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WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Volume XXI

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WORDS OF HELP

from the SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

The Righteousness of God.

(Read Rom. III. 19-26; IV. 1-3, 23-25.)

THE Epistle to the Romans takes up the subject of the righteousness of God. The apostle is writing to believers, to the saints at Rome, concerning the gospel of God. He had not visited that city himself and spoken there of this great subject which was so very dear to his heart. He was therefore desirous that those in Rome should understand more fully the great truths of the gospel in which they were already rejoicing and especially of the revelation of God's righteousness.

The conscience in a believer is much more sensitive than in an unbeliever. Many who rest their souls in faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, and who have life through His name, are a little unhappy in their minds when they think of the inflexible righteousness of God. If, one says, I know God so loved me as to give His Son for me, how is it that my love to Him is not greater than it is? Why am I not more obedient to His word? Such do not see how their imperfect behaviour can be consistent with the righteousness of God. Consequently they are very anxious about themselves.

God's righteousness is eternal and unchangeable, yet, in conformity with it, He receives the sinner, forgives his sins, and accepts him as righteous, too. Of this marvellous fact the Epistle to the Romans treats.

Nothing gives a more stable foundation to the Christian life than the understanding of what is brought out in the scriptures I have read. The apostle shows first that all men have sinned, and that they do now, as they have done at all times, come short of the glory of God. There is that about man naturally which is utterly inconsistent with the glory of God; and the

glory seen in Eden has departed from the face of man, and from the life of man.

In chap. iii. 21, the apostle lays emphasis on what is true now, and which God has brought to light because of the universal failure and unrighteousness of man. "But now the righteousness of God without law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ has come, and God Who had in vain sought for a righteousness in man has now found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ a complete answer to His righteous claims. The types and shadows of the law spoke of the good things of God that were to come, but they were not the very image of the things. It is now no longer a question of types and shadows; for their very image and their fulfilment have been manifested in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The righteousness of God which is now declared has nothing to do with the law; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." But man was disobedient, so that the law only showed that man did not love God; he mistrusted Him. Therefore righteousness could not come to men by the law, because of the material with which the law dealt; the weakness and evil of man's heart prevented the goodness of the law being carried into effect.

In the case of the rich young ruler we see an example of the failure of man to welcome what was of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to the Lord and asked Him, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And when the Lord referred him to the commandments of the law, he replied, "All these have I kept from my youth up." He had obeyed its precepts; he had always set his mind to keep the law as far as possible. The Lord then said to him, "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor." Did he really love his neighbour as himself? then he

would gladly give up all that he had to help others. The Lord added, "And come, follow Me." Did he love God with all his heart? then he would love the Lord Jesus Christ, too, and would gladly follow Him; for He was God manifest in flesh. If his heart had been right, he would with all his heart have responded to the Lord's call. He had done well under the law; he was a fair specimen of man in the flesh; and the Lord loved him. But if the flesh at its best under the law could only turn its back on the Christ of God, of what use was it? The young man lacked one thing—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wisdom and righteousness are found in the Lord Jesus Christ: for unto us who believe He is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). The righteousness of God has been manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ, but not during His ministry on earth. For this we have to go on to the cross, where the spotless and holy One was nailed to that tree of cursing. Man showed himself at his very worst there: for the Lord Jesus was condemned to that shameful death by the unmitigated unrighteousness of man. The centurion, amazed at such a spectacle, cried out, "Surely, this was a righteous man."

The marvel of the gospel is that when man showed how utterly unrighteous he is, God's righteousness comes out. The sin of man had to be dealt with that the purposes of grace might be accomplished; and as we look at the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, we see that God's righteousness is shown in Christ being then made a propitiation. Then God in His righteousness lays the stroke of judgment on the One Whom man despised. No wonder the apostle says that righteousness is by faith! God's righteousness was in fullest exercise with regard to Christ, when He hung on the cross, the Just for the unjust. Such a scene of injustice might well have called for God's deliverance of that holy and righteous One. One of the robbers by His side taunted Him with the words, "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us."

But there was no deliverance. He was the mercy-seat, and God was dealing with Him, the sinless One, in the place of the sinner. Our sins were laid upon Him there, and God brought judgment upon Him according to His own holy nature. The heavens on that day were silent to the cry of the Crucified. No wrath fell upon the world, because God dealt judicially with the evil of man in the Person of His beloved Son. All that we are, and all that we have done, was imputed to Christ.

The blood of Christ brings me into touch with the holy nature of God. It is clear that righteousness is needed for the administration of the world's affairs, and I instinctively feel it is needful for me in the tangled concerns of this life. When I come in contact with trying experiences, which seem to me to be unrighteous, I am tempted to say, "Could not this great trial have been diverted? Is God righteous in allowing the righteous to suffer?" I am then questioning the righteousness of God, and a Christian ought not to do this, as Peter explains (1 Pet. iii.). In the days of Job, or of the Psalmist, such language might be permissible: for they had never stood at the cross of Christ. But we can ever hold fast to this fact, that God's righteousness has been manifested. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ has vindicated God's righteousness in Old Testament days as well as in these. The sins of David, Isaiah, and others were justly forgiven because God could look onward to the death of Christ. God's righteousness is displayed in the cross, in the glory, and in what Christ is now at the right hand of God and in the future administration of the kingdom. The righteousness of God stands eternally firm and true; and it is on this basis that God receives me.

Abraham, through faith, came into touch with the righteousness of God (Gen. xv.). Abraham had received the promise of God; but for many, many years he had no seed to inherit this promise; yet Abraham believed God and He counted it to him for righteous-

ness. Faith must be a continuous exercise between our hearts and God. This is very important to remember : for we are believers, we have to keep on believing. The most precious gifts of God are not material ; and only by faith can we accept and enjoy them. The things we need most in our daily experience can only be received by faith ; while the choicest blessings of God are spiritually discerned, and enjoyed by faith, resting as they do upon the righteousness of God.

Our forgiveness, our justification, our acceptance, and our relationship, are all based on the solid foundation of God's righteousness. If we sin, and confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The blood of Christ is the permanent answer to everything which the righteousness of God condemns. The righteousness of God would not allow the body of Christ to remain in the grave : that righteousness raised up Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in glory. The assurance that we are righteous through faith in Him is that Christ is now in the glory of God. John saw the Lamb there "as it had been slain" ; He displayed the proof of His own death.

We have also an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. If we sin, and come and confess our sins, we find that God's righteousness, of which we might otherwise be afraid, is on our side. Christ Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree is now with the Father. Where then are our sins ? They are gone. We look back to the cross, and we there see our sins upon Jesus Christ ; we look up to Him in the glory, and find our sins are gone.

The special joy of the gospel is that the great work of propitiation was done entirely apart from ourselves and its complete efficacy attested by God Himself. The cleansing of the leper provides us with a typical example. There were two birds taken for the leper : one was killed in sacrifice, and the other dipped in the blood of the slain bird was set free, and flew upwards with the mark of death upon it. What a beautiful

illustration of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! There were, however, two birds, two lives, in the type; but only one life in the antitype.

Peter, after he had denied his Lord, found that the Lord was looking at him. Their eyes met just at the right moment. Why? Because Jesus Christ the Righteous was the faithful Advocate for His erring disciple. Peter then went out and wept bitterly; but he was restored, and his sin blotted out, because Christ died for his offences.

W.J.H.

The Wild Rose and the Cornfield.

(A Parable.)

ITwas the end of June; the tall, green ears of wheat, not yet ripened by the golden sunshine, waved gently in the breeze, and gave promise of a most abundant harvest; while the air was filled with the delicate scent of the wild roses, which hung in profusion over the leafy hedge. Those beautiful roses! How graceful were the festoons formed by their light green boughs! How pure the tender blush, which touched their pearl-like blossoms! The little child, who played beneath the hedge, had rejoiced in their wild profusion, and learned, under instruction, his first infant lesson of thanksgiving, as he praised the God Who made the lovely flowers. The maiden, with her heart so quickly responsive to the touch of beauty, had looked at them till soft tears filled her eyes, as she thought of the fulness of beauty which must dwell in Him Who could make earthly things so fair. The anxious, care-worn child of sorrow had looked on them with a lightened heart, repeating to herself the sacred words, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" But the rose knew nothing of all this; she hung there in her unconscious beauty, and drooped her fair head because she seemed useless to all; whilst the waving corn before her would supply the food of hundreds. Yes, the corn would

supply the bodily wants of hundreds; but had the rose done less in ministering to the higher wants of man's immortal spirit?—in teaching thankfulness to the child, devotion to the maiden, patient confidence to the poor? God had clothed her with beauty, and by that beauty she fulfilled His work. Even thus is it with many of His children upon earth; they would fain, as the corn-plant, be employed in some mission of manifest usefulness; they would feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and relieve the distressed: but His providence forbids it; sickness or some other hindrance withholds them from the work; and they hang their heads in sorrow, under a painful sense of uselessness. Not so, afflicted Christians! you may be as the fair roses of God's harvest-field. He has all beauty wherewith to clothe you, spirit-graces which shine brighter as the body decays. Though withheld from all active service, you shall be living witnesses for Him. Your love, your patience, your gentle thankfulness, shall be a holy, soothing influence on all around; while you may never know here below how many a holy thought you have awakened in the breasts of others, and how, when you seemed to be an idler, you were really working in the choicest part of the Lord's vineyard.

E. S. B.

A Faithful Servant of Christ.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—2 Cor. iv. 5.

THE following incident recorded of Judson on the occasion of his return to his native land in broken health, after an absence of thirty years, aptly illustrates the above scripture. It affords also an affecting proof of devotedness to the interests of Christ, and is very precious in days like these, when many—who take the place of being servants of Christ—so frequently use similar occasions for the exaltation of men, if not for the display and gratification of self in a greater or less degree.

“Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town, and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the close of the usual service; and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear attent, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the ‘precious Saviour,’ of what He had done for us, and of what we owed to Him; and he sat down, visibly affected. ‘The people are very much disappointed,’ said a friend to him while on their way home; ‘they wonder you did not talk of *something else*.’ ‘Why, what did they want?’ he replied; ‘I presented to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world.’ ‘But they wanted something different—a story.’ ‘Well, I am sure I gave them a story—the most thrilling one that can be conceived of.’ ‘But they had heard it before. They needed something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes.’ ‘Then I am glad they have it to say that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the gospel of Christ; and when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people to-day, how could I stand up and furnish food to vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge—I gave you one opportunity to tell them of Me, you spent it in describing your own adventures!’ ”

“Consider your Ways”—“Consider MY Ways.”

THESE words occur twice over (each of them) in the brief prophecy of Haggai, the first of the three post-captivity prophets, and will well repay our consideration.

If we turn to the book of Ezra we shall find the

occasion of these exhortations. The remnant of Judah had returned from the captivity of Babylon under the care of Sheshbazzar, the prince of the house of Judah, and commenced the work of restoration by re-building the altar of the God of Israel. But intimidated by the jealousy and threats of their enemies, they ceased the work of the house of God until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia, who found the decrees made by his predecessor, and encouraged them to recommence.

But the word of the Lord by Haggai gives us another view of this matter of their ceasing to build, and shows that their hearts were at fault in so easily accepting the discouragements. They said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built," and turned their attention to building their own houses. Hence the first message of the prophet is, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Ye have sown much and bring in little. Ye eat but ye have not enough . . . and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes . . . Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house."

The response to this appeal comes promptly. "Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai, the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord."

This revival brings the second message by the prophet, and we would note the fact that Haggai is the one prophet who is directly called "Jehovah's messenger." Although the least of the three post-captivity prophets, the Lord puts this honour upon him. And what was His message at this time—"I am with you," saith Jehovah. It has been well said—I don't know by whom—"I am with you," is the saving prin-

ciple for faith in the weakest possible day; and we would ask, What had they better in the brightest day? The result is a great revival of interest, and a return to labour in the good work of building the Lord's house.

Is it not always so when the Lord's voice is really heeded? Whatever the confusion and declension of these last days may be, every true revival begins at the same point in the same way. The Spirit of God recalls the hearts of His people to the Lord's presence in the midst, and His word controlling their service.

It was not only the resistance and discouragements from without that hindered them, but the lack of heart and desire in themselves that led to their ceasing to work in the Lord's house. What distinguishes the work of Ezra from that of Nehemiah is that the latter's chief concern was the state of the city—Jerusalem—he mourned over its desolation, and set to work upon its walls and exterior, while Ezra began with the house of Jehovah, and set up the altar first. What a lesson for us to-day!

Zerubbabel and Joshua, to whom these messages came, were prominent civil and religious leaders of that day. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel, which means asking of God in prayer; he was of royal seed, in direct line from David, and is called in the book of Ezra by his Persian name Sheshbazzar. But the word of God not only stirred these leaders, but "the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God."

This brings the third message. The great message, "I am with you," is repeated with the addition, "My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not."

And now for the second time the Lord calls upon them to consider *His* ways—why their work did not prosper, and their crops were blighted. It was not accidental, or ordinary causes, but the hand of God, to bring them to a due sense of their selfish indifference to His house. They were discouraged on account of the feebleness of their efforts and the small results,

but the third message is full of comfort and hope. "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest" . . . "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former (as we are told it should be read), and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

After this striking appeal we get a fourth message with the exact date of its reception by the prophet, in which Jehovah again asks the people to consider His ways with them, and lays down a most important principle for all time as to holiness and defilement; followed by a fifth brief and pregnant message of hope and glory in the future, in which Christ Himself is introduced as the signet of the future glory.

But our object in this brief sketch is not to explain this prophecy so much as to point its application to our present-day needs. It is a remarkable prophecy in every way. Haggai appears to have been only about four months in the prophetic office, and the date of each of the five messages is given with marked precision.

It is a remnant testimony and so becomes of special application to this present time. If we are led by the Spirit of God now in the closing days of this dispensation, what will be the character of our testimony? Not some new beginning, but patient, dependent labour upon the foundation already laid; comforted and encouraged by the two great messages of Haggai: "I am with you, saith the Lord"—"My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not." The days are difficult; man has succeeded in spoiling all the precious things committed to his responsibility; but Christ remaineth, and the Holy Spirit remains, and the message to the hearing ear to-day is, "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

T.R.

(To be continued, God willing.)

A Free Gospel, and a Full Gospel.

CHRISt is risen and He is our life; we have not only the life but we have also the Holy Ghost to give divine power of enjoyment of the life, which can never be unless the heart surrenders itself to the death of Christ. People stop short of that; they don't know the power of His resurrection till the power of His death is known. And that is what makes a *full* gospel of such grand importance for the saint. There is a great difference between a *free* and a *full* gospel. A *free* gospel is the finest thing possible for the sinner. A *full* gospel is not for the sinner but rather for the saint. I might say Peter preached a *free* gospel, and three thousand were converted on the first occasion. Paul preached a *full* gospel. There is this difference, that the preaching of Paul was most rich and profound and of the greatest possible blessing where it was entered into. It is all there for us and we ought not to come short of it, and if it is for us to know, it is for us to preach.

But the grand point for us is to take it into our souls. When that is done there is full blessing now. The Holy Ghost never stops short at the death of Christ—He would have that death entered into in all its sweetness—and in many respects there is nothing like it, but still there is this power in resurrection that we do well not to lose, and the Holy Ghost would have us follow Christ in faith where He is, and to know that our portion is in Himself there.

His death! It was for us, but now in His resurrection and His present place in heaven we are there in Him. As Christ is, so are we in this world. Connected with this I would just add one word. It is remarkable that the day of Pentecost was the day when the law was given. The law was given on the first Pentecost—not yet called Pentecost in the same way as now, but still it was fifty days after the wave sheaf and there was the law, and oh! what weakness, what death, and what misery, just because the law was

good and we bad, because Christ was not there. But now that Christ has come, everything is turned into blessing.

The judgment of God ! Yes, because it fell on Him, it was due to us, but it fell on Him, and surely it is an immense thing to know that ; and can anything show more clearly where some dear evangelical people are than the fact that this great truth of the gospel is not believed? The wonderful thing is that they are so good practically with so little truth to be their foundation. It is a vital truth of the gospel that the believer shall not come into judgment.

