exalted "to give repentance to Israel" (ch. v. 31), and after the conversion of Cor-

nelius, the brethren in Jerusalem agreed that God had "also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (ch. xi. 18).

In like manner, we find *faith* everywhere associated with the preaching of the gospel. In Jerusalem, a great many who heard the word believed (ch. iv. 4), and the new company formed there consisted of those that believed (ch. iv. 32). A large number of Jewish priests are said to have been "obedient to the faith" (ch. vi. 7), a phrase applied to the reception of the gospel by the Gentiles (Rom. i. 5 ; xvi. 26). Faith in Philip's preaching of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ was found in Samaria (ch. viii. 12). Faith came by hearing in the case of the Jews, and God also opened a door of faith for the Gentiles (ch. xiv. 27), through which Cornelius was the first to find entrance by the preaching of Peter. Thus God put no difference between those under law and those without law, alike "purifying their hearts by faith" (ch. xv. 9), as Peter said at the conference in Jerusalem. Paul, the apostle to the uncircumcision, was in perfect agreement on this point with Peter, and testified both to Jews and Greeks "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. xx. 21).

The unity of the glad tidings is also shown in other fundamental matters beside repentance and faith, and there is nothing to indicate that there is one gospel for the Jew and another for the Gentile, nor that there was one gospel preached by the twelve and another by Paul. The *forgiveness or remission of sins* was preached equally to both Jews and Gentiles (ii. 38 ; v. 31 ; x. 43 ; xiii. 38 ; xxvi. 18).

Again, *salvation* was announced in the name of Jesus for Jews (ch. iv. 12), and for Gentiles (ch. xiii. 47). The word of this salvation was sent to the sons of Abraham's race (ch. xiii. 26), and the way of salvation was made known among the Gentiles (ch. xvi. 17). That those

who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ should be saved was proclaimed wherever the gospel was carried. *Conversion* or turning to God was applied to both Jews and Gentiles (iii. 19; xv. 3, 19; xxvi. 18, 20).

Further, the gospel is shown to be the means of *life* to those dead in trespasses and sins. The apostles spoke "all the words of this life" to the Jews in Jerusalem (ch. v. 20). Similarly, life came to the Gentiles through the gospel on repentance (ch. xi. 18). Eternal life is for all upon faith, and when, at Antioch in Pisidia, the Jews judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life," Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles, and "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (xiii. 46, 48).

Moreover, the things concerning the *kingdom of God* were preached by Philip to the Samaritans (ch. viii. 12), and also by Paul at Ephesus (xix. 8; xx. 25), who also discoursed of them in Rome to the Jews and to all who came to him (ch. xxviii. 23, 31). Peter spoke also in Jerusalem of the "times of refreshing" and of the "times of the restitution of all things" which the prophets from the beginning had foretold (ch. iii. 19, 21). The *future judgment* of the world by the Lord Jesus was announced by Peter (ch. x. 42) and also by Paul (xvii. 31; xxiv. 25).

This brief recital of facts, which may easily be augmented, is sufficient to show that the gospel at the beginning was proclaimed with "one mind and one mouth." This men heard, and this men believed in all places throughout the period of about thirty years to which the history in the Acts relates. W.J.H.

How many objects that we now cling to, how many sorrows and cares that burden us, would be nothing, were the hope of His coming steadily before our eyes!

The Form of a Servant.

(Phil. ii. 5-8).

IS it mere humanity, I ask, I get in the Person of Christ? Is it not something immeasurably different, even *God manifest in flesh*? He would not as a Saviour, do for me a sinner, if He were not Jehovah's Fellow (Zech. xiii. 7). Every creature *owes* all that he can render. None but One Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God can *take* the form of a servant—for he *is* a servant already. "No creature can supererogate," as another has said; the thought would be rebellion. None could be qualified to stand surety for man, but the One Who could without presumption claim equality with God, and consequently be independent.

True humanity was capable of *sinning*. Adam in the garden was so, for he did sin. We may say more simply and certainly that he was capable of *sinning* than that he was capable of *dying*. The history shows us the first, but forbids us to determine the second; inasmuch as it tells us that death came in by sin. By nature there was a capability of sinning, but we are not told the same as to a capability of dying.

If, then, by-and-by, another was to come, and just to illustrate, as he might say, the true humanity of Christ, he were to suggest the capability or possibility of His sinning, I ask, What would the soul say to him? We may leave the answer to those who know Him. But we may, at the same time, be sure of this—that the devil is in all these attempts upon the *Rock of the church* which is the *Person of the Son of God* (Matt. xvi. 18). For His work, His testimony, His sorrows, His death itself, would be absolutely nothing to us, if He were not God. His *Person* sustains His *sacrifice*, and in that way His *Person* is our *Rock*. It was a

confession to His Person, by one who was at that time ignorant of His work or sacrifice, which led the Son of God to speak of the Rock on which the Church was to be built, and also to recognise that truth or mystery against which the gates of hell, the strength and subtlety of Satan, were to try their utmost again and again. And they have been thus engaged from the beginning, and are still so. By Arians and Socinians, the full glory of "God manifest in the flesh" was clouded long ago with either a deeper or a more specious falsehood

But one can trace a kindred purpose in all — *the depreciation of the Son of God*. And whence comes this? And whence comes the very opposite and contradictory energy? What is *the Father* occupied with, or jealous about, if it be not the glory of the Son, in resistance of all that would depreciate Him, be it gross or subtle? Read, beloved, the Lord's discourse to the Jews in John v. There that secret is disclosed, that though the Son has humbled Himself, and can, as He says, "do nothing of Himself" (v. 19), the Father will see to it that He be not thereby dishonoured, or in any wise depreciated—watching over the rights, the full Divine rights of the Son, by this most careful and jealous decree—"he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (v. 23).

Patience in teaching, patience with the simply ignorant, is surely the Divine way, the way of the gracious Spirit. The Lord exercised that way Himself. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" (John xiv. 9). But no allowance of any depreciation of Christ is the Divine way also. John's writings prove this to us—the most awful portion of the oracles of God, as well as being so peculiar and precious, because they so concern the personal glory of the Son. And they seem to me to show but little,

if any, mercy to those who would sully that glory, or carelessly watch over and around it (2 John 7-11).

And, let me add, other facts in the history of the blessed Lord, such as hunger and thirst and weariness, are not to be used as the least warrant for this thought about the mortality of His flesh and blood. The Son of God in flesh was exposed to nothing. Nothing outside the garden of Eden was His portion. He was hungry and wearied at the well of Samaria. He slept in the ship after a day of fatiguing service. But whatever of all this He knew in the place of thorns, and thistles, and sorrow, and sweat of face, He knew it all, and took it all, only as fulfilling that "form of a Servant," which in unspeakable grace He had assumed.

J.G.B.

The New Commandment.

(“ Which thing is true in Him and in you ”—1 John ii. 8.)

IF I read Scripture, faith sees and adores that One in whom is all perfection; from whose life given to me I derive all adoration and all power for living to Him. It is not only that life gushes from Him, the smitten One, but I can look up and adore Him as the *display* of that life.

When the whole work which He has undertaken is finished, and His people are taken up in bodies of glory, then will it be seen that all the springs of God are in Him; and all the fresh eternal fulness of the life that was with the Father will be manifested. But it *has been* manifested on this earth. There was the display of that life in the whole history of Christ as man down here—He, the only holy, undefiled One, the One in Whom was no spot, but spiritual divine purity.

People often overlook that the effect of having the *life of Christ* is that everything contrary to it must come into judgment, and faith casts the burden of this on Him, as He is the only One Who having given that life, can carry it on in our souls. He alone can carry us through the wilderness, the time-state, to the hour when "this mortal shall put on immortality" (1 Cor. xv. 53).

What we want is the character of a little child. What do I know? *Nothing*: but I believe and am *sure*, because God has told me, that I have eternal life. DOES GOD say it? Yes! "This is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life" (1 John ii. 25); and all who believe possess it. *He* says it, Whose judgment is alone worth hearing; He Who alone has a right to speak, says it; and I bless Him that He is able to speak such *large* words about me. It is the simplicity of a child believing just what God says that is lacking; and that is the reason why Christians do not walk (as they ought) as children of the Father. How can they, if they do not believe that they are children!

Put yourselves among the Jerusalem saints after Pentecost, and ask yourselves if you are walking as they did. Have we that Nazarite position outside everything connected with the world? And all that is of the world is not of the Father (1 John ii. 16). Can we say of any when going into their house, "That person brings me Christ"? If one had paid a visit to Paul, would one not have come away with a fresh taste of Christ? I have often come out of the house of a poor bedridden creature feeling, "Oh, how I wish my soul were like that!"—Oh, that that pulse of Christ were throbbing in every part of the body. How I want, how I long, to see it so in all who are His! G.V.W.

A Leaf out of a German Calendar.

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"—(Rom. viii. 37).

WHEN you are forgotten or neglected, when you are pushed consistently aside, and you submit to it, thanking the Lord for the humbling—this is victory !

When the good you do, or intend, is slandered, when your wishes are crossed, when your taste is offended, your advice despised, your opinions laughed at, and you take all quietly in love and patience—this is victory !

When with any kind of food or clothing, with any climate, any company, any position in life, or state of loneliness into which the Lord may lead you, you are content—this is victory !

When every ill-humour in others, every complaint, every irregularity and unpunctuality, while not condoning, you can bear without anger—this is victory !

When every foolishness, perverseness, even spiritual unfeelingness, every contradiction of sinners and every persecution you can meet and bear—this is victory !

If you are not concerned to bring yourself or your works into conversation or to look for commendation, if you are truly willing to remain unknown—this is victory !



I have often seen "the putting always everything in question" presented as sincerity and the love of truth. Whereas it is merely the haughtiest pretension of the human mind, which would hold its unshackled despotism to displace everything at pleasure, and makes its own thoughts creatures of its will; while love of truth is seen in holding and being subject to known truth, in which we are taught of God.

J.N.D.

Jesus Lives ! Jesus Comes !

" I am the first and the last, and the living One : and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades "—(Rev. i. 18, New Trans.).

" Yea, I come quickly. Amen, Come, Lord Jesus"—(Rev. xxii. 20).

JESUS lives ! who once in grace,
Took the guilty sinner's place,
Tasted death upon the tree,
Now He lives eternally.

Jesus lives ! who broke the spell
And the power of death and hell,
Rose triumphant o'er the grave,
Lives in glory now, to save.

Jesus lives ! ye saints proclaim,
Worthy is the Victor's name ;
Men and angels sound His praise,
Glad your heavenly anthems raise.

Jesus comes ! we soon shall see
Earth from Satan's thralldom free,
And the Morning Star arise,
Brilliant in the dawning skies.

Jesus comes ! our living Head,
He who once for sinners bled
On the cruel cross of shame—
Glory to His peerless name !

Jesus comes ! such is His word,
And we answer, "Come, blest Lord,
Take, O take Thy rightful throne,
Thou art worthy, Thou alone."

By the late F. G. BURKITT.

From Hymns of Grace and Glory.

In Memoriam.

THE news of the sudden passing away, from heart failure, of Horace Sidney Smith on Tuesday, December 31st last, came as a shock to his large circle of friends as well as to readers of *Words of Help*, which he had so diligently edited since May last. The following interesting details of our friend's life will, it is hoped, tend to stimulate in our readers a similar devotedness to the Lord.

Born on July 4th, 1864, Mr. H. S. Smith was brought up in the Anglican Church. His father was Governor of old Newgate Prison. His mother was a gifted singer. On her deathbed she sang, in tones which filled the house, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," leaving a lasting impression on her son's mind.

Educated at the Merchant Taylors' School, he did well both in Latin and Greek, whilst his mathematics were of a high order. In due course he acquired a knowledge of French and German and Hebrew.

In 1883 he entered the service of the City of London Corporation, with whom he continued for forty-six years, retiring only a few months before he died.

Soon after entering the Guildhall, Mr. Smith was invited to attend a Y.M.C.A. meeting and, later, to join several other young men for tea at the home of the late Sir George Williams, its founder. The latter delivered to them a simple gospel address on John iii. 31. This mercifully proved the means of Horace Smith's conversion. Immediately he began to confess Christ as his Saviour. But his father greatly objecting to this, he was eventually compelled to leave home and seek lodgings in the City.

A business acquaintance and he used to read the Scriptures together in their lunch hour. Among other truths which these studies stamped on their hearts was learning through the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians the

apostolic principles which governed the early Christians in their assemblies. Quite accidentally—for so it seemed—they discovered a company of Christians who were seeking to put these very principles into practice in London (see 1 Cor. xiv., etc.), and soon afterwards were led of God to link themselves with them in christian fellowship.

What marked the beloved subject of this brief notice from the beginning was great reverence for the word of God, of which in its details he had an exceptional grip. And it was from the conscious sense of its authority over his own soul that there sprang his untiring insistence on the importance of reading the Holy Scriptures from cover to cover, as well as his affectionate exhortation to young and old to make them the compass and companion of their lives.

“Apt to teach” truly describes the special form of our brother’s gift. He was never happier than when sitting down with individuals or gatherings to consider the word of God, and, like the householder of the parable, bringing “forth out of his treasure things new and old.” By these means many found salvation through him and rest from spiritual troubles. He had the heart of a true shepherd, and many assemblies of God’s people over widely scattered areas will cherish, till the Lord comes, grateful memories of profitable hours spent in reading the Bible with him. His courage in speaking to individuals of divine things and in witnessing for Christ, in all sorts of places, was a marked feature of his life. As might be expected his tastes were of the simplest and anything like forwardness and ostentation, especially among Christians, he abhorred.

Besides the sorrowing widow he leaves four sons and six daughters, all of whom, except one (who is in Canada), were present at the funeral. The burial at the City of London Cemetery, Manor Park, on January 6th, was attended by a large company of God’s people.

At the chapel W.R.K. gave out hymn 368 (New Book); prayer was offered by T.W.B., in which he thanked God for the useful life and testimony for Christ of His departed servant. He then read Psalm xxiii., and made some appropriate remarks applicable to the occasion. Hymn 171 was then sung, followed by prayer by H.L. At the graveside, by desire of the family, one of our brother's favourite hymns, No. 208, was sung with mingled feelings of sorrow and triumph. The reading of 1 Cor. xv. 49-58, suggested by the hymn, followed, concluding with prayer.

While comforted at the thought that our dear brother's pilgrimage and warfare are over, that he is at rest with the Lord, our hearts in our sorrow turn to God and say : Thy will be done.

May the Lord raise up many among His own, in these needy times, who will serve Him with the grace and devotedness of heart of our dear departed Editor.

W.M.R.

Submission.

It is Thy hand, O God !
My sorrow comes from Thee :
I bow beneath Thy chastening rod,
'Tis love that bruiseeth me ;
I would not murmur, Lord ;
Before Thee I am dumb ;
Lest I should breathe one murmuring thought,
To Thee for help I come.

Salvation at Jericho, the City of the Curse.

IT was Sunday evening, and we were listening to a gospel address in a hall about twelve miles out of London.

The preacher had read the story of Zaccheus in the first few verses of Luke xix., and, in his opening remarks he called our special attention to the wonderful grace of the Lord of glory, that He should ever have been found in such a neighbourhood as that of Jericho. For Jericho was the city of the curse.

Jericho has had a remarkable and a solemn history. We were reminded of its wonderful overthrow in the time of Joshua. After the priests had walked round its frowning walls for six days, on the seventh day, by the miraculous intervention of God, those massive walls fell down flat, and the idolatrous city was afterwards entirely destroyed by fire. Then it was that a solemn curse was pronounced upon whoever dared to rebuild Jericho, the penalty foretold being that any one so doing, should "lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son he should set up the gates of it."

Some five hundred years later, Hiel the Beth-elite was presumptuous enough to disobey the Divine command, thereby bringing the full vengeance of the curse upon his family (1 Kings xvi. 34).

But it was to this cursed spot that the footsteps of the Son of God wended. Nothing ever deterred Him in His blessed ministry of seeking and saving the lost. The woeful effects of sin, death, and the curse upon all around, were most fully felt by Him, but He had come to minister to the need of ruined man, and if the sinner (Zaccheus) had wandered down to Jericho, thither,—even to the accursed place—would the Saviour go and seek him. It was grace surpassing all human

comprehension. From the height of heaven's glory, the Son of God travelled to the city of the curse, to place Himself at the disposal of a poor sinner, who otherwise could have no hope of heaven.

Does not grace seem resplendent in those lovely words of the Lord Jesus, where as He unfolds the parable of the Good Samaritan, He tells us that he trod the steep and rugged path *to Jericho*, and saved the poor man who had strayed that way and fallen among thieves and was in such sore need?

The hearts of the Lord's people who were present that night seemd to glow afresh, as they were thus reminded of the matchless condescension of Him Who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

It was not the first time the Lord Jesus had been to Jericho, the preacher told us, but this was His *last* visit there, and He was now only "passing through" it. He was soon to endure the agony and shame of the cross. The wrath of God against sin was shortly to be poured upon His blessed head, when His soul should be made an offering for sin. But ere that moment came, He once more drew nigh to Jericho. Zaccheus was there, and this would be his last chance. Jesus of Nazareth would be passing close beside him with an offer of mercy. Will Zaccheus accept it? The blessed Saviour was bringing salvation to his very door. How will this tax gatherer treat this final chance?

Then most solemnly did the preacher appeal to each one that the Lord Jesus was "passing through" our midst that night with a pardon and a welcome for every sinner who would receive Him. Earnestly did he warn, that it might for some be the last time those gracious words would be heard in their ears. The Son of God was knocking at the door of all hearts present that night, but who could say whether His tender accents would ever be heard again? Perhaps it was

their last chance. Would they not accept Him as their Saviour then and there?

Amongst others present that night, was a young woman, who listened with rivetted attention. Her eyes were fastened on the preacher as though she hung on every word, for the story of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is a sweet sound for mortal ears. Then when the solemn warning was given, her eyes filled with tears and her head dropped lower and lower. She heard through the speaker the voice of God to her soul, and she trembled. But the devil whispered in her ears: "Plenty of time yet." After the meeting was ended and she reached the house where she was staying, she said she "had never heard anything so lovely before, only it has made me so downhearted," then she added, "I should like to go again next week."

Next week! Why, oh why, did she make that awful decision? The Saviour had said to her "*To-day* I must abide at thy house," and her foolish heart made answer, "Next week."

Six days longer did those blessed footsteps linger in grace at her door. Jesus of Nazareth was still waiting. Then came Sunday, when she had so fully meant to go and listen to the gospel invitation again, but in the afternoon she was found in a fit. This was followed by three others in rapid succession, so that on Sunday evening, whilst others were listening to the sweet story of old, in the very same hall, she lay unconscious of all around.

You pity her, do you not, and wonder how she could possibly have been so foolish, but if you have not yet accepted the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour, let me entreat you to listen to the voice of God speaking to you now.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1).

E. R. M.

The Many-Sidedness of the Gospel.

ON a previous occasion it was shown that the gospel at the beginning was characterized by a remarkable unity, but it must not be overlooked that the comprehensiveness and variety of the gospel are no less remarkable. Though some allusion was made on that occasion to this latter feature, it is now proposed to deal a little more fully with this point, in the light afforded by the Acts and the Epistles.

By far the greatest number of direct references to the "gospel" are made without any qualification, such as, 'preach the gospel, the truth of the gospel, the defence of the gospel, the furtherance of the gospel, and like phrases. They refer definitely to the message from God which was proclaimed in those early days, and which had the character of good news or glad tidings.

Leaving these passages for the reader to ponder, we will mention those in which some descriptive title is attached to the term, "gospel," in the words of inspiration themselves. And we shall find that for the most part the gospel is associated with the name of God and His Son, bestowing thus upon the good news a unique character as a communication to man. If it is of and from God Himself, nothing could be greater or grander.

(1) *The gospel or glad tidings of God.* This description occurs seven times in the Epistles. Paul wrote to the saints in Rome as one who was "separated unto the gospel of God" (Rom. i. 1). His great service among the Gentiles was "ministering the gospel of God" (Rom. xv. 16). At Corinth he "preached the gospel of God freely [without charge]" (2 Cor. xi. 7). Reminding the Thessalonians of his preaching to them in the face of great opposition, he mentions the gospel of God three times (1 Thess. ii. 2, 8, 9). But the

declaration of this glad tidings of God was not confined to Paul, for Peter uses the same description, asking, "What shall the end be of those that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. iv. 17).

(2) *The gospel of the grace of God.* This phrase is only once recorded. Paul, when addressing the Ephesian elders, makes reference to the ministry he had "received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24). The law came from God with its terrors for man, but now the gospel comes with its grace. Grace is its central and all-pervading theme. The grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared (Tit. ii. 11-13). Peter also wrote of the manifold and the true grace of God (1 Pet. iv. 10; v. 12).

(3) *The gospel of the glory of the blessed God.* The gospel is not only a divine message embracing and declaring God's grace, it also testifies to His glory in respect of the pardon of sins and the richness of the gifts bestowed on those who believe. His name was glorified in the Son of man on earth, and He has glorified His Son Whom man crucified, offering salvation to all men through faith in the One made Lord and Christ. Hence we read (in one place only) of the gospel of the glory [not "the glorious gospel"] of the blessed God (1 Tim. i. 11)—a striking and profound expression.

(4) *The gospel of God's Son.* This phrase, so expressive of the great personal theme of the gospel, is used by Paul. He says, "God . . . Whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son" (Rom. i. 9). So he had in substance spoken previously: ". . . the gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. i. 1, 2). The gospel was not the requisition of a spotless righteousness from man, but the exhibition of God's love to a sinful world by the gift of His only-begotten Son (John iii. 16). The glad tidings are con-

cerning a Person, for the Son of God is announced therein, as Paul said again, "God . . . was pleased to reveal His Son in me that I may announce Him as glad tidings among the nations" (Gal. i. 15, 16, N.Tr.). In these days God has spoken unto us in the Person of His Son (Heb. i. 1, 2).

(5) *The gospel of Christ.* As the "Son" speaks of relationship to God the Father, so "Christ" speaks of the One appointed and anointed of God to be the sole channel of blessing to man. The "glad tidings of Christ" is found seven times in the various Epistles. In Romans i. 16, and 1 Cor. ix. 18, the words, "of Christ," are omitted in critical versions; and in Rom. xv. 29, the words, "the gospel of," are also omitted. The other passages are 1 Cor. ix. 12; 2 Cor. ii. 12; ix. 13; x. 14; Gal. i. 7; Phil. i. 27; 1 Thess. iii. 2. They call for no special remark just now.

(6) *The gospel of the glory of Christ.* This phrase is found once only, 2 Cor. iv. 4. The apostle is contrasting the superior excellence of the message of the gospel with what was made known under the old covenant. Under the law the ministry of condemnation was attended by a glory in the face of Moses upon which the children of Israel were unable to look; but that glory the apostle declares to be altogether inferior to "the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ, Who is [the] image of God" (N.Tr.).

(7) *The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Lord's full titles are given on one occasion in connection with the gospel, 2 Thess. i. 8. The apostle is there referring to His public appearing, and to the judgment which will fall upon those who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus [Christ]."

In each of four other passages there is a description closely linked with this one. We find that the word, "preach," is used in association with (a) Jesus, Acts viii. 35; (b) Jesus Christ, Acts v. 42; (c) the Lord Jesus,

Acts xi. 20; and (d) the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, Acts viii. 12. In these passages, "preach" means to evangelize, or to preach the gospel of. Sometimes it means simply to announce, whatever the nature of the message. For instance, Jonah and John the Baptist preached (Matt. xii. 41; Lu. iii. 3), but they did not evangelize.

From this brief enumeration of passages it will be seen that the gospel comprehends within its range the present revelation of God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Its subject is inexhaustible and infinitely varied. It makes known how God has come out to man, and how man may come unto the Father through Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It announces the One God and the One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all.

The special endowments of those who receive the gospel of our salvation (Eph. i. 13), the gospel of peace (Rom. x. 15; Eph. vi. 15), the word of the truth of the gospel (Col. i. 5), are to be found throughout the New Testament scriptures. To know "the fulness of the blessing of Christ" (Rom. xv. 29, N.Tr.), it is needful to know, not only a particular part, or some special portions, of what is revealed in the Acts and the Epistles, but the whole of the revelation and teaching of the New Testament apostles and prophets, without neglecting the light thrown upon them by other parts of the scriptures.

It is unquestionable that Paul was allotted a special place in the service of the gospel. He was called to be an apostle subsequently to the twelve, and by the Lord in glory, not, like them, by Him when on earth. He was a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, but not exclusively to them, for the children of Israel were also to be within the scope of

his service (Acts ix. 15). While each servant had his own work, there was harmony and co-operation as well as interchange among them. For example, while the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter particularly (Gal. ii. 7), God made choice of him, not Paul, that by his mouth the Gentiles should first hear the word of the gospel, and believe (Acts xv. 7).

An outstanding feature of Paul's preaching was that he derived it personally and directly from the Lord Himself, and not from the main apostolic band (Gal. i. 11-20). Hence he delivered to his audiences what he himself had received of the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 1-3; see also xi. 23). He says that a dispensation (administration) of the gospel was committed to him (1 Cor. ix. 17; Tit. i. 3); that the gospel of the glory of the blessed God was entrusted to him (1 Tim. i. 11, N.Tr.); and that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him (Gal. ii. 7). He recognized the responsibility resting upon him because of these communications, declaring, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the glad tidings" (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17, N.Tr.).

In consequence of the revelation of the Lord to Paul personally he, on three occasions, speaks of "my gospel," not as if he preached something differing from other preachers, but rather by way of emphasizing the authority with which he spoke, but which some questioned because he was not one of the twelve. No persecution affected the divine origin of the glad tidings he preached.

To Timothy he said, "Remember Jesus Christ raised from among [the] dead, of [the] seed of David, according to my glad tidings, in which I suffer even unto bonds as an evildoer" (2 Tim. ii. 8, N.Tr.). There is no implication here that preaching the resurrection of the Lord was peculiar to Paul. The contrary was the case. Peter's first discourse proclaimed that the fruit of the loins of David was raised from the dead (Acts ii.). But

in fiery trial Paul would have it remembered that the royal rights of the Seed of David secured no exemption from suffering unto death, nor would his gospel which he had received from the glorified Lord secure freedom from tribulation. But His resurrection was the assurance of the ultimate victory of His servants (cp. 1 Cor. xv. 58).

Paul also associates the future judgment with his gospel. He says, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. ii. 12-16). The glad tidings he preached did not gloss over man's danger. Judgment was compatible with the good news. It was a subject of revelation (see Rom. i. 18; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8; Acts xvii. 31). Then hidden things of darkness will be brought to light (1 Cor. iv. 5). Peter, James, and Jude all testify in their Epistles of the judgment to come, while Paul here states it to be in accordance with the gospel committed to him, and therefore it is not to be overlooked by evangelists.

In Rom. xvi. 25, the phrase again occurs, where the apostle desires for believers that they may be established by God according to (a) "my gospel," and (b) "the preaching of Jesus Christ." The gospel was set out in great fulness in this Epistle for the instruction of those who had never seen him nor heard his ministry. This teaching was now communicated to them in writing so that they might be thoroughly grounded according to the glad tidings committed to him as a preacher, teacher, and apostle to the Gentiles (1 Tim. ii. 3-7). He at the same time refers to the preaching of Jesus Christ which was to be according to the "mystery," which was that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews, of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ (Eph. iii. 4-9).

It is to be noted that this mystery is now revealed "unto His holy apostles and prophets." Others beside Paul shared the revelation, though he was given the principal place. Also, as to the glad tidings, he speaks three times of "our gospel," as well as "my gospel" (2 Cor. iv. 3; 1 Thess. i. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 14). There were other evangelists beside Paul, for the risen Head of the church gave many such (Eph. iv. 11). In 2 Cor. iii.-vi. 1, Paul treats largely of the ministry of the gospel committed not to him only, but to others also, who were all entrusted with the word of reconciliation (see v. 19, 20).

The distinctive nature of Paul's ministry may be gathered from many passages of scripture. But he himself differentiates between his ministry of the gospel which was preached to every creature under heaven, and his ministry of truth to the assembly (Col. i. 23-29). The first is specially for sinners, and the second for saints that every believer may be presented perfect (that is, fully developed in knowledge and understanding) in Christ. The latter ministry is of the things of the Spirit of God which are spiritually discerned, and are but foolishness to the natural man (1 Cor. ii. 14). The exposition of these truths is found in the writings of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

The subject might be pursued to great length, but enough has been said to show that the gospel presents many phases. Those who desire to preach it fully must become acquainted with it in every revealed aspect, and then seek grace and wisdom to select what is suitable to the audience before them. To exalt one portion of truth at the expense of others is to dishonour the holy scriptures of which every word possesses a heavenly perfection and an earthly profitableness.

W. J. H.

Love, Righteousness and Holiness as seen in God.

“**G**OD IS LOVE.” This is no attribute; it is Himself. We also read: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John i. 18). Here we find Him again as to the essence of His nature in the bosom of the Father, hence always a blessed manifestation of the Father’s bosom in the humanity He had put on. Love in its fulness was never brought out in heaven as it has been on earth. Indeed it was never thus seen until *in Christ*, who was the activity of God’s heart in the midst of hatred, and the activity of His nature in the midst of evil.

Now as I never can know relationship, and the duties which belong to it, until I am in it, so I never know love except by being loved. But then I am not love, have no pretension to it, am by nature an enemy of God—a wilful rebellious enemy of God with nothing but sins; but I come to Him in my sins, in the truth of all that they are in their odiousness and hatefulness to Him; and as I thus come, I find they have been all put away on the cross at the time of Christ’s suffering for them. It is love that has done it all; and the love that has thus saved me and redeemed me by blood is more than every other thing that God could do or give, present or future.

Hence in knowing what it is thus to be loved when there was none in me, I know what love is. You cannot explain to a person the sweetness of honey; he must taste it for himself in order to know what it is. Just so as to love, you must taste it in order to know what it is. “God is light” and “God is love,” and He was these before ever He created an object to enlighten or to love.

But righteousness and holiness are not what God is in Himself, although He is righteous and holy. They are moral and relative attributes, belonging to Him, but having to do with that which is outside Him — elements of God's nature as to which we have to do with Him, and in possession of which, as partakers of the divine nature, we become assimilated to Him.

The truth as it is in Jesus is, the "having put off . . . the old man . . . and having put on the new, which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 22-24, N.Tr.). That is, what God is becomes the character and essence of the new man thus assimilated to God.

Righteousness in God is consistency with Himself, and is displayed by the exercise of judicial authority in condemning or justifying that which is right or wrong. *Holiness* is delight in, or abhorrence of, that which is true or false. If a creature is to "have fruit unto holiness" (Rom. vi. 22), he must know God's righteousness first in justifying the believer in Jesus. But human religion always subverts the divine order, by striving to produce holiness in order to gain righteousness, instead of seeing the necessity of "submitting to the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3), *i.e.*, of obeying the word which reveals grace—reveals a righteousness of God for man, and is obeyed by believing it, in order to produce holy fruit in separation of heart to God in known love.

It is thus one becomes partaker of the divine nature; and purity of nature must be there in order to produce pure or holy fruit—a nature that loves and is holy, "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4).

* * * *

And now let us come to the basis upon which God acts in righteousness for salvation in all ages. It is through the work of the cross, which is a deeper thing

than the glory, because it is God's moral nature glorified in the place of sin, *i.e.*, where sin is; and there will be nothing in heaven in its moral nature which has not been brought down here to us in Christ on earth, Who clothed the glory He had with the Father before the world was with provision for meeting our crimson necessities in His deepest, lowliest humiliation, His tears, His agonies, and His blood, in all His lowly graces through His whole course right to and through the cross. Look at Him, a solitary, weary, thirsty stranger seated at Sychar's well, and listen to His condescending request to a poor solitary sinner for a drink of water, speaking to her as if she had been the best woman in the town, until He gained her confidence, reached her conscience, and entwined her adoring affections around His Person—God manifest in flesh for time and eternity (John iv.).

* * * *

It is the cross that lays the foundation for the display of God's highest glory, because all the moral principles connected with His nature, in reference to good and evil, were displayed there; and now it is the Holy Ghost in the church Who perpetuates the solution of these moral principles which were decided at the cross. Hence those who are gathered to the name of the Lord are here only to perpetuate the moral character of the Name of the Holy and the True, in separation from all that opposes what that Name reveals, *i.e.*, from everything and every principle which caused His sufferings. For not only have their sins been put away on the cross, any one of which would have to be imputed to Christ before it could be imputed to them, but the work then done has fitted them for the glory of God as Christ is fit (1 John i. 7; iv. 17). And therefore, as the conscience is set right by the blood of the cross

in reference to the claims of God, so the conduct has to be set right by the holiness of the cross in reference to the saint's walk in separation from all that dishonours the Lord.

Christ, in passing through judgment, has broken Satan's power, and thus "abolished death, and hath brought (observe, it does not say into existence, but) to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings" (2 Tim. i. 10, N.Tr.), in resurrection for the first time, which is a "new creation," in His own risen Person, its Head. In order to accomplish this, He gave up His rights as God, in becoming a Man, although He never ceased to be the One Who thus humbled Himself; and when a Man, He stooped lower still in giving up His rights as Messiah, as Son of God born into the world, and even as Man to take His place as "Son of man" for the cross, and through the eternal Spirit to offer Himself without spot to God, Who "made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

One thus learns how He turned sin, and the judgment it deserved, into an occasion for exhibiting on the cross the exact opposite of sin, during the time He was made sin, by giving to God an obedience, as Man, which He never could otherwise have received; and also when He had to endure the unsparing force of the judgment of God, which was according to the perfect opposition of His nature to sin, how He showed at the time of His abandonment by God a love to His Father, the character and infinite extent of which could not have been thus displayed, if all that God was in righteousness against sin had not been His felt portion, without one ray of love or comfort in that terrible cup, the very thought of which, when in the garden, caused His sweat as it were to be as great drops of blood falling down to the ground, but which He drank to the last drop, thus glorifying God morally in obedience and

love (John xiv. 31) which no heavenly glory can ever eclipse.