There is nothing more wonderful than a *full* gospel—the gospel as Paul preached it. As the Lord said in John v., “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears My word,” — not the word of Moses or the prophets, now,—“and believes Him,” not believes *on* Him, that is, about it, but “believes Him that sent Me.” The essence of faith is that I believe God, that I believe what God says. He that, through hearing Christ’s word, believes God that sent Him, “hath life eternal, and cometh not into judgment,” not merely “condemnation.” Our translators of 1611 changed it to that. How few, even of the most intelligent, know that believers do not come into judgment ! They think that the believer will come into judgment, but be kept and brought through it.

But, let me tell you, if the believer goes into the judgment he would not, could not, get through it, because he is not guiltless. Even David felt this when he said, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant : for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Ps. cxliii. 2). And the judgment is a real thing. It is a foolish thing to go into a judgment that is unreal, and the idea of God sparing anyone is an impossibility. This idea of the believer going into judgment undoes the effect of Christ’s redemption. It is true that they think that the blood of Christ will speak in the day of judgment. But no, no one will speak in the day of judgment but the Judge. There are the books, and

they are opened, and the books speak of the guilt of the man and the guilt is undeniable, and so there can be no issue from judgment but to be cast into the lake of fire. There is no soul but a sinful soul that passes through the judgment.

The believer's judgment is past, that has been borne by Christ for all who believe. We shall not stand before the great white throne. We shall tell all out, or "be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ"; we shall confess everything there, but that is a totally different thing to being "judged." Being judged means that I suffer for what I have done, and if that is so what could it be but everlasting ruin? But it is not so. It would be a total denial of, a total inconsistency with, life eternal. Impossible that a person who has life eternal could be judged!

Nothing startles Christian people more than a *full* gospel. A *free* gospel presents rather what we are delivered from. It is right to think of the state of souls, but we should seek to lead them on, little by little, and not to leave them where they are.

That is the danger of too great quickness in receiving into fellowship. Souls should be led on to know the gospel—a full gospel—otherwise they remain where they are in their souls. Instead of teaching them about the anti-Christ and Babylon and the woman of the seven hills (all very interesting and profitable, in the proper place), let us seek that souls should hear and believe the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation.

For what are all these things compared with a sound and *full* gospel as a foundation for the soul—to know that all the evil is cleared away in the death of Christ now, that we are in the unclouded favour of God, and that Christ's place is ours? No doubt, it is entirely through Him and His death. It is not merely that we *look back* but we *look up* to where He is now; we know that we are *one with Him Who is there*.

W. K.

Notes of a Bible Reading on Genesis xxxvii. to xlii.

WE enter in these chapters on the life of Joseph, the last of the lives in this richly instructive book. Joseph's life presents in many respects a contrast to those preceding it, but it is also complementary to them. The lives of the O.T. worthies set forth different phases of divine life in man, which, in Joseph, is seen fully developed. Little failure, if any, is recorded of Joseph. In his pathway of simple faithfulness and consequent suffering to the glories which followed, he becomes an eminent, if not the pre-eminent, type of the Lord Jesus in His sufferings and glories.

xxxvii. 2-11. Those destined by God to rule are frequently chosen from the shepherds; so Joseph here, as Moses and David, notably, later. To the one who has a shepherd's heart the sceptre can be entrusted.

The hatred of the brethren soon manifests itself. There appear to be three causes:

(i) His moral separation from them (v. 2: cf. John vii. 7).

(ii) His being the special object of his father's affection and honour, of which the coat of many pieces was (a) the personal expression, and (b) the public declaration, and also, perhaps, (c) the mark of appointment to be successor as chief of the clan. Does not the coat suggest the Father's delight in the Lord Jesus? In Mark i. the Father's voice from the opened heaven addressed him personally on the threshold of His ministry, "*Thou art My beloved Son.*" In Luke ix. the same voice is heard towards the close of His ministry, declaring to others this time His complacency in Him, "*This is My beloved Son.*"

(iii) Thirdly, they hated him because of his dreams,—whose purport they quickly grasped,—in which God revealed his future supremacy.

In Joseph's two dreams two sides of Christ's supremacy are foreshadowed, the earthly and the

heavenly. Men contest, not His heavenly supremacy, but His earthly.

vv. 12-17. Fulfilment of the will of his father and love to his brethren took Joseph out of Hebron (place of communion) and put him in his brethren's hands.

He did not find them in Shechem ("support" or "shoulder"), but in Dothan ("laws"). When Christ came His brethren were far from being in the place of subjection under the yoke of God (cf. xlix. 14, 15), and they had the law only after an external and burdensome sort, not written in their hearts, but only on their lips.

18-20. In the dreams we see God's counsels regarding Joseph; here, the counsel of his brethren. They were descendants of Cain at heart.

21-22. All are not like-minded. Reuben here appears to have a conscience and concern for his brother, and a desire to save him (v. 29).

23-30. Joseph was stripped of his coat and our Lord was stripped of His glories. "There was no water" in the pit, adds the Holy Spirit. Yet death was not to be by that way. Joseph was delivered to the Ishmaelites; and the Lord was delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles, it being not lawful for them to put Him to death. Judah's question, "What profit?" is true to life to-day. Not right, but profits, is the guide (compare Judas, Matt. xxvi. 15). Joseph is sold for twenty pieces of silver, our Lord for thirty.

31-36. The heartlessness of Joseph's brethren shows itself in deceiving their father. Years before Jacob had deceived his father, and by the same means, a kid of the goats. How true that we reap what we sow! God's government is inexorable.

xxxviii. Joseph's story is broken for the time being. It is a dark chapter, but God records things as they are. Judah marries a Canaanitish woman, Shuah (riches). Contrast Abraham's care to secure a bride of his kindred for Isaac. But "where sin abounds, grace over-abounds," is the lesson of the chapter. Tamar is brought into the line of the Messiah (Matt.

i. 3), and the royal seed is preserved. Tamar with the other three women in the genealogy of Christ form a beautiful gospel subject.

xxxix. In this chapter and the next all seems to combine to take Joseph farther away from the fulfilment of God's word to him, but this is only apparent, for all the incidents are but links in the chain for blessing. God had one end in view—sole and supreme control for Joseph. Eph. i. 10, is a brief but full commentary on what is now before us.

vv. 1-6. Even now Joseph is ruler in his master's house, and the house is blessed on his account. Wherever we find Joseph supreme, there is blessing. Is the true Joseph, though unseen, supreme in our hearts and lives? We see the quickness of Joseph's master to appreciate his qualities and to turn them to his own account; this the world is ever ready to do.

7-18. Joseph's fear of God, unchanging integrity and purity shine beautifully here, as also does the absence of all self-vindication and fault-finding, either with God or with Potiphar's wife. The eye single, the whole body is full of light (Matt. vi 22).

19-23. In prison he suffers quietly for righteousness' sake, waiting God's time (see Psalm cv. 16-22). It was doubtless at this time that (as one version gives it) the iron entered his soul, and the word of Jehovah tried him. God's way is to develop in secret what is to come out publicly (cf. Moses, David, Paul, etc.). Lessons learned with God in suffering are among the most valuable of all. In the prison, as in the house, he is exalted to a position of confidence, a foretaste of what awaited him. Abased or exalted, Joseph shines in the lowly-minded performance of what is entrusted to him.

xl. 1-8. God is preparing and over-ruling. Nothing happens by chance.

9-19. In prison Joseph becomes the revealer of the mind of God: so the Lord on the cross (an infinitely darker prison) becomes the Interpreter, according to God, of all man's sin and doom, and of all God's

holiness, mercy and grace. For the different fates of the butler and baker, cf. the two thieves at the cross. Joseph asks for no honours or gain, but to be remembered. We cannot read this without hearing another Voice here.

20-23. Joseph's interpretations come true, as they must of necessity do.

xli. 8-36. The present times are the years of plenty (grace), but famine (coming tribulation) is not far away.

vv. 37-46. We reach at last the exaltation of Joseph to the throne. Probably never before or since has a man of such youth held a position of like responsibility. He is thirty years old, an age particularly mentioned in others' lives, the age of mature manhood. It is the grand foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone will be competent to meet the exigencies of the famine, and to Whom all knees shall bow (Phil. ii. 9-11).

The expression, "man in whom the Spirit of God is," is remarkable. It is the secret of all. God has revealed His mind and will both as to the present and the future, but only by the Spirit of God can they be understood. In exaltation Joseph is seen in a new relationship. It is in connection with his new name, Zaphnath-Paaneah (which in Hebrew means revealer of secrets, and in Egyptian, saviour of the world), that he gets his Gentile bride. To Christianity the mysteries belong.

47-52. Joseph sets forth the Lord Jesus as the wisdom and power of God. The names of his sons, born before the famine, are significant: Manasseh (forgetful). The Jews are Lo-Ammi for the time being; and Ephraim (fruitful), speaking of the church, the fruit of the grain of wheat which fell into the ground.

53-57. In Joseph are centred all the resources, and to Joseph all lands appealed, and so acknowledged his supremacy.

xlii. 1-5. Famine (need) drives the brethren to

Joseph, and need will cause the remnant in a day to come to cry to God.

6-24. Hearts are probed and consciences exercised to produce repentance, the point of all blessing; and all by one who loved them and whom they knew not. Nature would have led Joseph to reveal himself sooner.

J. P. B.

The Apostle Paul.

FOR my part I believe that we scarcely know what Paul was. We have the same salvation, the same Saviour, the same grace, and for the end the same glory, namely, to be like Christ—but to bear always in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that shows a life of continual abnegation and of devotedness. He was separated from the Jews and the Gentiles to be connected with the glorified Christ; but whilst he was in the body he had always the sentence of death in himself. Death wrought in him, and life wrought thus from him in others. This is saying a great deal, but he was an elect vessel, and the Lord showed him how many things he must suffer for His name. There is this true and deep consolation for you and me and for all who are His, that, be as it may, He will be perfectly glorified in us all according to the counsels of God. For me, I know it well, it will be His grace that will be glorified, and I shall be satisfied with it. God knows by what road He is leading His own; one thing is certain, it is that Jesus will rejoice in the travail of His soul, and will be fully satisfied with it; and He will not be satisfied, His love will not, without seeing His own in the most perfect blessedness near Him. If His love is satisfied we may well be. We shall enter into the rest of God, where His love, His fixed purpose, His character, will be fully glorified in all that surrounds Him, and “He shall rest in His love,” as He works now according to that love. For the rest, I believe that we shall rejoice more in the fact that Christ is fully glorified than in our own glory.

J. N. D.

Hold Thou My Hand *

BLEST Lord of love, through all my earthbound
days,

Hold Thou my hand;
In wilful moods, in thoughtless moments too,
Hold, hold my hand;
Thy hand that holds the heavens, the earth, the sea,
Thy mighty hand was pierced, and pierced for me.

When trials crowd to press my spirit down,
Hold Thou my hand;
Should hellish hosts my onward steps oppose,
Hold fast my hand;
No foe I fear, no sorrows keen and deep,
While Thou art near my trembling soul to keep.

When days are bright, and sunshine cheers my way,
Hold Thou my hand;
Should trials cease, and Satan seem to sleep,
Hold still my hand;
My treacherous heart might lead me then from Thee,
Forgetful soon of all Thou art to me.

Blest Lord of grace, so patient, gentle, kind,
Hold Thou my hand;
So changeful I! So apt from Thee to turn!
Hold, hold my hand;
Let Thy firm grasp still hold me evermore,
Till home at last, the wilderness be o'er.

W.J.H.

* Ps. lxxiii. 23, 24; Isa. xlii. 6; Jer. xxxi. 32.

Judaism and Christianity.

(Luke v. 33-39.)

THE scribes and Pharisees knew the need of repentance, for had not John the Baptist instilled this into their minds? He had come to prepare the way of the Lord, preaching the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel for the remission of their sins; and that they should bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, and believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

But the disciples of John were slow to learn their lesson; they were loth to display grace to others, much less, to perform ordinary acts of righteousness in their everyday life, although their longed-for King, prophesied of as a Governor Who should rule God's people Israel, had come, and was in their midst prepared to grant them repentance unto life, and to baptise them with the Holy Ghost. They had not therefore turned from John to follow Christ, but were still seeking by fasting and prayer to make a show of repentance.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, prided themselves on their observance of the law of Moses, and displayed their religion so as to be seen of man, making long prayers so as outwardly to appear righteous, and disclaiming, when charged, any participation in the evil deeds of their fathers in killing the prophets sent unto them.

The legal system is well fitted to fallen man; for it gives importance to him, claims his obedience, and falls in with his reason; for even a natural conscience owns the righteousness of the law.

The profession of many in the religious world to-day is summed up in that little word, D-O—do, whereas the basis of Christianity is D-O-N-E—done; for Christ has come to be the Saviour of the world. He has gone to Calvary's cross, and there He was delivered for our offences, and has been raised again for our justification; He has given Himself a ransom for all, He has

gone down into death and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and He has made propitiation for sin. That is something done. He has also made peace by the blood of His cross; He has finished the work His Father gave Him to do, and He has opened the flood-gates of God's love, whereby grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. That is something else that is done.

He has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against those under the law, which was contrary to them, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God; and to all who are seeking to be justified on the ground of their doing, Christ is made of none effect to them, and they have no Saviour.

Grace is supernatural, and the disciples of Jesus had turned to Him Who was full of grace and truth. With their Messiah in their midst, the divine Husband of Israel, how could they fast while He was there? His very birth was announced by angels as "good tidings of great joy to all people"; for on that day was born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The gracious reply of the Lord to the question of the scribes and Pharisees, Why His disciples ate and drank, when they were fasting and praying, should have filled their hearts with shame and remorse, had they any fear of God before their eyes. Shame, that there was no response in their hearts to His grace, and remorse, because their sins had brought Him to them.

But Israel was little prepared to be the earthly bride of Christ; for, on account of their idolatry, God had by providential judgments, scattered them amongst the nations; and they remain there in unbelief until this day, without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. "Lo-Ammi"—"not my people" being written upon them, they have become a byword among all nations.

But it is God's purpose of grace to re-gather them in a day yet to come; for He will draw them from the ends of the earth by the cords of His love. Because He is God, and not man, He destroys them not. If their fall has been the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? But blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. What an illuminating account of their restoration to blessing is given us in Isaiah lx.!

Few indeed were the children of the bride-chamber at this time; but there was a remnant faithful to God, who, as long as Christ was upon earth, trusted that He would have redeemed Israel. But the day was not far distant, when the Bridegroom would be taken away from them; for He knew His rejection would soon come, and sorrow fill their hearts; for all their earthly hopes would be closed in His death, and then it would be time enough for them to fast.

Israel, as a nation, having refused Him, can only be re-gathered as the result of the cross; and the time was coming when the cross must be faced, or blessing could not flow out. Even the high priest at the time prophesied that it was necessary that Jesus die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.

It has been well said, The Bible is the history of two men. The "first Adam"—the responsible and created man; and the "Last Adam,"—the Man of God's purpose and counsel. The responsible man's history closed in the cross, and only after the cross are God's purposes and counsels of grace unfolded; for everything depends upon the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Christ is now in the glory, having accomplished eternal redemption; and as a result, the Holy Ghost has been sent down to reprove the world—of sin, because they believe not on Him; of righteousness,

because He has gone to the Father ; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. Faith in a crucified Christ, now risen from the dead, and seated at God's right hand, can alone deliver you from this threefold condemnation of the Spirit.

Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ; and whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. His cross has proved that we have no righteousness of our own ; but God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ; and, now the righteousness of God is manifested by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe ; such as believe being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. For God is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

In going to the cross, the Lord Jesus went down into death to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and to deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And now, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Hearing the word of faith which is preached, and believing God Who sent His Son, ensures possession of eternal life, and exemption from the fast approaching judgment. The word of the Lord Jesus is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears My word, and believes Him that sent Me, has life eternal, and does not come into judgment ; but is passed out of death into life." (John v. 24, N.Tr.) Truly we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us !

The Lord, in bringing forward the uselessness of patching an old garment with new material, is showing that He is breaking up the old order of things, in order to bring in the new ; for if righteousness be by the law, then Christ died in vain. But Christ is the end of the

law for righteousness to everyone that believeth; for God hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

God's righteousness and man's will never mix. You cannot put a piece of new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. Judaism, like an old garment, must be set aside entirely, in order to bring in the blessings of Christianity; for the principles of grace cannot be united with the old system of Judaism.

The very fact of bringing in a new covenant makes the first covenant old: for if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

H.K.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Some Questioners and Their Questions.

QUESTIONS certainly play an important part in the spiritual education of God's children. To understand this, it may be helpful to consider that *enquiry* is the wooing of knowledge; *understanding*, its possession; *meditation*, its enjoyment; and *wisdom*, its practice; for wisdom is truly *knowledge applied* to practical affairs.

Youth is the time for asking questions (see Ex. xii. 26, 27; Deut. vi. 20-25; Josh. iv. 5-7), and every young Israelite was expected to have sufficient interest in his religion to enquire as to its real significance. Hence the anticipation of the scripture references as to questions being asked, in time to come, by the rising generation.

Three kinds of people may often be met with. Firstly, those who *know*, and *know* they know; these

are usually very humble-minded, not boasting of their knowledge, for they realise how little they know. Secondly, those who *do not know*, but think they *do know*: such people are a trial to everyone around them. Thirdly, those who *do not know*, but earnestly *wish to know*, and these are those contemplated in the above scriptures. Such naturally find questions a real help to the obtaining of knowledge.

When we think of our Lord Jesus Christ "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," we may well marvel at His humility, and crave to follow His example. In our blessed Lord's case, though as Son of God well able to instruct them, yet how beautifully fitting is the glimpse of the true Israelite Boy asking questions of those who should by virtue of age and office be competent to instruct seekers after the true meaning of the law of God.

Following His example, we must begin by learning and then asking questions, for true knowledge comes along the road of enquiry, meditation and understanding. This is true in temporal affairs, observation and concentration being the hedges on either side of the road to efficiency: it is equally true and infinitely more important in spiritual matters. By the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ grace and peace are multiplied unto us; the pollutions of the world escaped; and we are therefore exhorted to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (see 2 Peter i. ii. iii.).

Questions may be classified as follows. (1) *Reverent* questions: these were always answered by our Lord when on earth. (2) *Curious* questions: these were never answered: the Lord answered the questioner instead. (3) *Leading* questions: such lead to a clearer vision and fuller confession of faith in Him. These last are the questions of a teacher rather than of a learner. Let us consider three questions suggested in the scriptures referred to above. "What mean ye by this service?" "What mean ye by these stones?" "What mean the testimonies, and the

statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?"

To each of these there is an adequate answer for the young Israelitish enquirer: to each of these there is an extended spiritual application available for our learning.

The answer to the first question would inform the youthful enquirer as to how a number of down-trodden slaves had been emancipated and become a nation, the people of God to which he himself belonged. The story of that never-to-be-forgotten night in Egypt when the Lord passed over all who were sheltered beneath the sprinkled blood of the slain lamb, would be a part of the answer to the enquiry, What mean ye by this service? "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in Egypt . . . this is the Lord's pass-over," the father would reply, as he took the cake of unleavened bread into his hand. The lad would hear again of "the bitter bondage," of "the sprinkled blood," of the "stretched out arm" and learn what that historic happening really meant for the people of God to whom he himself belonged.

To the second question, in the order in which we are considering them, the answer given would, in effect, be "God brought us *out* of the house of bondage and brought us *into* the land of blessing." The reproach of Egypt is rolled away. Death and judgment are forever behind us. We have been redeemed by blood and power, and have come into the land which the Lord our God has given us.

To the third question suggested to the opening mind by the different feasts, fasts, ceremonies and laws, the answer given was "The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day."

How the people became a nation, and the redeemed people of God: what made this nation so entirely different from all other nations: why special laws and ceremonies distinct from those of all other nations had

to be observed:—these were the thoughts that would prompt the questions, and in each case it was made abundantly clear that God had undertaken for them, and made them what they had become. Hence the object of the questioning, so far as God was concerned, namely, that He might be known, loved and obeyed for the good always. God is good, and the Old Testament is eloquent of this fact.

The extended spiritual application of all this to ourselves as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is realised in measure when we enquire into the deep reality and significance of the “redemption through His blood” which our Blessed Lord and Saviour obtained for us at such unutterable cost to Himself.

“What mean ye by this service?” The meaning of our redemption to God from sin and Satan is given in 1 Peter i. 18-23, and in other scriptures of the New Testament, but it is in the Supper of the Lord, that what can never be repeated because of its eternal value and abiding efficacy is solemnly shown, “for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come (1 Cor. xi.).” “The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once,” never to be repeated but never to be forgotten, is the supreme fact in the history of the world.

“What mean ye by these stones?” God has brought us *out* of bondage and God has brought us *in* to blessing. When He brought us out of the slavery of sin, He brought us into the blessing of being His children by faith in Christ Jesus, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him, and this we confess in our baptism. Jordan is, figuratively, the river of death, not our death, but the death of Christ introducing the believer into fullest heavenly blessing. Crossing the Jordan became an individual act for every man in the nation. In the case of the Christian believer this is shown by baptism unto His death. Christ died; although death had no possible claim upon Him, it had many claims upon the people whom He redeemed. He was buried, and we,

crucified with Him, are buried with Him in baptism; and like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we, too, are raised to walk in newness of life, and to walk in the Spirit until we are taken up to the Father's house. By baptism I am buried with Him into death; as also it is a sign that I belong to Him wholly and entirely while living in the world where He is rejected.

The significance of the third question for ourselves lies in the fact, that we have been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light to show forth His excellences. To so keep His word, and His sayings that conduct, character and conversation all witness to the glory of Him Who has blessed us. So to live that men seeing us may be reminded of Him. This is the ideal Christian testimony, not so much a matter of lip as of life, but best of all when both are conditioned by a loving, loyal devotion to the Lord Jesus Himself expressed in single-eyed devotedness to His interests here below.

There are other questions that arise in the minds of some who are following on to know the Lord, and seeking to obey His word, and meet His mind as gathered to His Name.

Three common questions of to-day voiced by such are, What is done in the quiet times at the breaking of bread? What is the meaning of being led by the Spirit? and, Why cannot I concentrate my thoughts at the Lord's Table? To each of these there is only one satisfactory reply. It is personal communion and occupation with the Lord that is of the first importance. If we come definitely to meet Him at His Table most of our difficulties will disappear. He must have the first place in our hearts not only when so gathered, but at all time. We cannot be occupied with other persons and things until the hour of meeting, and then expect our minds to automatically exclude all distracting thoughts at a moment's notice. Think of Him, and speak to Him, and the quiet moments at His Table will be all too short and infrequent for the adoring

contemplation of Himself. The Spirit of God Who loves Christ and Who loves you, will suggest sweet and suitable thoughts which to your delight you or others will express audibly—this is the leading of the Spirit in the assembly of God, as known and enjoyed by others of like passions with yourself.

As to why I cannot concentrate my mind at such times, I fear the real reason is because I fail to do so at other times.

Reverent and habitual prayer, and reading and meditation of God's word during the week are of the greatest assistance towards a right state of spirit and thought on the Lord's Day.

If other mental guests are welcomed and entertained all the week to the exclusion of thoughts of God and His word, we can hardly wonder that they elect to stay on in such hospitable quarters over the whole week-end. "Lord, increase our faith," exclaimed the apostles on one occasion. "If ye had faith," replied the Lord. May we put our questions to Him in the secret of His own presence, assured that as "we draw nigh to God He will draw nigh to us." The least movement of faith always finds its way to God, and He is more concerned in our spiritual education and upbringing than any other. They who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true.

W.G.T.

A Solemn Reminder.

INACTION, following upon zeal, expresses in a few words the history of every era, in which responsibility to maintain a divine position has been entrusted to God's people. And may it not be added, inaction, following upon zeal, expresses briefly the story of the various religious movements which have occurred amongst Christians—those revivals to truth and to Christ, wrought by the Spirit of God, which have so frequently occurred since Pentecost?

These movements begin with faith in God, and faith's consequences—spiritual energy, zeal, self-denial and the spirit of victory. Then, as time passes on, the middle age of the movement develops subsidence into acquired privileges, spiritual sloth and dependence upon leaders rather than on God. After the middle age, arrives the end of what was once a movement for God; adhesion to the tradition of elders, instead of obedience to His word; holding on to some special creed, instead of to God Himself. The spirit of the soldier contending for God's truth on the earth is lost; direct dealing with God departs from the soul, worldliness ensues; and, as Israel mingled with the nations around them, so does the rearward of what was once a divine movement become a camp-following which soon is absorbed in the world. In the latter stages of such a history, a state of indifference and a spirit of self-confidence prevail. God not being depended on, the scripture not being the only rule, the leadings of God's Spirit are neglected, and human complacency abounds. The memories of the past are substituted for the living energy of the present; the feather-bed of religious custom for the hardships of spiritual welfare. Laxity and pretension are near neighbours in the soul. Lukewarmness to the things God loves in His people, and the assertion, "We have need of nothing" (Rev. iii. 16, 17), are the twofold signs of a degenerate spirit.

Recovery from this low state is obtained through the discipline of God's hand, often severe, always solemn. How the anguish of Israel, recorded in the Book of Judges, evidences this truth! And it should not be forgotten that that anguish was but the reaping of the fruits sown, as recorded in the latter part of the Book of Joshua. God will not permit the inflation, the boast, the unreal state that pride begets, to continue amongst His people. His severe hand of government, inflicting suffering, leads through His grace, to self-judgment in His people; to humiliation, and its invariable accompaniment, prayer. And then it is, sins and

shame being honestly mourned over and confessed, and the sins truly forsaken, God once more becomes the present help of His own, revives their hearts, recovers their strength, and renews their victories. For God is God, and He changes not. H.F.W.

Builders and Building.

(Second Part of "Consider Your Ways," page 8.)

IN our remarks on the first message of the prophet Haggai to the returned remnant of the Jewish captives, we made but a slight allusion to that part of the message which is of primary importance to Christians to-day.

After the second exhortation, "Consider your ways," this is added: "Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord" (Jehovah). Chap. i. 8.

The readers of this magazine will scarcely need to be reminded of the scripture in Matthew xvi. 18, where the Lord Jesus replies in answer to Peter's confession of His Name, "Upon this rock I will build My church (assembly) and the gates of hell (the powers of the unseen world) shall not prevail against it." Nevertheless confusion still exists in the minds of many professing Christians, as to the churches that man builds or forms, and the one only church of God built upon the one foundation of the name of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter, the very apostle whose confession brought out this memorable word from our Lord, tells us in his epistle addressed to the scattered Jewish believers in Asia Minor, that they "as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." This does not, of course, refer to the work of men, but to God's work by His Spirit, using His word written or spoken; and this same scripture speaks of a stone which

certain builders disallowed, which by God's hand had been made "the head of the corner." "A chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth *on Him* shall not be confounded." Need we say of Whom this speaks?

But of what building has the Lord Jesus this pre-eminent place? It is exceedingly important in these days to see the difference between this progressive building, never complete till all believers who are to form Christ's body are gathered in; and the present temple of God on earth. In the former Christ is the builder. He carries it on without fail, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. This is not yet complete nor viewed as a whole till built.

But besides this the present professing body is looked at as a whole on earth, and we see clearly in the third chapter of 1 Corinthians that men are spoken of as building, and here our responsibility comes in. There is no doubt much confusion in the minds of many true Christians on this subject. Many earnest and true servants of God have fallen into the error of forming churches with the object of separation from some special form of error, or else with the intention of emphasising some doctrine or doctrines, whilst the truth of the church as the body of Christ on the earth has never been seen by them. Our English translation of the Bible (so generally excellent) has, we fear, added to the confusion by the translation of the Greek word *ecclesia*, meaning assembly, by the well-known word, church; so helping to the general confusion on the subject. The assembly of God is the true title of the whole body of Christians on the earth, built up by the Spirit of God upon the one foundation, Christ, and should never have been confused with a building in which they meet, or with any man-made formation whatever. There is one and only one.

But to confine ourselves to the subject of building, we cannot omit the well-known warning words of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels, Matthew and Luke, as to building either upon "a rock" or "the sand";

although we must content ourselves here with their individual application to our destiny as depending on hearing and doing His words. Therefore in these brief remarks we speak only of the words of those already on the rock Christ Jesus, His work on the cross being the foundation of their present and eternal salvation.

We find then in scripture two kinds of building in which Christians rightly have their privileges and their responsibilities. In the Epistle of Jude (verse 20) we are exhorted thus: "Building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." This requires but little comment, the darker the days in which we live, the more earnestly should we "contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," as the beginning of this Epistle exhorts.

The foundation is laid on the Rock Christ Jesus, and we listen to the voice of the prophet Haggai again, as a voice to us: "Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts" (ii. 4). Yes, the reader may reply, but what about that word in 1 Corinthians iii. 10? "But let every man take heed *how he buildeth* thereupon"; and verse 13 that reads: "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every-man's work of what sort it is."

This is indeed a solemn scripture, and we do well to take heed to it. From this warning of the apostle we learn that a good man—a true Christian—may build good work that will stand the test of "that day" of judgment in which *all* work will be tested. And also that a good man may build bad work, whose work will not be approved in that day, although he himself is saved; but there is also a bad workman that does bad work, and both the workman and his work are rejected.

But is this intended, or to be allowed by us, to deter us from serving the Lord Who has Himself said that a cup of cold water given in His Name shall not be

forgotten? No! Look at the prophet's message again: "My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not." Let us heed the last letter of the great apostle of the Gentiles—that matchless labourer: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy iv. 2.)

Let us not be discouraged by any outward manifestations of the progress of evil. The Lord knows all about it and has not left us without warning *and* encouragement. Read His word in the twelfth chapter of Luke of which we quote here just that portion only which the Lord spoke in answer to Peter's question—"Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season. Blessed is that servant whom his lord shall find so doing; of a truth, I say unto you, he will make him ruler over all that he hath." (Luke xii. 41-44.)

The word of encouragement to His earthly people in Haggai's day, when those who had seen the former glory of the Lord's earthly house, wept at the contrast, was, "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts," and to His heavenly people to-day, called with a heavenly calling, and animated by a heavenly hope, He says—"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown: him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name. (Rev. iii. 11 and 12.) T.R.

"I will not ask for greater ease,
Lest I should love Thee less.
Oh! 'tis a blessed thing for me
To NEED Thy tenderness."

Notes of a Bible Reading on Genesis xliii. to xlviii.

IT is very striking in these chapters that, instead of saying a great deal about the famine, the Spirit of God concentrates our attention upon Joseph personally and upon his brethren. This is an incidental proof of the inspiration of the Bible. God's heart is always with His people, and, in the days that are coming, the world-wide events which are foretold in His word will really be with a view to the restoration and blessing of the Jews, as well as to the public honour and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The chapters not only have a prophetic bearing, but are also full of moral and practical truth and encouragement. With regard to the prophetic view, the following Old Testament Scriptures are striking:—Zech. xi. 12; xii. 10-14; xiii. 6; xiii. 9. The Lord will make Himself known to Jerusalem and the house of David in that day. They that wounded Him will know Him. The One Who has made Himself strange to them in tribulation will make Himself known to them at the end, like Joseph.

See Psalm lxxx. 1-7, 12-19. Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin are a portion of the camp. They were lodged together (Num. ii. 18-24). In the order of march they went together, being the three tribes that followed the tabernacle.

Benjamin represents power among the Jews, Joseph power among the Gentiles. In these chapters the two are brought together. Benjamin, as the "son of my right hand," is a type of the Lord.

In chap. xliii. we find Joseph's brethren put through further trials. The question seems to be whether they are really repentant, and whether there is a fundamental change in them.

Jacob seems to think that his preparations will make all the difference to the success of their mission. He regards the money left in their sacks as an oversight (ver. 12). But Joseph ignores the money, and all the

preparations made. Joseph's purpose is not to *receive* a blessing, but to *bestow* one, and to bestow it in their presence. All the while his heart is yearning to reveal himself: yet love awaits the proper time, till their hearts had been thoroughly searched, and their repentance made real.

The brethren made merry with him (ver. 34); the time had not yet arrived for him to make merry with them. So the cup is put into Benjamin's sack (xliv. 2). Benjamin's place here corresponds with Joseph's some twenty years before (xxxvii. 18-28). Joseph's brethren hated him because he brought their evil report to their father, and Joseph suffered in innocence. Now, they themselves are made to feel something of this. When they say to Joseph they are true men, he cannot accept their word without proof. God was going to work in their hearts and produce repentance. The crucial test of Joseph's brethren was whether, when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, they would allow him to remain as servant to Joseph in Egypt (xliv. 17). But we see how thoroughly the repentance had been effected. Judah's words show tenderness of feeling towards his father and his brother Benjamin. The work of reconciliation was complete: and so Joseph is able to reveal himself to his brethren (xlv. 1-4). This is very touching and sacred: Joseph makes himself known just at the right time. So our Lord at the well of Sychar does not reveal Himself until repentance is complete (John iv. 4-26).