It was thus that Christ turned sin into the occasion for laying the foundation for bringing out the counsels of God in love, without denying responsibility or diminishing the righteous unbending judgment of God which was due to us for having trampled under foot His majesty, set at naught His truth, and despised His love. Indeed it was thus that He made sin itself the occasion of putting it away, of founding everything upon sovereign grace, and of giving us a full revelation, morally, of all that God is.

H.H.M.

Fellowship Meetings.

FOR some time it has been on my mind, and I think on the minds of others also, to say a little on this subject, trusting to the forbearance of brethren whilst we speak plainly.

We take it that all are agreed that, in connection with what is called an "open meeting," it is left free to saints to minister the truth as guided by the Spirit. This is in accordance with 1 Corinthians xiv.

In practice, however, our "open meetings" can hardly be said to be conducted in that way. Brothers seem to come determined to make themselves heard. They jump up the moment there is an opportunity, just as though they must "have their say." Is it not so? It may be done with the best intentions and no doubt it is, but it leads to an *undue haste*, which is painful to one's spirit and which is not in keeping with the liberty of the Holy Spirit to guide as *He* sees best.

All our "much speaking" can accomplish nothing without the work of the blessed Spirit of God, Who should be counted on to lead in worship, in prayer, in ministry, and in everything else.

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying” (v. 26). “Unto edifying” is the great object that should be kept before us.

All this “much speaking” sometimes prolongs meetings to a point where the young in the faith are more likely to be mystified than edified. We have been at a meeting where *four* brothers spoke. This, we believe, was a mistake, in view of v. 29; though v. 31 may seem to permit a larger number than two or three, such an occasion would certainly be very rare.

It is well to weigh the latter part of v. 31 and v. 32, both of which are very important to bear in mind.

We also remember on one occasion, at a large meeting, a brother attempted to speak very late, when most were obliged to leave in order to get their trains or trams, etc. Surely this fondness for speaking may lead us into things which are senseless, and even disorderly.

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter iv. 11). This is a weighty word. It is well to ask oneself before getting up to speak: Is this the word the Lord would have ministered at this moment? It would help to calm our restlessness and make us more disposed to wait on God.

It is quite true that long wearisome pauses in a meeting are equally to be deplored, on the other side; they generally show a dead and cold state; but, in avoiding one error, it is not good to fall into another.

There must be room left for the most simple brother to lead in prayer, worship or ministry; but let it be *in the Spirit*, not in the restlessness of the flesh. No doubt much forbearance is needed by us all, but there is certainly a call for more waiting on God than there has been.

F.G.B.

Our Substitute.

(John i, 5 ; Matt. xxvii, 46 ; Heb. ii, 9-13.)

DARKNESS had the world enshrouded—
 Dire result of Adam's fall !
 We, his children, in that darkness
 Wandered, guilty, helpless all ;
 But Thine eye, Thou God omniscient,
 Looked in tenderest pity down,
 And Thy Son, Thy heart's Belovèd,
 Thou didst send from heaven's throne.

Jesus ! Thou amidst our darkness
 Camest down, the heavenly Light ;
 But we would not have Thee, Saviour,
 Choosing still the shades of night.
 We despised Thee and rejected,
 Nailed Thee to a cross of wood,
 Basely mocked Thy dying anguish,
 Patient, spotless Lamb of God !

Loud doth mercy boast 'gainst judgment—
 Mystery of Love divine !
 Sin condemned and God exalted
 In that wondrous cross of Thine !
 Thou didst call, and wast not answered,
 Lord, that *we* might answered be ;
 That *we* might with joy behold Him,
 God must hide His face from *Thee*.

Lord, the gloom is past for ever :
 We are with Thee in the light,
 Children in a Father's presence,
 Now no more the sons of night.
 Thou hast done it ! Thou hast purchased
 Many brethren by Thy blood :
 Low we bow the head and worship
 Thee, Thou Firstborn Son of God !

C. H. V. P.

“If Any Man.”

TO readers of the Bible this phrase will be somewhat familiar, and its homely appeal will not require explanation beyond saying that in general it might be read “*if any one*,” and indeed it is so rendered by reliable modern translators of the Scriptures.

The phrase occurs in all the four gospels, but about as many times in John as in the three others together, so in saying that it is characteristic of the fourth gospel we shall not be presuming a distinction which does not exist.

We propose to consider briefly a few of its occurrences in the gospel of John, and shall take them not quite in the order in which they occur, but rather in their adaptation to our souls' needs.

First—In ch. vi. 51, the Lord Jesus says: “**I AM THE LIVING BREAD WHICH CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN: IF ANY MAN EAT OF THIS BREAD HE SHALL LIVE FOR EVER**”; and in the previous verses Jesus proclaims Himself as the bread of life coming down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die, in contrast to the fathers of the Jews He was then addressing, who had eaten of the manna in the wilderness and had died, as His hearers very well knew. Here is our first requirement—life, eternal life—freely and graciously offered *to any-one* on the simplest, freest terms. Why perish if life can be thus freely obtained? Where is the man or woman who does not wish to live for ever? And this is not all that is offered so freely in this gift—there is the quality, the character of the life thus offered, not only its duration. It is meat indeed and drink indeed. We live in a world where the struggle for the bread that perisheth largely fills up “*man's little day*,” in one form or another, and then what follows? Death!

Now let us consider this offer from the One who is in Himself the embodiment of the blessings He offers. We might quite as pertinently ask: Will you have Christ Himself? For in receiving Him you get all that is needed, whatever particular form your need may take. Pardon, peace, eternal life, forgiveness, justification, righteousness, holiness: whatever may be the need of heart or conscience, the only perfect answer to it is to be found in Christ Himself.

But let us pass on. In John vii. 37, 38, we read: **"IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME AND DRINK. HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID, OUT OF HIS BELLY SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER."**

In the well-known interview with the woman of Samaria (chap. iv. 5 to 30), our Lord said to the woman: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst"; a blessed promise surely—thirst quenched and everlasting life possessed. But here in His cry on the last day of the feast our Lord offers something more than this, for it promises blessing to others, as well as entire personal satisfaction for whosoever will come to Him and drink; through them (man or woman) the blessing is to flow out to others.

The occasion of this blessed announcement is of great import. It was, as the former part of the chapter tells us, the Feast of Tabernacles; and the last day, the great day of the feast. It is the only one of the feasts of Jehovah that had an eighth day, and it points undoubtedly to the Lord's day, the resurrection day; the distinctive type of the great ingathering at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. No doubt the earthly as well as the heavenly people will share in the blessings of that time, but then and now the blessing is confined to the thirsty ones who, having heard the voice of Jesus,

come to Him and drink to the quenching of their own individual thirst, and then to the blessing of others through them. But another and greater thing is told us here—"But this He said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were about to receive; for [the] Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (ch. vii. 39, N.Tr.).

Do we as believers who have had our thirst quenched, our awakened consciences satisfied, and our hearts set at rest, desire to be a blessing to others? Here we have this made possible by a further gift—the gift of the Holy Spirit. Our capacity for helping other thirsty souls consists not in *our* gifts of speech or wisdom, but in the supply of the Spirit of God from the Divine source. If our domestic supplies of water are by any means disconnected from the reservoir, all the pipes and attachments are useless; so also our efforts to reach and relieve thirsty souls are useless, and barren of blessing, if anything is allowed to hinder the outflow of this stream of life-giving and life-sustaining water.

Another verse in this same chapter may help us here—*If any man will do His (God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself*" (chap. vii. 17).

A simple yet effectual test that will help us greatly in this day of difficulty, with so many conflicting voices obscuring the simplicity of the truth, and sowing seeds of doubt about the word of God. Let us test our ways, our path, our service by this simple but effectual test. "Whose will am I seeking?" How often our own wretched will spoils the work that we seek to do for the Master, and more often still is it entered upon with a measure of uncertainty and doubt, resulting in wasted opportunities and energy. It has been said that "A man without a will is moral perfection"; but we know where to look for perfection in this as well as all other

virtues. To the same blessed Lord and Master who said, "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"; and in the passage under consideration adds to the words above quoted, "He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but he that seeks the glory of Him that has sent him, he is true, and unrighteousness is not in him" (John vii. 18, N.Tr.). May the Lord graciously help us that our path in these testing days may be free from uncertainty, and so helpful to others; and our worship and service be in the power of the Holy Spirit, that other Comforter Who shall abide with us for ever.

T.R.

(To be continued, D.V.)

"Hear Him."

(Luke ix. 34, 35).

ANY attempt to put the Lord Jesus Christ on an equality with others will not be tolerated by God the Father. When the apostle Peter suggested such a step on the Mount of Transfiguration and proposed to make three tabernacles, one for the Lord, and one each for Moses and Elijah, the heavens immediately opened and the voice of the Father was heard, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him" (ver. 35). We read it was *while Peter was speaking* that the cloud, the most excellent glory (2 Peter i. 17), overshadowed them, putting them in the place of subjection and producing a godly fear, "for *they*, the disciples, feared as they (Moses and Elijah) entered into the cloud" (ver. 34).

The Father's testimony to His beloved Son was short, clear and decisive, "And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone" (ver. 36). It must ever be so; there was no longer room for the one who represented the law, nor for the one who represented the prophets as a

testimony, in the presence of the only-begotten Son, the One who is ever in the bosom of the Father.

“HEAR HIM”! What a word is this! even now proclaimed by the Holy Spirit in view of the theories of the modernists who seek by their ungodly speeches to degrade our Blessed Lord to the rank of an ordinary man. One of these profane persons dared lately to speak of Him as “only a Palestine Jew who partook of the limitations of His day.” Thus do these infidel preachers speak of our Blessed Lord who is the only-begotten Son; “come of David’s seed according to the flesh, marked out Son of God in power, according to [the] Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of [the] dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. i. 3, 4, N.Tr.). As another has said, “We know this blessed One as Son of God *in resurrection*, not the glory” (J.N.D.).

When about to be born into this world we read: “That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke i. 35). The very first assault of Satan related to this same title, “Son of God” (Matt. iv. 3). Even the demons acknowledged Him as such: “And behold they cried out saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God” (Matt. viii. 29).

The mistakes of Peter tended to lower the dignity of our blessed Lord. On another occasion (Matt. xvii. 24-27) when the question is put to him “Doth not your Master pay tribute?” he answers in the affirmative, not recognising the fact that the Lord, if all things had been in divine order, would have been a recipient, not a payer of tribute. Still the Lord does not here claim His right but rises immediately above the circumstances, and at once manifests His almighty power in causing a fish to come with the exact amount required in its mouth for both Himself and Peter, bidding him “That take, and give unto them for Me and thee,” thus associating Himself, the Lord of glory, the Creator of the

universe, with this poor and illiterate fisherman ! How the grace of our ever blessed Lord shines out here as it did all through His holy pathway in this sinful world. In the same chapter (Matt. xvii.) we read the account of the transfiguration (vv. 1 to 8) ; but the voice out of the cloud has the additional words, not recorded in Luke ix. : "This is My beloved Son, *in Whom I am well pleased* ; hear ye Him."

We do well to remember the Lord's advice to His disciples : "TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR" (Mark iv. 24). And this is very important in the present day in view of the strange and evil voices, clamouring to be heard, of the various cults that have come into being during the last fifty or sixty years, gathering adherents from all classes of those that are *without*. For those that are *within*, believers in Christ, how important it is to remember the apostle's warning : "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with the blood of His own. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. *Also of your own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx. 28-30).

It is within the memory of many believers of a mature age that from the middle of the last century men have risen up from among real believers, and, led on by Satanic influence, have spoken perverse things with the object of having a party following after them. In the majority of cases the attacks have been upon the perfect Deity and perfect humanity of our Blessed Lord. However, it is well to know that the Lord has raised up men of God, equipped with His word, to testify the truth and to withstand these evil men. The resource of all believers, so as not to be ensnared by evil doctrine or practice, is to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart,

and to have an open ear to hear His voice as He speaks to us in His word. We are enjoined to "HEAR HIM" in whom the Father has found His delight.

J. P.

Salvation and Its Song.

(Exodus xiv. 5-14, 26-31 ; xv. 1-6).

THESE familiar verses from Exodus conclude the historical account of the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, but they also form an object-lesson of the great deliverance that God works for those that trust in Him; the deliverance, namely, from the great power of the enemy of God and the enemy of man. We have a picture of the salvation of those who trust in God and in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

ABJECT BONDAGE

There was no mistaking the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, over the nation of Israel. For a long while the people were kept in his land in the most abject bondage. He wrought his savage will upon them, for he was a cruel despot, and loved to show his power by grinding the faces of these people that were in his hands.

There is no question, I think, that Pharaoh knew something of the early history of the children of Israel. He knew how they had come into the land of Israel; and he probably knew their origin. He knew something of the promises the Almighty made to their forefathers, and that the seed of Abraham was destined by God to have supreme rule in this world and to possess the gate of his enemies. Therefore Pharaoh's hand was against the children of Israel for, as it were, a double reason. He was moved not only by the love of political power and the exercise of his autocratic

government, but also by a deep-rooted enmity in his heart against God, against the Jehovah Who had made such promises to His people. Therefore, he showed his rage and spite against that people and determined, if possible, to wipe them from the face of the earth. He ordered a systematic massacre of Hebrew male children so that in a generation or so the whole people might disappear.

DEFIANCE OF GOD

Pharaoh made their lives exceedingly bitter. They wrought laboriously as his slaves. He devised that in their brick-making they should find their own straw, and that his taskmasters should stand over them with a whip that never spared if the tale of bricks lessened. So the bondage of the children of Israel was an excessively evil one, and the man on the throne of Egypt thought he could do as he would with them. And when the messenger of God came to him and said in His name, "Let My people go," he flatly refused. "Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." There he stood face to face, opposed to the God of heaven, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. It was just a contest between Pharaoh and his power on the one hand, and God in His love and His power and purpose on the other. We here to-night would be unanimous in declaring who would win the victory, but as we read through the early pages of Exodus, it is not so apparent in the account itself.

The pride of Pharaoh would not heed the plain evidences of God's intentions set before his eyes. Those plagues that smote the land so heavily had their successive voices of warning to him. He could not honestly deny that the finger of God was writing the name of the God of Israel on that land, but still he determined that he would not let the people go. They were his, and

he had, as it were, devoted them to destruction ; but as we look back over the history we know that God was on their side. God meant to bring the children of Abraham out of that land of oppression, and put them in the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. It was in His heart to do it ; His will was to do it ; and when God means to do a thing He will certainly carry it out.

What A.B.C. I am talking to you ! And yet you need it, and the one who speaks to you as much as any. We often forget that the Almighty God can do His own will and carry out His own purpose. We go to the Scriptures, and there we read plain declarations of God's will. Then we wonder how it is possible for His promises to be applied to ourselves, and in our hearts we find a terrible feeling of doubt and distrust against our God and His Christ, a fear lest His word should not come to pass.

The truth stamped on these early pages of Exodus is that God takes up a poor, despised, enslaved people, and in the face of that mighty empire, whose monuments of greatness remain to this day, He brings them out of their bondage with a high arm and glorifies His name. And then soon they are seen in possession of the land of Canaan, where it was God's purpose that Messiah should be born, that the King of kings should be seen manifest in flesh, by and by to reign in this world, and to remove from it even the slightest, tiniest speck of sin. The triumph of God's righteousness and grace is sure.

But, beloved friends, let us apply the great and simple truths of scripture such as this to our lives, and we shall be the better and the happier children of God.

This incident of the crossing of the Red Sea proved the delivering power of God, and when the power of God is proved before a man's eyes it causes his heart to break out in songs of praise to God. And this is our subject

this evening—God showing His power in the deliverance of His people.

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

We all know very well that the 14th chapter of Exodus comes after the 12th chapter; and in the 12th chapter we delight to show to anxious, enquiring sinners the great basis that was laid for peace and rest in the sacrifice of Christ our passover. There you find the guilty people of Israel at rest in a most critical hour. The crisis for them was that the angel of judgment was passing through the land; and there was not an Israelite in Egypt but had sinned, and whose family did not deserve that the firstborn should die, even as the first-born of the Egyptians.

And yet if you entered their houses you would find them equipped for a journey, and without alarm feeding quietly upon the flesh of the roast lamb. You ask, "Do you not know what is happening? Do you not know that the angel of the Lord is passing through the land, and standing at every door with the weapon of judgment?" "Yes, but we believe God's word. We believe that the blood of the lamb which is sprinkled on the side-posts and the lintels of our houses is a sufficient guarantee that God in the exercise of His judgment will pass over us, and we shall be safe. Though thousands fall around us, we are secure because the blood of the lamb has been shed; and on this ground, the death of another, we can rest in peace in our houses, until the signal comes for us to march out of this land and leave the house of bondage behind us for ever."

The word of Jehovah was their pledge. The work of Christ was pre-figured. As they were taught in type, so it is necessary for us to know the truth. The blood of the Lamb of God is the righteous ground for the salvation from judgment of every person who trusts in

our Lord Jesus Christ. His death is the foundation we must not pass over. We can rest only upon His atoning blood and upon what God says about it.

W. J. H.

(To be continued, D.V.)

David's Victory over Goliath:

A TYPE OF THE MIGHTY TRIUMPH OF THE LORD
JESUS OVER SATAN.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

Read 1 Sam. xvii. 54 ; Matt. iii. 16, 17 ; Mark i. 10, 11 ; Luke iii. 21, 22 ; Acts vii. 55.

IT was a serious time for Israel at this point. They had sought to copy the nations round them (always a dangerous thing for the people of God), and had asked for a king ; and God, in discipline, gave them a king—the best they could find from a human point of view—head and shoulders higher than any of the people, and a man to be admired. But he disobeyed God, and God took him away ; God rejected him. There was something attractive in Saul, so much so that Samuel was taken with him, and God had to reprove him. “How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?” We are all of us prone to be attracted by mere amiability, by something showy, and by one with a personality ; and even Samuel mourned and lingered in his thoughts about Saul, and God had to correct him.

Here Saul had failed, and the Philistines had come up, and by means of Goliath of Gath they taunt Israel, and defy God—which is far worse. But there is one there—David—who came not as a warrior, nor as one of those Saul had gathered together, nor as one that human resources had provided, but he comes on an errand of kindness from his father to his brethren. When there he heard the Philistine of Gath—Goliath—and learned that the men of Israel had fled from him ; and

they tell of the great reward for anyone who should kill him. David cannot understand this, and says, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" They were thinking of the men of Israel, thinking of the difficulties confronting them; David was thinking of God; and that which seemed hopeless to them seemed a fairly simple matter to David, and not a matter for great reward at all, for he had "defied the armies of *the living God*"!

What a title! The Name brought before us in that memorable confession of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"! And the Lord instantly responds, and tells him on that confession He would build His church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. How can they prevail against that which Christ, *the Son of the living God*, builds? So David takes his stand on the same ground. Then he comes in contact with his eldest brother, who despises him. "Why camest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" He was only just a shepherd lad. "Not many mighty, not many noble are called." It was a lesson that the world-loving, boastful Corinthians had to learn, and one of the first the apostle brings before them when writing his epistle to them.

Well, Saul sends for him, and to him David says, "Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul, speaking as a man of prudence, says, "Thou art not able . . . for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." What had *that* to do with it? It was not a question of how strong the foe was, or how weak David was; the question was, how strong was *God*? Every child of God will find plenty of difficulties, and sooner or later will have to learn the lesson that the flesh profiteth nothing. But it is not a question of the steepness of the hill, nor how little I am able to go up it; but *how strong is God*. "My grace

is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." How much have I learned my own nothingness, and have the sentence of death in myself, that I should not trust in myself, but in God which raiseth the dead? The power of God which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand! What a mighty power! That is the point with us, and the point, in measure, with David. David said, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep." It is good to be faithful in what comes to hand. Keep the sheep well, David, and God will give you something else later. If Miriam had not been a good nursemaid she would never have had the privilege of leading the song of the women of Israel. I have recently come across reproach to the name of Christ because some have not behaved themselves as they should. A good deal of our life is spent in the every-day things of life, and we are called to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Well, David was a good shepherd lad and a good king.

"There came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him," as though a perfectly natural thing to do! He might have said, "My father has a good many sheep, and this is only a lamb; why should I take my life in my hands over a lamb?" Ah, it was *his father's* lamb. There is no such thing as "my flock," but the flock of God. The Lord Jesus says, *My Father* gave the sheep to Me. When He came down here the question of the sheep came in. He would lose none. He faced death, faced the cross; they were *His Father's* sheep. The dear children of God are very difficult to get on with sometimes, but go out after them; they are *His* sheep, the ones the Lord Jesus died for. Let us remember they are of the flock of God. How could Peter show he loved his Lord? Feed My lambs; shepherd My sheep; feed My sheep.

So David goes on : "I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth . . . thy servant slew both the lion and the bear ; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." "Experience worketh hope." It did so in David's case. And "hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." The apostle had experiences of God's dealings with him, experience in difficulties, and he sums it up : "*My God* shall abundantly supply all your need, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19, N.Tr.). The God Who stood by me when none else did, my God Whose faithfulness, love and power I have experienced, "*my God* shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "The Lord Who delivered . . . will deliver." So he goes up.

The armour Saul would put on him is no use to David. If we try to use carnal weapons we shall find they are no use. So he goes out with sling and stones and "prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone." He took away the armour wherein he trusted, and spoiled his goods. Not only so, but with his own sword he cut off his head. So the Lord Jesus, *through death*—the strongest weapon Satan had got—*through DEATH* annulled him that had the power of death, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Then we read, ver. 54, "David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem." There was a public testimony to the work he, or, rather, God had done for the deliverance of His people. There, in the holy city which God chose, was this testimony; and what a testimony ! No doubt about it ! Men might argue about Goliath's strength and David's weakness, but there was the head !

But there was that which he had for himself, his armour. So there was the witness publicly to him and what he had done, and there was that which was for his own gratification. Now let us turn to Luke iii. In Samuel the testimony in Jerusalem is recorded first, and then that which was for David's own heart. In now reading Luke iii. first, I reverse the order in the case of the Lord Jesus. Here is One to Whom David points—the true Son of David, the Son of God, the Son of Man. What a blessed position I find Him in ! It was a terrible day when David came up against Goliath of Gath. The people's king had sadly failed. The people appeared at the mercy of their enemies. Then God raised up David, took him from the sheepfolds and brought him to find His people. Now the time this, in Luke, is brought before us is an evil day. God's governmental dealings had taken His people to Babylon, but God brought back a few, weak indeed, but trusting in God. A bright little picture for a time. They took their place as a feeble few trusting God, and He honoured them. But now the very descendants of these people are seen in the gospels, and John sums them up : "His own received Him not." It was worse than idolatry. God had tested men, and they killed the prophet. "I have One Son ; they will reverence Him" : the crowning testimony. The consummation of iniquity and sin is found at the cross ; "they crucified Him." Such was our Lord, the One with Whom we are identified ; our Saviour, Who not only had nowhere to lay His head, but was the object of shame and scorn. We are called to follow Him. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12).

Now the Lord Jesus appears, John has been preaching the baptism of repentance, and there were those baptised of him really confessing their sins. It was to them a baptism of repentance toward God. The first movement toward God is repentance. It is so with the

sinner and with the saint. When there has been wandering, failure, and sin, the first step back is repentance—godly sorrow working repentance not to be repented of. And the Lord Jesus identifies Himself in wondrous grace with those who have taken the first step back to God. When we have realised how totally undeserving we are, how tenderly we are encouraged! Cannot we recall it now—many years ago with some of us—cannot we recall the tender way, the soft, tender voice, not in earthquake nor in whirlwind, but tenderly led on to trust the Lord Jesus? And the same in failure as saints. “If thou wilt return, return unto Me”; and He still encourages us. I say to young ones here who know the Saviour, Never give up your trust in Him. Distrust yourself as much as you can. If there be failure, don’t mistrust His love by keeping away from Him, but know that He is present there, an Advocate with the Father. And there is One touched with the feeling of our infirmities (not our sins) always in His presence.

So we find the Lord Jesus identifying Himself in an evil day with the feeble few who come to be baptised. And what blessed agreement with the heart of the God of all grace! And there comes a word for Himself, for His own enjoyment—**THOU ART MY BELOVED SON; IN THEE I AM WELL PLEASED.** He, as it were, put the armour in His tent. First of all, that which was for Himself—the Father’s approval, the expression of the Father’s delight.

But He does not stop there. Had He only testified to the Lord Jesus Himself, where should we have come in? But there is the head at Jerusalem. Let us look at Matthew iii. There it is not something for Himself alone, but a testimony of Him, a testimony concerning Him; and that comes to us. It is not here “*Thou art My beloved Son.*” That is one phase of it, and I believe the greatest; for that which gives joy to the

Lord Jesus is more than a testimony *to me*. I believe that which brings *glory to God* is greater than that which redeems me. The first thought is not "What is Jesus to me?" but "What is He *to the Father*?" It is of great importance my need should be met; but there is something more important—God's glory carried out. So "Thou art My beloved Son" first; and then the Father's testimony to you and me—**THIS IS MY BELOVED SON.**

Do our hearts go back, beloved, and trace that wondrous life spent here, and consider deeply that sorrow, that woe, that passion of the Lord Jesus; and our eyes and our hearts go up and see in the highest glory that same Lord Jesus, and hear His Father and ours saying, **THIS ONE**, Who identified Himself with the repentant ones, this One Who walked down here in that perfect meekness, Who "when reviled, reviled not again," this One Who could say, Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, this One Who gave Himself for thee, Who took the lowest place, that of a bondservant, **THIS ONE**, Who is He? *This One*, gaze on Him from the manger to the cross, from the cross to the glory, to His coming again. **THIS**, says the Father to our hearts, "*This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased*"!

And the same testimony was given at the Mount of Transfiguration: "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." How blessed!

There was an Object here. God looked down from heaven once to see if there was any who understood. God looked down again and saw the Lord Jesus. "This is My beloved Son." God looked down and saw an Object here. Stephen looked up and saw an Object there, this same Jesus, the Father's delight and our delight, too. And if our hearts are enjoying what has been made known to us as to the Father's delight in Him, and what He is to us and for us—the portion for

our souls—shall we not then testify of Him—the **THIS IS**—in life, word and deed? The more the Lord Jesus is to our soul, the greater our joy will be, and the more we shall learn what the character of God is. We are set to learn *Christ*. “Ye have not so learned Christ.” The truth is in Jesus, nowhere else. Attempt to separate the truth from the Person of Christ and you are on mischievous ground. The more I learn of Him the more I behold no man else, for “beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face we are changed into the same image.”

A.J.L.

The Meat-Offering.

(Lev. ii. 1-16; vi. 14-18).

THIS presents to us the humanity of Christ; His grace and perfectness as a living man, but still, as with the burnt-offering, offered to God and fully tested. It was of fine flour without leaven, mingled with oil and frankincense. The oil was used in two ways; it was mingled with the flour, and the cake was anointed with it. The presenting (Christ's presenting Himself as an offering to God) even unto death, as in the burnt-offering, and His actually undergoing death, and shedding blood, must have come first; for, without the perfectness of this will even unto death, and that shedding of blood by which God was perfectly glorified where sin was, nothing could have been accepted; yet Christ's perfectness as a man down here had to be proved, and that by the test of death and the fire of God. He came to meet our case, and we were in sin, and the basis of all must be blood-shedding in virtue of what God is, and His obedience all through must have this perfect character—even unto death. Hence, too, there was no eating of the burnt-offering. Sin being there, it was according to what God is, and wholly to God. Sin was before Him and He glorified

as to it. But the atoning work being wrought, and His obedience perfect from the beginning (He came to do His Father's will), all the life was perfect and acceptable as man, a sweet savour under the trial of God—His nature as man.

Thus the burnt-offering gives what the sinful man's state according to God's glory needed; the meat-offering, the sinless perfect man in the power of the Spirit of God in obedience; for His life was obedience in love. Abel was accepted by blood; Cain, who came in the way of nature, offering the fruit of his toil and labour, was rejected. All that we can offer of our natural hearts is "the sacrifice of fools," and is founded on what is failure in the spring of any good, on the sin of hardness of heart, which does not recognise our condition—our sin and estrangement from our God. What could be a greater evidence of hardness of heart than, under the effects and consequences of sin, driven from Eden, to come and offer offerings, and these offerings the fruit of the judicial toil of the curse consequent on sin, as if nothing at all had happened? It was the perfection of blind hardness of heart.

But, on the other hand, as Adam's first act, when in blessing, was to seek his own will (and hence by disobedience he was, with his posterity such as he, in this world of misery, alienated from God in state and will), Christ was in this world of misery, devoting Himself in love, devoting Himself to do His Father's will. He came here emptying Himself. He came here by an act of devotedness to His Father, at all cost to Himself, that God might be glorified. He was in the world, the obedient man, whose will was to do His Father's will, the first grand act and source of all human obedience, and of divine glory by it. The will of obedience, and devotedness to His Father's glory, stamped a sweet savour on all that He did: all He did partook of this fragrance.

J. N. D.

Companionship.

“They abode with Him that day.”—John i. 39.

HAVE you companied with Jesus?
Have you walked with Him to-day?
Let Him take your hand and lead you,
Gently lead you all the way?
Have you lifted eyes of trusting
To His tender eyes above?
Seen the dear Face downward bending,
Felt the heart-beat of His love?
Have you thanked Him for the gladness
He prepared for you to-day?
Have you blessed Him for the sadness
Shadowing the lonely way?
Have you praised Him for withholdings,
For the earth-light burning dim?
Have you told Him all the longing
For a closer walk with Him?
Have you heard the voice of Jesus—
Glad to listen and be still,
Waiting for His loving whisper,
Ready then to do His will?
Oh, the bliss of close communion
Neither tongue nor pen can show;
Heart can never tell another—
None but those who love can know!
Far beyond all comprehending
Is such wondrous love as this;
All its depth you may not fathom,
But the joy you need not miss.
In His mighty arms enfolded,
Guarded by His watchful care,
Silent rest, or sing in triumph—
Earth nor hell can touch you there!

Extracted.

The Strong Man Overcome: The Triumph of Grace.

(Read Mark v.)

IN this chapter we have three distinct views of the sinner ; the first as showing him in his great strength, when led on by Satan to do evil ; the second in perfect helplessness and weakness, when it is a question of man's doing good ; and in the third case as really dead. The three persons blessed by the Lord seem to be so different, but they are really only varied views of poor lost man. It may seem to us inexplicable that the unclean spirits should treat so badly the man into whom they were entered, and whom they did not wish to leave ; but we have only to think of those in our own day who give themselves up to the leading of Satan through vice, excess and unrighteousness, to see how they also are injuring themselves for time and eternity, like this poor man who was cutting himself with stones. We have also a terrible example of how Satan ruins his dupes in the present state of Russia. A dear brother, well known to our friends, writes from Russia under date of December, 1929, that those who deny the existence of God have reduced him to the greatest poverty, forbidding the factories or offices to give him work, and refusing him all the rights of citizenship. By thus persecuting all God-fearing men they lose the most honest, intelligent and hard-working members of society, and these haters of God are really ruining themselves and their country, like the poor possessed man, who was crying and cutting himself with stones. Human society had done all it could to bind him, or to tame him ; but all their efforts were vain, he was unrestrainable and untamable.

“He had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and

the fetters broken in pieces : neither could any man tame him."

In our own day acts of parliament, ministerial proclamations, and police rules and regulations are being continually made to curb the vice, the excess, the violence and the dishonesty of mankind. Thousands of people are employed day and night to apply the chains and fetters, but the chronicles of the law-courts sadly show how vain their efforts are. Although London employs over 20,000 police, at a cost of five million pounds annually, yet the chains are plucked asunder and the fetters broken. But what all the power of unaided human wisdom and might could not do, one word from the blessed Saviour, the Son of God, could accomplish. Oh, the wonders of mercy and grace wrought by the gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, even in our days ! How many a one have we known who, with ourselves, has been brought "from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God."

"They found him sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind."

As in other cases mentioned in scripture of those possessed, he had been ever restless night and day, now he found rest at the feet of Jesus and is clothed and in his right mind. What a triumph of grace ! How we ought to thank the Lord, those of us who can say, I could not tame myself and nobody could tame me until,

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me, and rest."

In verse 11 and the following verses we are told of the swine. We must remember that the swine were forbidden as an article of food to the Israelites, and they had no right to be in the land of Israel. The Lord was the Good Shepherd. He would never have suffered the unclean spirits to enter into a flock of sheep; but He could not protect swine, as they were utterly forbidden to God's people.

I think all will agree that we have something to learn from the incident of the swine; God does not put anything in His word without a purpose. There were two signs or distinguishing marks of a clean animal, an outward, and an inward indication. The swine bore the outward mark of a clean animal, and, indeed, very thoroughly (Lev. xi. 7); but it was an unclean feeder, and did not chew the cud. We find in Matt. xxiii. 25, that some of the most religious people were characterised by every outward sign of piety, "but inwardly were full of extortion and excess"; to such the Lord had to say, "Woe unto you." The blessed Lord could no more shelter them than He could protect the swine. He who is full of grace and truth can only condemn hypocrites.

Oh, how many are self-deceived, and think that, because they lead an outwardly pious life, they need no change of heart, that they need not to be born again. May none of my dear readers make this terrible mistake, and neglect to come to the Lord with the full confession of their sins in this day of grace. The outward form of godliness is not enough, we must have the inward change of heart. Flee, dear friends, from the wrath to come! Alas! how many are neglecting the exhortation of Isaiah lv. 6, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."

(To be continued, D.V.)

T. W. B.

Propitiation.

IT is a striking feature of the writings of the apostle John, that whatever God is shown to have provided, in His love, for His own glory and the need of man, is also shown to be bound up closely in and with the Person of Christ. . . . In accordance with his manner of writing we see that propitiation is, by John, specially asso-

ciated with the Lord's Person, though not without reference to His work; for it is the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin. So, in the First Epistle of the apostle of love we read, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2); and again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10).