In the opening verses of chapter xlv. is foreshadowed the intimacy of our Lord with His people in a day to come. All the instructions for the journey to their father come from Joseph, not from his brethren. "Come near to me, I pray you" (ver. 4). Our Lord Himself ordained the twelve apostles that they should be with Him (Mark iii. 14). After the resurrection we are told that, whether we wake or sleep, we shall be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. v. 10).

Joseph first tells them, "Haste ye" (xlv. 9): they were not to delay. So there should be an element of

urgency in our service for the word, whether in the gospel, or amongst the Lord's people. The woman of Samaria hurried into the city to tell the men of the One Who had told her all things that ever she did (John iv. 28, 29). Our Lord, before His ascension, told His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mark xvi. 15). Joseph says, "Haste ye, . . . lest ye come to poverty" (ver. 9-11). What poverty will be that of the unconverted in eternity!

The burden of the message which the brethren were to take to Jacob was Joseph and his glory. Likewise we are to proclaim the threefold glories of the Lord, namely (a) His personal, (b) His moral, (c) His official glory.

They were given waggon, provision for the journey, and changes of raiment (vv. 21, 22). The waggon were to them a new, unthought-of power. So the Lord's witnesses to-day are "endued with power from on high." The changes of raiment show that they were not only to *speak* of Joseph's glory to their father, but also to *show* him the change of raiment which that glory had effected. So we should show forth our Lord's glories.

Lastly, Joseph says (ver. 24), "See that ye fall not out by the way." Strife has been a failing of the church since Pentecost. How important that there should be no strife amongst the Lord's people!

No man before or since has ever wielded such tremendous power as Joseph, at his age. Not a single hand was raised against him: the people were absolutely under his control, and were apparently glad to be so. In the world's history many monarchs have arisen and put forth their power, but at the expense and danger of the lives of those who have come under it; but Joseph used his power to the glory of God, and for the honour of Pharaoh. This is another vivid picture of our Lord. People often say, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." In Joseph's actions we see a foreshadowing of this.

There are three spheres of supremacy, namely, (a)

angels and principalities above, (b) authorities upon the earth, (c) the devil and his angels. The Lord is far above all these (Eph. i. 20, 21). Whether in the present day of grace, or in the millennial reign, or in the new heaven and earth, the position depends absolutely upon the supremacy, exaltation and glory of our Lord.

When the brethren return to Jacob (xlv. 25, 26), he does not believe; yet, when they brought him a lying report twenty years earlier (xxxvii. 31-35), he believed. Eventually, however, faith triumphs, and he consents to go and see Joseph before his death (ver. 28). So with us: if we wish to see Him by faith *before* we are with Him in eternity, we must "leave those things which are behind."

xlvi. 1-3. Abraham had no hesitation in going down into Egypt: Jacob seems very different. He apparently enquires of God before going down. This journey to Egypt, however, was a part of God's plan.

xlvii. 10. Jacob blesses Pharaoh. The *less* is blessed of the *greater*, for the man of God is greater than earth's greatest monarch at the time.

xlviii. Joseph could have made his two sons princes, and given them wealth and position in Egypt. But he does not do this: he brings them to be blessed of Jacob. He would rather go God's way than have worldly riches.

Fragment.

2 Kings vi. 21-23.—"Oh, noble revenge of Elisha, to feast his persecutors! to provide a table for those who had provided a grave for him! These Syrians came to Dothan full of bloody purposes to Elisha: he sends them to Syria full of good cheer and jollity. Thus, should a prophet punish his pursuers. No vengeance; but this is heroic, and fit for Christian imitators. The king of Israel has done that by his feast which he could not have done by his sword. The bands of Syria will no more come by way of ambush or incursion into the bounds of Israel." H.

An Evening Hymn.

(8.7.8.7.7.7.)

THROUGH this day, blest Lord and Saviour,
 With its joy and pain and care,
 Thou hast borne our every burden,
 Heard our every silent prayer;
 Blest above all thought are we,
 Thus to have a Friend like Thee.

Through this day Thine eye upon us
 Marked the pitfall and the snare,
 Gave our wavering footsteps guidance,
 Shewed us how to walk and where;
 Heartfelt thanks we render Thee;
 With us still, Lord Jesus, be.

Though the darkness close around us,
 Shutting out all else but Thee,
 Light is ours, for God's own glory
 Shining in Thy face we see;
 Morning Star, Thy rays so bright
 Gleam with hope athwart our night.

Slumber, Lord, Thou never knowest;
 Trust we then ourselves to Thee;
 Lull to sleep Thine own, Lord Jesus;
 Let Thy peace upon us be;
 Thou our souls hast ever blest,
 Bless us now in taking rest.

W.J.H.

(Written for the tune "Evensong," Bristol Tune Book).

A Word for Those Engaged in the Lord's Service.

A FEW years ago I had the privilege of being present at an interview between an evangelist and a venerable servant of the Lord. Having now before me all the fellow-labourers in the vast harvest field who may read these lines, I will relate the last words that passed on this occasion so full of interest.

Before taking leave of the old servant of God, and after having expressed the pleasure that it had given him to make his acquaintance, the evangelist made a request somewhat in these words: "We have just met for the first time and perhaps it will be the last. You have worked many years in the Lord's vineyard and are drawing towards the close of your pilgrimage and of your service. You have far more experience than myself, for I have only just started in service. May I venture to ask you for a *motto* which will be a help to me in my work if the Lord sees fit to lengthen out my term of service down here?"

A *motto*! Many who read these words might be disposed to reproach the evangelist for showing so little spirituality as to ask a man for a motto when he had the word of God. But I shall never forget the answer that came from the lips of the old man—an answer full of grace, and going to the heart. I shall always remember the unction and power with which he pronounced these words: "In the first place, endeavour to produce in the conscience of your hearers a deep sense of sin and of hatred against it; and then, when they have believed the gospel, endeavour to produce in the hearts of those who have believed a true and sincere affection for the Person of the Saviour."

Let all those to whom God has given in any measure to be engaged in presenting the gospel consider carefully these weighty words.

A true and deep work of conscience is extremely necessary in these days of lightness and indifference.

Let us never weaken the sense of the gravity of sin in attempting to make the gospel simple; nor fail in insisting on the necessity of real "repentance towards God." And then let us always cultivate in ourselves as well as in each new convert a sincere affection for the Person of Christ—an affection that will manifest itself in a prompt and unreserved obedience. The Saviour has said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." To do His will, cost what it may, is the *proof* of our affection for Him, just as love for His Person is the powerful motive and the source of all obedience. "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" The Lord refuses the outward fidelity of a disobedient heart.

ANON.

Contending for the Faith.

"**T**HERE be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Thus wrote the apostle Paul to the Galatians and his spirit was deeply stirred as he did so. For he loved them as a father loves his children and felt for them keenly as he saw the inroads made by those who were truly the enemies of the cross of Christ.

Alas! in this present day there are not wanting those of whom it can be said they trouble the saints of God by their perversion of the gospel of Christ. Indeed in these last times "evil men and seducers have waxed worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived," even as it was foretold by Paul (2 Tim. iii. 13). And as he forewarned the assembly of God at Ephesus, saying, "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them," even so do we find it now. For the professed ministers of the gospel are often the propagators of most terrible perversions of the truth.

What has led to the above remarks is the perusal of a book published not long since but which has already passed through several editions. So shocked was I when I read its blasphemous words that I longed to

be the means of providing an antidote to the author's poisonous teachings. But doubting of my own ability I sent the book to the Editor of "The Bible Monthly" with the request that he would write a brief refutation of its more serious errors. His letter is here appended, and it is inserted with the earnest hope and prayer to God that it may be the means of delivering not a few of those who have come under the influence of such utterances.

Editor W.O.H.

My Dear Brother,

I have read the book you sent to me, asking for some remarks about it. Its pronounced ethical features are typical of the great mass of current religious literature to-day. Being written in an attractive style and pandering, as it does, to the popular taste in its subject, it is evidently having a considerable circulation. Nevertheless, its teaching is of a poisonous character. The remarks of the author are accompanied by, and to a very large extent founded upon, a denial of the fundamental truth of scripture, which alone is able to make wise unto salvation. And since the root is corrupt we may be sure the fruit is evil, however agreeable it may at first appear to the senses.

In dealing with his subject of "friendship," the writer undermines the truth of the Incarnation. By him, the Lord Jesus is degraded to the level of sinful men in order that He may be represented as the Friend of man. Blessed be His name, He is a Friend indeed, but He did not become such by partaking of our sinful nature. He "took part" of flesh and blood (Heb. ii. 14), and was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), but He was born holy and free from all taint of sin (Lu. i. 35).

But the author says the Saviour was like us inwardly: his words are (p. 87), "Temptation came to Him just as it comes to us." "He was alone with evil suggestions thronging on to the threshold of His mind, just as they do in our case." The scripture certainly declares that He is "touched with the feeling of our

infirmities," and that He "was in all points tempted like as we are," but His intrinsic holiness is guarded by the addition of the clause, "sin apart" (Heb. iv. 15, N.Tr.). There was no sinful nature there, as there is in even the children of God (1 John i 8); for "in Him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5). Sympathy with infirmity, yes; but with sin, never; and the latter is the deadly error of the author as he enlarges upon the love and sympathy of the Lord Jesus. He merits the solemn divine rebuke in the Psalm, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. l. 21).

While the author dishonours the Son of God by placing Him on the common platform of sinful humanity, he also seeks to exalt unregenerate men by making them manifestations of God. He says, "All men are of the same caste, the very highest caste. They are all the sons of God. They are men in whom God dwells" (p. 133); again, "There is a sense in which every man is an incarnation of God" (p. 125). It was Satan, the liar and deceiver, who said to Eve, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 5), but scripture says, "All have sinned," and, "The wicked in the pride of his countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (Ps. x. 4). How can one in whose flesh dwells "no good thing" be a manifestation of God? The terrible delusion of calling good evil and evil good seems to underlie and permeate this teaching.

Further, the author implies that ultimately all men will be saved, on the ground that God is love, forgetting that equally and on the same authority God is light. Disregarding eternal and true holiness and righteousness, he declares that it is "God's eternal and holy purpose" that all men should be "broken down by the sheer vastness of Infinite Love" (p. 149). But cleansing is needed before there can be reconciliation, and it is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses from every sin (1 John i. 7), a "sentiment" which the writer repudiates as "repulsive" (p. 142). It is, however, the divine basis of fellowship, in either this

world or the next, with Him Who is light, and in Whom is no darkness at all.

But this sneer at the blood of Christ is because he denies the atonement of Christ, "the legal aspect of the Cross," as he calls it (p. 143). In the face of the revelation of scripture, the writer says, "It is not what Christ once did that bears my sins away and saves me, even though He be divine" (p. 148). Scripture is clear that Christ "bare our (believers') sins in His own body on the tree"; He "made peace by the blood of His cross"; and that we are "reconciled in the body of His flesh through death." Can we not trust the word of the living God about the work of His Son?

The writer denies the "once," when applied to Christ's work, but scripture states that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28); and that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). Further, the Epistle proves that there was no need that He should "often have suffered since the foundation of the world" (Heb. ix. 26, 27). But this irreverent man writes of "God; who, through the long eternal years, treads His own self-chosen *via dolorosa*, and is nailed by sin to His eternal cross" (p. 156).

It would be an easy but a painful task to point out many other travesties of the truth of God in the book, but its utterly unreliable character is surely patent from what has already been mentioned, and also its open hostility to the faith which "was once delivered unto the saints."

The writer expatiates upon "friendship," the main topic of his book, applying it to the relationship between the Lord and those who seek to follow Him. The beautiful term is, however, much abused in its application. In scripture, the English word, "friend," is used to translate two Greek ones, differing in significance. When Judas came to betray the Son of man with a kiss, the Lord said, "Friend (*etairo*s), wherefore art thou come?" (Matt. xxvi. 50). It was a reproachful rebuke to one who was no more than an external

associate with the Lord. But to those disciples who were prepared to do whatever He commanded, the Lord said, "Ye are My friends (*philoï*)" (John xv. 13-15). Here love was the bond of friendship. Abraham was called "the friend (*philos*) of God" (Jas. ii. 23); but whoever "will be a friend (*philos*) of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. iv. 4).

Under the guise of the kiss of a "friend" the Son of man was betrayed into the hands of sinners; the "friend's" "Hail, Master," was but a cloak to his base act of treachery. Fair words often conceal foul purpose, consciously or unconsciously. But surely no honest and good heart will be deceived by such dishonour to the Lord, even though it be disguised by the title of "friendship." The wounds we behold in the hands of our Lord are those with which He was wounded in the house of His "friends" (Zech. xiii. 6). The old spirit of enmity to Christ, masking itself under the guise of "friendship," is active to-day as of old.

Yours affectionately in Christ Jesus,

W.J.H.

The Righteousness of God—2.

(Read Romans v. 1-11.)

THESE verses present the happy conclusion arising out of the apostle's discourse about the righteousness of God. First of all, he describes the immutable foundation upon which rests the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, and then he draws out the practical consequences which flow forth from it to all those who believe. The Holy Spirit here sets out the present heritage that is ours in consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ. Our justification rests upon a fact outside of ourselves altogether—something in which we could not possibly have anything at all to do: for Christ died and rose again long before we came into being. Moreover, all the hostile powers of earth or hell can never alter that great historical fact. And since this is the foundation upon which our blessings rest, they are everlastingly secure.

Here we find it declared that, in consequence of what the apostle states as having been done by Jesus Christ, three things follow to those who believe in God. First, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, by Him also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. Thirdly, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Peace, grace or favour, and hope; these three features characterise the Christian's life-history. He has peace with God as to his past; he has the present enjoyment of the unchanging favour of God, and, as to the future, he has the glory of God before him. Can you match these privileges in any walk in life? Is there any calling, any career, comparable with that of the believer? And God makes all these blessings to be the direct consequence of the work of His Son; and He gives them all to us because of His marvellous grace. What then is our part? Simply to enjoy these gifts, and to realise that they are all of His pure grace.

Apart from the work of Christ, where can a troubled conscience find peace? The natural heart is at enmity toward God; yet, in spite of our opposing wills, God has so ordered it that we who believe may be at peace with Him. The state of war is over; the terms of peace have been signed, sealed and settled with Him Who made peace through the blood of His cross. Therefore, through our Lord Jesus Christ we have peace with God. This does not imply that we continually have a peaceful feeling in our minds. The point is that we who were once enemies of God by wicked works, are now brought into the possession of peace with Him. We look up to heaven and see, not an angry God, but One Who is for us and in His love for us gave His Son for us. The cause of our animosity against God has been entirely removed by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who made atonement for sin. Peace is ours. Do you enjoy it? You say that you do not feel it; that is because you do not believe that God has raised up from the dead Jesus our Lord Who was delivered for our offences. Faith takes it from

God that He is satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son, and rests upon His word. We ought to grasp this elementary truth that our relationship with the God of infinite justice depends upon the work of Another : and that work was amply sufficient and can never deteriorate in efficacy. You may feel a little trepidation about the matter, but your feeling cannot alter the reliability of what Christ has done, nor its value in the sight of God. I remember quite well the completion of the Tower Bridge for traffic, and its opening to allow vessels to pass underneath. It is of a peculiar structure. Some timid pedestrians at first considered it dangerous, because of a slight vibration. Huge lorries were going over it quite safely ; yet, in spite of this, many a person was secretly afraid that the bridge was unsafe for him to use. So with regard to peace, many people do not enjoy it, because they do not feel safe all the time. But, beloved friends, justification does not rest upon your feelings at all. Nineteen hundred years ago, outside Jerusalem, the work of propitiation was done. Then the Lord Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross. So that, says the apostle, we have peace with God. What a marvellous position to hold ! It could never have been acquired by human means.

Then comes our present acceptance with God. We enter into and remain standing in the favour of God. The favour of the king of this land would be a great privilege. Every one of his subjects would value immensely to be continually in the king's favour, to rest under his smile. But how much greater is the favour of God ! We who were once enemies have access into this grace wherein we stand ; the eyes of God are looking down upon us with love, with interest, and with infinite care. God says of each justified one, "That is My child : I know all about him and his affairs, and I make all things work together for his good."

Notice, that we are said to stand in this grace. It is a permanent relation ; we are always regarded as in this state of favour. The sceptre of righteousness was

held out to us: we have grasped it by faith, and we have now entered into the royal favour of God. And if God be for us, who can be against us? Since this is so, what manner of persons ought we to be? When the dark days come, and the clouds seem to gather overhead, it is not for us to say, "All these things are against me," but "All these things are for me." God is for me; we can rest in this, that

"A Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear."

We have access into the Father's favour through the One Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

It is bright to know that our bitter past has been obliterated, and brighter still to know that present things are for us: for all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose; for God never deviates from the purposes of His love and favour towards us; but the future is brightest of all. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We hope for it, but not as men hopefully and fitfully expect some favourable event on the morrow: for in human affairs how often the cup of expectation is dashed from the very lips of those expecting something good! The hope means something that is not yet accomplished, but is as certain of due accomplishment as if it had already come, because the hope rests upon the word of God.

This present body of humiliation is a body suited only for this earth; but the glory of God is to come, and we await the enjoyment of it when we shall have bodies fitted for that glory; until then, we look for the Saviour Who will save our bodies, as He has saved our souls. When we are caught up to be with the Lord, we shall have received those bodies of glory like unto His own. What a bright vision of hope to contemplate! The moment is coming, when all who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ will rise in a moment to be with Him and like Him in glory. This glory of God for us is to come; yet it is as sure and certain as if we were already

there. That is why we rejoice. The prudent man of the world does not rejoice about a future thing until he is sure, by possessing it; he does not count his chickens before they are hatched, as the saying is. The Christian, however, looks on to the glory of God as an absolute certainty, and so he rejoices as he hopes for it. The two reasons form a remarkable summary of Christian blessing, resting on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was delivered for our sins.

In verse 3, the apostle deals with matters concerning the practical life of the justified in this world. He points out the contrast between our hope of the glory of God in the future, and our experiences of things as they are now. What is our portion now? We glory or exult in tribulations.

We have an example of this exultation in the history of Paul and Silas. In the gloomy silence of the prison cell at Philippi, smarting because of their stripes, uncomfortably fixed in the stocks, surrounded with everything to depress and cast them down, they sang aloud in praises to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. So exuberant were they in their tribulation, that they could sing with their lips as well as in their hearts. They were glorying in tribulation, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for, the sake of their Lord.

W.J.H.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Judaism and Christianity—2.

DIRECTLY you bring in the cross, the whole system of Judaism falls to pieces; for Judaism consisted in carrying out the ordinances of the law—do this and thou shalt live—having a worldly sanctuary in which the high priest alone went into the holiest of all once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people, the Holy

Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

The many offerings under the law were a continual reminder that God was far off, and that blood was needed before they could approach Him in worship. They were but shadows of that one offering of Christ Himself, Who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, and Whose blood purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The Lord Jesus, after He was risen from the dead, spake to the apostle Paul from the glory, sending him to open the eyes of the Gentiles, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Him.

On account of that faith, their sins and iniquities are no more remembered, and as believers, they have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; and to draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water.

Similarly, as new wine cannot be put into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottles, so the power of the Spirit cannot be put into the old Jewish ordinances of the old covenant; for by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which makes us free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and have received the Spirit of adoption whereby they cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

The old nature cannot be improved; and as new wine must be put into new bottles so that both may be preserved, so is it only after we have believed in Christ Jesus, and become a new creation in Him, through being born again, that the Holy Spirit of promise comes and seals us as the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession; for a believer has been both purchased and redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. It is God's purpose and counsel that everything shall be headed up in His beloved Son. Having made peace through the blood of His cross, all things in earth and in heaven are to be reconciled unto Himself.

Now is the time when the grace of God is being manifested in Christ, in Whom all who were once far off by sin and wicked works, are, through faith in Him, made nigh by His precious blood, and have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

But the natural man does not like the new spirit of grace. He has been brought up in his father's religion, accustomed to religious forms and human arrangements, and says, "The old is better." But even this his heart never relished; and so he is finding it easy to throw off all restraint, and ignore the claims of God. This goes on rapidly to-day, and will continue until God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, to their own eternal condemnation.

But God, by His Spirit, is keeping a restraining hand on the ways of man, for the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only He Who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, even him, whose coming is after

the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Will you not, in the words of another, accept of that grace which in Christ displays God to man, and brings man, by the blood of His cross, to God?

H.K.

An Interesting Enquiry and its Answer.

QUESTION.—The great difference between the descent of the Spirit upon Christ as a dove, and on believers as a cloven tongue of fire, struck me so forcibly that I searched the subject out and saw, as it seemed to me, that He being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, received the Spirit (not that He was not immaculate by the Spirit from His mother's womb before) as an emblem of purity and harmlessness—a dove; whereas the believer, sinful still, received Him as a cloven tongue of fire. Was not the promise of Matt. iii. 11, fulfilled at Pentecost, a baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire? I connected with it 1 Cor. iii. 13, to the effect that the believer who is led by the Spirit will not build inflammable structures; but that if he exert his own quenching influence upon the fire of the Holy Spirit, worthless building must result. Then again, 1 Cor. iii. 16, "Ye are the temple of God"; "The Spirit dwelleth in you."

Thus the unquenchable fire (Matt. iii. 12) to me seemed the Spirit Himself Who seeks daily to burn up the chaff of flesh and self, and so to transform us more and more into the likeness of Christ.

We speak of allowing the Spirit to work, and so exclude the works of the flesh and expel them, too: is not this the purifying work of fire? To me the symbol seems to fit quite well. When (1 Cor. iii.) the day shall declare our works, how much of flesh shall

be burnt up by fire! all man's building undirected by the Spirit. Had the Spirit been allowed to do His work, would not these works have been burnt up at their inception instead of their author's having to suffer loss after this life's close?

If the fire of the Spirit is not for purifying purposes, why the promise in Matt. iii. and the cloven tongue of Pentecost? and is not Matt. iii. 12, applicable in great measure here and now, at this present time? And is not this what He is doing continually in us as we pass along? Is it not His will that by this process we should be more and more transformed into the likeness of Christ? Is it not written "*Our* God is a consuming fire"?

Answer.—It is well to observe that the form of the Spirit's appearance is stated in our Lord's case to be "*as* a dove," and in the saints "*as* of fire." There was divine suitability in each; and as gentleness marked the one, so the testimony of the other was to judge and consume as fire all opposing falsehood. But this is not the complete fulfilment of Matt. iii., though a moral witness of what awaits the Lord's execution of judgment on the living at His appearing. As the O.T. often combines the two comings of Messiah, so did John the Baptist the twofold baptism. Not till He comes again is the winnowing fan in His hand, whence He shall thoroughly purge His threshing-floor, and gather His wheat into His garner, but also burn the chaff with the unquenchable fire. Surely this last is in no way a moral purifying of faults of the righteous, but the judicial destruction of the wicked. Luke, who brings in the Gentiles, does the same; for His judgment will befall them, too.

This is corroborated by the Gospel of Mark, who did not write specially for the Jews as Matthew, but as the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Accordingly in God's wisdom he presents John the Baptist as speaking of Christ's baptising with the Holy Spirit (i. 8), but not a word about the baptism of fire. The baptism here spoken of by Mark took place at Pente-

cost. So in John's Gospel (i. 33) we hear of Christ's baptising with the Holy Spirit only. His judgment on the living is here left out, but will surely be executed at Christ's second advent.

1 Cor. iii. 12-15, has nothing to do with the baptism of fire spoken of in Matt. iii. 11, 12, and in Luke iii. 16, 17; nor does any one of them speak of its purifying influence, still less the burning up the chaff of flesh and self. For us the basis was laid in the cross where God condemned sin in the flesh, and as a sin-offering for us, and thus our sinful nature had His judgment executed on it, as well as our sins put away. No doubt there is also a daily moral government carried on, as our Lord pointed out in the Vine (John xv.), the fruit-bearing branches being cleansed (we read) by the water of the word, whilst the fruitless are left for the fire of another day; *but there is no mixing up the two for this day*. The transforming into Christ's image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit, is by looking on His glory with unveiled face, after the type of Moses, as 2 Cor. iii. tells us. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29) refers to Deut. iv. 24, in no way to the baptism of the Spirit.

W.K.

Notes of a Bible Reading on Genesis xlix. and i.

THERE is a great difference between Jacob's parting messages in chapter xlix. and the bestowing of the birthright by Abraham and Isaac. Till now the heir has been one; but Jacob's sons all have an interest in the fulfilment of the promise. Messiah's root (Judah) did not coincide with the receivers of the birthright and blessing (Joseph and his sons).

xlix. 1, 2. In Deut. xxxiii., where Moses reviews the tribes, God's mercies to His people are more apparent: blessing is expressed for each tribe named, and exultation in the Lord;—though in the preceding

chapter their sins are dealt with. In this chapter the immediate future is dark. Jacob did bless them at the end (ver. 28), but what shall befall them in the latter days (ver. 1) is prominent. We thus have here an outline of the whole of the nation's history, particularly its closing times: Judah's history, however, is traced only until Shiloh come. Jacob had to show them the root of wickedness in their hearts,—corruption in Reuben, and violence in Simeon and Levi, the sins for which the flood was sent. But when sin is recognised and judged, blessing can come by Judah.

vers. 3, 4. The past is taken into consideration: for Reuben it is disgraceful. Leah called him, "Behold, a son," but, like Cain ("gotten from the Lord"), he proved a sad disappointment. He was unstable like (bubbling) water, and had not learned submission to God's law; but being deprived of the birthright taught him a lesson. Reuben is a type of the nation of Israel setting out well ("my firstborn," ver. 3, cf. Ex. iv. 22), but failing terribly. The golden calf was a forfeiting of their every right: had not Moses stood in the breach (a type of Christ), they would have been blotted out.

vers. 5-7. These sons of promise, Simeon and Levi, are given an opportunity to repent (*see* Jer. xviii. 6-8). They were partners in crime (xxxiv. 25), and that confederacy needed to be broken. Levi means joined, but in these verses we read, "Be not united—divide—scatter." Though the words, "Cursed be their anger," appear, they will be blessed when they can say it of themselves. The parting between Simeon and Levi is very marked in the incident of Baal-peor (Num. xxv. 3), which probably led to Simeon's omission from Deut. xxxiii. In Ex. xxxii. 26, Levi answered the challenge, Who is on the Lord's side? and therefore found a place for repentance.

vers. 8-12. Jacob plays on the meaning of Judah's name, as on those of Zebulun, Dan, Gad and Joseph (for Ephraim means fruitful). This is not merely poetical: God goes back to beginnings. Judah would receive

ungrudging approval from his brethren and command their subjection. His great power over the enemy is illustrated in Judges i. His brethren's praise may be because he condemned himself, and offered to remain as a slave instead of Benjamin. In this he was a type of the Lord.

The lion is regarded in ver. 9 as a whelp (King as the Lion of Judah is, He is meek), as a lion couched (His strength in rest, preserving peace), and as an old lioness (jealously guarding His young ones).

The "sceptre" (not necessarily kingly) in ver. 10 denotes rule; the "lawgiver," observance of God's will. The royal line was kept up, though not actually reigning, and the Jews did not fall into idolatry even after the captivity. They had semi-independence until they were taxed and incorporated in the Roman Empire in the time of Christ, when they declared they had no king but Cæsar. "Until Shiloh come" is the clearest indication in Genesis of Messiah's advent. Shiloh, the Giver, or Man, of peace is not yet known, but the line has been narrowed to Judah, and now we have His name and character.

The "foal" and "ass's colt" (ver. 11) are an early reference to Matt. xxi., whilst tethering to a vine and washing in wine are references to the abundance when Messiah reigns. Judah's blessing goes on to the millennium (cf. "To him shall the gathering of the people be," ver. 10). Does "He washed his clothes in the blood of grapes" (ver. 11) hint at the final judgments of the earth?

In Ps. lxxviii. 9-11, 67-72, Judah takes the place of Ephraim, who showed himself unworthy. Judah had lost his staff and signet ring (chap. xxxviii.), and though God in grace restored it to him, in the meantime all honour was given to Joseph.

vers. 13-15. In Judah we have Shiloh coming, but rejected, and becoming, like Joseph, separate from His brethren, hidden till He comes again; meanwhile Zebulun and Issachar represent Israel mingling and trafficking with the nations. He sees that rest is

good, more exalted thoughts pass from his mind, and he is content to come under tribute. What a picture of the present state of the nation! Since Shiloh came, the sceptre and lawgiver have departed, but they are getting earthly good.

vers. 16-18. There is something sinister about Dan: the son of one of his descendants blasphemed, and had to be put to death (Lev. xxiv. 10-14): Dan had craft as well as strength; the tribe was among the first to set up organised idolatry in Israel (Judg. xviii. 30): under Jeroboam, Dan had one of the altars which made Israel to sin (1 Kings xii. 30): in Chronicles, the genealogy of Dan is omitted. It is possible that the Antichrist will rise from this tribe, and that he will be a special tool of Satanic power (cf. the serpent, ver. 17) in that day. See also his omission from the tribes in Rev. vii.; though he will not be entirely wiped out from blessing (cf. Ezek. xlvi. 1, 32). Like Iscariot, the son of perdition, the man of sin is an individual, not the whole tribe. Some of them supported David (1 Chron. xii. 35, 38) and made him king, so there is salvation even for Dan. Evil reached its height in their idolatry. Jacob, as it were, sighs (ver. 18), and thereafter the whole chapter is blessing. When all is darkest, Christ will come and deliver His people from their sins and their enemies.

vers. 19-21. An intermediate fulfilment of ver. 19 is found in Jer. xlix. 1, and of ver. 21 in Judg. iv. 5. Barak of Naphtali delivered Israel, but Deborah incited him, and celebrated the victory in song.

vers. 22-26. Joseph is a type of the Lord, Who receives His brethren in repentance at the end (Zech. xii. 10-14): then He will grant blessings unbounded (ver. 26). Judah had enemies (ver. 8); there are none for Joseph except his brethren, and to them he was reconciled.

Moses blessed Ephraim and Manasseh in Deut. xxxiii., signifying fruitfulness in the land, but Jacob blessed Joseph, representing Christ as fruit for God. Joseph's fruitfulness is a type of the true Vine, Who,

when rejected by the people, became the Vine bearing all His fruit for God. Moreover, His fruit was not confined to the Jews—His “branches run over the wall.” Though rejected, nothing impaired His glory and might (vers. 23, 24). As the shepherd, Joseph was the nourisher of his people, and provided bread during the famine: in this he is a type of the great spiritual Blessor of His earthly and heavenly people. Moreover, as a stone, Joseph was a foundation for Israel, and spoke of the Corner Stone to come. Yet the Antitype was not of Joseph; He was “from thence” (ver. 24).

Jacob speaks of God as the mighty God of Jacob, Whom he met at Peniel; as the Almighty, Whom Abraham knew; whilst he looks forward to Him Who was “separate from His brethren,” an unmistakable reference to the Lord Jesus.

ver. 27. This verse speaks of the millennial cleansing of the earth. “Divide the spoil” (cf. Is. liii. 12). Admonition is not pleasant, but is essential for repentance, without which blessing cannot be received.

Chapter 1. Joseph did not ask to be taken at once to Canaan (ver. 24), though Jacob did (ver. 5). Joseph had faith that God would bring His people back. The brethren’s fear at Jacob’s death (ver. 15) reminds us of xxvii. 41. They had not understood Joseph’s heart, in spite of what he said and did in xlv. 4-8, 14, 15. But there had been no real confession by them: now, however, they ask for forgiveness (ver. 17): the work of repentance is complete. Before, he had quieted their fears, but their consciences were not set at rest. So it is of great value when a soul expresses repentance for its sins. We may be too ready with our comfort, and gloss over the confession of iniquity.

Both Jacob and Joseph disappear in this last chapter of Genesis. Jacob is to us a beacon, Joseph a pattern of wisdom, meekness and love. The individual now becomes a nation; the twelve tribes are in being. The book of Genesis takes us from the beginning until God deals with nations instead of individuals. w.s.h.

Wilderness Pilgrimage.

WHILST through this world of sin and pain,
I pass my short career,
Lord, let my heart this truth retain,
"I am a stranger here."

If Thou prosperity bestow,
Lord, grant a jealous fear,
Lest I, at ease, forgetful grow,
"I am a stranger here."