Jesus Christ, the righteous, then, is Himself the propitiation for our sins. This is as infinitely blessed as it is simple; for if I, as a poor sinner, or an erring saint, need a propitiation for my sins, and I am told that Jesus Christ is that propitiation, however little I may be able to explain the meaning of the term doctrinally, I can rest assured in the fact that Christ being the propitiation, this will be fully adequate to atone for my guilt in the judicial estimate of that Infinite and Holy Being to Whom I am responsible.

But we may gather more than this from the manner of the usage of this truth in John's Epistle. The fact is first introduced in connection with the breach of a believer's communion by a sin. "If any man sin (or shall have sinned), we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins." John had been showing the intimate relationship into which the child of God is brought — into fellowship with the Father and the Son! But when we walk in the light, we are given to see as nowhere else the fearful hideousness of sin. We are not to sin; but if anyone does, and is then overwhelmed by the sense of the terrible nature of sin in the presence of the holy God, a provision for due restoration has been made. Jesus Christ the righteous, as Advocate, undertakes our case with the Father, because He is the propitiation for our sins; moreover, the great factor in His advocacy is what He Himself is. Thus, whatever satisfaction the righteous and holy nature of God demanded

because of those sins, Jesus Christ the righteous is that satisfaction. And the value and efficacy is, therefore, in effect, declared to be commensurate only with His Person. If, therefore, we wish to estimate rightly the basis of our restoration to communion, we must think of the eternal excellency of the Son, inseparably associated, as it is, with His propitiatory work on the cross. However we may be distressed by the heinousness of sin (and we shall never exceed the truth in this respect) we may be sure that its guilt is more than covered by the propitiation of the Son of God. For He did, and He alone could, offer to God a perfect sacrifice for our sins and what the glory of God demanded.

But we gather even more from these words in John; we see what a character of ineffable holiness is stamped upon propitiation by them. We are not left to invest it with whatever degree of sanctity we please. The Spirit has hallowed the truth in the highest possible way, and in a way that the veriest babe in Christ can but recognise. *Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins.* Herewith the work of propitiation is associated with all the glory of the Son. Can we attach too great importance to a doctrine that is set before us in such terms as these? In the mind of the Spirit, as expressed by John, the work of Christ is merged in the Person; and the value of the work is to be measured according to the intrinsic worth of the person of God's Son.

It is important for us to remember this, because the mind of man is so apt to belittle the things of God. And how terrible it is to detract from the Person of the Son, Whom no one knoweth (Matt. xi. 27). Israel in the wilderness sinned by limiting the Holy One in what He would do for them (Ps. lxxviii. 41). Shall the Christian with impunity set the bounds of time and space to the Son of God, Who is the propitiation for our sins, and especially by imposing human limitations upon Him in the performance of that particular work?

If any should inadvertently speak or think slightly of propitiation, let them remember that "*HE* is the propitiation for our sins." * * *

"If Any Man"—2.

"I am the door : by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture"—John x. 9.

TURNING to another of these invitations to any one, and everyone, we come to a more familiar passage perhaps; the well-known instance of our Lord's presentation of Himself as the Good Shepherd—the One who came by the divinely appointed way, and to whom the divinely appointed porter opened.

Those whom He addressed were unable to understand the allegory, so in His gracious compassion He changes the figures, and makes the simple but cogent statement : "I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did *not* hear them." How graciously He meets the difficulties in their poor unbelieving minds, clinging naturally to the religion of their fathers, with all its privileges and its ordinances ! What a contrast to all they valued is this simple blessed announcement : "I am the door : by Me if any one enter in." Mark, dear reader, the Lord does not say He is the door of the sheepfold, but out of that which God once owned as His sheepfold, Christ the Good Shepherd now leads His sheep, and not into another fold, although many Christians regard the church as a fold substituted for the abandoned Jewish one, but this is a grievous mistake. The Jewish fold enclosed all the natural seed of Abraham—false and true—all who inherited the promises, and their advantages were many. But those who enter into the new sphere of blessing by Christ find that which the old fold could not offer, *salvation, liberty, and pasture.*

Moreover, it is no longer the walls or hurdles of a fold that keep the sheep together, but the Person in the midst of the flock, the Good Shepherd, Who gave His life for the sheep. If near Him and led by Him, we shall not be far from each other, and His voice is known to the sheep, while on the other hand He knows them and calls them all by name. Precious privileges! May we value them increasingly. The sheep called out of the discarded Jewish fold, and the *other sheep* drawn by the irresistible voice of the Good Shepherd from the highways and byways of this world, together form His flock; and drawn by grace, and "*the expulsive power of a new affection*," are found together where Christ is in the midst.

Nothing is more puzzling to the lambs of the flock of Christ, than to see those whom they believe to be the sheep of Christ walking in different paths. How can they reconcile this confusion with the distinct definite promise that the sheep of Christ know His voice, and do not follow strangers? They see, and hear of, those whom they believe to be the sheep and lambs of Christ following in paths contrary to His word, and others grieved and distressed by the many voices of this distracting day. May we all long more to know the path where He doth lead His own (see Hebrews xii. 13).

"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." John xii. 26.

Why this injunction? Is it possible to serve the Lord and not be a follower of Him? It is indeed. Did He not say to His disciples, "They that kill you will think that they do God service"? More than once or twice did the gracious Master seek to prepare His servants for the pathway of rejection, and scorn, and suffering such as He had Himself trodden in this world. Strange as it may appear to the natural man, and altogether uninviting to many, the path of true service of Christ

may lead to trial, persecution and even death itself ; but He will be with them in it, and what will sustain them is His presence in the trial, and the promise of being with Him where He is. True service to Christ the Son will in good time have the Father's own approval and the Father will honour such.

This is surely a promise of special distinction. The apostle Paul does not seem to be in the least degree hindered by a path of trial and suffering. He was started on his path with a promise that might well have deterred the most zealous and ardent disciple—"I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake" (Acts ix. 16), but it doesn't frighten him away, or even damp his ardour in the least. He is only anxious "to fill up that which is behind," and having suffered "the loss of all things" he once valued, to press on towards the goal, "the prize of the calling of God on high in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14, N.Tr.). May the Lord grant us more of this spirit. T.R.

Salvation and its Song—2.

(Exodus xiv. 5-14, 26-31 ; xv. 1-6.)

THE PURSUIT OF THE ISRAELITES

IN the history of these children of Israel we are also given a picture of the further events which arise in the history of every soul sheltered by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are many persons who think that when they have once trusted in the Lord Jesus for the salvation, the well-being of their souls, their troubles will be for ever at an end. Before them they expect a time of sweet peace, unbroken by any clouds of doubt or difficulty of any kind ; but they are rudely shaken in this false expectation.

There are difficulties, there are dangers, there are

questions which come upon them. There is, as Scripture teaches, the great power of the enemy directed against them. When the Good Shepherd is speaking about the safety of His sheep He does not conceal the fact that there is a wolf, and that this wolf seeks to catch the sheep and destroy them, to scatter the sheep and do them all the mischief he can. Thank the Lord, he cannot snatch the feeblest lamb from the hand of the Good Shepherd nor from the Father's hand; but he can and does annoy. He can and does bring his power and subtlety to bear upon the child of God. He does not consider whether the person he is terrorising is a simple child in the faith, one just born into the spiritual kingdom. He comes to terrorize the lambs as well as the sheep of the Good Shepherd's flock.

And what do we find here in our chapter? We see that the great ruling power of Egypt became a terror day and night to the people of Israel so soon as they turned their backs upon that land so full of the evidences of the sorrows and distresses of their slavery. They find that Pharaoh and his army are after them. He pursued, relentless in his purpose like the wolf to kill, to steal, and to destroy. And what could the escaped Israelites do? In this chapter we see them in a perfect cul-de-sac. Hemmed in by the mountains on the left and on the right, the Red Sea before them, their furious enemy is behind them.

THE PEOPLE'S FEAR

How furious Pharaoh and his soldiers were! There were many fathers there that day still smarting at the death of their firstborn. Not many days had passed since they had laid their dead sons in the sepulchre. They hated the Israelites, and went after them, breathing out wrath, destruction and cruelty, seeking revenge.

And what could Israel do against the power of the tyrant? They knew how to make bricks, but not to

handle the sword. They had to endure the whip of the taskmaster, but could not face the cavalry of Egypt. There seemed to be nothing awaiting them but destruction. The sea was before them, the troops of the enemy behind them. Pharaoh said "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. I will bring them back. They are mine." The king was determined to recover his slaves, and was confident that he would succeed.

What did the people do in this predicament? They looked at themselves; no hope. They looked around; no hope. They said, "Why did we not die in Egypt? Why did we come into the wilderness to die? Even now we are not out of Egyptian territory; we are still in Egypt. Why did we not die beside our brick-kilns?" Poor, foolish people, why look at the dangers in your own strength? Who sheltered you when you were in Egypt. If you could have looked outside the door where the blood was sprinkled, if you had eyes of faith to pierce the invisible, you would have seen there Jehovah Himself, with His overshadowing wings, protecting those who had obeyed His word and placed themselves under the shelter of the blood of the lamb. They could not see Him, but nevertheless Jehovah was their Saviour that night. No angel of destruction could penetrate the Guard, the Sentry, there at each door.

DOUBT AND DESPAIR

But now, in their new danger, the Israelites had forgotten Jehovah, had forgotten that He was on their side in the night of judgment. What did they know about the blood as a safeguard for them but what He had told them? But now at this moment when the enemy threatened they could only, as it seemed to them, lie down in despair and die.

Many a person who has left the service of Satan and started on the pilgrim way finds before he has gone very far on the way that Satan is after him. The

roaring lion terrorizes him, and he feels it would have been better to have stayed where he was. "My service was evil enough, and the wages bad, but freedom seems to be worse than ever I expected." Why is it things are looking so black to him? Why does despair arise and hold him fast? Simply because he does not look to God. He leaves God out of account.

The children of Israel asked, "Why has God brought us out here to die?" But God had said, "I will bring them out and I will bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Mine inheritance." It was His purpose to lead the people into the land which He promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. The time had come for them to be there. They, however, did not think of God. They left Him out of account; and cowered before the power of Satan. Let us give the enemy his right name, because Satan was behind this great military power in pursuit of the people of God.

God, however, meant to deliver them completely from the house of their bondage. But He is patient with persons who fail to trust Him. He told Moses to speak to this doubting people. His first words were those which often recur in scripture, "Fear ye not." They were fearing about their safety. Would they be lost after all? They felt their end had come. But Moses said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." "You shall stand by, and see the wonderful works done; you shall enjoy the benefits and blessings of them; but you shall not so much as lift your little finger to do anything to effect your deliverance from this great power. I will do it Myself, and it shall be to My glory and to your deliverance." These were, in effect, the words that came from Jehovah through the mouth of Moses to this dismayed people.

W. J. H.

(To be continued, D. V.)

Notes on Psalm 84.

VERSES 1-4

THE proper place of the Lord Jesus is in the bosom of the Father. When He came into the world He knew the blessing of one whose strength was in God and of one who waited on God. Thus He learned God in a way, so to speak, He had never learnt Him before. He learned the strength and love of God meeting Him in need. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. v. 8). We are away *actually* from the presence of God. We are not in heaven. Jesus is there, and there for us. He is there in person that we may be there in spirit as our proper place to worship with praise and thanksgiving. Though it is our precious privilege by faith to dwell in the holiest, yet to be actually there, not only as now having the title, will be very different. The church should be full of praise at the prospect. "Selah" signifies a marked division.

VERSES 5-8

It is evidently the Lord Who speaks here also. But as to ourselves, when we are desolate we may find a resting-place where He did. As the little swallow finds protection by casting itself on man, so the poor desolate soul finds shelter by casting itself on God, having confidence in His love. The sparrow and the swallow are but lowly birds. They find no shelter but at the altar. Souls that find this shelter will then sing a song of praise to God, telling forth the glory and praise of the Lamb.

VERSES 9-11

Here is one journeying through the wilderness, longing for the time when he will be in the House at Jerusalem; but getting strength every step he takes, finding Jehovah's care for him, and when he least expects it, pools of water for refreshment. So we learn the care of Jesus, the Good Shepherd all the way we go

even while we are learning the strength and fulness that are in Jesus for our resources and comfort and support. The Lord suffered Israel to need that they might learn dependence upon Him and that He might supply their need. We are brought into difficulties that we may learn the same lesson. There is joy in the wilderness, for the Comforter is with us. Those persons who would otherwise be exhausted by what they meet with, being supplied out of the fulness of Jesus go from strength to strength. All appear before God. Moses and Caleb were not worn out. But if we do not learn the value of Christ, the wilderness will wear us out.

Our great safeguard is, God holds to us: He is our shield. This is for protection against our enemies, but that does not satisfy the soul. We want more than a sense of protection; we want communion. If God saves a person, He must make him perfectly happy, and we find Him to be our *Sun* when we know Him in redemption, as well as our *Shield*, the One Who enlightens and gives animation, the One Who cheers.

In the future day of His earthly glory the Lord Jesus will arise as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings for Israel and the nations; whilst they who have part in the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father in heavenly glory.

The same Jesus Who is "all our salvation" is "all our desire." We are not only saved but brought into conformity to Him (ver. 11). Glory must follow grace. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." I must not put a single thing between. In the glory we shall see the extreme difference between a sinner "dead in trespasses and sins" and one conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ. God takes empty vessels and fills them with His glory. When we are seated round about the throne (Rev. iv. 4, 10, 11) we shall most distinctly be able to say, "Thou are worthy." God has linked

together grace and glory. Man tries to rend them asunder. And God will give us all we want—immediately. “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

“O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.”

J. L. H.

God's Righteousness and New Creation.

YOU will find that the word “new creation” (2 Cor. v. 17, N.Tr.) is a peculiar term in Scripture, and never used at all until after its Head, as such, had been brought to birth, so to speak, in resurrection. This is the reality which answers to the similitude in John xvi. 21, 25. This is that which is absolute, final, and eternal, which creation is not, seeing that the heavens and the earth will pass away, and be superseded with a new sphere, suited in every way for the heart, the tastes, and the presence of its wonderful Head.

Creation gives evidence to the power of God, but the last resource of creatorial power as to a rebel is destruction. It has never displayed sin in the light of God under righteous judgment, and love to the sinner according to the agonies of judgment endured. Hence no mere creatorial power of God can be what the cross is; and this is what the Lord refers to in John xvi. 21. The figure of the woman refers to the distressing sorrow of the disciples about to lose their Messiah, which after all was nothing equal to Gethsemane. The “proverb,” “For joy that a man is born into the world,” refers to His restoration to them again as more than Messiah. This similitude points to the resurrection scene when He would see them again in His new state, in which He now can take into union with Himself the most defiled beings apart from their defilement, which (observe) He

never could have done as the "corn of wheat" before death. But now He who can say : I am "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14), can also say : "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one ; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren" (Heb. ii. 11, 12).

Observe the difference between the same words : "firstborn," and their different connections in Colossians i. 15 and 18. In the 15th verse it is a question of rank, not of time, for if it had pleased Him to be born last of all, He must be the first, according to verse 16. In verse 18 it is not the display of mere creational skill, but the introduction of divine power into the region of death (where Christ has lain) in order to express the divine estimate of His work and to raise others in Him, thus raised, into His own place of acceptance as Man with God, after having taken our place of distance and judgment. And oh ! how blessed for us to know that although sin is in us (for as to our bodies we are still in the old creation), and we are never delivered from its presence, until we go to be with the Lord or He come for us, yet for all that, it can never put us out of communion, or give us a bad conscience unless we allow it to act. And if one is foolish enough to let it stir, even this awakens Christ's advocacy for us in the glory on the ground of His work ; and although we are never delivered from the presence of sin, while here, yet it can never undo our righteous standing in Christ before God, for that has been brought about by God's own act as God, who, when we were all dead in sins and Christ dead for sins, stepped in, in the exceeding greatness of His power, and raised Him (and subsequently us in Him) as First-fruits and Head of the new creation, which was thus brought into display for the first time. But mark well, this never could have taken place until the first man's probation was ended : that is to say, until the responsible man's moral history was

closed before God, who has for ever set him aside as such in judgment at the cross. "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever" (Matt. xxi. 19).

During the time of this probation, however, it was impossible that any one could understand the things referred to, four of which I will take up without entering into the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the believer, or in the assembly of God on earth, or the union by the Holy Ghost of the members of Christ's body on earth to the Head, the glorified Man in heaven.

1st—There was no knowledge of the distinction between the old man and the new, or the flesh and the Spirit, as referred to in Gal. v. 17.

2nd—There was not the knowledge of eternal life, for no name that God ever took revealed it, until the Father was revealed in the Son by the Holy Ghost, who teaches us that "eternal life" is not only eternal in its duration, but that it gives us a present capacity to know, and a state of bliss in knowing the Father (as answering morally to His nature) in the Son—John xvii. 3.

3rd—No one was ever in the enjoyment of a perfect conscience until Christ's work purged the sins, and the Holy Ghost's testimony to the work purged the conscience.

4th—There was no such thing in the Old Testament as reckoning oneself dead to the law, dead to sin, and dead to the world; and there is no other way of coming out, by faith, from under the dominion of these, but by being dead to them.

What a difference the cross has made ! Observe how Scripture expresses it : "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh : yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new

creation'' (*kainee ktisis* : new in kind, which never existed before) 2 Cor. v. 16, 17. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (*kainee ktisis*) Galatians vi. 15.

People have made a comparison between God's power in creation and His quickening power as to souls, and they have called the latter the "new creation." But it is people only who have done so, not Scripture. No doubt the Old Testament saints were born again by an act of divine power, as the Lord says when speaking to Nicodemus of the new birth : "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." But the Lord Himself classes this new birth amongst "earthly things," not "heavenly things" (See John iii.). No doubt it was a new exercise of divine power from the earliest soul born of God, and the state of that soul was the result of God's power in quickening, but not "quickened together with Christ," which is a creation, the result of the exceeding might of God's power, which has for its basis the agonies of the cross, and an accomplished redemption.* This is what Scripture calls a new creation, in contrast to any that preceded it. Such is the value to God of the cross; and He calls nothing else by this name; if so, where?

Moreover, it carries with it the full revelation of God in redemption, as well as the revelation of the Father in the Son. But the former must be understood before the latter can be fully known.

H. H. M.

Our Words.

OUR words are part of our acts and they have a predominant place in the life of every one of us. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day

* "Redemption is the price that has been paid to take us out of one state and put us into another."

of judgment : for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt. xii. 36-37). Our words manifest what we are, what we think, what our heart is, and the treasure of our hearts, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (ver. 34). The word of God tells us the importance for the children of God of watching our words : "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life : but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Prov. xiii. 3). "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips" (Ps. cxli. 3). If we are told to watch and be sober, this also applies to our words.

If we could at the end of the day recall every word we have uttered, should we not be confounded? How many useless words ! how little are we different from the world ! What have we said for the Lord, or about Him? It is written : "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17) ; but how have we answered to this holy admonition? Oh, that we would every evening think over our words before the Lord, and confess to Him how much we have failed.

A hasty word so easily provokes anger, and so it is written : "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James i. 19) ; and also : "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth ! And the tongue is a fire" (James iii. 5, 6). "A soft answer turneth away wrath : but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. xv. 1), and "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle his whole body" (James iii. 2).

Even the apostle Paul himself at Jerusalem had to admit that he had failed in word when he said to the high priest : "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall" (Acts xxiii. 3).

Among the numerous exhortations putting us on our guard in relation to our words, we may quote Col. iii. 8-10 : "But now ye also 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 ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that hath created him."

If the word of God tells us what we should put off, seeing that we have put off the old man, it also shows us what the new man should produce. Its character should above all be gentle and meek : "Let your moderation [gentleness, N.Tr.] be known unto all men" (Phil. iv. 5). "Gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Tit. iii. 2). "And the servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient [forbearing, N.Tr.], in meekness instructing those that oppose" (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25). "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. iii. 15). Meekness characterized the men of God : "the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3) ; as also was David, even towards Saul, his deadly enemy. What a precious gift of God is speech which we use to speak of Christ, to tell of His love, to testify, to exhort, to teach and to make known the word of God ! "A word spoken in due season, how good is it" (Prov. xv. 23).

Let us fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus, the perfect model, Who could say : "For I have not spoken of [from, N.Tr.] Myself ; but the Father Who sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John xii. 49). What perfect dependence ! and this is the secret of faithfulness of walk ; no will of our own, but entire dependence upon the Father (Is. l. 4).

M.K.

Experience.

CHILDREN of God through the death of His Son ;
Love will accomplish what Love hath begun.

1 John iii. 2 ; 1 John v. 1 ; 1 John iv. 11, 12.

Little by little the lesson is set,
So that His dullest ones need not forget.

Isaiah l. 4 ; Matt. xi. 29.

Patient my Teacher, though I am so slow,
And I shall know what He wants me to know.

Matt. iii. 3 ; John vii. 17.

Line upon line, and the lesson is turned,
Ever until it is perfectly learned.

Psalms cxix. 98-110.

Step after step, so my feet may not stray ;
"Only a day at a time" is His way.

Psalms xix. 7-9.

Growing in grace as His sweet lilies grow ;
Going in ways where He tells me to go.

2 Pet. iii. 18 ; Isaiah xlviii. 17.

Walking in light, though my eyes may be dim ;
He is the light, and I'm walking with Him.

1 John i. 7 ; John viii. 12.

Step after step, not one taken alone ;
By-and-by seated with Him on His throne !

Rom. v. 1-5 ; Heb. xiii. 5 ; Rev. iii. 21.

EXTRACTED.

ERRATA IN APRIL NUMBER :

Page 75, line 7, delete "In now reading" and read "Luke iii. reverses the order," etc.

Page 75, line 15, for "find" read "feed."

Page 75, line 25, for "prophet" read "prophets."

The Strong Man Overcome: The Triumph of Grace—2.

(Read Mark v.)

IN the first part of this chapter we have considered the case of the poor man possessed by an evil spirit, whom no man could tame, but whom the gracious Saviour freed with a word. In thinking again of him I am reminded of a dear friend, now with the Lord, who was very strong in his enmity to the truth, but whom the Lord tamed by the truth. His name was Anton, and he and his friend Joseph were leading young men in all the festivities of a strictly Roman Catholic village. Anton led in the dances and Joseph played the bass-viol. In early youth Anton had been told that if he prayed through the beads of his rosary every morning for fifteen years he would be sure of salvation. So every morning, without any intermission, before his work as a farm labourer began, he went to the church and prayed all through the rosary, at the same time that the verger said his prayers. Thus he never missed a day; but was much disappointed at the end of the fifteen years to find that he did not feel any holier than before, or any surer of salvation.

One day they heard that some Baptists were holding meetings at a place distant about an hour's walk. This greatly disconcerted these two zealous Roman Catholics, and Anton, who was powerfully built, proposed that they should go and disturb the heretics, who had no business to hold meetings in such a thoroughly Roman Catholic part of the country. They agreed that as soon as a word was said against their religion they would make a disturbance, and, with this purpose, they went. To their surprise the preacher only talked of the love of God, and of the Lord Jesus and His work. On leaving they shook their heads and said that he had perhaps got a hint that they were there, and so kept

back his heresy; they would have to go again, which they did. The third time, while returning home, Joseph said, "It really does not seem so bad after all, there is much that appears good in it." Anton lifted his fist, and turning to him angrily said, "If you say that again I will fell you to the ground!" But it was all no good; the word of the Lord reached their heart and conscience, and converted both. They were used of the Lord as the nucleus of a new and happy work, and a testimony to the truth, which spread far and wide, and continues to this day.

"Had Spent All That She Had"

In verse 24 and the following verses we find an entirely different picture, and yet it is only another side-view of man as a sinner. Surely, one may say, there could be no greater contrast than the violent demoniac and this poor afflicted woman! And yet the same sinner who is strong and untamable to satisfy his desires and passions is weak as water when it is a question of doing good or serving God; and no one can give him strength but the Lord Jesus. In the 10th verse of the third chapter others had already touched His garments, and in chapter vi. 56, we read that, "As many as touched Him were made whole."

What we have to learn from the case of this suffering woman is that with all our best endeavours to get healed from our spiritual infirmities, that is, of the burden of our sins and sinfulness, nothing can heal us but coming personally to the blessed Saviour. All healing virtue is in Him, and none other can help us. However, until we are reduced to absolute spiritual poverty we do not come to Christ, but seek help of the many would-be soul-physicians who are ready to give us good advice; just as the afflicted woman did not come till she had spent all. Our above-mentioned friend Anton had to learn by experience that the prayers of fifteen years did not save him; although I think the

Lord in His mercy took notice of the man's earnestness, and sent the gospel to him. How many a one has sought relief from the burden of his sins and the power of his temptations by struggling to attain to a greater degree of personal holiness in his own **unaided** strength; only to find that none but Christ can heal!

"Who Touched My Clothes?"

Another important truth that we have here to learn is that we cannot get settled peace by coming to the Lord surreptitiously and hidden in the crowd. Perhaps one will say, "Yet she did get healed when she came in the crowd." That is true, but she had no settled peace, for soon we find her "fearing and trembling." Thus also many dear christians are healed, but have no full assurance of salvation, because they never faced the truth as to their fully ruined condition by nature. One might say, "She felt in her body that she was healed of that plague"; what more could she wish for? She was happy for the moment, but feelings are very uncertain foundations to build on, and she might lose her assurance. In a large conference the question was asked, why did the Lord Jesus say, "Who touched My clothes?" A brother answered, "She had stolen the healing, and the Lord was not going to allow that." But another said that the Lord wanted her to have settled peace, not founded upon her feelings but upon His word.

"Told Him all the Truth"

We can well imagine that it was no easy task for a person of a sensitive nature to tell before others the whole truth, but it was necessary for her own sake, because after the complete need had been confessed, the Lord could give her the complete assurance that her faith had made her whole, and in the future she was to be or remain whole. Her assurance now rested on His word and not on her feelings. The Lord's gracious words, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole;

go in peace, and be whole of thy plague," removed all fear for the future.

We were invited to a brother's house, and at the table he said, "Do you remember speaking on Mark v. fifteen years ago in the assembly rooms at E.? I was a young man then and was secretly a believer, but had not full peace. When I heard of the woman who wanted to get away so silently, I thought that is just my case, I have not told even my nearest relatives that I have come to the Lord as a poor lost sinner. I confessed the Saviour openly at once, and soon found settled peace."

What a proof of the blessed Saviour's love and kindness, that He not only wished her to be healed, but also to know the healing was lasting, and to have the joy of it; and thus be able to praise God for His mercy and salvation; never doubting that the work was His, and therefore of enduring efficacy.

To possess this happy certainty of full and eternal salvation, it is necessary for each one of us to recognise and confess "the whole truth" as to our utterly lost and ruined condition by nature.

T.W.B.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Largeness not Laxity.

I ADMIRE the exceeding breadth of Paul, as indeed well one may admire it in every one who—steering clear of its counterfeit, laxity—proves spiritual capacity for it. It becomes not the christian to be narrow. Nevertheless, who can avoid seeing the tendency to be so in various ways? Be assured that it is not only weakness, but a danger, wherever it may be. I grant, however, that even narrowness in and for God's truth is far better than the lax uncertainty and spurious liberalism in divine things which is growingly a snare in this evil day.

Take the contrary of this in the apostle and his preaching. The very man to whom all are most indebted for the gospel of the grace of God set forth, as none else did, that particular phase of it which is called the gospel of the glory of Christ.

At the same time he preached the kingdom of God as decidedly as possible. He never was afraid of the ignorant outcry that this is low ground. The fact is that hasty and little minds say so, unable to take in more than one idea, and apt to be intoxicated with that one. But the apostle exhibits that excellent largeness and elasticity which gives its place to every message which God has revealed, which pretends not to choose in scripture, but thankfully takes and uses the testimony of God as it is given.

It seems to me that we really lower the revival of truth which grace has wrought by allowing that this truth or that is the only truth for the day. The speciality of our blessing is that we have got into a large place—contemptible as it looks to unbelief—that no truth comes amiss, and that all truth is for this day. I hold this to be an important point for us, avoiding the pettiness of fancying or seeking a fictitious value for whatever happens to be dawning with especial force on our own minds.

It is a snare the more to be dreaded because it has ever led to the making of sects, through an active mind laying hold of, or rather taken captive by, some favourite notion, or even truth. I consider it then an essentially sectarian bias; and that the true and distinctive blessing of what God has given to us now in these days is not so much laying hold of this or that truth higher than others accept—though this be true—but the heart open to the truth in all its extent, and this bound up with Christ personally, as the only possible means of deliverance—if by grace we walk there in the

power of the Spirit—from every kind of pettiness. It will be found, too, that it is immensely important practically for holiness, because we are so weak, that we are likely to take just what we like, and what at the time suits our own character, habits, position, circumstances, and capacity.

Whereas what we really want is to detect, judge, and thus be saved from self; not that which ever spares flesh, but what gives us to mortify our members on the earth, as well as what in divine love suits the varying wants of souls around us, and, above all, His glory who has given us not only a particular part of His mind, but the whole of it.

Thus, as it has been well said, the peculiarity of the right position is its universality. That is, it is not merely a special portion or phase of truth, no matter how blessed, but the truth in all its fullness as the divinely given safeguard against particular views, and the communication of the exceeding largeness of God's grace, and truth, and ways for us in the world. "All things are yours." Anything that tends by distinctive marks to make a party by bringing forward oneself, or one's own views, as a centre, is self-condemned.

W. K.

Salvation and its Song—3.

(Exodus xiv. 5-14, 26-31; xv. 1-6.)

DOWN STREAM AND UP STREAM

A PERSON who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ very quickly finds out the power of the world in a way he had never before dreamed of. You may have seen people floating easily down stream in a boat. They glide along without any effort of their own. There is no appreciable force in the current of that river, they

say. But presently the boat is turned round; things are different now. The current strives to carry them in the opposite direction from the way they wish to go. They have now to struggle against the stream in order to make any progress. The current that formerly helped them now hinders them.

This illustrates what is true in the Christian life. After conversion a great many persons find things are against them that were not so before. They find there is now a great power seeking to oppose and to force them back to where they once were. What do they do? Many persons fail to look at once to God; they trust in themselves. They try in their own strength to meet the power of evil companions, the power of the world and its subtle influences. They leave God and His word out of their account, and so they are carried away by the stream in the wrong direction.

How many such some of us have seen! Young lives that we have known have started in faith in Christ, rejoicing in the forgiveness of their sins; but where are they to-night? Carried away by the power of the world. They sought to meet the power of the enemy in their own strength; they forgot the word of God; they forgot to cry to the Lord; Satan was more than a match for them. Now they are immersed in the world just as they were before they made any profession of Christ. We should be there too if we did not see the great victory that Christ has won for us, that the power of the world is broken for the believer, that he that had the power of death has been annulled through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We trust in the Lord, and not in ourselves.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ speaks victory in every contest for the believer. You need not only to rest upon the shed blood of the Lamb, you want to see that Lamb risen in power, the Lamb Who will put away the sin of the whole world by His mighty

power. He has broken in pieces the enemy ; and in His victory you find victory too. Looking to the Lord Jesus Christ you triumph every time ; looking away from Him you fail miserably, and dishonour the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose name you profess.

CROSSING THE SEA

You know quite well the details of this history of the crossing of the Red Sea. They are always very striking. The stretching out of the rod of Moses, the going forward of the great mass of people as the evening falls, and then the movement of the pillar of cloud which turns from before their faces and comes between them and the enemy behind them. Then the Israelites see that awe-inspiring sight, the cleavage of the waters of the Red Sea as the east wind blows in their faces, the waters rising up on the right hand and on the left as a wall. The depths are congealed in the heart of the sea, and the people go forward on dry land. Six hundred thousand men beside children and others go on their night march through the Red Sea.

It was a night ever to be remembered when the people of the Lord passed over in that march of victory through the sea. Many a child and timid man, too, looked up and wondered whether the waters would fall, whether those crystal walls would crumble and envelop them in ruin and destruction. But God had spoken to His servant Moses, and by faith in Him and His word they passed safely over. Not a man, nor a woman, nor even a babe was lost that night. Every one passed safely from bondage to freedom.

The light of the glory of Jehovah from the pillar of cloud and of fire shone upon them. Its illuminating rays lit up their pathway. They saw where they were going, as they passed triumphantly over to the other side through what had seemed to them certain death. How could they walk into the sea, except to be

drowned? So men must have thought then, so men think now. They say, "There was no miracle," denying even the possibility of such a thing, because they have no faith. We who believe God and His word believe that God brought that mighty host through a way that was prepared by Him for their deliverance. The Israelites went over, trusting in God, and they reached the other side in safety. The Egyptians essaying to do the same, to follow the footsteps of faith, failed. The waters of death came down upon them, and there was an end of Pharaoh and his hosts.

THE SIGNS OF DELIVERANCE

When the children of Israel were on the other side they looked back and saw the bodies of those who had enslaved them dead on the sea shore. They knew they were delivered and safe. Though they had to traverse the wilderness, they would never again be assailed by the power of Egypt. If they had not learned that lesson of complete deliverance they would never have felt quite safe. Frightened women would have awakened in the night, and said, "What is that noise? It is the noise of the chariots of Egypt coming to carry us back to slavery." They would have trembled with fear many and many a time during that forty years in the wilderness. But now that they saw the power of Egypt broken for ever and ever, they were delivered from such terrors. They had seen the salvation of the Lord.

Now where are *we* to look? Let us bring the matter to a practical issue. I want to speak to those who have really experienced the power of the wicked one. It is foolish to close one's eyes to the fact that there is a great wicked personage, the ruler of the darkness of this world, the prince of the power of the air; and his whole power is pitted against you and me and all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no reason

that we should fear him, but there is less reason that we should ignore his existence. He sometimes comes as an angel of light, but his purpose always is to turn you from the pathway of faith, or to fill your heart with fear and dread and with doubt of God's love and mercy and your own salvation.

To terrify and deceive the redeemed of the Lord is his business; and how is he to be met? How may you become what the apostle John calls "young men" in Christ? They are those who have overcome the world and the wicked one. The young man is strong, strong in faith, one in whom the word of God abides, one who overcomes the wicked one. Strength is needed to gain the victory, and there is only one place to look for strength. You must look to the Lord Jesus Christ, that blessed Son of God, Who was manifested in this world for the express purpose of destroying the works of the wicked one. He was here to oppose all that Satan had done, to receive in Himself the opposition of sin and Satan, and accordingly you find that from the time of His infancy to the cross and the grave there were onslaughts of Satan against our Lord. Which was the victor? The devil had the power of death, and one of the great marvels of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is that He did die. He Who alone of the countless millions of this world was exempt from death, laid down His life. Having power to do so, He came to do it. He "bowed to the grave, destroyed it so, And death by dying slew."

THE OVERTHROW OF SATAN

This great power of Satan was for ever broken at the cross. And if you ask me where I find evidence of that, I go to the grave of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Joseph's tomb is opened, I look in and find no body there. There are the grave-clothes. Yes, but no body. The Saviour has risen; the Lord has gone up

III

triumphant. He is not there. The power of death was then broken for ever and ever. The greatest power associated with our bitter enemy was overcome in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the children of Israel had to stand still and see what was done by Jehovah on their behalf, so it is with ourselves. We have to see what has been done; and how can we see it? We must open our Bibles and turn to the records of what the Saviour God has accomplished. Let us read over and over again the closing chapters of each of the four Gospels. There we find the death of the Lord Jesus magnified above everything else. Inspired words chronicle the wonderful events of that day when He laid down His life. How the Spirit of God loves to dwell upon the events of that day, that we may learn the value and efficacy of the Lord's death! We know that the eye of God looks upon the atoning work at Calvary with approval. There our deliverance was wrought. If you neglect the lesson of the cross you will miss the peace that comes from knowing that your enemies have been entirely overcome through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It might seem to some a very insignificant way of bringing these people out of Egypt. There was no striking event manifest to the eyes of all mankind. There was just a way made through the Red Sea, that the people might cross. Then the sea came back and destroyed their enemies. It might seem a very simple act to some, but when the people of Israel realised the truth of their deliverance they said, "What a grand and glorious thing! See how the might of our God has been displayed!" And we read that they feared the Lord.

W.J.H.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Perfect Obedience.

IT is impossible to read John's, or indeed any of the Gospels, where what He was, His Person, specially shines forth, without meeting, at every moment, the blessed fragrance of loving obedience and self-renouncement. It is not a history—it is Himself, Whom one cannot avoid seeing—and also the wickedness of man, which violently forced its way through the coverture and holy hiding-place which love had wrought around Him, and forced into view Him Who was clothed with humility—the divine Person that passed in meekness through the world that rejected Him; but it was only to give all its force and blessedness to the self-abasement, which never faltered, even when forced to confess His divinity. It was “I am,” but in the lowliness and loneliness of the most perfect and self-abased obedience; no secret desire to hold His place in His humiliation, and by His humiliation: His Father's glory was the *perfect* desire of His heart. It was, indeed, “I am” that was there, but in the perfectness of human obedience. This reveals itself everywhere. “It is written,” was His reply to the enemy, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” “It is written” was His constant reply. “Suffer it to be so now,” says He to John the Baptist, “for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” “That give,” says He to Peter, though *the children be free*, “for Me and for thee.” This historically. In John, where, as we have said, His Person shines more forth, it is more directly expressed by His mouth: “This commandment have I received of My Father,” “and I know that His commandment is life eternal.” “As the Father hath given Me commandment, so I do.” “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.” “I have kept,” says He, “My Father's commandments, and

abide in His love." "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not."

Many of these citations are on occasions where the careful eye sees, through the blessed humiliation of the Lord, the divine nature—God—the Son, only more bright and blessed because thus hidden—as the sun, on which man's eyes cannot gaze, proves the power of its rays in giving full light through the clouds which hide and soften its power. If God humbles Himself, He still is God; it is always *He Who* does it. "He could not be hid." This absolute obedience gave perfect grace and savour to all He did. He appeared ever as one sent. He sought the glory of the Father that sent Him. He saved whoever came to Him, because He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him: and as they would not come without the Father's drawing, their coming was His warrant for saving them, for He was to do implicitly the Father's will. But what a spirit of obedience is here! He saves whom? whomsoever the Father gives Him—the servant of His will. Does He promise glory? "It is not Mine to give, but to those for whom it is prepared of My Father." He must reward according to the Father's will. He is nothing, but to do all, to accomplish all, His Father pleased. But who could have done this, save He Who could, and He Who at the same time would, in such obedience, undertake to do whatever the Father would have done? The infiniteness of the work, and capacity for it, identify themselves with the perfectness of obedience, which had no will but to do that of another. Yet was He a simple, humble, lowly man, but God's Son, in Whom the Father was well pleased.

J.N.D.

Psalm cxix.

AS we read this remarkable psalm we are irresistibly drawn to admire the character of the one so powerfully delineated by the writer under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

We are not informed who wrote it. Nor ought we to be unduly curious to discover what the Holy Spirit has left unrevealed. It should be enough for us to know that, whoever was the author, there never has been any doubt as to its right to a place in the Holy Scriptures, those sacred oracles entrusted to the keeping of God's earthly people, the Jews, and so carefully preserved by them as their greatest national treasure (Rom. iii. 1, 2).

The omission of any title, as well as of the name of the writer, coupled with the well-known and most striking acrostic form in which the psalm is written, points surely to the design of the Spirit of God to provide a memorable meditation suited to a holy nature and applicable without regard to time or place to the varied experiences of one who in his desire to please God feels deeply the limitations imposed upon him by his human weakness and who sorrows because of the sad condition of his fellow-men, many of whom not only know not God, nor love to do His will, but are filled with hatred and cruel thoughts towards all who seek to keep the word of God.

This remarkable suitability to the experiences of the godly has been proved again and again, by all sorts of persons, in all nations and in every period of time, under every conceivable condition, whether of ease or difficulty; isolation or fellowship; persecution or prosperity. No matter what may be the lot of him who, like Abraham, walks before God and, like him, seeks to walk in a perfect way. Indeed the godly will ever find in this psalm the cheering reminder that another

has been in the way before him and found his sole true comfort in turning confidently to the Lord, His ever-enduring word never failing to bring him consolation and guidance, protection and encouragement.

One feature of outstanding interest is that, in common with a large part of the Old Testament, there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. This is a fact that clearly shows the reference to the condition of those under law before the Holy Spirit was given; or again, of those under law in the days when Israel shall be brought back to their own land, when the godly amongst them shall be there awaiting the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that the Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh—not indeed universally but upon all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile. For though there has been already a partial fulfilment at Pentecost, as the apostle Peter declared, there is yet to be a complete fulfilment after the judgment spoken of by Joel shall have come to pass. See Joel ii. 28-32; Acts ii. 16-21.

We are convinced that this psalm outlines for us the true experiences of the Lord Jesus. There are, it is true, some passages that can be by no means applied to our Lord because of the implied presence of sin, for *"in Him was no sin."* But on the whole there need be no doubt that the One Whom Peter called the Holy One and the Just had, in the days of His flesh, such experiences as the psalmist so marvellously and touchingly describes. They are in fact the exercises proper to a godly Israelite.

The full confidence in the Lord expressed throughout and the delight in His word that triumphs over every adverse condition were never so sweetly exemplified as in the life on earth of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Truly "He was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart" (Heb. iv. 15, compare N.Tr.). And here we see how fully and sorely He was tempted and may learn the lesson of complete and unwavering confidence

in God's word and be stirred to emulate His diligent occupation with all the Holy Scriptures reveal.

Nevertheless the exercises of the godly under the law could never rise to the height of Christian experience. For in the days before the cross there was no knowledge of new creation and no such thing as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a seal and as an anointing. Although all the feelings of a child were present in the believer, none in those days could know that he was a child of God. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into *our* hearts, crying Abba, Father (see Gal. iv. 6). But such blessedness and all its happy consequences of joy and peace in believing were unknown to the believer in those days. There was no certainty and assurance of salvation; no knowledge of eternal life as a present possession, and, most important of all to remark, they were as entirely ignorant of death with Christ as, perforce, they were of Christ's death for them, seeing He had not then died.

All through the Old Testament period, and especially in the Psalms, we see that the godly were subject to fluctuations of feelings, with alternations of hope and fear which would be unworthy of the Christian indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Yet, however, it must be confessed, there are many believers who through dwelling too much upon the Psalms, to the neglect of the truth given by the Spirit through the holy apostles and prophets of the New Testament, know only too well what these alternations mean. Indeed, in some cases, they have come to regard them as the normal experience of the believer, and even to suggest that all is not well if they have no occasional doubts and fears interspersed with gleams of joy and peace.

(To be continued, D.V.)

How to Know the Father's Will.

PEOPLE would like a convenient and comfortable means of knowing God's will—as one might get a recipe for anything ; but there exists no means of ascertaining it without reference to the state of our own soul.

Moreover, we are often of too much importance in our own eyes ; and we deceive ourselves in supposing some will of God in such or such a case. God, perhaps, has nothing to tell us thereon, the evil being altogether in the stir we give ourselves. The will of God is, perhaps, that we should take quietly an insignificant place.

Further, we sometimes seek God's will, desiring to know how to act in circumstances *in which it is not His will that we should be found at all* : if conscience were in real healthful activity, its first effect would be to make us quit them. It is our own will which sets us there, and we should like nevertheless to enjoy the consolation of God's direction in a path which we ourselves have chosen. Such is a very common case.

Be assured that if we are near enough to God, we shall have no trouble to know His will. In a long and active life it may happen that God, in His love, may not always at once reveal His will to us, that we may feel our dependence, particularly where the individual has a tendency to act according to his own will. However, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" ; whence it is certain that, if the whole body is not full of light, the eye is not single. You will say, "That is poor consolation." I answer, It is a rich consolation for those whose sole desire is to have the eye single, and to *walk with God*—not, so to speak, for those who would avoid trouble in learning His will objectively—but whose desire is to walk with God. "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth because there is no light in him."

It is always the same principle. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." You cannot withdraw yourself from this moral law of Christianity.

It is then the will of God, and a precious will, that we should be able to discern it only according to our own spiritual state. In general, when we think that we are judging circumstances, it is God Who is judging us—Who is judging our state. Our business is to keep close to Him. God would not be good to us if He permitted us to discover His will without that. It might be convenient just to have a director of consciences; and we should thus be spared the discovery and the chastisement of our moral condition. Thus, if you seek how you may discover the will of God without that, you are *seeking evil*; and it is what we see every day.

As regards *circumstances*, I believe that a person may be guided by them: scripture has decided that. It is what is meant by being "held in with bit and bridle," whereas the promise and privilege of him who has faith is, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." God, Who is faithful, has given the promise of directing us thus—near enough to God to understand by a single glance from Him. He warns us not to be as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding of the will, thoughts, desires of their master. It is needful to hold them in with bit and bridle. Doubtless that is better than to stumble, fall and strike against Him Who reins us in; but it is a sad state, and such is it to be *guided by circumstances*. Undoubtedly, too, it is merciful on God's part so to act, but very sad on ours. As to impressions, God can suggest them, and it is certain in fact that He does suggest a thing to the mind; but in that case the propriety of the thing and its moral character will be as clear as noonday. In prayer God

can remove from our heart certain carnal influences, which, being destroyed, leave room to certain other spiritual influences to take their place in the soul. Thus He makes us feel the importance of some duty which had been perhaps entirely obscured by the preoccupation caused by an object one had desired.

It is often useful to ask myself, *Whence* comes such a desire of mine or such a thought of doing this or that? I have found that this alone decides more than half of the embarrassments that Christians meet with. The two-thirds of those that remain are the result of our haste and of our former sins. If a thought comes from God and not from the flesh, then we have only to address ourselves to God as to the manner and means of executing it, and we shall soon be directed.

For the rest, remember only that the wisdom of God conducts us in the way of God's will; if our own will is in activity, God cannot bend to that. Such is the essential thing to discover. It is the secret of the life of Christ. I know no other principle that God can make use of, however He may pardon and cause all to work for our good. If there is still a query as to His direction, He directs the new man who has no other will than Christ. He mortifies and destroys the old man, and in that way purifies us that we may bear fruit. Be assured that God does more *in* us than we *for* Him, and that what we do for Him is only in proportion, as it is Himself Who works it in us.

J.N.D.

We must expect increasing looseness in the last days; but for everything there is a resource in the Lord, and those who look to Him, and keep His *word*, will never find Him to fail them in the time of need. Faith often needs trying in order that it may be approved to His glory. But *dependence* is the great lesson of the wilderness,

W.J.L.

God Three in One.

WE worship Thee, Thou Triune God;
 We hail Thy glorious name:
 Of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
 We sing the deathless fame.
 With mingled awe and rapture now
 Before the Three in One we bow.

O God the Father! Thou Whose grace
 Chose us in Christ the Lord,
 By myriad sons through endless years
 Thy name shall be adored.
 O Abba, Father, ever blest!
 As children in Thy love we rest.

O God the Son! meet Object Thou
 To fix and fill the heart;
 Thou, once on earth despised and slain,
 Heaven's glorious Centre art.
 Lord Jesus, on Thy face we gaze,
 And songs of love and blessing raise.

'Tis God the Spirit by Whose power
 Alone we worship Thee;
 And, Father, for that gift divine
 We'll praise eternally.
 With mingled awe and rapture now
 Before the Three in One we bow. C.H. v. p.

A WORD IN SEASON.

"I will therefore that the MEN pray in every place, lifting up pious hands, without wrath or reasoning. In like manner also that the WOMEN in decent deportment and dress adorn themselves with modesty and discretion, not with plaited hair and gold, or pearls, or costly clothing, but what becomes women making profession of the fear of God, by good works."—1 Timothy ii. 8-10.—N.Tr.

The Strong Man Overcome : The Triumph of Grace—3.

(Read Mark v.)

Jairus' Daughter

WE have now a very different view of mankind. A beautiful, young, and, as many would say, innocent being, about to be cut down by the ruthless scythe of death. No longer, as in the beginning of the chapter, the strength and violence of man led on by Satan to evil, no longer the twelve years of weary struggle of a human being in suffering and weakness, but a young life of twelve years extinguished by the cold hand of death. The former two could come to the Lord, but this one could not come. How well it was that someone could come to the Lord to entreat for her! So is it, alas! with many of our relatives; they seem to have no desire for salvation, no sense of their lost condition and spiritual death to divine things, and to God's claims upon them. They have ability to perceive that which may be known of God, for God hath showed it unto them; "For 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; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). Although perhaps often taking part in religious services with others, they do not approach God personally with thanksgiving and prayer. The personal element and exercise of conscience fails. How thankful we can be that the Lord gives us the privilege to pray for such, and to beg Him to come down to our houses, and bring life and salvation to our relatives and friends! "Well," says one, "it does seem hard that such a dear young creature should be threatened and seized upon by death. Surely at her age she could not be considered a sinner." We must not forget that the scripture has said, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;

and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). It is remarkable that one of the Greek words translated "damsel," the one the Lord Himself used in speaking to her, is only applied in the New Testament to two persons; to the daughter of Jairus and to the daughter of Herodias. This would indicate that they were of a similar age, thus if one were a sinner at that early age, the other could be also. The ready acquiescence of the daughter of Herodias in her mother's crimes shows at what an early age sin can have dominion over us. Thus we must confess that young people are also sinners, and dead to God till they hear the voice of the Son of God, and live (John v. 25).

May the Lord stir us up to pray more for children, relatives, and friends; and also for the many spiritually dead around us, who cannot or will not pray for themselves.

But one of our friends suggested what seemed to him a plausible excuse, that not being born again he could not even see the kingdom of God, so it was no good his going to the gospel preaching. The answer to such an objection is—that God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6); and that it is by the word of God that men are born again (1 Pet. i. 23), and so all men are responsible to go and hear His word. And God's gracious invitation still holds good, "Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). It is the word of the Lord Jesus that still gives life to dead sinners; may it often be heard in our Sunday Schools and families!

"And commanded that something should be given her to eat."

This word is of very great importance for parents or guardians of believing children. We are responsible to give them something to eat. The Lord alone can give the new life, but when He has given it, we are responsible to supply nourishment for this new life. The Lord

delights in allowing us to share in His blessed work. Also in the case of Lazarus, after He had raised him from the dead, He allowed the disciples the blessed privilege of loosing him and letting him go. The conversation at the parental table should be nourishment for the young people. It need not be forced or unnatural, but should be edifying. One should take the greatest care not to speak disparagingly of Christian friends, as the young people catch up and retain such remarks to their own damage. The elder Christians know the sterling worth of a true believer, and it may be necessary for them to mention among themselves some little weaknesses of a brother or a sister; but if spoken in the hearing of the young people it tends to make them supercilious; because they can easily perceive the faults, but cannot so readily recognize the solid virtues of older Christians. The culture we should seek for the young is heart-culture, which is the highest form of education. God has very graciously told us what those things are on which we should think, and which should form the subject of conversation in Christian families:—"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8). T.W.B.

"Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
 A living, bright, reality;
 More present to faith's vision keen
 Than any outward object seen;
 More dear, more intimately nigh,
 Than e'en the dearest earthly tie!"

Salvation and Its Song—4.

(Exodus xiv. 5-14, 26-31 ; xv. 1-6).

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

THE Israelites took their place before Jehovah as simple persons who believed Him. They were persons, too, whose greatest sin since the night of the passover, perhaps, was their distrust of God. What had they said in the afternoon of that day? "We wish we had not come out of Egypt. We wish we could have gone on with our brick-making, and died there." Why did they not trust God? It was a great shame that they did not trust the God Who by the blood of the paschal lamb pointed forward to the death of His own Son. He would not bring them out of Egypt, and leave them to be overcome by the army of the tyrant. When they allowed such thoughts to come into their minds, it was a terrible dishonour to Jehovah.

Have you ever done anything similar, ever been guilty of distrusting God? Have you sometimes said to yourself, "I do not think it is worth while after all being a Christian? I do not see that I am any better off as a child of God than I was before I turned to Him. I do not believe it is worth such a great struggle; and I do not think God does all He might do for me." Have you allowed such thoughts as these to enter your mind? If so, it is to your dishonour and disgrace. You have not feared the Lord, nor trusted in Him.

The fear of God does not mean fear of His punishment so much, but it means yielding to Him that allegiance of heart which is due to the supreme, holy God, and giving Him the confidence of your heart as the God of love. Fear Him, and take your right place as dependent upon Him.

It is specially recorded in this place that the people believed the Lord. When Moses in the land of Egypt told them to go into their houses with the blood on the

doorposts, and to feed on the slain lamb during the solemn hours of judgment, they did so because they believed the word of the Lord through Moses. By faith they kept the passover and the sprinkling of the blood. Yes, and then three or four days after at the Red Sea they doubted Him!

You see faith is a perennial faculty. It is continually needed. It is not something once used, and never again. Faith has to be in constant exercise. A man must trust God to become a believer, and when he is a believer he must trust Him all the time. A believer is one not only by profession but by habitual practice. He is not an amateur, but a professional, believer. It is his life's business to trust God, and if he doubts God he is by his evil heart of unbelief a disgrace to his calling. Let us then be believing believers, and keep on believing till we reach the rest of God.

These people failed when they saw the Egyptian army approaching, but when they saw their enemies dead, they were ashamed and probably said, "We ought to have trusted God to save us from the foe. We will trust Him in future. We will trust Him in the wilderness, even if we feel very hungry and thirsty." Whatever they thought and said, we know what happened in their history, and how soon they murmured against the Lord. But there was the fact that at the Red Sea, when they were led over, and saw their great salvation, they believed the Lord.

THE SONG OF DELIVERANCE

Having feared the Lord and believed Jehovah, the people praised their Deliverer. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." We cannot consider the details of this song now. It is a very famous one, and very full of interest and instruction. But just think of that vast concourse of ransomed people, six hundred thousand men, male voices, beside

the women and the children, and Moses at their head with the inspired words of song on his lips. Think of that vast company of delivered people joining in the song to Jehovah, that full-throated choir singing from their hearts the song of redemption and salvation and victory.

It was a famous victory over Satan's power, and they rejoiced in what God had done. You will find the Israelites sang very little about themselves. They did not say, "We were such terrible sinners in Egypt." It was true of them, but they did not sing about it that day. They sang to the Lord. They said, "The Lord is a man of war." The Lord has overcome. The Lord has glorified His name. It was the Lord's right hand that dashed in pieces the enemy.

Let us sing praises to Jehovah. Let us do so first of all because we cannot help it, because our hearts are so full, because we see to-day what great things the Lord has done for His name and for us. Each one said, "I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thee, I will sing to Thy name. I cannot do anything just now to express my gratitude, but I will sing to Thee."

And so Moses and the people sang to the Lord. I think the song of Moses at the Red Sea was a sweeter song than angels ever sang. We sometimes say, "Angels do not sing." Perhaps not. At any rate, they do not sing of redemption as we do. The angels have their own suited way of expressing their praises to God; and I think it must be a better performance than some hymns I have heard sung in London and the country.

But angels never sang a song like this, the song of redemption, the song of victory, the song of Moses and the song of the lamb. For the passover lamb was behind this song. If the lamb's blood had not been shed, the people would still have been in Egypt.

Israel sang of the power of God that brought to nothing the power of their great foe; and I want us all to lay hold of this important fact. Although we have a mighty foe, not almighty but very mighty, a foe who has been at work for nearly 6,000 years endeavouring to draw sons of men to that place prepared for him and his angels, he is now overcome. He has no power over believers, over you and me. His power was destroyed by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who bruised the serpent's head. By and by, when it is a question of delivering the world from the presence of the evil one, He will send an angel to bind him and cast him into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, so that the Father's kingdom may come. The very things for which the disciples of the Lord were taught to pray will be fulfilled in that day. The inheritors of the kingdom will be delivered from the evil one, and the Lord Jesus Christ will rule the world in righteousness and peace. W.J.H.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Christian Liberty.

“**S**TAND fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” wrote the apostle Paul to the Galatian churches. Some there were attaching to Christianity the rites and ceremonies of law, thus undermining the true gospel of Christ and denying the liberty wherewith He sets His people free. Christian liberty is not licence; it is realised in submission to God and His word, which is truth. Satan's object always is to bring us into bondage of some kind.

Christian liberty—the liberty which we have in Christ—brings us deliverance from sin, from the law, from the world and its religion, from self. But this deliverance needs to be realised in practice by the “reckoning”

of faith and the application of *death* to the old man (Rom. vi.). The Holy Spirit given to us is the *power* to carry us on, and Christ is the *Object* set before us to engage the heart and affections. But the tendency, if the soul gets away from God, is to drift back into bondage to those very things from which, through grace, we have been delivered.

The whole spirit and principle of Christianity is one of liberty, the soul having been brought into the presence of God Himself and having to do with Him direct. This was not so in Judaism, where there was an order of priests who were necessary to the carrying on of the worship. The ritual was carried on by intermediaries who were indispensable to it. The way into the holiest had not yet been made manifest, the veil was still unrent, and the priest's work was never done.

Christianity is just the opposite of this. *Now* the veil is rent and the believer has boldness, or liberty, to enter into the holiest at all times, with not one unsettled question between his soul and God.

Yet Christendom—or at least a large part of it—has so to speak put up the veil again, and instituted an order of priests and clergy as necessary to the worship. And experience shows that this same tendency may exist amongst those who have left aside human systems and profess to meet in dependence on God only. There may be assumption of authority on the part of individuals (as there was in the early church) acting in the name of the assembly, and determined to carry out their own will. This is an evil to be guarded against, and prayed against, continually.

To the Galatians, who would go back under legal bondage, as we have said, the apostle Paul speaks of the cross of Christ. The cross has not only separated between us and our sins, but between us and ourselves (the old "I"), and the world (Gal. i. 4) and its religion as well. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the

cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal vi. 14).

What part had I in the cross? None, unless it were the sins that brought Christ there. It is the end of the old man and the greatest proof of the incorrigible nature of the flesh in every shape. "I am crucified with Christ." What freedom!—but this is not all, for I have a new life and nature, a new "I," and a new Object, the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The cross, too, is the end of Ritualism; the breaking of the yoke of ordinances, which, the conscience being still unpurged and unsatisfied, enslaved men and held them bound to human rules and forms. We are dead and risen with Christ and set free from sin, self and the world.

James, in his very practical Epistle, speaks of the perfect law of liberty, which is connected, not merely with *hearing* but with *doing* the word. It is that liberty which delights to do God's will, not our own; for the new nature is formed by the word, with a view to a walk in godliness and holiness. So Peter speaks of the sanctification of the Spirit unto "the obedience of Christ." In Christ—*His* obedience was that of a nature which delighted to obey, which found its joy in doing the Father's will. This is the principle of our obedience also.

A further truth as to what is really the strength and spring of Christian liberty and walk will be found in 2 Cor iii. 18, "Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty. But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by [the] Lord the Spirit" (New Trans.).

This chapter contrasts the ministry of the Spirit with the law. Now the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of life and liberty, so that we should walk—not after the flesh, but

after the Spirit (Rom. viii.). Moses had to put a veil over his face; although it was on the second occasion when he came down from the mountain, when it was not a question of pure law, but law mixed with a measure of grace.

But in Christ we behold a glorified Man, in whose face shines all the glory of God without a veil. So that the principle of Christianity — that which forms the Christian's life and walk—is not that of law, but the power of an Object set before the heart and affections. As we gaze upon Him by faith, we are changed. This is not a physical change, of course, but that moral change which the Holy Spirit would effect in us daily, as we are occupied with Christ at God's right hand.

Human religious systems bring the believer into bondage. He is not free in the presence of God, but has to submit to a code of rules and regulations made for him by someone else. Creeds—written or unwritten—may be a means of bringing us into bondage, because, however well-intentioned may have been those who framed them, they fall short of the *whole* truth, which can only be found in the word of God.

Even amongst those who have left human systems, and are gathered as members of the body of Christ, a serious danger to be guarded against is, an insidious form of bondage. This may come about with the best intentions on the part of truly godly men who believe that they are responsible to maintain a certain ecclesiastical position which they consider to be in danger of being set aside. (*To be continued, D.V.*) F.G.B.

“CONSIDER the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus : Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him.”—Heb. iii. 1, 2.

“CONSIDER HIM that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”—Heb. xii. 3.

Psalm cxix—2.

BUT let us return to the Spirit's delineation of the character of the person who is before Him, whether it be the Lord Jesus Himself when on earth, or some godly leader of, and sufferer with, God's earthly people in the days when they become once again the special objects of Jehovah's care.

As to his personal qualities we find him deeply emotional, entirely unselfish, patient, noble-minded, generous, and full of courage; towards others, considerate, tender-hearted and meek; and in his conduct towards God, holy, prayerful and full of thanksgiving and praise. A blessed character truly! He reminds us of Nathanael, of whom the Lord said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John i. 47).

His custom is to meditate in the word of the Lord at early dawn and oftentimes far into the hours of the night. And although for the time he is small and despised yet is he one who looks confidently forward to bearing his testimony before kings and is of such social standing that princes do not disdain to speak against him. His hope, moreover, is that he will be hailed with gladness when he makes himself known to those that fear the Lord.

His sweet trust in Jehovah is very touching. His prayers are never addressed to Him as to One unapproachable, but as a child with his father, so his heart's desires are laid before Him. He ever prays with entire freedom and a perfect assurance that he will be heard. Indeed the whole psalm is a lovely example of true communion.

As with much humility he prays the Lord to teach him, we perceive how simple is his expectation that the Lord will not consider him too insignificant but will certainly give him the desired instruction and understanding.

We will now consider briefly in their order the twenty-two stanzas into which the psalm is divided, according to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Every stanza has eight verses each beginning with the same Hebrew letter. This arrangement we may suppose was designed for the better committing of the whole to memory, and to provide at the same time a divine example of consideration for those simple-hearted readers who find difficulty in comprehending long passages. Here also we may remark that the psalm as a whole exhibits in a prophetic way the exercises of the repentant remnant of Israel, who having been brought back into their own land, as they surely will be, have Jeremiah's prediction fulfilled in them: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34).

Aleph

In this opening stanza the writer proclaims the blessedness of those who walk in the law of the Lord. He recognises Jehovah's claim upon the obedience of Israel, and earnestly desires his own ways to be directed to keep the statutes of the Lord. It is with deep humility and a sense of his dependence that he exclaims, O forsake me not utterly!

Beth

He appears to be a young man and fully conscious of the snares besetting the pathway of the young. Yet

133

as one truly godly he declares "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee."

Blessing Jehovah, his determination is to meditate in His precepts and to delight himself in His statutes and not as others to forget the word of the Lord.

Gimel

His faith has made him a stranger in the earth. But when princes speak against him he turns away from all their ill words to meditate in the statutes of Jehovah, and to find in His testimonies the counsellors his solitary position has denied him.

Daleth

The burden of reproach bows him down to the earth. He feels his imperfection, and pleads that his confession has been heard. His great longing, in the midst of much sadness, is to be taught by the Lord Himself that he may be strengthened to run in the way of His commandments with a large heart.

He

With unvarying confidence in Jehovah he lifts up his heart to Him and asks to be taught of Him, that having more understanding he may apprehend the truth and delight in it, and so be delivered from covetousness and from beholding vanity. For so will his whole being become more active and alert in the righteous ways of the Lord.

Vau

In his humility he fears to be overwhelmed by the reproaches of the ungodly and prays Jehovah to give him the word of truth in answer to their reproach. As princes deign to consider him and speak against him (v. 23), so is he prepared to speak before kings.

Zain

He takes his place as a servant of Jehovah and pleads the word of the Lord to him upon which He had caused

134

him to hope. He is derided by the proud, but they cannot influence him. Jehovah's ancient judgments greatly comfort him as he remembers them. Horrified by the ways of the wicked, he is the more cast upon the word of the Lord, and though fully realising his pilgrim condition he is enabled to sing songs of gladness even in the night as he remembers the name of Jehovah.

Cheth

He has known what it is to have fallen among thieves who, though they robbed him, could not deprive him of his confidence in Jehovah nor prevent his praises ascending to God even at midnight. The more he feels the power of evil the more he resorts to the companionship of those who fear Jehovah and keep His precepts. Though robbers abound he declares that the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, and only desires of Him that He would teach him His statutes.

Teth

Again in the presence of the proud who have forged a lie against him he refuses to be turned from his confidence in Jehovah. They may prosper and he be afflicted, but he has so learned of the Lord that he testifies, Thou art good and doest good, and joyfully affirms that the law of Jehovah's mouth is better to him than thousands of gold and silver.

Jod

Here his desire is to be a helpful example to those who fear Jehovah. Nor can the perverse dealings of the proud turn him from his complete confidence in Jehovah. I know, says he, that Thy judgments, O Lord, are right and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Thus his noble bearing in days of adversity will cause those who fear the Lord to turn to Him.

Caph

In this stanza the sense of wrongful persecution lies hard upon him and he prays to know how many days he must suffer and how long it will be ere the Lord turns the scales in his favour by judgment upon his persecutors. With this the Christian may well set in contrast the admonition of the Lord Jesus, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." From this portion we may see most clearly how the hope of the Christian differs from the hope of the Israelite. We look for deliverance out of the world when the Lord Jesus comes for us, but the earthly people of God look for deliverance on earth by the overthrow of their oppressors, and the establishing of the blessed reign of Jesus the Messiah. Earnestly this godly one prays for a more living, energetic compliance with the will of Jehovah as expressed in His testimonies.

Lamed

Here he finds comfort in the stability of the word of the Lord which is settled in heaven and declares he would have perished in his affliction had he not taken delight in the law of Jehovah. There are wicked ones ready to destroy him, but he calls upon Jehovah to save him, pleading that he belongs to Him, and with perfect peace in his heart he considers the testimonies of the Lord and far from feeling cramped finds the commandments of the Lord exceeding broad.

Mem

Here he is found still under teachers. Through the instruction of the Lord he is wiser than his enemies and because he keeps Jehovah's precepts he has more understanding than the old men. "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste," he exclaims (compare Luke ii. 46, 47).

(To be continued, D.V.)

Mary of Bethany.

DIFFERENT measures of light will separate disciples from each other, but not from their common Master. This woman, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was not at the tomb afterwards. Her richer knowledge of Christ kept her apart from such a journey and such a task; she could not have been there. Faith, light and knowledge forbade her. But Mary Magdalene and others are there; and the angels, and the Lord of angels, will meet them there, though Mary cannot.

Oh, the sweet and sure truth which all this illustrates in days of distraction like these !

Disciples are now separated, through divers measures of light and knowledge, like these women of faith and love; but those who, though in the place where faith would not have them, are yet where love has sent them, shall know something of heaven, and of the presence of Jesus. Well to know the meltings of pity over sorrow according to love; and well to know the gladdenings of hope over sorrow according to faith. But the spices of the women at the tomb were but as graveclothes; the box of spikenard of the woman of Bethany was an ivory palace.

J. G. B.

The Mercy of Our God.

I HAVE thought much lately of divine mercy, and it appears to me that, now more than ever, we have need to know it. How great it is! How precious! How much we need it to surmount the last stages of our journey across the desert! May our God and Father grant me the grace to speak of it in a worthy way, in order that we may lay hold of it more and more.

We find it from the very beginning of the gospel, when "the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-

spring from on high hath visited us" (Luke i. 78). Into what misery man was plunged! The Holy Spirit depicts this in three words — sin, darkness, and the shadow of death! Terrible picture for everyone who has eyes to see it—infinite misery! but infinite mercy!!