When friends depart and comforts fail,
And naught be left to cheer;
Athwart the gloom this bow I hail,
"I am a stranger here."

When sins attack, and cares invade,
When sickness adds its fear;
Faith o'er my peace this shield shall spread,
"I am a stranger here."

But oh! how bitter were my cup,
How oft would flow the tear;
If this must sum my story up,
"I am a stranger here."

There is a land of joy and bliss,
A home, a mansion dear,
For all, whose lips and lives confess,
"They are but strangers here."

For this I long, to this I press,
Through discipline severe;
Nor shall I wish I'd suffered less,
"While but a stranger here."

1853.

The Captivated Heart—A Servant for Ever.

A STORY has often been told of an Englishman who, passing through a foreign slave-market, saw to his shame and indignation, an English girl exposed for sale.

He took the first opportunity that presented itself of purchasing the object of his pity with a view to setting her free.

The girl, misunderstanding his motives, and embittered by the circumstances in which she was placed, was horrified by the thought that she was being purchased by one of her own countrymen.

To be purchased by one who accepted slavery as a principle was bad enough, but to be bought as a slave by one who professed to abhor slavery was the extreme limit of degradation.

The Englishman saw her look of horror and resentment and endeavoured to make the position clear by saying; "I have purchased you to set you free. You are no longer a slave, but free!" And he emphasised the word "free" by repeating it in the hope that the truth would dawn upon her, that he was really her friend.

His reassuring words, combined with his kindly look of compassion, won her heart, and when she at last realised what his words meant, she fell at his feet saying: "Sir, I am your servant for ever."

Her rescuer accepted her devoted services, and she served him faithfully, with a heart full of gratitude for what she owed to him for rescuing her from her condition of slavery.

Reader, the Son of God has done more for you and me than the Englishman did for the slave-girl, and one who realised something of the debt that he owed has written under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20). Can you say Amen to these words?

G.S.P.

Heaven.

MY desire is to collect from Scripture the instruction afforded in it with respect to heaven, whether we regard it as the present home of our affections, or as our future actual habitation. "Partakers of the heavenly calling," it is surely well for us to know what is revealed as to the place to which we journey. Already made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," we are but looking round at the objects amid which abounding grace has already in spirit, and as one with Christ, placed us, in thus meditating on what Scripture reveals of heaven. It is not intended to confine our attention to the passages in which the word "heaven" occurs, or to notice all those in which it does. May the blessed Spirit of God Himself direct and control both those who read, and the poor sinner saved by grace, and waiting for God's Son from heaven, who attempts to write on such a theme.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." These are the words with which the volume of inspiration opens. It is not till we reach the heart of the book, however, that we learn for what ends respectively these separate spheres were formed. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men" (Ps. cxv. 16). But while such was the general and ostensible design of God, we learn from another Scripture, that what seems an exception to this, viz., the raising of the saints to a place—and such a place!—in heaven, was really the purpose of God before all worlds. In Eph. iii. 9-11, we read of "God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by (or by means of) the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He hath purposed in Christ Jesus." Thus we see that while, as one has observed, "neither heaven nor hell were made for man"; while it is sin that has opened hell to the human family (see Matt. xxv. 41), and grace that has

taken occasion from man's sin, to open heaven to redeemed and blood-washed sinners; the purpose according to which these wonders are accomplished, is an eternal purpose. God, foreseeing the fall of man, purposed from all eternity to raise some from among the ruined race to occupy, with His glorified Son, the heavens, which the Psalmist informs us "are the Lord's," while it is the earth He has "given to the children of men." It is not by accident then, but according to God's eternal purpose, that we find ourselves, instead of being blessed with temporal favours in earthly places, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly places* in Christ Jesus." And if the thought arises in each one of our wondering hearts, "Why have I found (such) grace in Thine eyes?" let the answer at once satisfy and assure us, and give us courage to look around by faith on the inheritance of which we are with Christ co-heirs, "that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Save in the way of typical illustration, the Old Testament does not furnish much instruction as to heaven. We do read there indeed of Enoch, that "he walked with God, and that he was not, for God took him." But it is in the New Testament we find that "he was translated that he should not see death." It is in the New Testament we are thus taught the meaning of the words, "God took him"—he "was not found, because God had translated him" (Heb. xi. 5). So as to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; we read in Genesis of their pilgrim-character and course, and feel that there must have been some wondrously powerful attraction to act thus on their souls, and make them strangers on the earth. But it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn the secret of it all. Of Abraham it is said, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Of the whole of those who in these early days of the world's history "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," we are told, "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mind-

ful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city." The patriarchs themselves, and the other saints of the Old Testament, did no doubt look forward to a heavenly country and a better resurrection; but it was in the exercise of a faith which went beyond the dispensation under which they were placed; and hence it is not from their history, but from the notices of them which the New Testament contains, that we gather the heavenly character of their prospects and their hopes. The dispensation itself (that, at least, under which Israel was placed), was essentially an earthly one; and the notices of heaven which are scattered through the Old Testament regard it simply as the dwelling-place of God and of the angelic messengers of His power; or else as the place where the sources of those influences are which affect the state of things here below, whether that state be viewed as actually existent, or viewed prophetically as anticipative of the future. Thus we read of Jehovah, as "He that sitteth in the heavens"—"The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven"—"The Lord looked down from heaven"—"He will hear him from His holy heaven."—"Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens"—"Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens"—"Sing unto God, sing praises to His name; extol Him that rideth upon the heavens by His name JAH"—"To Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens which were of old"—"The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens"—"Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power"—"God is in heaven, and thou upon earth." These are specimens of the passages which speak of heaven as the dwelling-place of God, and the throne of His glory. As the place whence those influences proceed which regulate the course of events below, we have mention of heaven thus. Nebuchadnezzar was to be driven out until he had learned this solemn, salutary lesson; and then it was said to him, "Thy kingdom shall be sure

unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule." This, of course, would apply to the then existing, as well as to the present state of things. The connection of the heavens with the earth as the source of holy, benign influences in the future millennial kingdom, is more largely treated of. "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel (or the seed of God)" (Hos. ii. 21, 22). "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens" (Ps. viii. 1). "Ascribe ye strength unto God; His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds. O God, Thou art terrible out of Thy holy places; the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God" (Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35). "And Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth" (Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9). "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." "For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord" (Ps. cii. 19-22). "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it" (Isa. xlv. 8). Such is the light shed on this subject in the scriptures of the Old Testament. Heaven is regarded as God's dwelling-place—His throne; and whether the present or the future be treated of, heaven is only viewed as the source and depository of influences which affect the earth. That heaven should be in part peopled by inhabitants chosen from among earth's ruined race; and that in those glorious days to come, when the heavens shall so bene-

ficially influence the earth, it should be by men, not angels, that these influences should be applied—these were truths, the revelation of which was reserved for another and brighter economy than the last. It is to us that it is now made known in the words of the apostle : “For unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. ii. 5). The habitable earth to come (for such is the meaning of the word) is not to be under the government of angels ; but, as the apostle goes on to show, of man. First, of that blessed Son of man, spoken of in the eighth Psalm, here quoted by Paul. Then, further, to those many sons who are being brought to glory, and as to whom it is said of the Captain of their salvation, that “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” But here I find myself in danger of anticipating what more properly belongs to a further stage of the present inquiry.

We have not to read far in the New Testament, before we find ourselves in another element, so to speak, than that which pervades and characterises the Old Testament. It is no longer exclusively, or even chiefly, man, and *his* world, and *his* trial in it, with God in the distance, and behind a veil ; no, not even accompanied, as all this is in the Old Testament, with bright promises of future, but distant, glory and blessing. It is the Son of God Himself, come here from heaven, manifesting what heaven is in His own ways, opening heaven to view, and becoming by His death and resurrection the way of access to heaven for sinful men. And though this new and heavenly light does not burst immediately upon us in its fulness — though the first Gospel we read presents Christ more in Jewish connection, as the Son of David and the Seed of Abraham, “a minister,” too, “of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8)—still He is, as to His Person, “Immanuel, God with us,” and His glory cannot be hid. Yea, when He seeks to hide it under the veil of a lowliness in which He, sinless, and the Holy One of God, stoops to identify Himself with the repenting remnant of Israel in the very act in which they confess their sins, then *heaven*

opens, the Spirit of God descends as a dove and lights upon Him, and a voice *from heaven* proclaims, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 16, 17). How the light of heaven begins to break upon us here! How we begin to learn what the mind, the heart, of heaven is! First, the blessed One Himself is from heaven; and in Him we see the perfect moral display of what heaven is. Man—and earth has hitherto taken its character from man—seeks to exalt himself. Here is One Who so deeply humbles Himself, that, sinless and infinitely holy as He is, He condescends to take His place amid those who were confessing their sins. He had no sin; and, in the still more emphatic language of scripture, "knew no sin"; yet does He identify Himself with the repenting remnant in this first movement of their hearts towards God; and to all that the Baptist urges to deter Him, He meekly replies, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." What a contrast between heaven and earth! The only persons on earth in whom the Spirit was then working, took the place not of justifying or exalting themselves, but of confessing their sins and justifying God. Here was One from heaven, Who, I need not repeat, had no sins of His own to confess; but whither do the instincts, the mind, the heart of heaven lead Him? To this broken-hearted, contrite, confessing company. Amid them He takes His lowly place of self-emptying, self-renunciation; and heaven—responsive to this perfect exhibition of the mind and ways of heaven in Him Who came from heaven—opens to declare its approbation and delight; while a voice from heaven proclaims, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Jesus is heaven's delight, as well as heaven's perfect moral manifestation and display. Blessed Jesus, draw us towards and after Thyself!

W.T.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Notice.—The above is the first instalment of a very valuable article on Heaven by the late William Trotter. It is hoped to continue its re-publication each month of the year, should God permit.

The Righteousness of God.—3.

(Read Romans v. 1-11.)

THE justified are not ignorant of the beneficial result of trials. "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." This means that God has a kind and gracious purpose in allowing these tribulations; that all are ordered for our good, that they may work in us that virtue which shone in our Lord Jesus Christ, the patient, spotless One. "Tribulation worketh patience"—if it is allowed to do so! But if we are restless, irritable, despondent, throughout the trial how can it work patience? If God sends a trial, then let us learn to bow the head submissively to what He sends, and not forget to bless Him in it all.

But there is yet more: "Patience works experience." Experience is what we learn of the ways of God for ourselves; that is, we learn experimentally the blessedness of putting patience into practice when enduring our various trials. It is one thing to talk about the advantages of a certain matter and quite another thing to experience them for oneself. Take the case of Mary and Martha in their great trial. They had suffered a terrible bereavement: Lazarus, their brother, the object of their affection, the mainstay of their home, was dead. What seemed to them to make their loss the harder was that they had sent word of his sickness to the Lord, and He had apparently taken no notice. Lazarus died, and was interred. What patience the two sisters needed to wait until the Lord came! But presently He did come. What a change His coming wrought for them! Both sisters learned a great deal of value through their patience. They learned that after all the Lord had not been oblivious to their grief, nor had He disregarded their grief, for when He came to the graveside He wept, showing that He could not have been unmindful of their sorrow. But they had to wait in patience some days before experiencing for themselves the gracious and loving sympathy of the Lord

Jesus Christ, as well as His power over the grave. But it was worth waiting for; it was a real experience of the Lord as a Friend and Helper even in the house of death.

The Epistle to the Philippians is an epistle of real Christian experience. Its theme is the experience of Christ by the believer, proving the sufficiency of Christ in daily trials, proving how sweet, how gracious He is to the patient sufferer in everyday life. We shall never have this experience of Christ in heaven; for there will be no sorrows nor trials there. But here, in this world, we have tribulation, which works in us first patience and then experience.

Next we read that "Experience works hope." So the practical life of the justified moves in a circle. If doctrinally we hope for the glory of God, it is also true that the trials we endure in the midst of this groaning creation lead our hearts to the same expectation. We have the hope of the Lord's coming, which causes us to realise that our pilgrim journey may be ended at any moment, when we shall all leave together, and ascend to meet the Lord in the air. Then every sorrow will be passed. This is a cheering thought. Are we in the midst of trial now? May be, it is the Lord's will we shall never see the end of it. He may come to take us all out of it. Let us remember that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ may become one of the most potent factors in our daily life, if we only make the right use of it. Perhaps some may recall the effect this hope had on their lives, when it was first discerned, and it was realised that He was quickly coming, and they expected every moment that the Lord was about to come.

"Hope maketh not ashamed." If I fall asleep at night in the belief that the Lord is coming, and in the morning find that He has not come, I am not ashamed; I am not confounded, or covered with confusion; I have not been deceived. He knows the hour of His coming; and "He that shall come will come and will not tarry," and the scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." Here the apostle recites, "Hope

maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

This is a very blessed expression. The expiatory work of Christ which is the basis of our justification was wrought without us and apart from us. But now God works within us. It is not in our evil hearts; for in the flesh dwelleth no good thing; but in our hearts is shed abroad the love of God. The Holy Ghost is given; He works within our hearts, and the love of God is there shed abroad. This gives a heavenly glow to our whole lives, and makes us ready to rejoice in the things of God, because of the presence of the Holy Spirit within us; so that we know and feel in our hearts that God's love is upon us. We have it now in our hearts. It is not something hidden up there in heaven, which we shall get by and by; but we have it now. Amidst the coldness of this world, with many difficulties and trials against us, we carry about in us the love of God for us. Here it is not the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans viii. 39), but in our hearts. Neither does the apostle here speak of our love to Him, but of His love for us. His love is always a present possession, and the Holy Spirit makes it good to our hearts.

The apostle then speaks again of what God has wrought for us outside of ourselves, for he would not have us to trust our feelings. He says, "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It is a good thing for believers to learn that they have no strength. Often God puts us in the way of proving our utter weakness. Peter was very confident of his own strength, and did not know how terribly weak he was; but the Lord Who knew his weakness put him to the proof.

It was when we had no strength, Christ died for us. It does not say when we were full of sin, though that was true, but when we were without strength. Have you yet proved the truth of your own weakness? To mistake this truth is a failing more conspicuous, and more disastrous than many others. Have you come to

a right conclusion about your frequent failures? It is because we are without strength to do even what we know to be right. We try in our own strength, and consequently break down and dishonour God. The truth is that we are bound hand and foot by our evil nature; but the apostle says Christ died for the ungodly. Thus are we led back to Calvary again. God knew what poor failing creatures we are; but in Christ's death is the power to overcome.

Again, God's love is marked off from all other love in that He loved us when we were sinners. He saw the essence of all wickedness within us and its working upon us. It was then that God loved us, and such is its commendation to us! God, in sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. We are ever assured of the love of God because while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. This proves the unique character of God's love. Human love needs an object to draw it forth; God loved us in our unlovely state, and sent His Son to die for us.

"Much more then being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Chapter i. 18 tells us the solemn fact that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. If God as Judge was vindicated at the cross, and we are now accepted righteous because of the death and resurrection of Christ, God's wrath when outpoured cannot fall on the righteous; so in that sense we shall be saved from it by reason of our present justification which is based on the blood of Christ.

But the apostle proceeds to give us an assurance which is double in its force; for he says, "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. The prodigal son, on coming home to his father, was received, kissed and clothed; so we have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son. How much more shall we be saved by the life of Christ, Who lives to make intercession for us! We shall be

saved, not by our final perseverance, but by His life. Thus we whom God has now reconciled to Himself when we were His enemies have the further certitude that being reconciled we shall be saved because His Son Who died to secure our present reconciliation now lives to ensure our future complete salvation of body as well as soul and spirit.

Then comes the triumphant ending of the apostle's argument. "Not only so but we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation." When the prodigal son is depicted seated at the father's table, it is said they began to be merry. The father was rejoicing because everything in his heart had been satisfied; his son was clothed, and was restored into the condition of sonship; and so he could feed with joy on the fatted calf; for the calf on the table spoke of the death through which the son had been reconciled to him. The son, too, was rejoicing, because he knew now how much he had wronged his father by his depravity; and yet, in spite of it all, he knew with what lavish welcome his father had received him. He too was feeding on the fatted calf, which typified the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; and so there was fellowship between father and son. This illustrates the highest form of worship—rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. W.J.H.

The Last Words of David.

(2 Samuel xxii; xxiii. 1-7.)