This mercy is not limited to the knowledge of salvation, the remission of our sins; it gives light to those in darkness and guides our feet into the way of peace. We also meet it in the whole life of the believer; it accompanies us every day (Ps. xxiii. 6).

In 1 Peter i., the apostle blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His *abundant mercy* has begotten us again unto a living hope. It needed nothing short of that to deliver us from the misery into which sin had plunged us. Who was it that desired to, or that could, deliver us from this misery? The life that once we possessed was not capable of any good; we needed the communication of a new life, a new creation.

We were so defiled that, even if washed with "nitre" and "much soap" (Jer. ii. 22) our iniquity could not be effaced; but, thank God, when we have been washed in the precious blood of Christ, we are made whiter than snow. We were slaves, we needed to be redeemed, and all the silver and gold in the world would not suffice to pay our ransom. We were dead; His mighty word, by which He created the world, brought us life. Who then could tell the extent of the mercy of God towards us?

Now that we possess salvation and a living hope, will this mercy abandon us? No, for in all our sufferings, in all our troubles, the Father of mercies comforts us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God (2 Cor. i. 4).

This mercy shows itself also in connection with the service which is entrusted to us. In 2 Cor. iv. we

read, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have *received mercy*, we faint not." We are converted to *serve*, and to *wait* for the Son from heaven (1 Thess. i.). If we consider this service in all its aspects, we shall see everywhere the same mercy. It is as objects of His mercy that this service is entrusted to us.

It is indeed a service of mercy towards the world, and the same mercy accompanies us every day in the accomplishment of this service, whatever it may be, whilst awaiting "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). A.G.

Illustrations of God's Faithfulness—I.

THE year 1814 commenced very sadly for the inhabitants of the town of Sleswig, in Germany. Detachments of Swedes, Russians and Cossacks camped within half-an-hour's distance of the town. An armistice had been concluded, but it would expire in the night of the 5th of January, and the war with all its horrors and all its violence must then recommence.

Outside the town, on the edge of the road, and on the side by which the enemy must enter, was situated an isolated house of quite fine appearance. There lived an aged woman who loved the Lord and trusted in Him. Continually in prayer, she found pleasure in repeating these words of an old German hymn :

"O God, Thou Lord of hosts,
Direct on us Thy gaze ;
And all around our walls,
Thyself a rampart raise."

"Yea, Lord," she used often to say, "raise ramparts around our dwelling, so that the enemy cannot attack us."

Her daughter, who was a widow, and her grandson, a young man of twenty, lived with her. One day after

the grandmother had prayed with her accustomed fervour, the grandson said to her :

“Grandma, why do you ask God for an impossibility? Are you simple enough really to believe that He can raise a rampart round us?”

“My dear,” replied she, “I do not mean it quite as I express it. I am asking God to preserve us from every harm, and it matters little to me by what means. But, for all that, nothing is impossible to Him. And do you not think that He could, if He would, fulfil my prayer to the letter? Surely that would be an easy matter for Him.”

The 5th of January so dreaded, arrived. The day passed away in alarms, and towards midnight the troops began to advance. The night was terrible; a hurricane swept the country; snow fell in huge flakes, and the wind blew with extraordinary violence. Soon the grandmother and her children heard the sound of horses’ hoofs on the road. Gries, explosions, and the clash of arms made it manifest to them that the Cossack bands were entering the town. Trembling they listened, expecting every moment to see the soldiers rush into their abode; but to their great astonishment, no one came to trouble them. No one even knocked at the door. When the day broke, everything was explained. The wind during the night had heaped up so much snow in front of the house, that there was no means of reaching it from the road: both doors and windows were effectually barricaded.

“Well now, my child,” said the grandmother, “you see how easy it has been for the Lord to erect ramparts round our house !”

“The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord : He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them : He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, *because they trust in Him*” (Ps. xxxvii. 39, 40). *Extracted.*

The Storm on the Lake of Galilee.

Peter says, " Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee upon the water " (Matt. xiv. 22-33).

BEHOLD the tempest rise on high,
The clouds obscure the darkened sky,
The bark is on the billows tossed,
The boatmen fear that all is lost.

But hark !—above the storm is heard
The well-known voice of Christ, the Lord ;
Hear—O ye boatmen, Jesus says,
“ 'Tis I, 'Tis I, be not afraid.”

“Lord, if 'tis Thou”—is Peter's cry—
“Thou Who the tempest canst defy,
Bid me to come—Thy word has power,
To keep, e'en through the darkest hour.”

He leaves the ship and braves the storm,
Upheld by Jesus' mighty arm ;
'Tis well—while faith's unswerving gaze,
Sees *only* Him Who walks the waves.

But soon he sinks and cries aloud
To Him, the Christ, the Incarnate God,
Whose hand outstretched across the wave,
Is mighty, powerful, still to save.

Ye saints !—Why fear the threatening storm?
Your Saviour's great, almighty arm,
His power, His love, can never fail ;
His strength o'er all will yet prevail.

And if, indeed, He tries your faith,
'Tis but to prove that all He saith
Is sure, as is Jehovah's throne,
To guide and guard and keep His own.

F. G. B.

Salvation and Its Song—5.

(Exodus xiv. 5-14, 26, 31; xv. 1-6.)

OVERCOMING THE WICKED ONE

BUT Satan is now walking about in the world, and his business is to find those whom he may devour. And what are believers to do? We are to resist him. And the place to resist the devil is upon our knees. The words are still true, "Satan trembles when he sees, The weakest saint upon his knees." In the attitude of prayer, let us confess our faith in the revealed truth that Satan has been defeated, and the victory over the prince of this world accomplished, and that now we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. We are entitled to share the spoil, though we did not do anything to obtain the victory.

Let us take our place as the redeemed of the Lord and as children of God. We should not ignore nor despise the subtlety and power of our great enemy, but we do well to remember the words of the apostle John when he said, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one touched him not." There is something within me upon which Satan has no hold, and that is the new nature born of God. That holy nature begotten within us by the Holy Spirit of God Himself is ever there, and does not commit sin. The wicked one does not touch what is born of the Spirit. He does not attempt to lead away our new nature, but he panders to the old nature that is also there. He spreads before us things that will lure and captivate the old dispositions, the old passions and feelings; or things that may fill us with cowardly fear.

The only resource against Satan is to go back to the Red Sea, to go again to its cloven waters, and, as they return to their strength, to see the foe dead upon the sea shore. Through the death of the Lord Jesus, he that has the power of death has been completely over-

thrown, and his power over the believer annulled for ever. So when we resist the devil, he flees from us.

May we rejoice in this victory of our Lord. I say, Rejoice, because why should we not rejoice in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ? Though there is also a great deal to make us sad when we remember the Lord Jesus in His suffering of death. It is very easy for one to say, "He died for me," but I ought also to say, "I brought Him there to that place of death. My sins were laid upon Him on the tree. I know He made atonement, but my sins made it necessary." I must not forget the bitter herbs.

But there is another thing associated with that work : the Lord has risen. When I think of the risen Lord, my soul must sing. When He emerged from the tomb, when He went up on high with a shout, when He was hailed in heaven as Conqueror, when all the mighty intelligences above owned the Son of God victorious, what hallelujahs to His name ! The Lord is crowned and seated on high, all things being put in subjection under Him. He is waiting there for the appointed time when He will come forth and remove the forces of evil from this world. Let us then be glad in the Lord, and rejoice. There is always something connected with the work of the Lord in which we can rejoice and praise God.

PRAISE AS WELL AS THANKSGIVING

Let us not forget to bring our praises continually to our God. We so often forget to praise the Lord. I am not speaking now of thanksgiving. We certainly ought to thank God for the definite mercies we receive, for those things that call for gratitude from our hearts. *But in Exodus xv. we have a song of praise.* Those singers were conscious of the unseen power of Jehovah that moved the waters of that Sea for their salvation. They knew the angel of God went behind them and stood between them and the foe. The mighty waters

obeyed His behest. They saw His glory. The cloud and the fire struck them with awe. They felt what a great and holy God was their God. Jehovah had established His righteous name in Egyptian territory, where His holy name had been defiled by that idolatrous nation. In their song of praise the children of Israel gloried in the fact that God was glorified in the overthrow of the enemy and their deliverance. The glory of God in redemption should be the subject of our praises also.

When I want something to praise God about, I can always find it in our Lord Jesus Christ. If I feel cold and inert, and no praise comes to my heart, what must I do? My eyes are in the wrong direction. Surely I am not looking at the Lord of glory. My eyes fail to pierce the heavens, and see there the Son of man crowned with glory and honour, His victory won so completely that in a moment I may be there too. He has so completely cleared away everything that was against me that in the twinkling of an eye I and all those that love Him may be removed there to be with Him for ever. If at such a remembrance you cannot praise God, there is something the matter, something radically wrong, something evil upon your conscience, something working in your mind which is robbing God of His rights. May God restore to you the joy of your salvation.

Beloved friends, God brings us out of Egypt and shows us the wonders of the Red Sea that our mouths may be filled with His praise; and in the name of God our Saviour I lay it upon you to do your part and bring to Him that tribute of praise which is His due. Do not let one of us fail in this.

W.J.H.

Christian Liberty—2.

CHURCH discipline, if rightly exercised in obedience to God's word, is no infringement of Christian liberty, but if done unjustly or wrongly it may become a weapon used to give effect to a most severe despotism. In 1 Cor. v., a clear instance of necessary discipline is given. There was manifest sin, leavening the whole assembly, and which they were responsible to deal with. They seem to have been unconscious of their responsibility, indeed to have boasted of their gifts, etc., when they ought to have been down in the dust before God. But the apostle sought to reach their consciences and to press upon them their responsibility to act in the matter.

This discipline was evidently such as would carry the conscience of everyone who understood that holiness becomes God's house for ever. It was therefore a very different matter from a disputed or questioned case of discipline, such as has, at times, caused sorrow and division amongst saints in our days.

The assembly at Corinth was in a condition of much confusion and disorder, and yet it is remarkable the way in which the apostle writes to them. In chapter i. he speaks of the grace of God which was given them in Christ Jesus, that they were enriched by Him in all things, they came behind in no gift, etc. Would *we* have said so much concerning a meeting which was in such a state?

Granted they had just come out of heathenism, but the Lord took account of all that His grace had conferred upon them. How striking—especially when we read through the First Epistle and see what the actual condition of that assembly was! And although later on they had cleared themselves in the matter of the evil which was amongst them, yet in the end of the Second

Epistle it is clear that their condition was far from what it should have been (read chap. xii. 20, 21).

Another instance of a judgment given of God respecting matters in the church of God is found in Acts xv. It was not God's mind that the apostle Paul should settle the question as to whether the Gentiles should be put under the law, as this might have caused a division resulting in a Gentile church and a Jewish one. The matter was referred to Jerusalem, where the church was admittedly Jewish; and yet the decision came to was to place no yoke on the necks of the disciples but to preserve the liberty of the gospel.

This decision, of course, had the authority of God, and to have refused it would have been an act of disobedience to His will. Yet it can hardly be considered quite the same thing as what is sometimes called an "assembly judgment," for it is described in Acts xvi. 4, as "the decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders," and it carried divine authority with it.

The Galatian churches were in an even more serious condition than Corinth. In the former, the question at issue was one of doctrine, subversive of the grace of God, which sought to tack on the law to Christianity. In the latter it was more a question of moral evil. The whole truth of the gospel was in danger at Galatia, and the apostle meets the error in the most decided way possible, making no terms with it.

God had delivered them from bondage under the law; were they going to turn back again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they had been in bondage? Brought into the liberty wherewith Christ sets His people free, were they to be enslaved again? But Satan sought to bring them into bondage again, and with these efforts, alas! the human heart is very prone to agree. One effect of legality is that it leads to acting in the flesh, to bitterness, to biting and devouring one another, instead of acting in grace (v. 15).

The Colossians were in danger of being drawn aside by tradition on the one side and philosophy on the other—of going back to the shadows and losing sight of the substance. How easily we may be caught in any wile of the enemy if not kept by the grace of God! But legality and error of all kinds makes something of the first man, and dims in our eyes the glory of the Second Man—Christ Himself.

The Epistles to Timothy are addressed to an individual servant of God and not to the church. The first was to guide Timothy's conduct in the house of God when it was in order; the second to guide him when it was in disorder and confusion.

But the very fact that these Epistles were addressed to an individual servant and not to the church shows us that each individual is responsible to God Himself. The responsibility of the assembly, true as that is in its place, can never set aside or weaken the responsibility of each individual also. This cannot be pressed too strongly, especially in a day when the *direct* reference of the soul to God about everything needs to be carefully maintained.

The false religious systems of Christendom bring in something between the soul and God. Of this evil the most striking example is Romanism. A good Romanist dare not think for himself, or even seek guidance from God's word individually; everything is settled for him by "the Church"; and if a dispute goes far enough, it is referred to the Pope for his decision. No good Romanist would think of questioning what the Chair of St. Peter would say; however much opposed to his judgment it might be, it is alleged to be infallible and of God. Thus man is put in the place of God.

Now this false principle, even in an attenuated form, is a danger against which all of us need to be on our guard. To act in self-will and set up our own judgment against the decision of an assembly would cer-

tainly be wrong ; but when one comes to look into facts, is it not the case that in some cases which claimed to be "assembly judgments" there was no clear evidence such as would carry the conscience of godly persons? The evidence was disputed, and the assembly should have refrained from acting until the evidence was so clear as to convince any God-fearing person.

It is a most serious thing to attach the name of the Lord and His authority to anything which has a shadow of doubt about it : it *may* be a case of using that name to carry out one's own will and purpose, thus dishonouring Him and scattering the sheep of Christ.

Independency of spirit is to be condemned ; but an enforced obedience to what has at least an element of doubt is equally to be deprecated. And yet there can be no question that saints have been driven about and scattered, at the point of the sword of division, in cases where forbearance and patience was called for, rather than division.

All this tends to produce a pressure on conscience and a state of unhappiness and suspicion in assemblies rather than that true christian liberty which can afford to submit ourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord.

F.G.B.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Psalm cxix—3.

Nun

In darkness and in danger, taking his life in his hand, he threads his way through this life with the word of Jehovah as a lamp for his feet and a light upon his path. Having sworn to keep Jehovah's righteous judgments in spite of all the enemies of the Lord can do, he humbly offers the worship of his lips desiring all the more to be taught Jehovah's judgments.

Samech

A God-fearing man, he is afraid of the judgments of

the Lord. This his enemies are not. The evildoers are perpetually seeking to destroy both him and his confidence in the Lord. Therefore he prays that he may be upheld of Jehovah, that he may live and that he may not be ashamed of his hope. Reviewing the ways of the Lord he notes that the erring ones are trodden down and put away like dross.

Ain

In the face of those who would oppress him he declares his integrity and looks earnestly to the Lord for salvation from all his enemies. Still he affirms he is Jehovah's servant and in his prayers he pleads for the intervention of the Lord. If others make God's law void—he finds in it all that his soul desires. He not only obeys Jehovah's commandments but loves them; esteeming them of more value than fine gold and altogether right; with a corresponding hatred of every false way.

Pe

His heart is full of grief and his eyes full of tears because those to whom the law was given keep it not. He prays for the mercy of Jehovah as one who loves His name and reminds Him that it is His custom to show mercy to those who love His name.

Tzaddi

He renews the affirmation of the righteousness of Jehovah and the uprightness of His judgments. He acknowledges that his zeal consumes him as he thinks of all his enemies. Enemies for the truth's sake as they are. Small and despised and full of troubles and anguish, he still declares his delight in the commandments of the Lord.

Koph

Now the active opposition of his enemies is reaching a crisis. They would fain get rid of him, therefore he cries with his whole heart unto Jehovah that He would

keep him. He prays day and night and finds comfort in the thought that though his enemies are near so also is Jehovah. His whole confidence is in His word. "Save me," he pleads, "and I shall keep Thy testimonies." If he still keeps the testimonies of the Lord his oppressors must acknowledge defeat.

Resh

Once again we find him looking upon and thinking of the transgressors and because they keep not the law of Jehovah he is grieved. He therefore prays the Lord to consider his affliction—an affliction he would cease to bear if he ceased to be faithful to Jehovah. And he pleads the tender mercies and the lovingkindness of Jehovah as his reason for crying thus for help. The blessed thought that the word of Jehovah is true from the beginning and for ever brings him great comfort.

Schin

Princes persecute him but cannot shake his steadfast reverence for the word of Jehovah. Far from departing from it he rejoices over it as one who has gained great spoil. Seven times a day does he praise Jehovah. And while he waits and watches for Messiah's return great peace fills his soul as he reflects that he has kept the testimonies of the Lord and that all his ways are before Jehovah. Thus he consciously walks in the light of the Lord.

Tau

Living, as he was, in constant hope of salvation from all his enemies by the revelation of Jesus Christ according to the word of Israel's hope: Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! (Ps. xiv. 7; Isa. xxv. 9), he cries for understanding in His word, that his lips may praise God and his tongue speak of His word. Yet feeling himself after all to be but a wanderer, like a lost sheep, he prays that Jehovah may seek him.

(To be continued, D.V.)

The Faithfulness of God—2.

“The Living God” (1 Samuel xvii).

A DUTCH brother in the Lord, on a visit to a conference in England, very deeply interested his brethren by an account of how the Lord put it into the heart of one of His servants to be concerned about the neglect of the spiritual needs of the children in Holland.

This man of God started a Sunday school in a certain town, using a small room in the council buildings, hired for the purpose.

There was a living interest that showed that the movement was of the Lord, and the consequent blessing aroused jealous opposition on the part of the enemy, as is so often the case.

People otherwise opposed to one another will readily unite in a common opposition to the Lord and His interests, as the Pharisees and Sadducees, and Pilate and Herod, were united in the days when the Lord Jesus was personally present as God's representative on the earth. The Catholics and Communists met in solemn conclave and brought pressure to bear on the Council to deny the teachers the privilege of using the room they had hired, and when the children assembled the next Lord's day, they found the door closed, and use of the room forbidden.

A brother in the Lord offered to lend his herring-packing shop temporarily till a more suitable place could be obtained, and the herring barrels were used as seats for the occasion.

Then when the chief councillor was asked why this drastic action had been taken, he said that they had been accused of teaching the children “doctrine,” whereupon the one who had begun the school pointed out the absurdity of the charge on the grounds that if they did teach the children “doctrine” they would not understand it.

So it was arranged that by way of a test the councillors should be the children, and the teacher should talk to them in the same way that he talked to the children, so that they could see for themselves whether the charge was just.

The Sunday school teacher accepted the offer, and told the story of David and Goliath as if to the children. When he had finished the chief councillor said, "We understand now, Mr. ——. You are David and we are Goliath and you've killed us."

The result was that he and his helpers were officially permitted to have not merely the small room they had previously hired, but the council chamber itself, without any payment at all, and neither Catholics nor Communists could interfere with them.

Thus the Lord undertakes for his own work when trusted in the simplicity of faith by those to whose care it has been committed, and when things look darkest His overruling hand is most manifest.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs iii. 5, 6). G.S.P.

A Master in Heaven.

AT the beginning of chapter iv. of the Epistle to the Colossians the Holy Spirit reminds masters, who are very liable to forget this, that they have a Master in heaven. This Master we have to serve, whatever our position may be in this world; our life belongs to Him absolutely. Let us not be unmindful of this.

The whole chapter speaks of service. In the first place this service can only be accomplished in entire dependence, and prayer is the expression of this (v. 2). Even the apostle Paul felt the need of it to carry out his service, and he asks here as elsewhere the prayers

of the saints (v. 3). We need to watch in order to be kept in this state of dependence. Another thing is also necessary for us : vigilance to seize the opportunities placed before us by the Lord (v. 5) ; for if we let them pass we may not have them again. Alas ! how often do we miss them !

We are debtors to all men (Rom. i. 14), having the unsearchable riches of Christ, and we have to make them known to others when it is in our power to do so. How easily do we say : there will be a more favourable opportunity to-morrow, forgetting that the future is not in our hands (Prov. xxvii. 1). On the morrow circumstances may have changed, the opportunity will have passed and may never occur again. Our speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt, which will preserve it from corruption, that we may know how to answer every man (v. 6).

From verse 7 we find the names of several servants who are mentioned to teach us something of what service is.

The first is TYCHICUS, a beloved brother, a faithful servant, and a fellow-labourer with the apostle Paul. He is mentioned several times in scripture. The first time is in Acts xx., where we read he accompanied him with others into Asia. The second time is in Eph. vi. 21, 22, where he is commissioned to make known the state of the apostle, and to comfort their hearts. Then in 2 Tim. iv. 12, he is sent again to Ephesus ; lastly, in writing to Titus (iii. 12), the apostle proposes to send him to him. On each of the five occasions where he is mentioned he is on a journey or on the point of departing for one. It was a great and precious privilege to be thus sent here and there to comfort the saints. His service may be summed up in the little word, "Go." Moreover, while the apostle was present in the world, Tychicus takes a secondary place. He could thus go about his service under the supervision of the apostle ;

this shows that he was conscious of his weakness and inexperience. Joshua, Elisha and Timothy commenced their work in a similar way under the guidance of Moses, Elijah and Paul, and the Lord was pleased to honour such servants later.

The second who is mentioned is ONESIMUS (v. 9), of whom the epistle to Philemon speaks. He was sent with Tychicus to Colosse. Formerly he had been a bad slave and ran away from his master; but he had been brought to the knowledge of the Lord, grace had worked in his heart and had produced such fruit that now he could be profitable to his master, to the apostle and to the Lord Himself. Such is the effect of grace. Grace is everything in service, as in all other things.

Then we find ARISTARCHUS (v. 10), a companion of the captivity of the apostle. He is mentioned in Acts xx. at the same time as Tychicus. But how different is his service! In Acts xix. 29, and xxvii. 2, he is a fellow-traveller with the apostle, here and in the Epistle to Philemon he is a fellow-prisoner. He is always his companion, whether on a journey or in prison. His service can also be summed up in a word, but one different from that of "Go" to Tychicus; for him it is "*Come.*" Near the great apostle Paul, he could profit by his instruction and enjoy his company. His service is perhaps not so prominent as that of Tychicus, but how precious it is! What grace was given him! Once again all is grace.

After him we find MARK, another example of grace. He had accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first journey, but had departed from them in Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem (Acts xiii. 13). Barnabas on the second journey proposed to take him with them, but Paul thought it not well to take with them one who had left and did not go with them to the work (Acts xv. 38). This caused such contention between them that they separated. Poor Mark! his service, instead

of bringing blessing, caused trouble. Later he was restored, and, having learned to serve, he could now be commended to the Colossians; and at the end of his course the apostle could call him to him saying: "He is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11).

If our service has been poor and unfruitful, we must not be discouraged; we should judge ourselves before the Lord, awaiting the moment chosen by Him when He can make use of us, and enable us to help others by our service. Perhaps this may take time and our faith and patience need to be exercised. Did not Moses keep his father-in-law's flocks for forty years in the desert before being used of God? We learn many things in the school of God, and it is of great value to our souls to go through it.

Later on the Lord honoured Mark, and he who had been a bad servant had the privilege of writing the Gospel of the Perfect Servant. It is interesting also to mention Mark's mother, in whose house many were gathered together praying for the deliverance of Peter from prison (Acts xii. 12). She placed her house at the disposal of the saints where they could meet together.

The next servant mentioned is JESUS called JUSTUS. Little is said of his service, but what we are told is precious: he was a fellow-worker and a comfort to the apostle. His service may not have seemed much as men count, but he did it faithfully and this was enough for the Lord.

In vv. 12 and 13 we find EPAPHRAS, one of the Colossians. He was a faithful servant of Christ to them. The first thing said of him here is that he was a slave of Christ. A slave does the will of another, his master, he does not do his own. If he had done his own will, he would certainly have returned to the Colossians, since his heart was greatly concerned about them. The Lord would have him with the apostle, and as a faithful slave

he obeys. But at a distance he continues his work on behalf of the Colossians. He laboured fervently for them in prayers. This labour may also be ours, dear brothers and sisters. Epaphras had served the Colossians while in their midst, now he still serves them from a distance. It is also our privilege to do this on behalf of those from whom we are separated; distance is no obstacle in this. May we be enabled better to serve on our knees, having our hearts much in exercise about others!

LUKE, the beloved physician, companion of Paul's imprisonment,, is then mentioned. He was faithful to the end. When all had forsaken the apostle, he could say: "Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. iv. 11). The Lord was pleased to honour Luke in using him to write one of the Gospels and the book of Acts.

What a contrast is he to DEMAS, who was one of the companions of the apostle in his work, but forsook him, "having loved this present world" and "departed to Thessalonica" (2 Tim. iv. 10). Those two words only, "And Demas" (v. 14) speak much. It would seem that the apostle had nothing good to say of him, as he certainly would have done so had it been possible. Poor Demas! May the Lord preserve us from being like him!

After these servants NYMPHAS is named. He had a service of little importance in the eyes of man, but it was precious in the eyes of the Lord: the church assembled in his house and this was dear to the heart of Christ. Can He forget the smallest thing done for Him during His absence?

Lastly the apostle addresses a few words to ARCHIPPUS, who also had a service which it seems he neglected. He is exhorted to take heed to the ministry he had received in the Lord that he fulfil it (v. 17): a warning which we all also need.

At the end of the chapter we find three words which recall the servant more faithful than any we have been considering : the apostle PAUL himself. "Remember my bonds." On account of his faithfulness in his service among the Gentiles, he was bound with a chain as a malefactor. In his service he displayed the spirit of His Lord and Master. Happy servant indeed ! In spite of all his sufferings, he is to be envied.

May these few remarks be the means of stirring us up and encouraging us in our service. May we be faithful in that which is entrusted to us and in the place assigned to us ! Soon will the time of service be ended, and may we have the joy of hearing the Lord say to us : "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. xxv. 21). And while here, let us each remind ourselves that even if having done all (and who has?), we are unprofitable servants (Luke xvii. 10).

ALF. G.

Remarks in a Bible Reading, on the word "Faithful."

"He Abideth Faithful" (2 Tim. ii. 13).

THIS word in its full meaning can only be applied to the Lord, as indeed is the case here. With us, who are His, though we may be faithful in a certain degree and for a time, yet there is ever the possibility of being unfaithful. This we find foreseen in our verse : "If we believe not" (lit. : "If we are unfaithful") . . . In view of this, His faithfulness shines forth so much the brighter, limitless and measureless. The Holy Spirit never fails to add this to the Lord's other virtues and glories, as we may see in the following passages :—

"*Faithful* is He that calleth you, Who also will do it" (1 Thess. v. 24).

“But the Lord is *faithful*” (2 Thess. iii. 3),

“He is *faithful* that promised” (Heb. x. 23),

The “merciful and *faithful* High Priest” (Heb. ii. 17),
 “Who was *faithful* to Him that appointed Him” (Heb.
 iii. 2), is *faithful* “as a Son over His house” (Heb. iii.
 6), and is the *faithful* and true Witness (Rev. iii. 14)—
 even He Who is called “*Faithful* and True” (Rev.
 xix. 11).

He delights to associate Himself with such as manifest the same character and whom He calls *faithful* entirely apart from the degree of faithfulness that might be shown in practice.

Twice we find this indicated in the Epistles of the apostle Paul, when he addresses the assemblies at Ephesus and at Colosse. In Eph. i. 1, we read, “. . . to the *faithful* in Christ Jesus,” where the believers are seen solely in their relation to Christ, which is by far the highest position in which they may be viewed. Whereas it says in Colossians i. 2, “. . . . to the saints and *faithful brethren* in Christ,” by which we are pointed to their relations one toward another, which are founded upon Him.

However, not only now, but also later, at the time of His glorious victory over the ten kings who will be united under the guidance of the beast and make war against the Lamb, we see in fellowship with Him such who are named, not only “called and chosen,” but explicitly, “*faithful*” (Rev. xvii. 14).

The same feature we find with the apostles in the days of their service and testimony.

Paul speaks with humble admiration of the fact that the Lord has counted him *faithful*, putting him (such as he was) into the ministry (1 Tim. i. 12), and who can doubt that he who penned the word of victory (2 Tim. iv. 6-8) kept the faith unto the end?

Moreover, it gave *him* pleasure to know he was surrounded by faithful ones.

He writes of Timothy, his beloved and *faithful son* in the Lord (1 Cor. iv. 17); he calls Tychicus a beloved brother and *faithful minister* in the Lord, in Eph. vi. 21, as well as in Col. iv. 7. Onesimus, in verse 8, is spoken of in a homely way, as a *faithful* and beloved brother. In a similar manner, Peter mentions Sylvanus as a *faithful brother* (1 Pet. v. 12).

In the letter to Pergamos the exalted Lord remembers how during those serious days of persecution Antipas was His *faithful martyr* (Rev. ii. 13).

However manifold the tasks of the servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God may be, the word says emphatically: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found *faithful*" (1 Cor. iv. 2).

Thus the faithful Timothy is instructed: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to *faithful* men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2).

This, however, has been the case at all times. Faithful men have looked out for faithful companions and fellow-servants. We may again remember Moses, who, in the passage quoted above (Heb. iii. 1, 5), is compared and contrasted with Christ, the Son over His own house, and of whom it is stated that he was, as a servant, *faithful* in all God's house. According to the advice, authorised of God, of Jethro, his father-in-law, he had to provide able men such as feared God, men of truth, hating covetousness, whom he should place over the people, to be rulers, in order to judge the people (Ex. xviii. 21, 22). Did he not find in Joshua a "servant from the days of his youth" (Num. xi. 28, *lit.*), one like himself, just as did Paul in Timothy?

Likewise Nehemiah, himself a faithful man, after having built the wall, gave two men charge over Jerusalem, namely, his brother Hanani (who had brought him the sad news of the great affliction and of the reproach of the remnant, and of the wall of

Jerusalem being broken down, Neh. i. 2, 3), as well as Hananiah, the ruler of the palace, "for he was a *very faithful (lit.)* man, and *feared God* above many" (Neh. vii. 2).

Thus we see, in those who fear God (compare also Daniel and his fellows, Dan. vi. 5, 11; iii. 16-18), there is rooted, in believers of all times, the faithfulness which in Gal. v. 22, is the seventh to be enumerated as the fruit of the Spirit. P.S.

Encouragement.

A YOUNG Christian was rather timidly seeking to serve the Lord by giving away a few tracts in a railway compartment. Suddenly an unknown lady, in a clear voice that all could hear, said, "I also am a Christian." Ah, how greatly cheered was that young man! Many years have passed since then, but those blessed words of encouragement have never been forgotten—even now they seem to re-echo—I also am a Christian. What power there is in a simple confession of Christ!

I would not work my soul to save,
For that my Lord has done;
But I would work like any slave,
For love of God's dear Son.

Anon.

Gathered to Remember the Lord.

Tune : Stella.

AS lingers still this "little while,"
 We gather round Thee here, O Lord;
 No palaces of lordly style
 Attract us; but Thy simple word.
 Called to the table Thou hast spread,
 Our souls on Thee are richly fed.
 Much more than satisfied we are,
 For Thou hast filled these hearts with praise;
 Once sinners lost, from Thee afar,
 As saints we now our anthems raise.
 Thou risen Christ, our Saviour, Lord!
 We bless Thy name with one accord.
 We hear again those words of grace,
 Of "Peace, My peace," be unto you,
 As in Thy wondrous words we trace
 Those promises so blest, so true;
 And every blessing, Lord, we owe
 To Thee—Thy cross of deepest woe.
 Thy hands, Thy feet, in man's deep hate
 There nailed to the accursed tree,
 Tell of the Christ-rejecter's fate,
 But of the grace that set us free;
 For Thou, the corn of wheat, hast died,
 And all God's claims are satisfied.
 This bread we eat, this cup we drink,
 And thus Thy death for us show forth;
 Of love ineffable we think,
 When Thou didst bear God's righteous wrath;
 Our hearts rejoice that all is o'er,
 And Thou shalt suffer thus no more.
 With grateful homage of the heart,
 We gladly in Thy presence sing,
 Bid things of time and sense depart;
 Of love's sweet incense to Thee bring—
 Thou, Christ, dost fill each soul with joy,
 Thy praise our endless, sweet employ.

Grace Reigning.

THE question is often asked—"What is Christianity, and in what does it differ from the Jews' religion?" One special feature is given in the Epistle to the Romans, "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21).

All through the long period, from the fall of the first man till the advent of the Second, God's grace had been restrained toward man. His heart of love was ever what John iii. 16 has proved for all eternity, but while He "waited to be gracious," man's sin often occasioned judgment, His "strange work," for He is Light as well as Love. At last grace and truth were manifested in this world in the Person of the Son of God, the Word made flesh; but dwelling among sinful men, the grace was despised and the light hated, except by the few who in His words and works beheld His glory (John i. 14; ii. 11). Yet grace could not reign through righteousness, as to the believer, until by the obedience unto death of the Sinless One the demands of God's holiness were fully met in His unsparing judgment of sin. Proof has been demonstrated to all, for God has "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). Now with the Second Man risen, glorified and seated on the Father's throne, having made purification for sins, the throne of God is a throne of pure unlimited grace. The chief of sinners is welcomed with "the abounding grace of God and the free gift in grace" (Rom. v. 15). "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7). Indeed nothing can hold back the tide of His infinite grace but the unwillingness of man to receive it. No questions of sins and their judgment will be raised with any who now come unto God by Him, drawn by the

62 grace and goodness of God and impelled by their own want and misery. Not that God makes light of sin, or any longer passes over sins when forgiving the sinner, as He formerly did (Rom. iii. 25), but at the cross He has already entered into judgment upon them, when His own Son, sent in love into this world to be the propitiation for sins, suffered for them. Now grace reigns through righteousness, and the returning prodigal receives not only the kiss of reconciliation and the assurance of full remission of sins, but the best robe and an honoured place at the Father's table, the free gift of righteousness, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is only for the unbeliever who despises the riches of His grace that judgment is reserved, as unmingled and unsparing as grace is pure and free.

These ways of God in present grace and future judgment find many beautiful illustrations in Old Testament history. May a brief glance at one familiar incident (2 Samuel ix.) lead us into a deeper appreciation of the fullness and freeness of the grace by which we are saved and wherein we stand.

The long war between the house of Saul and the house of David was over. Saul and Jonathan his son had fallen before the Philistines and David had been anointed king by Judah and all Israel. In David's own heart there springs up the desire to show kindness to any who may be left of Saul's house, according to his covenant with Jonathan many years earlier. For it is not the need of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, that draws out his compassion, though well it might have done—lame on both feet, in hiding among strangers at Lo-debar, a place of no pasture, as the name signifies, possibly, too, fearing the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children (for had not Saul sought David's life?). News of David's purpose, however, draws Mephibosheth from his hiding place, and, falling at the king's feet, he hears for himself and from the

king in person of lands restored and a place continually at the king's table as one of the king's sons. Conscious as never before of his own unworthiness (for what, to an Eastern, less fitted for a king's presence than "a dead dog"?) he nevertheless bows to acknowledge the favours bestowed upon him, his heart too full for many words. He learned more of that love as he sat continually at the king's table, but the king's rejection later was the occasion for showing how full was his heart's response, while the king's return to Jerusalem made manifest an attachment of heart that could reach beyond the gift to become absorbed with the person of the royal giver (2 Samuel xix. 24, 30).

Who can fail to trace in this the picture of God's own desire to show kindness, in His great love fulfilling, in time, His own eternal purposes of grace toward those who had become enemies, poor, maimed prodigals of Adam's race, hiding from God in a land of perennial famine (Eph. i. 3-14; ii. 4-7)? To draw such to Himself "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," "to seek and to save" the lost, and now all who not only believe the report but come unto Him, and in heart and will prostrate themselves at His feet receive from Himself "grace upon grace": eternal life, forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, salvation, and sonship with Christ, indeed "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." No judgment for past sins, no reproof, no prescribed measure of repentance or degree of faith, nothing demanded from the sinner, and nothing on God's side to hinder the outflow of His grace to everyone who disclaims all merit and falls at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Grace is supreme where sin had been; and the prodigal is clothed in the best robe at the Father's table.

"By grace ye are saved." And salvation, as it is God's gift, so is it received through faith (Eph. ii. 5, 8), "on the principle of faith that it might be by grace" (Rom. iv. 16), for any other principle for bestowing it

would either detract from grace or compromise righteousness. "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2).

The throne of God has not in the past been thus accessible to sinners, nor will it always remain so. It is while He has with Him upon His throne the One Who so perfectly glorified Him upon the earth with regard to sin that God can bestow such boundless saving grace upon sinners, and do it righteously. His eyes, long turned from sinners because purer than to behold iniquity, now rest with holy delight upon Christ, and accordingly He accepts the believer in all the value of the Person and work of His own Beloved Son. There can thus be no higher blessing conceived by mortal mind than is now revealed in the gospel of God's grace in Christianity, alike the gospel of the glory of the blessed God (1 Timothy i. 11) and of Christ (2 Cor. iv. 4), and the gospel of our salvation (Eph. i. 13). But if, for a little while, this world still rejects such a Saviour and neglects "so great salvation," and we, too, who believe are as little accounted of as He was, whilst we learn to suffer for Him now in proportion to our devotedness of heart to Himself, we know to our joy that when He returns to judge the world in righteousness and to reign, we shall be manifested with Him in glory and be like Him for evermore.

H. H.

Psalm cxix.—4.

THE remarkable and pious utterances of this fine character, so expressive of a life spent in communion with Jehovah, found throughout the psalm, hardly prepare us for the declaration at its close that he is like a lost sheep, albeit he still clings to his integrity as a servant of Jehovah and declares he does not forget His commandments. The explanation of this seemingly con-

tradictory experience lies in the truth that no O.T. believer had a knowledge of redemption such as the Christian now has, founded upon the finished work of Christ upon the cross. Though born of God they knew not that they were children, and knowing well that God was abundantly able to pardon, they nevertheless were unable to rejoice in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins. For as the day of atonement in Israel was the yearly witness to the gracious disposition of Jehovah toward them and of His willingness to forgive, so was it also, by its constant repetition, the solemn reminder that the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sins (Heb. x. 1-4). Thus do we see that settled peace of conscience was impossible in that day, as also it will be unknown in those days that lie between the coming of the Lord for His saints and His coming with his saints, a period during which the Holy Spirit does not dwell upon earth and the people of God are earnestly looking forward to His being poured out upon all flesh, on the Gentiles as certainly as on the Jews.

Thankful indeed should the Christian be that the Holy Spirit is now given to all that obey God (Acts v. 32) and that ALL who believe the gospel of salvation are sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of the glory of God (Eph. i. 13, 14).

There is a difference, moreover, to be observed between the godly one of our psalm and those who in the New Testament are described as the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. x. 6). The latter are really lost, but the former only *feels his likeness to a lost sheep*. The wanderings of the straying sheep fitly express the spiritual uncertainty of his soul.

And very touching it is to see the tender compassion of the Lord Jesus towards these same lost sheep when, in the days of His flesh, He went in and out amongst them and sought their eternal blessing. By parable

as well as by the plainest speech He made known the love of His heart towards them. If they are like sheep lost upon the mountains He is the Shepherd Who seeks them, and finds them, and brings them home upon His shoulders with great joy, saying, I have found My sheep that was lost, and He tells how God and the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. Happy indeed will Israel be when they are able to say of Jesus, their Messiah, The Lord hath laid our iniquities upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. (See Isaiah liii.).

“In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest [or be silent] in His love, He will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. iii. 16, 17).

With this holy and blessed future scene before our eyes, the happy consummation of God's dealings with His once sinful people, the triumph of grace towards the very nation that once cried, Away with Him, let Him be crucified, we would only add that He Who is to be the Saviour of Israel in that day is a very present Saviour for all who will call upon Him even in this our own day, for WHOSOEVER shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. x. 13).

An Extract from a Letter.

Faith, Love and Hope.

HOW cheering it is to observe what lessons the Holy Spirit teaches us by the lives of the O.T. saints! Take, for example, Jonathan, Ittai and Mephibosheth.

Jonathan shows *faith* in the Victor (1 Sam. xviii. 1-4).

Ittai shows *love* to the Rejected (2 Sam. xv. 19-22).

Mephibosheth shows *hope* in the returning One (2 Sam. xix. 24-30).

How beautiful the traits and characters of all these coalesce and are centred in a conspicuous figure in the New Testament, namely, the apostle Paul! We see in him :—

Faith that strips for the Victor (Phil. iii. 7, 9).

Love that follows the rejected One (Phil. i. 20).

Hope that awaits the returning Christ (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

As to love, David did not command or force the affections of Ittai (a stranger and exile), but his deep love involved him in David's rejection and suffering, and David valued it. Surely it is so now with reference to the crucified Christ. He values and accepts such love, with all its freshness, from a heart that is devoted to Him, as the rejected One (John xii. 26). *Hope* in Mephibosheth wanted the king himself, not the land!

J.S.

A Letter Written Many Years Ago to a Young Sister in Christ.

Coffrane, August, 1875.

Dear J.,

I write you in English as I see you have given up the thought of continuing the study of French. That doesn't matter if you stick close to Christ.

You will learn from M.'s letter the biggest part of my budget of news.

I have been considering a great deal lately the life of faith upon the Son of God. How often it is considered as though at conversion it was a finished matter, as if there were nothing more to desire. If it is a question of atonement, it is plain that was finished upon the cross, 1800 years ago, but then there is the worry and difficulty and care of every day. And for that we have a living Christ in heaven.

Conversion is like the Exodus from Egypt, the land of bondage. Although there are lots who profess to be converted, to this hour they do not know how to be free from the bondage of sin, and are still the slaves of lust.

But there is a land of promise to be entered and possessed by faith, not simply a notion to be talked about, but a real heavenly life to be lived. What a blessed lesson when we have learned practical freedom from sin, and sin means my own will in every shape and form. There is no freedom but by death. We must oppose our death in Christ to the claims of sin—the old master that we once served. He that is dead is freed from sin. Sin may present itself every day, in the kitchen, at the breakfast table, in all sorts of ways, to claim our service by ungovernable tempers and evil desires. There is but one method of deliverance—death. “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” (Rom. vi. 11). Christ “bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness” (1 Pet. ii. 24). “Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Pet. iv. 1). There you have the moral crucifixion. If I indulge the flesh it is plain it doesn’t suffer, but if I resist it unsparingly, I apply death to it, and it does suffer.* You can’t kill a man without his suffering, but then I, the new man, that which is born of God, and that does not sin (1 John iii. 9), is in joy. “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Col. iii. 5). “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. v. 24).

This then is the starting point for a life of faith—freedom from the power of sin, by reckoning myself dead. Then if I speak of my care and worry — what

* It is, perhaps, more accurate to say that it is I who suffer, not my flesh.—Ed.

must I do with it? Leave it all to Christ. It isn't the sheep who takes care of the shepherd, but vice versa. To be rid of care then I must take my place as a sheep and let Jesus the Good Shepherd take care of me.

"Leave it all with Jesus, day by day.

Faith can firmly trust Him, come what may.

Hope has dropped her anchor—found her rest,

In the calm, sure haven of His breast."

Love esteems it heaven to abide at His side. If you want to know whether He will keep you or not—read Ps. cxxi. 3, 8; Ps. cxxv. 1; Isaiah xxvi. 3; Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3.

With regard to heavenly places, one may say "I have heard about it but *I* am not worthy of it"; but then *Christ is*. Simpler faith takes what love offers. (Luke i. 38; 2 Sam. vii. 25, 26, 28, 29.) May Christ enlarge our faith's capacity wider and wider still and then with all that is in Him our souls for ever fill! That we should be filled with all the fulness of God is what God has designed for us (Eph. iii. 17-21).

Give my love to A. and all the dear ones at home. Remember us in prayer. We are all pretty well through mercy; lots of work, and happy in the Lord, bless His name.

"Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast,

There by His love o'ershadowed, sweetly my soul shall rest."

Yours for ever, your brother in Christ. w.s.

On Thy compassion I repose,
In weakness and distress;
I will not ask for greater ease,
Lest I should love Thee less.
Oh! 'tis a blessed thing for me
To NEED Thy tenderness.

A.L.W.

Christian Liberty—3.

IN the seven addresses to the churches (Rev. ii.-iii.), the one who has an ear to hear is told to hear (not what the church says, but) what the Spirit says to the churches, which is, for us, the written word of God. Thus, it is *God* we are to hear. So also Peter in Acts v. 26, when speaking before the Jewish Sanhedrim, said, "We ought to obey"—four words which express an important truth. But when an authority was set up which claimed to be of God, yet which commanded what was contrary to God's will, he added four other words, "God rather than men."

Obedience is a much needed principle in these days truly, but if any authority commands anything contrary to God, the Christian must obey God rather than men. This places the soul in the presence of God Whose authority is owned.

Taking the Epistles of John—these were not addressed to the church as such, but are a setting forth of those fundamental truths so much needed by us to-day. In the second and third Epistles, the test was "the truth." Anyone who did not bring "the truth" as to Christ was to be peremptorily refused: those who brought it were to be received and forwarded on their way. One thing that is striking here is, that the test was not an ecclesiastical position, but *the truth*—it was individual.

Another thing which may deprive us of the liberty which is ours in Christ is, bondage to the opinions of others. An instance of this is shown by Peter in Gal. ii. He fell under the influence of Jewish prejudice and of those who came from Jerusalem, and did not act straightforwardly. Which of us has not suffered, more or less, from the fear of man? It may be a most powerful motive to keep us in bondage.

And yet there is a sense in which we are bound to

consider the conscience of others, and not to do things which we might be quite free to do so far as we ourselves are concerned, but which might stumble others as we find in Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. vii. This consideration for others is not, of course, any infringement of true liberty.

Again, the apostle Paul, acting in perfect liberty, but in a way which some who are great sticklers for holding to exact forms, might find much fault with, took Timothy, who was the child of a mixed marriage (his father being a Greek) and circumcised him. But when some wanted to compel Titus to be circumcised, he would not give way for an hour (Gal. ii. 3). In this case it was a question of imposing the law on the Gentiles, and Paul would have nothing to do with it. But, in order to meet Jewish prejudices, he acted in perfect liberty as regards Timothy, in Acts xvi. He was not bound by a strict rule which will admit of no relaxation whatever.

Yet the Christian, being a member of the body of Christ, has to consider every other member of that same body. He is not an isolated unit, an individual who may act simply for himself without consideration for others. "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5); "We, being many, are one bread and one body (1 Cor. x. 17); "There is one body and one Spirit" (Eph. iv. 4); and it is written to the Corinthians, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 27).

Thus in the Christian assembly there was this link, and consequently consideration one for another. God had made them one, and this unity of the Spirit was to be carried out practically in a spirit of grace and humility. According to God's ordering of things there was no room left for self or self-will. Sectarian divisions, such as we see to-day, are opposed to the truth of the church of God.

In one sense the unity God has made cannot be broken, nor can a true member of the body of Christ be cut off. But we may have to separate from fellowship with persons in the church of God. Such a breach would be sectarianism, unless it were necessary to purge ourselves from "vessels of dishonour" (2 Tim. ii.), and if that had to be done, as a last resource, no doubt God would make it plain, so plain that a simple and godly soul would be able to see the need for it.

The unity of the church, carried out in practice, is certainly a Scriptural principle. But a false imitation of it is deceptive and dishonouring to God. The unity of Rome, for instance, is a mechanical thing, an enforced unity, brought about by submission to "the Church," or the priest, who represents it, and who interposes himself between the soul and God. It may also be said truly that if we make unity our *object*, it may lead to a kind of unity obtained at the expense of truth, and this would be no true unity.

True unity in the church can only be by God drawing souls to Christ and therefore to one another. It is the work of the Holy Spirit—and how sweet it is, as Psalm cxxxiii. tells us. But it cannot be produced by the rod, nor by an enforced submission to an unwritten creed, which indeed may be as oppressive as a written one, or more so.

This very thing appeared very early in the Church's history. In the Ignatian Epistles, written about A.D. 115, some of which are considered to be authentic, the writer frequently urges obedience to the Bishop; probably because things were already falling into a state of confusion, and this was considered to be the best way of maintaining order. It should, however, be remarked that the word "Bishop" then meant a different thing from what we usually mean by it—it was simply an overseer in a local assembly.

But now, at the end of this dispensation, when the

church of God is in ruins as to its outward unity, we cannot depend on gifted men, however much we may value them in their place. They would be but a broken reed to lean upon, and they are not agreed amongst themselves. We must fall back upon "God and the word of His grace," which can never fail the trusting soul.

Let us never forget that there is also to-day amidst the general decline, all the more urgent need for that which is indispensable for a right understanding of the will of the Lord: i.e., practical godliness and separation from the world. There must also be a state of soul which depends on God, realising one's own weakness and need of guidance by His word and His Spirit.

So also with a company of Christians—there must be a moral state which God can approve of, if there is to be real blessing and spiritual power. This, it ought to be unnecessary to say, cannot be brought about by the rod of severe discipline, but by a ministry of Christ to the soul in the power of the Holy Ghost. The sheep of Christ need to be fed and cared for; not driven.

Another matter calling for some remark in this connection is that of Christian service. The gifts are given by the ascended Lord for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, etc. The servant of God is responsible to the Lord in the exercise of them, not to the assembly. So in Acts xiii. the Spirit said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Then they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, not by the church; the church commended them to the Lord with prayer and fasting.

It is encouraging for us to see the way in which the Lord Himself sees to it that His people should have that measure of liberty which He sees well. He says to Philadelphia, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. iii. 8). Her very weakness casts her all the more on His strong arm,

and so in grace, He gives liberty in service, in testimony, etc. When *He* opens a door none can shut, and unless He opens it no one else can.

Lastly, let us remark that the word of God is one of the chief—perhaps we might say *the* chief—means of keeping the soul in direct touch with God Himself. When we read the Bible, do we realise that in it God Himself is speaking to us? It is of course very helpful to get instruction from others or from their writings, but it is true only of the Bible that we can go to it with the assurance of finding there pure and undiluted truth, and God Himself speaking to us directly. And we may add that, in prayer, we speak to Him directly—into His very ear—about our every need and want, as well as about the interests of Christ in this world.

Before closing, let us refer to three things as to which Scripture expressly forbids all liberty:—

- 1 “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Gal. v. 13). How “the flesh,” that evil principle in us, would like to use Christian liberty for its own ends! But no! it must not be! Christ, not self, is the Christian’s object.
- 2 “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (1 Peter ii. 16). This is so plain that it needs no comment.
- 3 “Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak” (1 Cor. viii. 9). Our liberty is not to be a stumbling-block to others, especially those that are weak in the faith.

F.G.B.

“Consider the Lilies How They Grow”—I.

(Matt. vi. 28; Luke xii. 22).

Written 40 years ago by a Brother in New Zealand.

WE are told in the scriptures “to consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” What an object lesson for our poor hearts! Let us consider them a little in dependence upon the Lord, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may profit thereby, as also we should from all the sayings which fell from the lips of Jesus.

Firstly, we have to consider how they grow: they toil not, yet they grow. How then do they grow and become clothed with such glory and beauty? The seed is put into the ground, being buried out of sight entirely; then the refreshing rain descends upon it, after which, the bright, and powerful, and transforming rays of the sun cause it to grow, and likewise embellish it with a grace and glory in the which we can learn the wisdom and power of God, Who finds His delights in all the works of His own hand; for “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

Now we can learn a lesson as to ourselves in this. Firstly, the heart and conscience are ploughed up by the Spirit of God — for all must be of God, whether in creation or in redemption—then the seed, which is the word of God, is deposited deep down in the heart, by the which we are, through the operations of the Spirit, “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” Then by the dews of heaven and the streams of the river of God’s pleasures, the seed is watered, and with the warmth of the rays of the glory of God (now shining in the face of Jesus Christ) streaming down

upon it, it is caused to grow, giving it a character like unto His own, while it is yet here in the valley. It is down here the lilies grow, and it is down here we must grow. There will be no growing in heaven; for we shall then be perfect. It is down here the growth takes place. It is here we are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The lilies require watering continually in order to grow, and so do we. The word of God is that by which we grow, and as we are feeding upon the "sincere milk of the word" we grow thereby: as the lilies which grow upward, so are we to "grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." And according as the word of Christ is dwelling in us richly, so our thoughts and affections will be going upward; thus we become more like Him in our pathway down here—walking in humble dependence and obedience to the word of God.

The lily is clothed with a garment of purity, for which it toiled not, neither spun for itself. It was the work of another. It did not have its existence, and grow of itself; neither did it clothe itself with such a beautiful garment. It was all the workmanship of a Divine Person, Who works for His own glory; and so in like manner, we who have believed on the Son of God as our Saviour are clothed with a spotless garment; for our robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." What rest and satisfaction to our souls to see the work of Christ for us, and the work of the Spirit in us, and all planned and purposed by God! We who were lost and dead morally, now have Christ as our life, and as our food—He is the Living Word, and the Bread of Life which came down from heaven, that we may eat, and grow thereby—and it is through Him we have this robe of spotless purity, and are conscious of it too, through the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us. S.D.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Spiritual Worship.

IT is impossible to separate true spiritual worship and communion from the perfect offering of Christ to God. The moment our worship separates itself from this, from its efficacy and the consciousness of that infinite acceptability of Jesus before the Father, it becomes carnal, and either a form, or the delight, of the flesh. If the peace-offering was eaten separately from the offering of the fat, it was a mere carnal festivity, or a form of worship, which had no real communion with the delight and good pleasure of God, and was worse than unacceptable—it was really iniquity.

When the Holy Spirit leads us into real spiritual worship, it leads us into communion with God, into the presence of God; and then, necessarily, all the infinite acceptability to Him of the offering of Christ is present to our spirit. We are associated with it; it forms an integral and necessary part of our communion and worship. We cannot be in the presence of God in communion without finding it there. It is, indeed, the ground of our acceptance, as of our communion. Apart from this, then, 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 our wants and desires in the unction of the Spirit); and our singing is only pleasure of the ear, taste in music, and expressions in which we sympathise; all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil; the Spirit of God owns it not; it is not in spirit and in truth; it is really iniquity.

J.N.D.

Illustrations of the Faithfulness of God—3.

A YOUNG man whose parents were hostile to true piety was converted to God. His father said to him : “John, you know that I am an enemy of religion ; I will not have anyone pray in my house.”

Knowing that “it is better to obey God than man,” the young Christian, in spite of this prohibition, “per-severed in prayer.”

One day the father, very angry, said : “This must come to an end, choose between God and me. I swear solemnly that you shall not again cross the threshold of my house unless you give up praying. I give you until to-morrow to think it over.”

The son passed the night beseeching the help of God. In the morning he got up, very distressed at the thought of being disowned by his relatives, but resolved, come what may, to remain faithful to his Saviour. The father accosted him roughly, and said to him : “Well, have you made your choice?”

“Father,” replied the young believer, “I cannot disobey God ; I cannot forget my God.”

“In that case, leave my house instantly and never again appear before my eyes.”

The mother was present when this took place. The harshness of her husband had prevailed over her ; nevertheless she was more moved than she wished it to appear.

“Leave instantly !” repeated the relentless old man.

The young man moved towards the door ; but at the moment of going out he turned round and said to his parents :

“Before leaving you for ever, will you grant me one favour, only one?” “Say what it is,” answered his father ; “it shall never be said that we have refused our

child his last request ; but remember that after that all will be at an end between us."

"Well, then," replied the son, "I desire that before my departure you will let me pray just here for you and for mother."

The parents, who had been expecting something else, remained dumb and confused, and the son, falling on his knees, proceeded to pray with such unction and power, with a fervour so divine and a love so real for their souls, that they in their turn fell face downwards to the ground. They were still in this attitude when the young man arose.

"Don't go away, John," said his father to him. "Remain with us, my son, remain with us."

Shortly after, not only the father, but every member of his family found pleasure in Christian fellowship. The prayer of faith had carried off a fresh victory.

Thus is the Lord pleased to show His faithfulness towards those who call upon Him. Look at Daniel in the den of lions (Dan. vi.), look at the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace (Dan. iii.); their God Whom they served delivered them. He shut the mouths of the lions and quenched the violence of the fire for those who had believed on Him.

Do you not wish, dear reader, to have to do with such a God? Do you not desire to come to Him that you may have life eternal? You will have a Friend as powerful as He is faithful, and life with its difficulties and its trials will be transformed for you into a time of joyful service and patient waiting for Christ, Who will come and "will transform our body of humiliation into the likeness of His body of glory" (Phil. iii. 21, N.Tr.).

From the French.

Faith in God above all Circumstances.

“Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”—(Heb. xii. 28).

“Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength (lit. rock of ages)”—(Isaiah xxvi. 4).

AN active ploughman drove his plough
Across a field;
With diligence he worked to gain
A fruitful yield.
Unheeded there a little lark
Had built its nest;
Its careful industry instinct
With home and rest.
The ploughshare made its labour vain,
And up it soared;
From its full heart to heaven itself
Its plaint it poured.
Then when the ploughman's work was o'er
Down, down it came,
With strength renewed to start afresh
A short life claim.
Could I see all I value most
Thus rudely tossed,
And rise to God with songs of trust,
Though all seem lost?
I learn a lesson from the lark,
And, learning, muse:
The God Who loves me never will
My trust refuse.
Have faith in God, ye troubled souls,
And find how good
It is to trust the One Who has
Your Surety stood,

G.S.P.

The Blood of Jesus.

"It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"—Lev. xvii. 11

"Without shedding of blood is no remission"—Heb. ix. 22.

HOW very plainly scripture shows that the way of approach to God is by blood.

What God's eye rested on in Abel's sacrifice was the blood.

When the children of Israel were delivered from the bondage of slavery, the token of their deliverance was the blood. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. xii. 13).

The hearts of the Israelites might be filled with peace when they had obeyed the commandment of the Lord by putting the blood on the two side-posts and the lintel of their houses and remaining within until the morning. The storm of God's wrath and judgment would be raging at midnight, but how safe they were under the shelter of the blood!

They learnt that night, "How that the Lord put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" (Ex. xi. 7). Those who are cleansed by the precious blood of Christ know the difference the Lord has put between them and the world. We read in John iii. 36, that the wrath of God abideth on the unbeliever; it is not yet manifested because God is gracious and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He bids us flee from the wrath to come.

The sacrifices of the O.T. speak to us of God's requirements in approaching Him.

The high priest could not enter into the Holy of Holies without blood, neither could he enter at all times, but only at God's appointed time once every year (Lev. xvi. 2, 34). Man was kept at a distance, but now the soul cleansed by the blood of Jesus may, with boldness, enter into the holiest, drawing near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 19-22).

"We are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph.

ii. 13). "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. v. 9).

"Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away its stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Took all our guilt away,
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they."

In 1 Pet. i. 19, we read of the precious blood of Christ as the price paid for our redemption. There is nothing in this whole world which can be compared to it. The valuable things of this world are but as dross in comparison. How precious, too, in God's sight is the soul of the sinner (Ps. xlix. 8). What a price God paid for our redemption! The children of Israel were to give half a shekel for the atonement money. The rich were not to give more, and the poor were not to give less (Ex. xxx. 15). Whether we are great or little sinners, it needs the precious blood of Christ to cleanse each one.

"Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou giver of all good,
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood."

Some time ago I remember reading an incident in the life of a missionary working in India. He was travelling over a rough road in a wagon with several Indians. Among their number was an old man who was very ill. He was taken from the wagon and left on the roadside to die. The missionary, feeling anxious about his soul, went to him and enquired if he knew the name of Jesus. For answer the old man drew from his pocket a small

piece of paper torn from a Bible with these words on it, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). This was all he knew of the word of God, but he gave the missionary to understand he was resting on that precious blood which was able to save his soul and make him fit for the presence of God for all eternity.

How blessed is that precious blood which can cleanse the vilest sinner !

It is a solemn thought that the door of mercy will not always be open for the sinner to enter in, but now God is beseeching souls to be reconciled to Him through the death of His beloved Son.

There is a day coming when the Master of the house will arise and close that door of mercy, when the loudest and most urgent knocking will not avail to open it, a day when the Lord will say, "Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke xiii. 27).

Now in this day of grace His pleading voice is calling the sinner to come unto Him. We have His sure word of promise in John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? (Heb. ii. 3). The One Who is so willing to save the sinner to-day is coming again to take all those who are cleansed by His precious blood to be with Himself throughout eternity. That coming may take place at any moment. "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear," then? We are told in 2 Thess. i. 9, that they will "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

God hath commanded all men everywhere to repent, "Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31).

M. II.

A Letter to the Editor.

DEAR Sir,—Some time ago a series of letters appeared in a great morning journal under the title “If I were a preacher.” The writers looked at the subject from various angles, some Christian and some non-Christian. The true appeal in such a matter should always be to the holy word of God, and particularly to the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament there are five principal preachers :

1. John the Baptist—who came to go before in the spirit and power of Elias . . . to make ready for Jehovah a prepared people. He preached, “Repent and receive remission of sins” (Mark i.).

2. Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, “The time is fulfilled . . . Repent and believe the gospel” (Mark i.). On taking His leave from His disciples immediately before His ascension he said to them that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations—and they were witnesses to these things—but they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 47-49).

3. Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and said to the Jews, Repent . . . and in the name of Jesus Christ receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 38). To Cornelius at Cæsarea—To Him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness that through His name (Jesus) whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins (Acts x. 43).

4. Philip went down “to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them”—and subsequently was commanded by an angel of Jehovah, “Arise, go . . . unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert” Here he found a man sitting in his

chariot reading Isa. liii. 7, 8. The man invited him to a seat in his chariot and Philip from the same scripture preached to him Jesus (Acts viii. 5, 26-40).

5. Paul says at Antioch, Be it known unto you . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

At Ephesus Paul says, I kept back nothing testifying repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ . . . For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God (Acts xx. 20, 21, 27).

Further, Paul writes, I declare the gospel which I preached . . . How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

This was the gospel, preached, and received and wherein (says Paul) ye stand and by which ye are saved (1 Cor. xv. 1, 2).

In the Epistle to Timothy the apostle shows the curriculum of the good minister of Jesus Christ—reading, exhortation, doctrine, cultivation, meditation, warning, and continuity. In 2 Tim. He shows him under different aspects or characteristics — child, soldier, athlete, husbandman, workman, vessel, servant. He enjoins upon him to preach what he has learned and has been assured of—the scriptures, which carry conviction, correction and complete equipment—

“A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives its light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.”

More than sixty years ago I found a quotation at the head of a page in my Bible as follows.—

“It is incredible to anyone who has not made the experiment what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation by studying the scriptures with reference to the parallel passages without any other commentary or exposition than that which the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study them in this manner, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by whom these books were dictated and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian’s faith.”—(*Horsley.*)

I followed this rule and added to it the valuable fact that the doctrine of the Bible is a progressive unfolding of a divine revelation from God—in all its parts a complete whole—and I have found that, unlike any other book, “God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain,” and that God’s book contains themes and subjects equal to everlasting demands; and while there are many things passing understanding there is nothing incredible.

The Lorica or breastplate of St. Patrick conveys the teaching of the 5th century. It has been strikingly translated—

“Christ be with me, Christ within me,
 Christ behind me, Christ before me,
 Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
 Christ to comfort and restore me.
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
 Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
 Christ in hearts of all that love me,
 Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.”

“I bind unto myself the Name, The strong Name of
the Trinity,
By invocation of the same, The Three in One, and
One in Three,
Of whom all nature had creation, Eternal Father,
Spirit, Word.
Praise to the Lord of my salvation. Salvation is of
Christ the Lord.”

“The word of the Lord endureth for ever and this is
the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”
(1 Pet. i. 25).

“To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ
our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from
the whole age before (*past*) and now (*present*) and to
all ages (*Eternity*) (Jude 25, N.Tr.).

“Glory, honour, praise and power,
Be unto the Lamb for ever !
Jesus Christ is our Redeemer :
Hallelujah ! Praise ye the Lord.”

(*Theodolph, ninth century.*)

Your obedient Servant,

G.K.

I append to these statements, that the whole revela-
tion has come down as a comprehensive whole, pointing
to the purpose of God, revealed in Christ Jesus, that
He should be Heir of all things, and, as the poet sings,
the all-absorbing Object of the praise and worship of
heaven.

“Of the vast universe of bliss,
The Centre Thou and Sun ;
The eternal theme of praise is this,
To heaven’s beloved One,
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee shall bow.”

The Death, the Blood and the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IT is most instructive as well as deeply interesting to the Christian and the Bible student who values the truth for its own sake, to notice the way in which scripture speaks of the threefold aspect of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as set out above.

That neither word is used indiscriminately, it is scarcely necessary to say. But while the one word, death, is sometimes used to cover all, there are occasions in which they could not replace each other without losing their force; and we can learn much by the varied ways and applications in which scripture presents the one great work upon which our present and eternal blessing rests, and which forms the divinely laid basis of Christianity. For if we may speak of Christianity as a religion—the religion which alone has the authority of God—it has for its basis the *death* of Christ rather than His birth.

We would briefly point out a few of the leading features of this way of God in His word. It is easily seen, for example, that the point in the apostle's argument in 1 Corinthians, 2nd chapter, 2nd verse—"For I determined not to know anything among *you* save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"—derives a force from the reference to the cross that would be lost had he spoken of the death of Christ in a general way. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ *crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 22, 23).

We are not to suppose from this that it was the only theme which they preached, for who among the apostles and preachers announced more freely and often the resurrection and kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus than Paul and his helpers?

We are familiar with the expression—"The world, the flesh, and the devil"; often, alas! used by the men of the world in jest or irony. But it expresses in a rough and ready way the three great enemies of God and His truth; and against this threefold enmity stands the power of the death of Christ for emancipation.

The Christian can say, Between me and the world the *cross* of Christ has come; between me and my sins the *blood* of Christ has come in its cleansing efficacy; and between me and my sinful nature His *death* has come in its liberating power.

But let us look a little more in detail at this threefold deliverance, and the way it is spoken of in scripture, following the order of the heading of this paper.

Where the testimony is so abundant we hesitate where to begin; but Romans, 5th chapter, 6th, 8th and 10th verses, speak plainly to our first point. "For when we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us . . . For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

If we ask why the Lord Jesus answered the Greeks who desired to see Him in the way He did—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 20)—does it not teach us the necessity, as well as the infinite value of His death, and show us clearly that the only way of blessing for man at large, and not for the Jewish nation only, was in His death? The answer to His presentation of Himself as a living Saviour is, "He came unto His own (things) and His own (people) received Him not"; as to the world that was made by Him, "the world knew Him not" (John i. 10-11). His death closes up every avenue of blessing on that ground as is so plainly taught in the parable of

the vineyard—"Last of all He sent His Son also and they said, 'Let us kill Him and let us seize on His inheritance' " (Matt. xxi. 38).

It is a cause of the deepest wonder that man by his natural wit and wisdom does not see how completely it shuts the door of hope upon any effort he may make to approach God otherwise than by the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Was not the world's answer to God's offer—"We will not have this man to reign over us"?

The answer of God in grace is—"But God commends His love to us, in that we being still sinners, Christ has died for us" (Rom. v. 6, 8, 10, N.Tr.). Without strength and ungodly as we were, Christ died for us, and as enemies we were thus reconciled.

But scripture also uses the death of Christ in another way equally remarkable and blessed, as that in which the believer obtains faith to gain deliverance from the power in his own fallen nature; the rule of the old man. No effort or means in our power—neither religion nor the indwelling Holy Spirit can alter our evil nature. The only deliverance is by way of death—not the death of the body, but our identification with Christ in His death by faith. "Are you ignorant that we, as many as have been baptised unto Jesus Christ have been baptised unto His death?"; "So also ye reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans vi. 3, 6 and 11, N.Tr.).

Other scriptures will no doubt occur to our readers that confirm the view here expressed. Let us now turn to briefly look at some references to the blood of Christ.