THERE is a remarkable contrast between the two songs in these chapters: the song of David after he had done with all his enemies, that is, after his trials by Saul; and the song of David after he had done with himself—here brought together by the Spirit of God.

At the end of his trials, when, looking back at his enemies, he sings songs of joy and triumph, and all is exultation. After his experience of the blessing, it is,

“Although my house be not so with God.” The end of all the sorrow and trial with Saul is, rejoicing, exultation, and strength. “The waves of death had compassed him, the floods of ungodly men made him afraid; the sorrows of hell compassed him about, and the snares of death prevented him”; yet, the result of all he thus went through, in deep and bitter exercise of soul, is triumph, thanksgiving, and praise, in the first instance, when he recounts God’s deliverance; while in the second the result of the place of honour, blessing, and triumph, is deep and bitter sorrow, the confession, “My house is not so with God!” Not that he was without something to sustain his heart under it all; for he adds, “Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” For this he waited until the “morning without clouds.” But the end of all his blessing here is, “My house is not so with God.” This contrast makes trouble precious, and is a check to any desire to get out of it.

So practically is it with us. We need to guard against the effects of success; the pressure of circumstances which keep me down produces nothing but joy and praise in the experience of God’s goodness; the effect of circumstances which lift me up is sorrow. How often has a saint, when in trial and conscious weakness, cast therein upon the Lord, cried unto Him, and as a faithful servant been sustained—had blessing, and acquired influence, godly influence too; but how often, satisfied with the blessing and the influence thus acquired and losing a sense of his weakness, has he stopped suddenly short in his course, been arrested in the point of influence obtained, and become comparatively useless in the church of God! This should lead us to desire conformity in suffering to Jesus. The path of grace is, like Him to be getting on nearer to the Father, but to be getting nothing here.

There are three things brought before us in these chapters (one of them intended to give us solemn warning) :—

First, the result of David’s trials at the hand of Saul.

Then when set upon the throne, the consequence of his being surrounded with all the earthly blessings.

And, thirdly, the joy at the end, of "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," in anticipation of the "morning without clouds."

While the heart receives the warning against the effects of success, or anything in present blessing, are we looking out for and resting on the full, distinct, and perfect blessing, which will be in that day when the Lord Jesus comes?

We see here the way in which the Spirit of Christ gathers up the history of Israel into Himself as a centre, and makes the harp of David that on which it should be played. There is perhaps nothing of deeper interest than to see how God takes up the history of David in the Psalms, writing as it were upon the tablets of David's heart the history of the Lord Jesus.

In the first song there is a remarkable allusion to the whole history of Israel—to dealings of God with them, of which David felt the moral power in himself. We have a wonderful variety of circumstances, backward, forward, and around, gathering up all the history of David, and the triumphs of David; unfolding the sympathies of Christ with the heart of David in sorrow, until he is made the head of the heathen, his own people being blessed under him.

In chap. xxiii. we get "the last words of David." And here we learn where his heart and eye rested, amidst consciousness of his own failure and the failure of his house. He was looking for the "morning without clouds," for the One Who should rule over men in the fear of the Lord, Who should build God's house, and in Whom the glory should be manifested. These men of Belial, too, there must come one in the sternness of judgment to set them aside: then "they should all of them be as thorns thrust away." There is the deep consciousness of all the ruin, but the effect of the coming morning shining into it. The effect of the coming of the Son of David on David's heart, and the failure of everything around, lead him to reach forward

in spirit to the full triumph of that day when all should be full of blessing.

We thus, in the two chapters, have the unfolding of the sympathies of Christ with the heart of David, gathering up all the sorrows of the history of Israel; and also the heart of David resting in the consciousness of what the "morning without clouds" would be. We should seek so to get the power of the Spirit in the sympathies of Christ, and at the same time to reach out to the hope which the Spirit of God sets before us, as by the way to be thrown upon the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

J. N. D.

Philippi—A Colony.

(Acts xvi. 12.)

PHILIPPI, as we may learn from ancient history, was a city of Macedon, garrisoned by Roman soldiers as an outpost, by Caesar Augustus, after the defeat of Brutus and Cassius, B.C. 42; and its full title, as seen on the coins of the city, was Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis. Portions of conquered territory were commonly assigned to veteran soldiers, and the settlement thus formed was considered an integral part of the Roman Empire; all decrees of the Emperor or Senate being as binding there as in Rome itself. Thus the people of Philippi, as a colony, had the right to claim the title Roman citizens; could vote among the Roman tribes; had their own Senate and magistrates and observed the Roman laws.

The above remarks help to illuminate the obscure phrase "Philippi . . . a colony" which occurs only in Acts xvi. 12.

The existence of these Roman colonies is interesting and serves to illustrate vividly a most important feature of divine truth; one which is much neglected by children of God at the present time, even if they ever learnt it, that is, *the heavenly calling and character of the*

believer, and of the church of God—the body of Christ, of which He is the Head on high (Eph. iv. 15; Col. ii. 19).

With some believers these terms possess only a vague meaning. Their hopes never reach to anything higher than their being saved from judgment and brought to heaven when life is over. It may be well, therefore, that the reader should face seriously the question of how he stands before God. Can he in the words of the old hymn, read “his title clear, to mansions in the skies?” If not, this paper can mean very little to him, unless it should stir him up to seek Christ as his portion and to possess eternal life through faith in Him (John v. 24). Apart from this there is nothing before him but the “outer darkness” for ever (Rev. xxi. 8).

But we hope to show here that to have no more than the assurance of going to heaven when we die—important as that is—*falls very far short* of the exalted privileges stated in scripture to belong to the believer both on earth and in heaven, and of which that colony in Philippi is a forcible and helpful figure. To discuss man's lost condition and destiny is not a popular subject, and the scriptures which treat of this, if read at all, are generally passed over. But if man by nature is lost, as scripture asserts; if he has inherited a fallen nature, a nature, too, capable of the drab deeds depicted in the third chapter of Romans, such facts are only presented in order to reach the conscience, to help man to see his lost state and to value at its divine worth the great salvation now brought within his reach through the death and resurrection of Christ.

The child of God is one whose bond with heaven is more abiding and more important than with the earth, though this does not imply that he is to be indifferent to his responsibilities socially. All that God has counselled in blessing for the believer cannot be conferred below. The unique and heavenly character of these blessings is such that this world is unsuited for their full display, even in the millennium. The only fit

atmosphere in which to bring about their manifestation is the glory on high where Christ has already entered, thus preparing a place for us (John xiv. 1-3). * It cannot, then, be too clearly grasped that the true Christian is one who possesses eternal life, and whose calling, origin, and goal, are heavenly, as J. G. Deck, a well-known hymn writer of the last century, so finely, and so tersely, puts it:—

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

Thy cross has severed ties which bound us here,
Thyself our treasure in a brighter sphere.”

Let us now briefly tabulate some of the heavenly features of the believer's life of which Holy Writ is so full.

1. *The child of God is heavenly as to his ORIGIN.* By natural birth he is descended from the first Adam, from whom he has inherited a sinful nature. But through faith he is now linked with Christ in glory Who is the last Adam. He is risen with Christ from among the dead (Col. iii. 1). The life communicated to him is from heaven, though he has to manifest its traits here on earth. While the Lord Jesus was here He had life in Himself and communicated it to whom He would. And this He still does, but now from heaven.

2. *The child of God is heavenly as to his CITIZENSHIP.* To the man of this world it is natural that he should exercise his citizen rights by going to the poll to vote, to choose his representative on the earth's seats of government, and the more diligent he is in this respect the more highly will he be commended by his fellows. But grace has come in and put the Christian's name on heaven's register and has made him a citizen of another country. Abraham also *sought* a better country, “that

is a heavenly" (Heb. xi. 14-16) but God said very little to him concerning this, and he died looking for it. But as to the Christian, the Spirit of God has informed him in much detail of the new and indisputable ties which bind him with heaven, from the very moment he is saved. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20. R.V.). The claims of the new country, the new register, absorb, transcend, and override every other claim, both as to responsibility and privilege. They cut across the ambitions of nationalism as well as ties of blood. The appeals to patriotism leave him untouched. He feels that consideration for his new citizenship should give its colour and character to all the varied details of his life. When the apostle Paul proclaimed himself "a citizen of no mean city," he doubtless referred to Tarsus, but was it not also an oblique allusion to this great fact of his association with heaven?

3. *The child of God is heavenly as to his HOME.* Those designated earth-dwellers so often in the Revelation, are they whose resources and interests are solely of the earth. These, in course of time, ally themselves with the Beasts of chap. xiii., and eventually degenerate into devil worshippers—doomed to be swept away in judgment. Such is the end of those who have no prospects in heaven as their home. But for the believer there is another home in view, which nothing that defiles will ever reach, as our Lord taught in John xiv. : "In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

4. *The child of God is heavenly as to his HOPE and DESTINY.* His Lord and Saviour has entered the glory as his forerunner, and those who are saved are looking for Him to return the second time (Titus ii. 13; Heb. vi. 20; ix. 28). Nowhere does scripture lead the believer to make this world the arena for the development of his hopes and plans. His prospects are spiritual and

heavenly. It is according to scripture to sing—"The sky not the grave is our goal."

5. *The child of God is heavenly as to his CALLING.* It is from the glory that God has called us "to glory and virtue" (2 Peter i. 3). Hebrews iii. 1 speaks of us as "partakers of the heavenly calling." Then in Phil. iii. 1, the apostle says — "I pursue (looking), towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus" (N.Tr.). All his interests concerned the glory from whence and to which he had been called (Acts ix. 3, 4; 2 Thess. ii. 14). Therefore every Christian should be a heavenly man.

Lastly, as these far-away Roman colonies were one with Rome in polity, life, community of interest, and national status, so God's people at this time are linked with the glory as their home and native land. They draw their supplies from a country they do not see, hence their life here is a life of faith and not of sight (2 Cor. v. 6, 7). They use thankfully what God is pleased to give them, they use this world as not of it, for the fashion of this world passeth away (1 Cor. vii. 31). Their purpose is to conform to their heavenly position in ways and habits. They are no longer keen to exercise the franchise, or other national and municipal rights, because they are followers of the rejected Jesus. Their only sure portion and inheritance is that associated with Christ on high. And just as Rome cared for all these distant colonies, so the word of God, by the Holy Ghost, has come to the Christian, enlightening, quickening and instructing him as to all that relates to his heavenly interests, though his lot is cast, in the meantime, among those who know not his hopes, his country, nor his prospects.

W.M.R.

“The Hour.”*

(“Father, the hour is come.”—John xvii. 1.)

ONE hour there is in history's page
Pre-eminent o'er all the past,
'Twill shine and shine from age to age
While earth, while heaven itself, shall last.

O'ercome by time's oblivious power,
While earthly glories all decay,
The memory of that blessed hour
Shall never, never, pass away.

A watch-fire on a lofty hill,
Conspicuous o'er the waste of years,
That friendly beacon, blazing still,
The weary, way-worn pilgrim cheers.

Thou'lt say—what deed of glory gave
Such lustre to the single hour?
Go, ask the earth, the sun, the grave,
These all confessed its thrilling power.

Ay, wrapped at noon in deepest night,
The trembling earth it shook with dread,
The sun at mid-day lost its light,
The opening grave gave up its dead.

Child of the world, 'tis not for thee
To feel its heart-consoling power;
Dead—dead to God, thine eye can see,
No glory in that wondrous hour.

Christian, 'tis thine alone to know
And prize it more than all beside,
So bright with love, so dark with woe—
The gracious hour when JESUS died.

SIR EDWARD DENNY.

*Doubtless “the hour” is comprehensive and includes not only the awful moment when our Lord became obedient to the death of the cross but also the glory consequent upon His death and resurrection.—Ed. W.O.H.

“He Must Increase.”

(John iii. 30.)

ONE cannot think too much of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in John the Baptist's testimony in John iii. 30, there is a matter of great moment to every true servant of His.

John the Baptist was great, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself bore witness to this in those memorable words, “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. xi. 11), but John acknowledged in his last public testimony before being cast into prison, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John iii. 30).

He had given expression to his joy as the friend of the Bridegroom in hearing the Bridegroom's voice, and his spirit was willing to retire and leave the whole field to the One before Whom he was sent as forerunner.

But how the weakness of the flesh is manifested, even in the one equal to the greatest, from a human standpoint, when the willingness of the spirit is put to the test within the cold blank walls of Herod's prison.

Mere natural feelings are allowed to express themselves to two of his disciples in the question that they are sent to ask of the greatest of all: “Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?” (Matt. xi. 3).

The messengers are given additional audible and visible signs of the supreme greatness of the One to Whom John was privileged to testify, and are sent back with instructions to report to John, and to convey the notable message: “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me” (Matt. xi. 6).

All the doubtings of the flesh in its weakness are silenced and John is ready, as every true servant of the Lord should be, even for the executioner's sword for his Master's honour. This, the Lord's striking word of encouragement, has been recorded, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the blessing of those in like danger of being stumbled by adversity in the Lord's service.

G.S.P.

The Humanity of Christ.

TO enter upon subtle questions as to the person of Jesus tends to wither and trouble the soul, to destroy the spirit of worship and affection, and to substitute thorny inquiries, as if the spirit of man could solve the manner in which the humanity and the divinity of Jesus were united to each other. In this sense it is said, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father." It is needless to say that I have no such pretension. The humanity of Jesus cannot be compared. It was true and real humanity, body, soul, flesh, and blood, such as mine, as far as human nature is concerned. But Jesus appeared in circumstances quite different from those in which Adam was found. He came expressly to bear our griefs and infirmities. Adam had none of them to bear; not that his nature was incapable of them in itself, but he was not in the circumstances which brought them in. God had set him in a position inaccessible to physical evil, until he fell under moral evil.

On the other hand, God was not in Adam. God was in Christ in the midst of all sorts of miseries and afflictions, fatigues, and sufferings, across which Christ passed according to the power of God, and with thoughts of which the Spirit of God was always the source, though they were really human in their sympathies.

Adam before his fall had no sorrows: God was not in him, neither was the Holy Ghost the source of his thoughts; after his fall, sin was the source of his thoughts. It was never so in Jesus.

On the other side, Jesus is the Son of man, Adam was not. But at the same time, Jesus was born by divine power, so that the holy thing which was born of Mary was called the Son of God: which is not true of any other. He is Christ born of man, but as man even born of God; so that the state of humanity in Him is neither what Adam was before his fall nor what he became after his fall.

But what was changed in Adam by the fall was not humanity, but the state of humanity. Adam was as much a man before as after, and after as before. Sin entered humanity, which became estranged from God; it is without God in the world. Now Christ is not that. He was always perfectly with God, save that He suffered on the cross the forsaking of God in His soul. Also the Word was made flesh. God was manifest in flesh. Thus acting in this true humanity, His presence was incompatible with sin in the unity of the same person.

It is a mistake to suppose that Adam had immortality in himself. No creature possesses it. They are all sustained of God, who "alone has immortality" essentially. When God was no longer pleased to sustain in this world, man becomes mortal and his strength is exhausted: in fact, according to the ways and will of God, he attains to the age of near one thousand years when God so wills, seventy when He finds it good. Only God would have this terminate, that one should die sooner or later when sin enters, save changing those who survive to the coming of Jesus, because He has overcome death.

Now, God was in Christ, which changed all in this respect (not as to the reality of His humanity, with all its affections, its feelings, its natural wants of soul and body; all which were in Jesus, and were consequently affected by all that surrounded Him, only according to the Spirit and without sin). No one takes His life from Him; He gives it up, but at the moment willed of God. He is abandoned in fact to the effect of man's iniquity, because He came to accomplish the will of God; He suffers Himself to be crucified and slain. Only the moment in which He yields up, His spirit is in His hands. He works no miracle to hinder the effect of the cruel means of death which man employed, in order to guard His humanity from their effect; He leaves it to their effect. His divinity is not employed to secure Himself from it, to secure Himself from death; but it is employed to add to it all His moral

value, all His perfection to His obedience. He works no miracle not to die, but He works a miracle in dying. He acts according to His divine rights in dying, but not in guarding Himself from death; for He surrenders His soul to His Father as soon as all is finished.

The difference then of His humanity is not in that it was not really and fully that of Mary, but in that it was so by an act of divine power, so as to be such without sin; and, moreover, that in place of being separated from God in His soul, like every sinful man, God was in Him Who was of God. He could say, "I thirst." "My soul is troubled," "it is melted like wax in the midst of My bowels"; but He could also say, "the Son of man Who is in heaven," and, "before Abraham was, I am." The innocence of Adam was not God manifest in flesh; it was not man subjected, as to the circumstances in which His humanity was found, to all the consequences of sin.