Here the necessity and the true meaning of atonement confront us at once. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Is not this the outstanding meaning of all the sacrifices and offerings from the beginning by Abel and Noah, on to the varied ritual delivered by Moses to Israel, that marked them

out from all the nations of the earth as a people in the knowledge and favour of God?

It is the voice of the blood-sprinkled doorposts of their houses in Egypt, and speaks the same language through all the ordinances up to the blood on the mercy-seat in the holy place (Lev. xvi.).

As to ourselves, as Christians, we rejoice ever in the word, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Then again, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation by faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 5). It is the purchase price of the assembly of God (Acts xx. 28). It is the righteous ground of our justification (Rom. v. 8-10). "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. i. 14). And if it be a question of approach to God, we hear the invitation in the words, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the *blood of Jesus* (Heb. x. 19).

It is unnecessary to say more perhaps as to that which every child of God will happily assent to; so let us turn to the teaching as to *the cross*. We shall find the uniform testimony of scripture not only to the fact but to the manner of the death of our Lord expressed in a very marked way.

As to man's estimate of the living person of the blessed Son of God in all His peerless excellence—"They all said, 'Let Him be crucified'" (Matt. xxvii. 22). Let us mark this; it is not only death but the cruel, ignominious death of a felon invented by pagan Rome. The charge against the people made by Peter in Acts ii. 23, is, "By wicked hands *crucified* and slain."

Turning now for a moment to what the apostles say in their Epistles as led and taught of the Holy Spirit, Paul says in 1 Cor. i. 23, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, unto the Greeks

foolishness.” When he says to the same people (chapter ii. 2), “We determined to know nothing amongst you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” are we to suppose it was their only theme? Nay, but their need is before Him and the fact that they gloried in man and his world. Is not this why he says in the 1st chapter, verse 30, “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto *us* wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption”? Why wisdom first and redemption last? Because they sought this world’s wisdom, and *the cross* is the only real antidote to that.

Now we turn to Romans vi. 6, and we find it is the sentence of God against the old man in ourselves; “Knowing this that our old man has been crucified with Him that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin” (New Trans.). Turning now to Galatians we find the force of the apostle’s arguments against a return to Judaism in principle is, “I am crucified with Christ” (chapter ii. 20), and the force of his teaching among *them* was, “Christ crucified” (chapter iii. 1).

Then again we see the force of his reasoning on the difference between fleshly and spiritual to be, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”; and the strength of his appeal at the end of the Epistle, “But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world” (chapter vi. 14), lies in what he saw *the cross* to mean.

Space forbids our entering with further detail into the scriptures that emphasise the truth of what we draw attention to. We have only touched upon the fringe of this interesting study which will well repay the reader to pursue, and we trust will draw out also praise and worship to Him to Whose giving of “Himself” we owe everything worth having.

T.R.

“Blessed are the Meek.”

(Matt. v. 5.)

IF we would see, in absolute perfection, the meekness of which this text speaks we must turn in our meditations to Him Who knew deeper sorrow here, and deeper communion above, than any of His people can ever know. While discoursing to the people of the kingdom, and answering their questions, He has the sense of the true state of the people, and of His own rejection as the Messiah, the King of the Jews. What sorrow must have filled His heart! What relief and rest He ever found in His Father's bosom!

If we turn to Matthew xi. 20-30, we have the distinct expression and the perfect combination of these two things in Jesus—groaning in spirit because of surrounding evil, and entire submission to His Father's will, with praise and thanksgiving. Scarcely had “Woe, woe” fallen from His lips when He looked up to heaven and said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.” With the growing, deepening sense of the unbelief of the people whom He loved, and their blinded rejection of Himself as Emmanuel in their midst, He meekly bows to His Father's sovereign will, sees only perfection in it here, and the glory that would follow it hereafter. “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” As it then was, so has it been ever since, and so it is now. Mark well, my soul, what thou art now writing. Thou hast Jesus before thee as the obedient man, and the Father's ways in grace with the meek and lowly. He shields the person of His beloved Son from the unholy gaze of unbelief, and hides His glory from the pride of man. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” All who have dared to penetrate, in the pride

of intellect, into the deep mysteries of His person have but revealed their own blindness and folly, and exposed themselves to the snares of the enemy. But to the lowly in heart—the worshipping heart—the full blessedness of the knowledge of Jesus and His ways is made known. “The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way . . . The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Ps. xxv., xxxvii.).

These passages no doubt refer to the millennial earth, when the God-fearing remnant shall possess it, in association with Christ as their King of glory.

It is not said, observe, that they shall inherit heaven, but the earth. The place of their trial and sorrow will one day be the scene of their rest, their glory, and blessedness. The Christian will possess it in a higher way—as one with Christ, Who will then feed the poor with bread, and, like the disciples of old, the heavenly saints may be privileged to distribute it.

But, to return, it may be well for the servant—the Christian, especially tried ones—to look more closely into the nature of the discouragements which led the blessed Lord and Master to turn to His Father as His only resource. He had come to His own, but His own received Him not. The people He loved, and had come to redeem, had no heart for Him. When John the Baptist came with mournful tidings they refused to lament; when Jesus came with glad tidings they refused to rejoice. They would not have Him on any terms. This is the secret of the comparatively small success of the gospel in all ages. The natural heart prefers the enjoyment of present things to a rejected Christ and a heaven that is thought to be far away. The most solemn warnings by John, and the most gracious invitations by Jesus were alike unheeded by that generation. Enough to break any preacher’s heart. When the attractions of grace, the appeals of love, the threatenings of justice, the miseries of hell, the glories

of heaven, fail to arrest or awaken the careless—when the preacher's heart is broken because of the hardness of men's hearts—what is he to do? Retire into the presence of God, and in communion with Him learn his lesson more perfectly, both as to service and submission. This is the only resting-place for the disappointed workman.

Let us now see how the Lord acted.

He knew perfectly the state of the people, and how they had refused the goodness of God, both in His Person and ministry. The inevitable result of such unbelief must be judgment. Accordingly we read, "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! . . . And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell ; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." This is most solemn ! A more terrible, a more unsparing judgment is denounced against these highly favoured cities in the land of Israel than on the notorious corruptions of Sodom.

But has not this a voice to the highly privileged gospel-hearer of our own day? Most assuredly it has. No judgment will be so heavy, so unsparing, as that which will ere long fall on apostate Christendom. The higher the place of privilege, the deeper must be the fall of those who are untrue—who have merely the name of Christ, without the reality. And do not such abound now, as in the days of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum? Alas ! the answer need not be given ; the question rather is, Where are the real, the true, witnesses for the glory of His person and the authority of His word? The thought is overwhelming. What is to be done? What did the Lord do? He turned to His Father. "At that time Jesus answered and said,

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." In a word, in place of complaining of the treatment He received, He meekly bows to the sovereign will of His Father, falls into His hands, as Lord of heaven and earth—the wise Disposer of all things; and what is the result? Just what it must ever be—He receives the blessing. Not merely a promise, but the possession—"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." And this proves to be the occasion, through grace, of a fuller revelation of God, and of a richer blessing to mankind. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How beautiful and precious this is as an example to us! It is always the way of blessing, both to ourselves and others. When Jesus was despised as a man, rejected as the Messiah, and refused His crown of glory, He did not stand up for His rights, as we would say, but meekly submitted, and looked up to His Father as Lord of heaven and earth. He could have all in His hands, and wait His sovereign will. In the meantime the blessing flows like a wave of life from the ocean of eternal love—it overflows all Jewish limits. The Gentiles are brought in here. The Father is revealed as the source of all blessing. "Come unto Me . . . I will give you rest." The poor Gentile as well as the Jew; are you weary and heavy laden? Come unto Me." It is pure grace now. No qualification required, save that you are weary and heavy laden. Come just as you are, just now; "I will give you rest." The blessed Lord does not here say by what means He will give us rest, but we must trust Him. He can no more trust man; man must now trust Him. There is no other way of blessing now. There is only one question: Is He fit to be trusted? This is all. Trust Him. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm ii. 12).

But this full, flowing tide of grace does not lead to carelessness of walk, as man might say it would. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your

souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." The difference between the two verses is very distinct, and has been often noticed. In verse 28 it is, "Come unto Me . . . and I will *give* you rest"; in verse 29 it is, "Take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall *find* rest to your souls."

The one is pure, absolute, unconditional grace to the sinner; the other is the yoke of Christ for the believer. The reason why so few have learnt to meet the troubles of this life as He met them is because they are not under His yoke, and learning of Him. They are thinking of their own character; how much they have been misunderstood, how grossly they have been misrepresented, how falsely accused, and how unjustly or unkindly treated. They have not learnt that their own reputation is the last thing they should think about; that now they have only to care for the character of Christ. Those who are under the same yoke must walk side by side, and step by step. True, the strong one may pull the weak one through, when the chariot wheels sink deep in the sand of the desert; but they must walk together. The Lord give us thus to learn the great truth of this beatitude, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." A.M.

Illustrations of the Faithfulness of God—4.

I remember, perhaps a half-century ago, a godly ex-clergyman asked in the open street by a friend how he lived, and his family. His answer was that he could not well say how, yet they did live by God's grace. Up came the postman with no words but a banknote, which he showed to the inquirer with the remark, "This may, perhaps, tell you how I live." Our God is a living God, and answers faith as He sees fit, whatever the circumstances. "He withdraws not His eyes from the righteous." W.K.

“Consider the Lilies How They Grow”—2.

(Matt. vi, 28 ; Luke xii, 27.)

THE face of the lily is always upward, and as the warmth of the sun descends upon it, it develops and unfolds itself to its congenial rays; and it is transformed in its image and glory to the design of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. And in like manner as we are looking upward and beholding “the glory of the Lord (we) are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The face of the lily is always looking upward, because it is there the One dwells Who gave it its life, its fashion, and its glory; and it is there the scripture directs our gaze. The disciples were looking up steadfastly into heaven when Jesus was parted from them; and it separated them from everything here below. They went straight away to the upper room; being bound up together in the bundle of life, with their hearts knit together in love, “they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,” waiting for the promise of the Father. What a truth this is! “For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”

If Christ is our treasure our heart will be in heaven. It is there Christ is, and it is that which really separates us from everything below, and enables us to count all things but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Then our desire is to win Him; to know Him; to be found in Him—and pressing towards the mark will be the one thing we do. Thus, we become changed; for it is gazing upon Him where He is that gives us the moral correspondence to Himself. It is little by little; it is from glory to glory, it is progressive, and that by the Spirit of the Lord.

The lily is held up by a green stalk displaying a comeliness and glory which are not its own, but

Another's; for which it had not toiled, nor spun for itself. So are we upheld by the resurrection power of Christ, and kept by the power of God through faith, manifesting a life and character in this world which is not our own, but Another's. For Christ is our life, and the Spirit of God is the power of that life, through which we are enabled to bear about in the body, the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be manifested in our body—representing Him through grace down here, Whose we are, whilst He is upon the throne of God, Who is that eternal life which was with the Father, and which has been perfectly manifested in Himself when here in this world.

The lily is surrounded by beautiful green leaves, giving it a most attractive outward appearance, which brings into prominence the qualities and character of the lily. So ought our surroundings to be also, that others may see that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him. Our outward profession should be like the green leaves, setting forth and giving prominence to the life we have in Christ, Who Himself witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. But alas, is it not too much otherwise to-day amongst Christians—worldliness, unrighteousness, spotted garments, making provision for the flesh, knowing little of God and His grace? “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

But there are so many withered leaves upon the trees to-day—unlike the Man Whose delight was in the word of God, and Who meditated in it day and night, planted by the rivers of water (not in the barren and waterless soil of this world), Who brought forth His fruit in His season, and His leaf did not wither, but was ever green. May it be with us as with Paul—“for to me to live is Christ”—manifesting in our ways and walk Whose we are, and to Whom we belong.

S.D.

(To be continued, D.V.)

“Exhorting one another.”

“When the hour was come,”—Luke xxii. 14.

BEAR with us, friends—for sure the fault is great—
If we refer to those who “come in late,”
As if they grudged the time as far too long—
They must omit the first and closing song.

A little less indulgence in the bed;
A little more contrivance in the head;
A little more devotion in the mind,
And you will surely not be so behind.

“But,” murmur some, “we have so far to come !”
Well, start a little sooner from your home.
But if we live “close by,” then must our state
Of soul be bad, if oft we “come in late.”

Granted—lest we should seem to be severe—
There are domestic cases here and there :
Age, illness, service—things quite unforeseen,
To censure which we surely do not mean.

But these will not (unless we greatly err)
Among the true and thoughtful oft occur;
And when they do, e’en then such will endeavour
To come at last—“ ’tis better late than never.”

Dear brethren, ’tis the Lord must judge each case;
Yet if we really love to see His face,
We shall seek grace—as saith our simple rhyme—
To gather round Him at the appointed time.

Anon.

Job's Three Questions and their Answers.

(The quotations from the Bible are from Darby's "New Translation").

HARDLY is man born than he is full of questions. From his early childhood he faces numberless problems and unsolvable riddles.

This must be so, for man should not pass through this earth in indifference. But how many questions remain unanswered — or what is much worse — are answered wrongly !

Most people in the days of outward prosperity are content with satisfying their earthly needs. They pass their days as a dream and put away all disquieting thoughts. But when they get into trouble and straits, when all human supports break down ; then they ask for the original causes of things, seeking comfort in some reply to their questions. Unfortunately it often happens then that the "liar and murderer from the beginning" gives the answer and drives them to despair, or what is worse still, by poisonous lies numbs their minds again.

True believers have, through Jesus, received a satisfactory answer to all questions. Blessed be His name ! God Himself is fully satisfied, why should not the believer be so also ?

In the book of Job we find the highest and deepest questions, and some of them elucidated in a way far exceeding any other revelations in the Old Testament. It is marvellous to see how in this book all important questions that man can put in his seeking for forgiveness, and in his searching out the mysterious ways of God are satisfactorily answered. Even the presumptuous cavillings of the doubter are here silenced. For these reasons the study of the book of Job can only be a blessing to the believer and especially in these days

when many Christians are, perhaps, like Job, tempted to argue with God.

May the Lord therefore help us to learn from the book of Job, to the glory of His Name !

Job was evidently a man of fine perceptions and deep emotions. All the more then must he have suffered from the blows that Satan was allowed to deliver. But no word of murmuring escaped his lips. The temptation only brought to light his perfect submission to God's will. Even whilst suffering the greatest bodily tortures and when his wife spoke as "one of the foolish women" he still uttered words of wisdom and devotion, which have since then instructed and comforted many a soul. Although not understanding why all this calamity came over him, he yet held fast the assurance that God had permitted it, and that it would work together for good. He had received good from God's hand, should he not also receive evil?

How this puts us to shame to whom God's love in Christ Jesus has been so fully revealed, and to whom God's word distinctly says that all things must work together for good ! How often do minor trials make us disagreeable and rebellious or cause doubts to arise in our hearts. One thing is worthy of notice ; it was Satan not God who killed Job's children, who destroyed his possessions, and smote him with boils. God certainly permitted it ; not only in order to prove Satan a liar but also to teach Job a needed lesson. The lesson which Job and his friends learnt was of such great importance that he later indeed considered his suffering of no account compared with it.

At first, of course, everything seemed incomprehensible to him. At the end of the first chapter we read "in all this Job sinned not nor ascribed anything unseemly to God." In chapter ii. 10, however, it says only "In all this Job did not sin with his lips." Surely God would have wished to spare Job his sufferings ;

also what Satan was permitted to do did not come directly from the hand of God. This is a mystery, hard to understand, and if Job later on did charge God foolishly it was partly because he did not understand this mystery. Job's patience was admirable and has rightly become proverbial. When his three friends arrived, however, and through their seven days' silence shewed only that they had no words of comfort for him but rather thought in their hearts that Job was receiving the due reward of his deeds, then he began to despair of all and in the bitterness of his heart uttered his first presumptuous "why?" "Wherefore is light given to him that is in trouble, and life to those bitter of soul?" "Why, yes why?" Many millions have asked the same question since. Why do I live at all? Would it not be better if I had never been born? See chapter iii. 10-20. In Isaiah xlv. 9-12, we see a grave woe pronounced on those who ask such questions. H.R.

(To be continued, D.V.)

The Cross and its Consequences.

(Galatians i. 1-4 ; ii. 19-21 ; vi. 11-18).

MY OBJECT in choosing these three scriptures from this important Epistle is to draw attention to the wonderful way in which God seeks to establish His people.

There was a danger, because of the false teachers that came among the saints of Galatia, of their falling from grace. To fall from grace is not to fall from salvation. As if there could be any reason in Scripture for any poor soul who has trusted Christ to have any doubt of his eternal salvation! This Epistle is to show the danger of listening to false teachers. We are surrounded by false teachers to-day, and should be warned

of the danger of listening to them. So it becomes us to be elementary. The great danger of God's people is to depart from the most simple elementary teaching of God's word. Take *life*; how many of God's dear people have been taken from enjoying the truth of eternal life! Also *righteousness*! So God has been pleased to give us this Epistle to enable us to detect these false teachers.

Take ch. i. The dear saints had lost touch with their relationship, to an extent—the power and joy of walking in the consciousness “I am a child of God,” was no longer theirs. They were set on working for a state they could never obtain by the law of God. That had already been proved over and over again. “By the deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” These dear souls had lost their joy by listening to the teachings of men. How important this was we see from ch. vi. 11. He would not trust it to an amanuensis at all; he would maintain his credentials as apostle; it was so very important.

So here (ch. i. 1) he would not come down from the dignity of his apostleship. In Corinth there were those who refused his apostleship because he was not of the Twelve; but he was the apostle of the Gentiles; and God never intended Gentiles to become Jews. He meant them never to lose the sense of being saved from among the Gentiles. Yet they belonged to the same blessedness as those converted from the Jews. But Satan's efforts were to judaize them. That won't do. It was a real danger then, and is so to-day. Christianity is of a distinct character, and has distinct heavenly associations. It does not belong to this world at all. It is from a heavenly source, because those who are true Christians belong to a heavenly Christ. On the evening of the very day of His resurrection He shows them where they are, first by His message through Mary Magdalene, then by His own words,—“I ascend unto My Father and your Father; unto My God, and

your God." No longer is the association with Him as Messiah on earth, but with Christ in glory.

It is a blessed thing to know we are in relationship with Christ in heaven; not earthly at all, but heavenly; because we are linked with Christ at His Father's right hand.

Take the title, "the last Adam." The first man was made a living soul. He got this as an emanation from God Himself. Now mark in John xx. the Lord not only said "Peace," to show He was there among them, to dry their tears; but also He was going to send them into the world. But then (the second time of *breathing* in scripture), He breathes into them and says "Receive ye Holy Spirit." I leave out the article because it is not there. Then they possessed new life in relation to Him as the last Adam, the life-giving Spirit. They had life before; had been born again; He had told them, "Now are ye clean through the word;" but in this wonderful way the Lord identifies them with Himself in that life that is theirs in One soon to be ascended and glorified. Not *another* life, but life in its fulness, —the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as Rom. viii. 2.

Now the apostle states that he obtained his apostleship not from men, but directly from Christ in glory. He could say, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" Did I not get my ambassadorship direct from Him as the other apostles did? Yes, but from the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the full blaze of glory.

The first thing he does, he presents himself as an apostle who has a practical witness to fulfil for a glorified Christ. Now we find a link there—our own link—with a glorified Christ, and our link with the cross of Christ. He does not show us we have any link with the world at all. We are in it; but the very cross that finished Christ's history in this world, has finished ours.

We are privileged to know our link with a heavenly Christ. So you see where detachment comes in,—detachment from the world.

Two things are brought out in v. 4. God—in that wonderful death which Christ died — God took full account of every sin we have committed, or should commit. Every one was accounted for in that wonderful cross. “*Who gave Himself* for our sins.” That blessed One gave Himself. He could not do more! As it is said of the church, when He found the pearl of great price—He gave Himself for it. “Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” But He not only gave Himself for our sins, but to deliver us from this present evil world. The world takes its character from the cross—“this present *evil* world.” It is not the material world, but the moral. They estimated your Lord and mine so badly as to give Him the cross! They gave Judas for Him thirty pieces of silver — the price of a common slave! As we go through it, witnessing its great aims and ambitions, let us take account of it as an *evil* world.

There are three points before us. The second point we get in ch. ii. He was a most zealous champion of the law; so much so, that though he murdered, he did not count it murder when he persecuted the followers of Christ. He thought he was getting rid of the enemies of God. But now mark the wonderful change that came on him! He can now say, “For I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God” (Gal. ii. 1-9). He had to be put to death himself; he had to accept the sentence of death in the law. The law pronounced a curse on him.

I was struck with the two kinds of death in Deut. xxi. The common death was *stoning*—for the man found gathering sticks, etc. The young man in that chapter comes under this category, and the sentence is passed he must be stoned. But another character of

death comes into view there : "And thou hang him on a tree." "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (v. 23). So there was a curse resting on a crucified man, whoever it was. I only know of One. Before Christ you don't find any, so far as I know.

Now here the Apostle learns his death. "I am crucified with Christ,"—linked with Christ. I am linked in this world with a Man Who has been crucified,—made a curse "as it is written." For what? "That I might live unto God."

Now mark the other point. "I am crucified with Christ,"—that is my death, my death sentence. When my blessed Lord died, I died also. The old "I" has gone out of court altogether. I wish *we* could put it out of court altogether! God *has*. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ,"—a new tenant—"Christ liveth in me." So "the life that I now live in the flesh," — flesh here means the body, not the sinful nature,—"the life I now live in the body, I live by the faith of the Son of God." All the thought of His wonderful Person is brought in there :—"The Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

You see where you are,—you are not your own, but bought with a price, so glorify God in your body.

The life which I now live in the flesh, the life of faith, is soon going to be a life manifested in glory. The apostle loved to think of himself as a slave—slave of the One who bought him, yet a free man.

Now in the closing chapter you see the apostle sets it before us, not as a cause of triumph only, but a cause of *glory*. "God forbid that I should *glory*," etc. I have something to glory in down here—the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we hold it up as a standard of life in our ways through this world day by day? Are we prepared to walk in the footsteps of a crucified Man?

We sometimes speak slightly of Nicodemus; but I love to think when everyone else had run away and

been ashamed of Christ, he confessed Him. I want to be a Nicodemus. There are often people who don't own themselves as Christians but when they get into certain company they own Him. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." You see where we are—crucified. A new path opens to us in relation to that fact :—v. 15. We have a new rule for walk. That rule is that we are linked with a rejected Christ in this world and linked with a glorified Christ in a new creation. That is the rule of a Christian. What happens to them? "Peace be on them," etc.

This is the only Epistle that closes in this way.

There were spiritual disturbances going on with these saints. Oftentimes there are now. What peace to know we belong to Christ and are just waiting for Him to take us out of this world to be with Himself for ever !

H. L.

A Momentous Appeal.

(Read Rev. iii. 14-22.)

PAUSE ! give earnest heed ! ye that bear the name of Christian. An appeal is being made to you by the Head of the Church and "Lord of all." Now is the prophetic character of Rev. iii. 20, being fulfilled. The last stage of the church on earth has been reached. The finale has been revealed. The end is drawing nigh. The professing church ignores the appeal. Its heartless indifference to the Lord, indeed, is the cause of the outside position taken by Him. But before He casts it away as too nauseous to be longer endured, He lingers in patience to make a personal entreaty in words so tender, so gracious as to demand immediate whole-hearted attention. "Behold," He says, "I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear My voice and open

the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me" (v. 20).

It is narrated of our late King Edward VII. that on one occasion when in Italy he visited a celebrated church about the noon of the day. At this hour one sacristan only was in charge. He, not realising that a special responsibility rested on him for admitting visitors to view the beauties of the building, made fast the door, slumbered and slept. Thus, the king's first knock at the bolted door was unheard. The king's continued knocking aroused the sleeper. Dazed by his slumber the sacristan conceived the knocking to come from beggars and still delayed to open the door. At this juncture a noble of high authority riding that way recognised the king and with stern rebuke ordered the sleepy sacristan to open immediately.

Feebly, indeed, the incident illustrates the attitude of Christendom to the solicitations of the One Whose glories so far transcend those of any earthly potentate—glories not alone of majesty and power, but of holy love and patient grace. Yet a reminder of His august dignity is given in the titles He assumes in His address, namely, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Very touching were the pleadings of the Lord with His people Israel, ere judgment was allowed to fall on them. But His warnings neglected, His pleadings rejected, Jerusalem was taken and Solomon's temple destroyed. Then came from the prophet Jeremiah's breaking heart the pathetic moan—"the kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem . . . for the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her." A short time previously there had been revealed to Ezekiel the removal of the throne of Jehovah outside Israel.

And is it not the "sins" and "iniquities" of the professing church (Rev. xviii. 5 and 24) which have driven the Lord outside? But where is the conscience about them? Where even the sighing and crying for the abominations? The call to repent all along her history (Rev. ii. 5, 16, 21; iii. 3) has been unheeded until moral incompetency is setting in such as was depicted of Israel by Malachi.

Laodicea is the flower of Christendom matured in spiritual light. But blinded and stupefied by self-occupation, unconcerned about her Lord's absence or its cause, she is destitute of all that is precious in His sight. She reaches the ultimate limit of the declension which began even with Ephesus. As ceasing to reflect His character of holiness and truth and therefore to be a witness for Him, she passes the limit of His forbearance. When cast off by Him, her final development as the mystic Babylon will speedily follow, leading on to swift and sure destruction (see Rev. xvii. and xviii.).

Saddening it is to reflect that this unfaithfulness follows a special activity of the grace of our Lord in giving a rich unfolding of the word as to God's counsels for His glory, the distinct position of the church in association with Him, the "blessed hope," etc.

The tender attentions of His love have been disregarded. Nevertheless, the rebukings and chastenings which reveal its depths are being continued to individuals. In unspeakable grace, too, the Lord is appealing to "anyone" to open their hearts to receive Him in blessed intimacy.

Evangelists, pastors, teachers, brethren! in all your words and ways, be mindful of this appeal. It may end so soon. In the last moments, it may be, of this day of grace, while exhorting "him that heareth" to say "Come," urge also on those around that last inspired universal invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Christians in name only ! yea, "Anyone" ! we beseech you turn not a deaf ear to this appeal from the Lord in glory. It is a loving one ; it is also a momentous one. He Who makes it is ordained to judge the world in righteousness (Acts xvii. 31). He has come beforehand to be the Saviour. But the refusal of grace must entail the enduring of judgment. Life is uncertain. The Lord may come at any moment. Let not an eternal seal be set on your refusal. Despise not the matchless grace of the glorious Intercessor Who now desires to be, as it were, your Guest in order that you may be His. Delay not to admit Him as *your* Saviour, *your* Lord.

A. J. H. .

"Consider the Lilies How They Grow"—3.

WE have been considering the lilies in their growth, their purity, and their character as displayed before the eyes of others but there is one more thought which suggests itself to my mind, a most precious one it is too, it is the crowning one, because it brings in the glory ; it is that which is not yet manifested, but which may be at any moment.

The lily is perfectly white, both inside and out, but as we look inside, we see something more. There is a yellow or golden coloured stem. We have not only purity, but righteousness also. Is there not a striking analogy to the Christian in this, who is now, not only made white in the blood of the Lamb ; but also made the righteousness of God in Him ? What is now seen in the valley is the purity of the Christian ; the gold is not yet seen. But although we are now, through the work of Christ made the righteousness of God in Him ; "it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for

we shall see Him as He is." "When Christ Who is our life shall appear then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (that is the glory). So in the resurrection, when the last trump shall have sounded, and we shall have been changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; then shall we be like the cedar trees, which were hewn down in Lebanon and placed in the temple, being covered with pure gold. In the resurrection, we all shall be changed; for He "shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory." We shall then be clothed outwardly with the righteousness of God, nothing but the gold being seen; for the glory will then have come, and we shall be like Christ.

What a beautiful and glorious robe we are going to be clothed with, when the Lord comes to introduce us into the Father's house of many mansions! I have no doubt but this is what is referred to in the 15th of Luke, where we have the whole purposes of love and grace begun and accomplished—the prodigal brought from the far-off country; stripped of all his rags; clothed with the best robe; and put right into the glory of the Father's house. The wilderness journey does not come into view at all; for as soon as he was reconciled to his Father, "the Father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him." And the next moment he is inside feeding on the fatted calf; thus began the joy that never ends. After being saved by grace, he is attired with all the dignity and glory of a son with the Father; to dwell in the home which His love has provided for him. Here it is the Father satisfying His own heart as to the son, and as to the place he is to dwell in for ever. Mark, it is the *best robe* which is put on the prodigal. That implies there are other robes; but those who are saved during this day of grace, and brought into relationship with the Father, must be clothed with the best robe; and also have a

special place in the Father's house of many abodes. The church, that which Christ loved and gave Himself for, must have the best robe, and the best place in the Father's house, and be with Christ and like Christ. For whom God foreknew, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.

The lilies are mentioned in the Song of Songs; they are used there as figures, to represent those in whom Christ finds all His joy and delight. Two things He does: He feeds among the lilies, He also comes down to gather them. This is very precious indeed; for it gives us to see what are His thoughts about them, and how much He loves them. They are the ones in whose company He delights; that He may have communion with them; and feed among them, that they may have a fuller and deeper acquaintance with His own Person and glory; and with the home and inheritance they are to share with Him for ever. While He is thus talking with them, their hearts are filled with Himself, giving them to see really what He is to the souls of those who *belong to Him through sovereign grace*; then they, out of the fulness of their hearts, say: "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine: He feedeth among the lilies." But not only does He feed among the lilies, He also comes down to gather them. So to Him, blessed be His name, there must be beauty in them; for they must be pure and undefiled ere He would gather them. He is pure and holy, and comes down from the place of spotless purity; and if He gathers them, it must be to take them to His home, whereinto nothing that defiles can enter. They are pure and white through His own precious blood; therefore they are fit for those courts above of unsullied light and purity. He who gathers them, sees in them what no other eye can see. They are the fruit of His own work; and as those whom He clothes with such glory and beauty, He finds His joy and delight in them. Hence He would have them with Himself, and around Himself.

By the lilies the Lord desired to teach His disciples (who were in company with Him during His rejection, and who were looking for the setting up of the kingdom on earth, and to share in the Solomon glory of it), that God in His purposes had some better thing in store for them, whom He was leading out of Judaism, and bringing into Christianity with its untold privileges and glory. Jesus says unto them, "And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Is it not remarkable, that the Lord should contrast the glory of the lilies with the glory of Solomon? Now the glory of Solomon was really wonderful, as we learn from other scriptures, but it was glory in this world. The glory of the lilies is put in contrast with the glory of Solomon by Him Who only had a right to do so; for He is the source of all glory, whether it be earthly or heavenly. There is to be an earthly glory, and a heavenly glory, as we are clearly taught from the Mount of Transfiguration. There are "celestial bodies, and terrestrial bodies, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." The glory of the earthly saints will be wonderful indeed; but the glory of the heavenly saints will be far more wonderful. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." It is wonderful indeed how our blessed Lord takes up such things as the lilies, the treasure, and the pearl, to convey to our finite minds, His divine thoughts — for His thoughts are higher than our thoughts—and to elevate ours and to bring them up into His; that we may learn something of His thoughts about His saints, and what they are to Him, for He says to His Father "all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them." The day is coming when He shall be manifestly glorified in His saints, and be admired in all them that believe.

May it be ours to sit at His feet more and learn of Him.

S.D.

Notes from a Bible Reading on Genesis i.-ii. 3.

v. 1.—The scriptural record of creation bears its own evidence of divine inspiration. All other ancient accounts of the origin of the world are childish compared with the dignity and authority of Gen. i. That a nation like Israel should possess such a document is itself a miracle. The object of the record is to reveal that God is the author of all, and that man is the object of God's love. Hence much is omitted which would merely satisfy curiosity or describe what man can discover for himself. Without saying how or when, scripture ascribes the origin of all to God's creatorial power. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

v. 2.—The Spirit of God, the true Author of the Scriptures, without further reference to the heavens here describes a subsequent condition of the earth. In the interval between v. 1 and v. 2, the successive ages revealed by the study of the rocks took place, each with its own suited animal and vegetable life and all in the wisdom of God being turned to account for the man who would know how to use the hidden treasures of the earth, such as coal and oil. Scripture does not refer directly to this interval though Is. xlv. 18, is referred to as shewing that Gen. i. 2, must have been a subsequent development ("In vain" = "without form"). Jer. iv. 23, is, however, prophetic.

The Jews from early times have taught that there was such a breach. The unusual insertion of the verb "was" in the original of "the earth was without form, etc.," may indicate that the verse is describing a new order of things, and is not an explanation of v. 1. The cause of the upheaval is not given us, but it shows that the earth had not yet been made a fit habitation for man.

The presence of the Spirit of God upon the dark waste of waters is the presage of the coming changes whereby the earth was to be made fit for man's habitation.

vv. 3, 4.—Light is first introduced, and that before the sun was set in its place of rule. Light had "existed" before, but it had ceased to act for the earth, perhaps as a result of the upheaval. "Evening and morning were—one day," in the original indicate that the day should be understood as a period of 24 hours. An age seems out of the question for the first, fourth and seventh days, at any rate.

vv. 6-8.—The "firmament" is the expanse, the atmosphere, which divides the clouds from the seas and rivers.

vv. 9-13.—A double work is done on the third and sixth days. Here the dry land appears and the vegetable kingdom.

vv. 14-19.—The ordered succession of seasons, days, and years, and the supply of light for mankind are here attributed to God who appointed the already created sun, moon and stars to that end. They are signs of His wisdom and goodness.

vv. 20-23.—Fishes, whales and birds are now created. The power of the Creator is expressly mentioned the second time. In v. 1 it was material things; now "living creatures" (or souls), that is, self-conscious beings.

vv. 24, 25.—The beasts of the field appear at the word of God, but a twofold work is done and the work of creation is completed by the making of man.

vv. 26-31.—Note the third use of the word create in the chapter (v. 27) and the emphasis of its threefold repetition. Man alone can communicate with God, the Father of spirits (Heb. xii. 9). He was created upright and God speaks "unto them" (v. 28) alone of all created things.

What a contrast is the creation of man to anything

that has gone before! He is the subject of God's counsels, "Let us make man"; he alone is said to be made in the image, and after the likeness, of God; God has not said even of angels, "Let them have dominion." Also of mankind but a single pair were made, though the lower creation was brought forth in abundance. "In our image": man was to represent God on the earth and exercise authority. (Cf. the "image of Caesar"—not necessarily a likeness but that which stood for and claimed allegiance to him. See Matt. xxii. 20, Dan. iii. 1). "After Our likeness": man was endowed with moral qualities which were God-like. He is now a fallen god, and as such has some sense of beauty, order, righteousness, love, etc. (see John x. 34). The Lord Jesus is the image of the invisible God, but it could not be said that He is like God, for He is God (Col. i. 15).

Ch. ii., vv. 1-3.—God rests in view of the completion and excellence of His work. No evening and morning is mentioned of this day, but sin broke this rest. Scripture reveals an "eighth" day, of unbroken rest, wherein God does not act—He dwells. (See Lev. xxiii.).

There are foreshadowings, even here, of Christ. The true Light dawned on this dark world when the Lord Jesus came (Luke i. 72, John i. 5) but He does not rule as the Sun until later (Mal. iv. 3). The same thing is true for the individual believer. (2 Cor. iv. 6.).

In all that is said of the creation of man and his place on earth we find that God has the Second Man in view, Who is worthy to have dominion and rule over all (Ps. viii., Heb. ii. 6-11). He, too, is to have a bride.

The seventh day is typical of the rest of God which the work of Christ makes possible, and which remains for the people of God (Heb. iv. 9, 10). The sabbath given to Israel was directly linked with Gen. ii. 1-3 (Exod. xx. 9-11), but this was disturbed through Israel's sin (John v. 17).

God's way of establishing order is by dividing and

separating (vv. 4, 6, 10, 14). Satan's aim is to break down the divisions between truth and error, etc., but at the end God will bring an eternal separation between "light" and "darkness."

Perhaps the work of the first four days shews the necessary conditions for sustaining the life which appeared on the fifth. Light, air, food and rule are provided, and these are given us in a spiritual way in Christ and His word.

What a contrast to the brutalizing theories of men is God's testimony to man's origin! He was given the highest place on earth, which was fashioned for his blessing and joy, but he owed all to God. The revelation of these things should lead to humility, gratitude and worship. The glory of creation awakens worship in heaven (Rev. iv. 10, 11). How sad that the discoveries which men have made of the vastness, order and beauty of creation should have been used by Satan to make them infidels!

L.C.H.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Illustrations of God's Faithfulness.—5.

YEARS ago, before her marriage, my mother was an earnest worker in connection with a small Mission Hall, at Surbiton, in Surrey. The speakers were men who "wrought with their own hands," to "provide things honest in the sight of all men"; and one of them gained his living by taking Devonshire produce, butter, eggs, chickens, etc., with a pony and cart, to the houses in the neighbourhood, where he had a good but scattered connection.

One Lord's day evening, after he had told out the gospel message, he confided to his friends that he was in great anxiety. His pony had met with an injury, and had to be shot; the weather was warm; and the

farmer had sent an unusually large consignment of produce, which he did not know how to dispose of, although he would have to pay for it ! With a delicate wife, and large family, he was living largely from hand to mouth, and did not know how to replace the pony. When others left, the little band of workers remained behind, and falling on their knees, committed it all to God, asking Him to come in and meet their brother's need, as well as to sustain him in the trial. Before they separated, my mother enquired how much would be required to purchase another pony. "I think I could get one that would do for me for £5," was the reply.

A young lady, living at home, with no means but the moderate dress allowance given by her widowed mother, a good proportion of which she had already spent in her visits among the poor, she did not possess £5, nor did any of the little number; but in her heart she purposed to call upon some of her wealthier friends in the morning, and see if she could get the money.

It is written, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Is. lxxv. 24). She had not left the bedroom, the following morning, when the post brought a registered letter for her, from a friend living in Somersetshire. Within was a £5 note, and a letter saying: "Dear Miss B——, It is much on my heart to send £5 for your work for the Lord. Please accept it from Him."

It did not take long to hurry off to the preacher's house, and hand him the money. Another pony, which turned out a most satisfactory animal, was soon bought, and the customers were supplied as early as usual.

The following day, if memory serves, another letter arrived from Somerset. "Dear Miss B——, I was wrong to send you £5 yesterday; it ought to have been £10; here are the other £5" !

H. C. T.

Serving the Living and True God.

(1 Thes. i. 9, 10.)

“**T**O serve Him !” Do we think it hard
To hear that word of old,
Which tells us of the place on earth
Our Lord would have us hold?

The place where we can work and serve,
While waiting for Him here,
While rays of glory breaking down
Sustain our hearts from fear.

“To serve Him !” Does it mean some work
That history’s page will hold,
And thousand grateful hearts and tongues
Will to the world unfold?

“To serve Him !” Nay, ’tis but to go
To those *His heart* holds dear;
To soothe the orphan’s bitter wail—
To dry the widow’s tear !

“To serve Him !” ’Tis within your home
To shed that sunshine round,
Which tells, with louder voice than words,
The treasures you have found !

“To serve Him !” ’Tis the angry word,
Check’d, ere it well began ;
It is to make a stream of bliss
Where once but discord ran !

“To serve Him !” ’Tis with little deeds
No other eye can see
But His, Whose voice will one day say,
“Ye did it unto Me !”

A.S.O.

Job's Three Questions and their Answers—2.

(The quotations from the Bible are from Darby's "New Translation").

THE FIRST QUESTION, "WHEREFORE WAS I BORN?"

THE first question of Job, "Why has God given me life only to send me such suffering now?" is the language of the natural man in rebellion against his Maker. Contending with the Almighty man wants to instruct Him (see chap. xl. 2). He curses the past, reviles the present and all his future hope is gone, just as Jeremiah (Jer. xx. 14-18) not only bemoans his torments but also his very existence. What a state to be in!

Yet both Job and Jeremiah were faithful and devoted men of God. How did they come to forget themselves? What led them even for a moment to despair of the power and goodness of God?

First of all, these men passed through very unusual exercises of soul. All blessings seemed to them to be changed into curses, and instead of hearing words of comfort and sympathy, they were covered with reproach. Their best friends had ceased to shew loving sympathy; but, worse than all, they themselves could no longer understand why they should so suffer, and saw neither purpose nor profit in it. Just as Asaph in Ps. lxxiii. they came to the conclusion: "Truly I have purified my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocence," and with the Preacher, looking only on visible things, they said "All is vanity." The original cause of such despair lies deeper. If the creature had not in the beginning turned away from his Creator he would not now curse his existence. The fact that men like Job and Jeremiah were capable of cursing the day of

their birth, only proves how far man has drifted away from God. As long as all goes well the rebelliousness and sullenness of the human heart do not show themselves, but trials bring them to light. Temptations are therefore good and necessary, not in order that God may find out what is in man's heart (to Him the hidden things of the heart are manifest, and whatever comes out of it does not increase His knowledge), but that man may learn to know himself. By nature, as we have said, man is in rebellion against God, and even when born again still the old nature constantly shews itself in times of temptation. Let no one think, however, that he is more capable than Job of bearing temptations, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

Although Job in bitterness of soul said many perverse things, the result of it all was to God's glory and to the blessing of His servant. Many of the questions which he in anguish asked, became clear to him in the course of his pleading in defence of himself. Others were answered for him by Elihu, and again God answered some in the whirlwind and that mostly by counter questions.

Every question can be asked in two ways, either in humility and with the sincere desire to learn, or else in presumptuous rebellion against the solution, be it what it may. In the first case the questioner honestly takes the place of a learner, which is the right thing for him to do; in the second case he takes for granted that there is no satisfactory answer or else that it is definitely withheld. Man either comes before God in sincerity and with the prayer which later Elihu taught Job "What I see not teach Thou me" (chap. xxxiv. 32) or he asks in rebellion "Why is everything so different from what it ought to be?"

He who does not wish to sit at the feet of the Master, and say "I will demand of Thee and answer Thou me" takes the place of judge against his God. The vessel

says to the potter "What makest thou?" Foolish as the question is, we yet find it frequently among the children of Adam, the generation of back-sliders. The so-called Higher Criticism that has done so much harm in Christianity puts all its questions in the latter way. In our day, when the spirit of independence forces an entrance everywhere, and all men want to be free to think and do as they please, this fundamental error is almost universal. Even believers must take heed lest they be affected by the spirit of the times. Moreover there is nothing new under the sun. In reality the men of Job's time had to solve the same problems as we have to-day; only with this great difference, that God's counsel has since then been more clearly revealed. There may be some excuse for Job arguing with God, but for the Christian professor who possesses the whole word of God, it is a terrible thing to doubt the wise and loving providence of God.

Job's first great question implies a doubt about the purpose of human existence, and therefore also about the wisdom of the Creator. This is an insult against God Himself, answered by Him at the end of the book and by a series of counter questions. Then Job submits, and his tormenting questions find a satisfactory answer in the power and goodness of God. But for the man without God, and without a Saviour, there is really no adequate answer to Job's question "Why have I been born?" What is the purport of the terrible words pronounced by the Lord Jesus over the traitor Judas? "It were good for that man if he had not been born," for all the millions who have since then gone to their own place? Will mockers like Tom Paine, Voltaire, and others in the place of torment, indeed curse their day through all eternity? Yea, truly, he who does not submit to God's verdict and accept Christ as the Redeemer, will never receive light about the purpose of man's existence nor about creation generally. Only in the restoration of all things (Acts iii. 21) promised

by God and pledged through the cross, will the problems of present day suffering be solved. Only when the groaning creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption (Rom. viii. 21) will all questions be satisfactorily answered. This was shewn to Job figuratively in his own experience.

It is only in the New Testament, however, that God has revealed His plan for man. Only since the Holy Ghost has come down has the Third Person of the Godhead shewn to the nations through the apostles' writings that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us." It is only in our time, to him who hears and believes, that it has been proclaimed that we according to God's will are heirs of His glory through Jesus Christ. This Spirit, also called the Spirit of promise, is the pledge of our heirship (see Eph. i. 13, 14).

Therefore the viewpoint of the Christian cannot ever be so dark as that of Job. Job saw only as from afar off and groped in the dark, but we are brought nigh to God through Christ and walk in the light. Should we not, therefore, so much the more guard ourselves from harbouring doubting thoughts and from presumptuously arguing with the Almighty? We may, indeed, in all humility, ask what the purpose of our life is, but let us beware of the rebel's spirit and of the language of the presumptuous.

It is also good for the Christian to remind himself daily what the ultimate aim of his life is and when he does this in the spirit of communion with the Lord, he comes to the point where he can "glory in tribulation."

When the ungodly man however, because of the vanity of earthly things curses his very being, or when the mere professor in times of trial, loses his apparent faith and argues with God, then he adds rebellion to his sin. The spirit of independence develops into open

rebellion, and the state of mind previously hidden shews itself in action. May the Lord grant to every child of God to keep the purpose of his life and the end of his course always before his eyes, so that he may be kept from the presumption of Job in arguing with the Almighty! And if there be one of my readers who has not yet accepted God's answer to Job's question, oh, let him shake off his indifference, and flee from the ranks of the rebellious before it is too late! Do not seek the answer with the pride of the rebellious, or the perversity of the doubter, but with a humble and submissive heart. Then only in learning of Jesus will you find rest unto your soul.

JOB'S SECOND QUESTION, "HOW CAN MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?"

The oldest of Job's three friends had answered the first argument. Eliphaz was a wise, eloquent, and pious man, and his first speech is perhaps, the best of the speeches of the friends, (none of the speeches were equal to Job's either in form or contents, not to mention those of Elihu and Jehovah's own). In this speech Eliphaz takes trouble to shew Job that everyone on the earth reaps what he sows. "Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow mischief reap the same" (chap. iv. verse 8). All he says is true in principle but in Job's case false. Although right in itself it is wrong in its connection, for often the wicked become old in sin, and the good in the strength of their youth are cut off. The ungodly often live in plenty while the god-fearing have to do without the common necessities of life. Eliphaz and his two friends drew false conclusions, just as it often happens nowadays. According to his opinion, Job's sufferings proved that his former righteousness was only malicious hypocrisy. He describes with great eloquence a dream, in which a spirit was revealed to him, in order to shew Job that the reason of his suffering was to be found in his own

folly. Job had expected, and rightly too, more understanding for, and deeper sympathy with, his sufferings. He says "For him that is fainting kindness is meet from his friend," and soon after "Return, I pray you, let there be no wrong; yea, return again, my righteousness shall be in it" (chap. vi. verses 14, 29). He cannot admit that he deserved such a trial. The words of his friends are now harder to bear than the sufferings of his tortured body. The death of his children and the loss of his goods were terrible blows; the sickness with which Satan had visited him was of the most trying and horrible kind, but both the silence and the speeches of his friends were as the innumerable poisonous arrows which pierced his soul. In these three men Satan had found unconscious but all the more efficient tools. Instead of really comforting Job they brought him to despair. Instead of reminding him that the goodness of God endureth for ever, and that the reason of his ways although hidden for a time, would in the end be revealed as glorious, they accused the poor man, first in their hearts, then openly, of the grossest crimes, simply because they could not account for his sufferings in any other way. Who then can still be surprised that Job became vexed and wished that God might destroy him? (chap. vi. 9). He saw deeper than his friends and recognised the dealings of God clearer than they did. For this reason they received at the end a sharper rebuke from God than he did. His mistake consisted in taking for granted it was God who tormented him, and in his presumption in calling God to account. And yet in his bitterest speeches we find gleams of light which break out as rays of hope in the darkest night, and cause him to see from afar God's salvation out of all his troubles. Thus his sad speech ends with a request to God Himself and not to his friends, and he already admits that he needs forgiveness for his transgressions, and pardon for his misdeeds (chap. vii. 20, 21).

Bildad the Shuhite answers Job's second question. He is more personal than Eliphaz and calls Job's words a "strong wind." At the same time he declares that Job and his children are only receiving the due reward of their deeds. The story of Job's friends should be a solemn warning to us. There is nothing so dangerous as a truth falsely applied. One can do the greatest harm with a word of Scripture in a wrong place. This is one of the devil's methods, and only unbroken communion with God can keep us from it. How important then is the exhortation "be slow to speak," especially in spiritual matters. Conclusions too quickly drawn and hasty judgments are often bitterly repented of, just as Job's friends were surely ashamed of their mistakes when it was too late. At the end of his speech Bildad points out that God will not forsake the perfect man but assuredly fill him with joy and gladness, whereas he could hardly know that this would in Job's case be fulfilled to the letter.

Bildad's speech is poetical and picturesque, as are all the other speeches, but he does not bring out anything new. His words do not help to a better understanding of the question which troubles poor Job. Therefore the latter begins his third speech with the words "Of a truth I know it is so; but how can man be just with God?" And the words about God which follow are words of insight which are becoming for the creature towards the Creator. Job's question shews that all Bildad's statements were worthless and comfortless for him. Morally it is the vital question of man's being on earth since the fall. Peace for the heart of man is dependent on the answer. Here lies the mystery of a conscience brought to rest. The believers of the O.T. from Adam onwards, sought to solve this problem. Both before and after the flood, before and after the Law, every sincere soul puzzled over this question. What does the expression "Be just with God" mean? First of all we must remember that in God's vocabulary

there are no words of uncertain meaning. Any comparison or diminution of adjectives is here not admissible. That which is good in His eyes does not require any improvement, and to be just before Him implies to think, to speak, and to do what is right; and to be as is meet to be before the eyes of a thrice holy God. With Him alone is the standard of measure. Think a little over this, dear reader, and you will agree that so it must be. Whoever has understood this, does not need to be told that "there is none righteous, no not one." He who does not deceive himself must admit that the thoughts of his heart are often impure and corrupted, that his words are frequently wrong and irresponsible, and his actions again and again unjust and wicked. In short, that he in his innermost being (and the question here is about this) is anything but "just with God."

And now perhaps someone will say: "Although that is man's condition it does not necessarily follow that he must remain so. What is not can be. Have not the sages and teachers of religion from ancient times onward been working for the moral betterment of mankind? Is there no progress visible in the development of the human spirit? Do not thinkers and poets of all generations teach us that we should further our powers for good? Is there no remedy? Is there no hope of recovery? Has man neither strength nor gift nor invention to fight against unrighteousness, that greatest of all evils, and cast it out of the world?"

All these questions can only be answered by a decisive "No." Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Who can bring a clean man out of the unclean? Not one. Can a slave whose whole time is spent in weary working for a hard taskmaster earn his ransom? Can man escape the bondage of sin? Will Satan allow him to go? Can man outwit the devil? or is he able, after having been captured by him, to fight and overcome him? Can prisoners put

the hosts of the enemy to flight? Has that "murderer from the beginning" left any weapons for his victims with which they could fight for their freedom? These questions are all to be answered in the negative. There is no hope of salvation to be looked for from the side of fallen man. The exertion of all his strength, the display of all his learning cannot make him "just with God." There is no remedy from within. There is no improvement to be hoped for on the part of man, neither from the individual or from mankind in general. The talk of a progress towards goodness, towards human virtue, is a phantom, a deception, a lie of Satan's, that "liar from the beginning." What then? Is the fall of man quite hopeless? Is there none capable and willing to redeem the slaves of Satan? Can no strong hero be found in the whole universe who is able to wrest the spoil from the strong man? Is there nowhere a physician capable of healing the death wound of the human race? God be praised! Job already received satisfactory answers to these questions although not so clear and detailed as we find them developed in the N.T. First the Spirit of God leads him to give utterance to the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and later Elihu speaks to him of a messenger "an interpreter, one among a thousand" (chap. xix. 25; xxxiii. 24) so that God can have mercy on him and (to the messenger) say "Deliver him from going down to the pit I have found a ransom." We do not know to what extent the believers of the old covenant understood these words, for the Scripture says that they, for the most part, ministered not unto themselves but unto us the things which are now reported unto us (comp. Job xxxiii. 23, with 1 Peter i. 12). But doubtless Job heard in spirit the words "I have found a ransom" as he in shame and repentance threw himself at his Judge's feet. And that is the only way to be "just with God." The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews shews clearly that all the saints of the O.T. were only justified through faith, and only so could they be well-

pleasing to God. What, however, was the ground of their faith? For faith must have a person whom it can trust, a staff on which it can lean, an object to which it can look. Was it not the seed of the woman, whose head the serpent bruised, that should destroy death and bring life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel? Yes, the object of Job's faith was no other than the one we have, although it could not then be told him in so many words that God is now just when He justifies him whose faith is in Jesus. See Rom. iii. 26.

Now it goes without saying that the man who is justified by faith should henceforth walk in righteousness. That is indeed another part of the truth which is explained in Rom. vi. 1, and elsewhere in the N.T. But before we turn to the third and last question of Job, I would entreat the reader who has not yet found a satisfactory answer to the question, "How can man be just with God?" prayerfully to look for the same in the word of God and that without delay.

JOB'S THIRD QUESTION, "IF A MAN DIE SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?"

Job asks his third question in his fourth speech, where he also answers Zophar's hard words. This man had called Job a prattler and had challenged him to put his wickedness away. In this, his attitude resembled that of the other friends. He points out that the hope of the ungodly (and such he considers Job) ends in the breathing out of life (chap. xi. 20). In other words, the motto of the ungodly is, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die" (Isa. xxii. 13). It is really astonishing to see what a lack of discernment Job's friends shewed at that time. But are we to-day more intelligent than they? Do we not often judge before the time? Do not the children of God very often judge according to appearance in spite of the solemn warning, "Judge not that ye be not judged." It is no wonder

231

that Job, with biting irony, answers, "Truly ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you!" What was the use of reciting truisms in flowery language? Such speeches brought neither comfort nor light to the sufferer. "Who does not know the same?" asks Job, and then he shews that he had already long ago carefully thought over their questions and that he can develop them in all their variety not in a one-sided way as Zophar. "I also have understanding as well as you, I am not inferior to you." Yes, Job recognized the unsolved questions of man's moral existence much clearer than these glib-tongued talkers, and quite rightly did he tell them plainly, "Ye indeed are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value." And then he turns again to the Almighty and seeks to justify himself before Him. He is convinced of his innocence and wishes to convince God. He desires rest and wonders whether he will find it in death. Man withers as does a flower, and dies off as a tree. "Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and put forth boughs like a young plant." The tree dies and lives again, but what happens to man, who clearly in this earthly life seldom gets what he deserves? For very often "a derision is the just and upright man," while the "desolators are in peace" (chap. xii. verses 4-6). The houses of the wicked are "safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them" (chap xxi. 9). If death is the end for both, then the motto of the godless ("Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die") is after all the best. But then, what would become of God's righteousness? Would not mankind sink into a desperately hopeless selfishness, every man's hand against the other for evil? None feels deep down in his heart that life on earth is the only or the final existence. Some may deny life after death, others may spend their days in indifference to this question; but the majority of men have, throughout the ages, demonstrated through the practices of their religions (wrong and corrupt as most

may be) that in reality they do not suppose that all ends with death. From the mummies and pyramids of the ancient Egyptians to the ancestral worship of the Chinese (which to be sure is already thousands of years old) man shews that he believes in a resurrection or else in a continuance of existence after death.

Certainly this belief is in most cases unconscious or else subconscious. It is misty and indistinct and seldom clearly formulated. The myths and fables of the nations offer no firm foundation for the faith of the heathen. Concerning the resurrection of the body, Job is perhaps the only one in the O.T. who clearly asks this question and who in chap. xix. verses 25, 27, through the Spirit, answers it. The wonderful words "I know that my Redeemer liveth and the Last he shall stand upon the earth. And (if) after my skin this shall be destroyed, yet from out of my flesh I shall see God; Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another, my reins are consumed within me," may have been in Job's restoration partially fulfilled, but doubtless they find their definite fulfilment in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. And how precious it is for faith to find out that Job already in the prophecy was able to suggest how close the life of the Redeemer is connected with the resurrection. "Because I live ye shall live also," said the Lord before He departed from His disciples, and the apostle points out in 1 Cor. xv. that because Christ has risen those who sleep in Him shall be raised through Him. The life of the Redeemer is always in the present. He lives for ever, as the Last One He will stand on the earth. He is the last Adam, a "quickening spirit." From all those whom the Father has given Him, He would lose none but raise them at the last day. Job had the assurance that he himself in his own person (not merely in spirit as some perverse dreamers fancy) would see God. And our Redeemer says in His so-called high-priestly prayer, "Father (as to) those whom Thou hast

given Me I desire that where I am they also may be with Me that they may behold My glory.”

What a blessed hope! What a glorious outlook! No wonder that Job in the consciousness of his present sufferings adds, “My reins are consumed within me.” The contrast between such a glorious hope for the future and the torture he had to bear in the present was so great that he nearly fainted for the longing after this unspeakable bliss. But after his restoration and recovery it is certain that he often strengthened himself with this hope. Surely many a time did he think over, and enquire as to what the full significance of those wonderful words might be which the Spirit of Christ had revealed to him. But he had to satisfy himself with the assurance that God was ruling all in wisdom and righteousness and that He would yet bring all to a glorious end. Only at the appointed time could God’s counsel with regard to the resurrection be fully revealed. Now there is no more excuse for the fools who raise stupid questions concerning the resurrection. There is a kind of ignorance that is criminal. It springs from the preconceived disinclination to learn about things which might disturb man’s false security. He who believes in a resurrection of the dead, must arrange his life in the light of eternity. He who waits for the “last Adam” will prepare himself for His reception. But he who has to fear a reckoning after death acts often like the ostrich when he is pursued and sees no escape; he hides (so they say) his head in the sand and denies the presence of the hunter. An unpleasant truth simply does not exist for that class of people. The judgment on such fools will be dreadful but deserved.

H. R.

A Remarkable Forecast.

JOHN Nelson Darby was one of the most eminent scholars who ever lived, and possessed an insight into the word of God, which made him one of the greatest gifts the Lord has given to His church in these latter days. The deep knowledge of the word gave him a keen sight into the conditions and the course of this present age. Some 60 years ago he gave an address on the "progress of democratic power" in which he said the following words:—

"I do not expect Protestantism nominally to cease, but it will be really infidel. You may find individual ministers, Independent or Episcopalian, preaching Christ, but the disruption that is taking place is a disruption into infidel radicalism or popular will. I have no doubt that God will keep every faithful soul, and maintain every needed testimony; but it is well that Christians should know what is before them, as time goes on more rapidly, perhaps, than we are aware. I do not look for violence, because I believe there is no courage anywhere to resist the course of events. I do not pretend to say how long it may take to bring these things about. God knows, and God holds the reins or looses them; but I have no doubt as to what is coming. The Christian may walk in peace through it all, waiting for God's Son from heaven, and keeping the word of His patience; yet he may have a specially blessed place of testimony in the midst of it all, but a lowly one, content to be nothing in a world which has rejected Christ and is ripening for judgment. Our part is to keep His word and not to deny His Name . . . The opposition to Popery will be infidel, not Protestant. The general public effect will be a great and rapid increase of centralisation or despotic power, and loss of personal liberty. Individual personal independence of character will disappear almost entirely. Men must go with

others to be anything. Protestantism having lost its integrity and energy, God allows infidelity as a check on Popish power."

This is an almost perfect outline of what this age would bring, and it is all true to-day. May God give us courage to stand alone with Him and for Him. If we are true to our Lord and to the gospel, the Holy Spirit will supply all needed power. * * *

My Position Changed.

"I AGREE that we are sitting in heavenly places, *in*, not *with*, Christ; but I do not know in speaking of its being faith, by which of course it is known, if you have allowed quite enough for union with Christ by the Holy Ghost. Again there are things which we enjoy by experience which are not acquired by experience: every sealed believer is in Christ before God, and his place is to know it (John xiv.); but there are those who do not, through imperfect teaching. Hence to the Corinthians he writes as to carnal (not natural) not as to spiritual. 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect'—perfect meaning simply grown men in Christ. So Philippians: 'Let us therefore as many as be perfect.' We take the place *by faith* (beyond Jordan), but *when taken* we realise being in it by the Holy Ghost; and this is experience. It is not based on experience or progress in it. We are in it if in Christ. I reckon myself dead. But the wilderness is as much the fruit of redemption as Canaan.

"It is quite false to make it a matter of progressive experience, as at the end of the desert: it is our identification with Christ's death, and Jordan is identical in fact, though not in application, with the Red Sea. But at the Red Sea it is a redemption wrought for me: in Jordan I died—not by experience, but *I* died; that is, it connects itself with our state, though

we do not change that state by experience. But I experience that I have changed my *position*. This is not a play on words. A process of experience is not the operative cause; but I have been brought into a new experience which is *the fruit of the change*. It is important to see that it is no subject of progressive experience. Experience is that I cannot get it at all (Rom. vii.)—no good to be got in me, nor a new position out of me, by any process. I then learn by simple faith, as taught of God, that He has condemned sin in the flesh, which I find in me, in the cross of Christ. (Rom. viii. 3.) This is *simple faith* and *divine teaching*; the effect is I am free according to verse 2, and take the ground of chapter vi. Ephesians ii. is quite another thing; there is no experience at all, but a new creation, if there, dead in sin. The new creation has nothing to do with dying, but we are viewed as dead *in sin*.

“The wilderness is no part of the counsels of God but of His ways; the Red Sea and Jordan coalesce, only at Jordan they go up into the land. Further, in its full character the Red Sea closes all: they are brought to God, to His holy habitation, but not to the result of His plans as to us. The converted thief had no wilderness.”

J. N. D.

Notes from a Bible Reading on Genesis ii. 4.-iii. 24.

v. 4.—God is here referred to throughout as Jehovah Elohim, whereas Elohim alone had been previously employed. “Jehovah” expresses God’s unchanging faithfulness and is therefore used when the subject is God in relationship with man. The distinction is seen clearly in Exod. vi. 2, 3. There God acts in the name of Jehovah towards His people Israel whom He chose to

be in special relationship with Him, in contrast with "God Almighty" which was the character in which He had acted towards Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The same is true here—it is God the creator in chapter i. but in chapter ii. man receives from Him the breath of life, communes with Him, is placed on the ground of responsibility by Him and receives from Him his help-mate. The names by which God is referred to throughout scripture are used with unerring precision in relation to the context of each passage. How fitting is the emphasis on God's faithfulness in ch. iii. where we have the promise as to the woman's Seed! In Jesus, (Jehovah, Saviour) we see the crown of God's faithfulness to His fallen creature.

vv. 5, 6.—The *creation* of the vegetable kingdom is stated and that prior to rain or cultivation.

v. 7.—In contrast with all else is the creation of Man. There is the distinctive act of communication of life to man by the breathing of God, and he must therefore be fundamentally different from the "beasts that perish." He is "spirit, soul and body" (1 Thes. v. 23) by the direct in-breathing of God. The word of God alone can divide between soul and spirit (Heb. iv. 12). The Old Testament deals primarily with man as he is on the earth in his natural ("soulish") body (1 Cor. xv. 44) and the New Testament emphasises the spiritual side. The spirit in man is, however, frequently referred to in the O.T. (Zech. xii. 1; Job xxxii. 8, xxxiii. 4; xxvii. 2, 3; Is. lvii. 15, 16, etc.).

vv. 8-17.—God prepares a "paradise of pleasure" for man and introduces him into it. God is ever the Giver of good. The garden was the centre of blessing for the world, for thence the four streams flowed. For man it provided beauty, food and congenial occupation, and also a simple test of his obedience to the will of God. To eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not in itself sinful, but rebellion against

God was, and this discloses to us that the true nature of sin is lawlessness (1 John iii. 4, N. Tr.). The consequences of disobedience were revealed to Adam; he would thereupon become subject to death.

vv. 18-24.—Adam's intellectual powers were perfect and God delighted in His creature's exercise (in the naming of the lower creation) of the dominion that he had been given, but Man needed for the perfect satisfaction of his moral nature an object for his affection, and God supplies this in man's "helpmate," formed of that which was nearest his heart. There are always evil results where the divine order is set aside. The creation of woman and her place is referred to in the N.T. as embodying important principles and as prophetic of Christ and His church (Matt. xix. 5, 6; 1 Cor. vi. 16; xi. 9-16; Eph. v. 25-33; 1 Tim. ii. 11-15).

Chap. iii. 1-8.—This unique account of the origin of sin in man is undoubtedly to be taken literally and not figuratively. The N.T. references to it are conclusive (Rom. v. 12-21; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14). Scripture makes it clear elsewhere however that it was Satan who acted through the serpent (see John viii. 44; Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2). He begins by raising a question as to what God had said and emphasises the solitary negative commandment (cf. ver. 1 with ch. ii. 16, 17). Eve adds to God's words, and Satan thereupon flatly contradicts what God had said and insinuates a doubt as to God's goodness. Contrast the temptation of the Lord Jesus; He, in such different surroundings, meets Satan's voice with the precise word of God.

Eve was deceived, and her heart now out of the place of subjection to God's word is swayed by her desires; she sees, desires, and takes, and then out of her proper sphere she acts as head and induces her husband to eat also. Adam was not deceived (v. 17; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14).

The knowledge of good and evil was thus acquired, but with it a guilty conscience, and they hid themselves from God.

vv. 9-19.—The first question in the O.T. is “Where art thou?” Contrast the first question in the N.T. “Where is He?” (Matt. ii. 2). Notice how deliberately God acts in judgment. There is the fullest enquiry of each in turn and then the suited judgment is pronounced first on the serpent (from whom the curse is never removed, Is. lxv. 25) then on the woman, and lastly, the man. Mercy rejoices over judgment, and there is the promise that the final victory will not be Satan’s, for a Deliverer will come born of a *woman*. (See Luke i. 31-33.)

vv. 20-24.—In spite of the sentence of death he had just heard Adam rests on God’s promise and names his wife accordingly “Living.” Thereupon *God* clothes them through the death of others, thus introducing a principle of immense importance in the ways of God. But man is sent from the garden lest he should partake of the tree of life and thereby endeavour to defy the judgment of God.* The cherubim are the executors of God’s judgment; they are next referred to as gazing (in figure) on the mercy seat (Exod. xxv. 20).

The eternal life which is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ is of an immensely higher character than any that Eden’s tree might have imparted (John xvii. 3). How that can be righteously given to sinful man is one of the great themes developed in God’s revelation to us.

L.C.H.

* “Man is justly driven out of the garden, an outcast from paradise and God, and hindered from partaking of the tree of life, that he may not perpetuate here below a life of disaster and of misery.”—*Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, by J. N. Darby.

Waiting for God's Son from Heaven.

"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to *wait* for His Son from heaven."—1 Thess. i.9-10.

TO wait!" These hearts too often ask—
How long, O Lord, how long
Must we amid the world's rude scorn
Do battle with the wrong?

"To wait:" Oh, is it to look on,
Through heavy clouds and gloom,
To that bright light whose rays e'en now
Shine out beyond the *tomb*?

"To wait for Him!" Nay, 'tis to watch
With faithful hearts and true
For His *return*, while all around
Grows darker to our view.

"To wait for Him!" 'Tis just to find
His absence such a loss,
That, pained, we turn from earth's gay scenes
And gladly clasp His cross!

"To wait!" 'Tis like some brilliant light
Through darkness shining clear;
The "day-star rising in our hearts"—
The Lord will soon appear.

"To wait!" 'Tis day by day to cry,
And in our hearts to be
Ready to go or stay, O Lord,
As best may seem to Thee.

Be this our one desire, blest Lord,
Whate'er our earthly state;
And sweeter may it prove each day
To serve Thee, and to *wait*!

A. S. O.