On the other hand, the humanity of man fallen was under the power of sin, of a will opposed to God, of lusts which are at enmity with Him. Christ came to do God's will: in Him was no sin. It was humanity in Christ where God was, and not humanity separate from God in itself. It was not humanity in the *circumstances* where God had set man when he was created, the circumstances where sin had set him, and in these circumstances without sin; not such as sin rendered man in their midst, but such as the divine power rendered Him in all His ways in the midst of those circumstances, such as the Holy Ghost translated Himself in humanity. It was not man where no evil was, like Adam innocent, but man in the midst of evil; it was not man bad in the midst of evil like Adam fallen, but man perfect, perfect according to God, in the midst of evil, God manifest in flesh; real, proper humanity, but His soul always having the thoughts that God produces in man, and in absolute communion with God, save when He suffered on the cross, where He must, as to the suffering of His soul, be forsaken of God; more perfect then, as to the extent of the perfection and the

degree of obedience, than anywhere else, because He accomplished the will of God in the face of His wrath, instead of doing it in the joy of His communion; and therefore He asked that this cup should pass, which He never did elsewhere. He could not find His meat in the wrath of God.

Our precious Saviour was quite as really man as I, as regards the simple and abstract idea of humanity, but without sin, born miraculously by divine power; and, moreover, He was God manifest in flesh.

Having said thus much, I recommend you with all my heart to avoid discussing and defining the person of our blessed Saviour. You will lose the savour of Christ in your thoughts, and you will only find in their room the barrenness of man's spirit in the things of God and in the affections which pertain to them. It is a labyrinth for man because he labours there at his own charge. It is as if one dissected the body of his friend, instead of nourishing himself with his affections and character.

* * * *

I may add that I am so profoundly convinced of man's incapacity in this respect, that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define how the divinity and the humanity are united in Jesus, that I am quite ready to suppose that, with every desire to avoid, I may have fallen into it, and in falling into it, said something false in what I have written to you. That He is really man, Son of man, dependent on God as such, and without sin in this state of dependence, really God in His unspeakable perfection—to this I hold, I hope, more than to my life. To define is what I do not pretend. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." If I find something which enfeebles one or other of these truths, or which dishonours what they have for object, I should oppose it, God calling me to it, with all my might.

May God give you to believe all that the word teaches with regard to Jesus! It is our peace and our nourish-

ment to understand all that the Spirit gives us to understand, and not to seek to define what God does not call us to define; but to worship on the one hand, to feed on the other, and to live in every way according to the grace of the Holy Ghost.

From a Letter of J.N.D.

“Put to Death your Members.”

(A Word on Colossians III. 5-15.)

PUT to death” is in our responsibility, and we are exhorted to have it done,* and not to be always doing it. So also “put off” (v. 8) and “put on” (v. 12). It is a thing to have done. The old character has to be done with, and I am to go on now with the new. There is ever need of prayer and watchfulness to maintain the power of it in the soul, but unless the old things are really put off and the new put on there is not the same power nor the same standard practically in the walk. Many true souls are defective because not definite as to this. Though we may have many prior experiences of the profitlessness of the flesh, it is not a matter of experience, but of recognising by faith the true result of the place in which grace sets us in Christ. The old character is to be put off for good and all, because the old man has been put off;* the new character has to be put on once and for ever, because the new man has been put on.

The having put off the old man and put on the new is absolute and done, and is no part of our responsibility to do; but the putting to death our members and putting off the old things, as well as the putting on of the new character is not absolute, but is our responsibility, and therefore is the subject of exhortation.

If I have recognised that henceforth my conduct must be according to the new man, because I have put on Him and His character and put off the old, then I

*See note in New Translation by J.N.D. (Col. iii. 5).

know distinctly the manner of life that becomes me. It is necessary for proper Christian walk to put on definitely the character of the new man.

So far from its being pride and presumption to take the ground of having done so, it alone gives stability to the soul, a true measure for conduct, and a real sense of the necessity of dependence upon God and obedience. Preliminary to my walk, the standard thereby set up is high and glorious, but faith sees that it is the only possible answer in grace to the grace that has set me in Christ—the old man put off and the new put on. Therefore, before beginning, I own that the grace that set me in Christ is the only thing that can keep me in His path. But that I am in it for good and all should not be a matter of the slightest shadow of a doubt at any time. Souls must leave distinctly the old path and start on the new one, and this is their responsibility. It induces sobriety, definiteness of purpose, occupation with Christ, obedience to the word, tenderness of conscience, a true sense of grace and need of communion with God, as well as self-judgment and lowliness. A merely moral or religious man may live up to a standard of his own and be well satisfied. But a person who is not only in Christ, but has put on His character according to the exhortation of the apostle (Col. iii. 12-14), must be always deeply convinced of how short he comes of so glorious a standard. For Christ, Whose walk on earth is our example, is now in heaven. It is a Christ in glory Whose character we put on and in Whom we are.

As a figure, "put to death" is found no doubt in the circumcision of Israel at Gilgal. Circumcised *there* and *only once*—a thing done once for all and never to be repeated—they constantly returned thither after their conflicts and victories, not to be re-circumcised, but to renew, in the place of circumcision, their communion with God and their strength for His warfare.

This is what we have to do now in spirit, not having to do constantly with these evil things of the old man (Col. iii. 5, 6), but as having altogether done with

them, since we have put on the new man and his character. Prayer and watchfulness are needed, but this is the reverse of living in these evil things (ver. 7).

It is also true that we are not out of the reach of failure, but in such a case this is judged by what the new man is, and as utterly foreign to that which is our life. Not only is the new man put on, but we are exhorted to have His character put on, and, having done so, the failure is judged according to this measure. The members "put to death" are no part of the Christian life, and are dealt with accordingly. "Put to death" is in the living power of what is good, and is different from reckoning yourselves "dead to sin," which supposes evil in that which dies. The believer does not seek to acquire a good character by walking well, but he puts on the things of the new man, the character of Christ, and seeks to walk in accordance therewith.

Faith or Sight?

(Manuscript Notes of an Address given at a Fellowship Meeting in Dublin, 1887.)

"And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John xiv. 16, 17).

IT has been already remarked that the object of our being together for these two or three days is to help one another, and this is my desire in drawing attention to this scripture.

Why cannot the world receive the Holy Spirit? Because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. Their motto is "Seeing is believing," and we have to take care not to fall into it. There is nothing so lacking amongst Christians as the knowledge of what the path of faith really is.

"We walk by faith not by sight" is the true character of our path. Let us turn to Hebrews xi. and read the opening verses. I will read them, that we may have before us what faith effects.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews xi. 1-3).

It is one faith throughout the chapter, but a faith that is equal to the testings. There is nothing for sight and sense to rest on in the examples of faith here given. Flesh cannot go one step in the path of faith. If it attempts it, the result is the same as with the Egyptians when they assayed to cross the Red Sea.

In Peter's first Epistle (chap. i. 21) we see that God has raised up Christ and given Him glory that our faith and hope might be in God. So He is equal for every single thing that can stand in the way. Wherever we look, the difficulty is that the flesh must have something tangible to rest upon; the question for us to-day is—how far we know how to walk by faith, not by sight.

What the Lord has before Him in John xiv. is, that He is leaving "His own," and He knows the difficulties before them. In pointing out the weak spot and seeking to help them, He knows that the great difficulty would be to walk by faith, and consequently He tells them of this one great provision that would be here when He was gone—that would be the Holy Spirit *Who cannot be seen.*

And have we not to say to one another, Take care lest we are found asking for something to show that the Spirit of God is working? The world can be drawn by a large crowd, even if it be a report that the Spirit is working.

We see in the disciples in this very chapter this same tendency—for example in verse 8, "Show us the

Father," and again in verse 22, "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" I would ask, What is there for sight and sense in verse 21? The world may see the effect in you and me, but we cannot show the world the power that is operating on your heart and mine. It is only true to faith. They may say, What have you to show for what you say—"that you have the Lord with you; you don't seem to gather many"?

Sight will not discern anything. It is faith that sees the body of Christ on the earth, and there is nothing to encourage our hearts but faith. The religious world is seeking to produce something that is popular. When that word came to us, "Wilt thou go with this man?" had we anything to see?

In speaking of what is against us, the natural man can see that, but cannot see what is *for* us. This is illustrated in the account of Elisha and his servant in Dothan (2 Kings vi. 13-17). How simple, yet how powerful the prophet's prayer, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see."

Now let us turn to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, verse 21, for a moment. The phase of faith we see in Jacob is that which gets divine intelligence in a day of confusion. He has the mind of the Lord. Jacob's natural eyes were dim, and Joseph thought to help him, but faith leads Jacob to say, "I know it, my son, I know it."

We shall never discern what our path should be by looking at what is around us. The day we are living in has not come upon the Lord unawares, and He has provided for it, and faith discerns the path of the Lord's approval, but it will have to get its encouragement and sustainment from Him where He is. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but—it does not say spiritual—*mighty*.

We get restless and envious like the man in Psalm lxxiii. when we have our eyes on what is around us, but I do not know any more emancipating power

than is found in the words of another psalm, "In Thy light shall we see light (Ps. xxxvi. 9). But that is faith, and, as another has said, "Faith has a world of its own."

I thank God for what was said this morning, that the two powers—the Spirit and the world—cannot go together. The Lord opens up for us all the resources of faith. May He keep us from that which characterises the world, and enable us to discern its true character in spite of imitations.

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Three Crowns.

1. THE CROWN OF LIFE is mentioned in the Epistle of James as the reward promised by the Lord to those who love Him, after the reality of their faith has been proved by trial. "Blessed is the man who endures trial" (James i. 12).

The Crown of Life is held out to the assembly at Smyrna in the Spirit's special message to those about to be tried there, as the reward of faithfulness unto death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10).

Those who have a heart for the Lord value His approval above even life itself, and the Lord's presence in the power of the Spirit should be a reality to every true believer. It is the One Who is Himself the Life, the Bread of Life, and the Light of Life, Who gives the Crown of Life.

2. THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is declared by the apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy about his own death, to be laid up for him, and not for him only, but for all those who love the appearing of the Lord, the righteous Judge, Who will Himself present it (2 Tim. iv. 8).

Surely no person who loves the world or the things that are in the world, even though he is a believer, can expect this crown. The true servant of the Lord,

far from finding his delight in the world, has to insist on the necessity of repentance for all men, and that the world shall be judged in righteousness by the Man Christ Jesus, Who is ordained by God for this, and raised from the dead to give assurance of it to all (Acts xvii. 30, 31).

This blessed One, while He was here a Man amongst men, when speaking to the Father about the world, said, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me" (John xvii. 25). And does not "the whole world lie in the wicked one" still? (1 John v. 19).

How can I as a child of God link myself with any schemes of world reform, however attractive to the flesh, in the light of divine revelation which sweeps away everything of the old man to give place to the appearing in glory of the Man Christ Jesus? Righteousness will reign when the Righteous One is recognised as the universal Ruler.

If the crown of righteousness is to be mine (and why should it not be?), it is the Lord, the Righteous Judge, Who will Himself give it to me at that day.

3. THE CROWN OF GLORY is offered, in Peter's first Epistle (v. 4) to those who are faithful, as elders, in feeding and taking the oversight of the flock of God. Obviously it is a crown that no woman can receive. Peter himself was given a direct commission from the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd to both feed His lambs and His sheep, and to shepherd His sheep (John xxi. 15-17, N.Tr.). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he passes on the commission to those who desire to be faithful under-shepherds; and what a reward awaits faithfulness in this service! Even a crown of glory which fadeth not away!

G. S. P.

Heaven—2.

BUT this light of heaven is too pure and unearthly for the self-will and pride of man; and any who receive and reflect it must expect no better treatment from mankind than that which He received, Who in His own Person brought this light of life into the world.

But if rejected by earth, heaven smiles but the more; and it is interesting to see how early in His ministry the blessed Lord taught His disciples to look away from earth to heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—"Blessed are they that mourn"—"Blessed are the meek"—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake"—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." Very different indeed is this from the language of the law. It had spoken of blessings on the obedient of quite another sort. Blessed they were to be in the city—blessed in the field—blessed in their basket and their store: the Lord would cause their enemies to be smitten before them, and all people should be afraid of them. The Lord would make them the head, and not the tail; they should be above only, and not be beneath. Now it is—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all matter of evil against you falsely, for My sake."

But how blessed! Hear the answer: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; *for great is your reward in heaven.*" They who, attracted by heaven's light and love in the Person of Jesus, followed in His steps, and so shared His rejection by the earth, should find, like Him, both their solace and their reward in heaven—a solace so sweet, a reward so rich, that, amid all their trials and persecutions, they might, in the hope of it, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad." Heaven, then, is the place of reward for those who, through grace have suffered with Christ, and suffered for Him on earth.

Heaven's love, we have said, as well as heaven's light, was displayed in Jesus. And surely it was so. And He would have it so in us, beloved, as well. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 44-48).

If Jesus had come from heaven to let in the light of heaven upon our souls, attracting us away from earth so effectually that earth's rudest blasts of persecution should only cause us to "Rejoice and be exceeding glad" that our reward was great in heaven, how was this joy to be evinced? Surely in practical resemblance to our Father in heaven, Who showers blessing on both the evil and the good, on the just and on the unjust. A heathen or a Jew who looked not beyond the earth, could be kind to those who were kind to him; but if grace has opened heaven to us, and caused us to know that we have a Father in heaven, surely that Father's mind and heart and ways must now become our standard. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The instructions addressed by our Lord to the disciples as to prayer afford precious light respecting heaven. Those instructions were perfectly adapted to the state in which the disciples were then found; and in their spirit, and in many respects as to the letter, they are still adapted to ours. "Our Father which art in heaven." It is not only that God dwells in heaven; that is abundantly shown in the Old Testament. But now that God in heaven is revealed in such a sort that poor sinful mortals on the earth can say to Him, "Our Father which art in heaven" But, further, that Father is obeyed in heaven—cheerfully and perfectly obeyed. There is but one will consulted or regarded there; and that the infinitely perfect will of our Father in heaven. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Happy,

happy place ! No struggles of the creature's will for pre-eminence there. No disobedience—no self-will. How happy that family even on earth, where the children delight to obey their parents ; or rather, in the intelligence of affection, to anticipate their wishes and fulfil them before they can be expressed ! What profound happiness there is in the spirit of obedience ? What must heaven be, where every movement of the affections, every word, and every action is in absolute, perfect obedience to our Father Who dwells there ! And what will earth be when this prayer is answered, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" ?

Alas ! how different from this is earth at present ; and how divine and perfect the wisdom and love which would have us transfer our hearts and our treasures from such a place to heaven. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal ; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Would that these words might be written indelibly on our hearts. Vain indeed is the attempt to have our treasures below and our hearts above. Is not this the real secret of the want of heavenly-mindedness so universally complained of even where heavenly truth is known ? "If ye know these things," as our Lord said on another occasion, "happy are ye if ye do them."

Towards the close of Matthew's Gospel, we have a passage which teaches us that in heaven those relationships have no existence which so principally form the character of human existence here below. The Sadducees had thought to entangle our Lord by the question respecting a Jewish woman who, according to the Jewish law in that special case, had had seven husbands in succession. "In the resurrection," they asked, "whose wife shall she be of the seven ?" Jesus, in the perfection of His wisdom, replied, "Ye do err, not

knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." I only cite this here as conclusive proof with regard to heaven, that there our divine relationships to God and Christ by the Spirit and to one another as in the Spirit, will have entirely superseded those natural human relationships which only exist on earth. We shall be "as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. xxii. 30).

We shall be no losers by this, beloved. If natural, earthly relationships have no place in heaven, there are relationships there which will fill up all the capacious affections of the renewed heart. These we know by faith even now, and find, however feebly, their blessed operation on our souls. What else is it that is set forth to us in Matt. xxv. under the representation of virgins going forth to meet the bridegroom? The night may be long and dark. Faith, and hope, and patience, may all be tried to the uttermost. Even those who are most wakeful, and have the fullest supply of oil, may, through unfaithfulness, yield in some measure to the universal drowsiness; and the lamp may require a special trimming on the immediate approach of the Bridegroom. But there will be those, when He comes, who will have thus trimmed their lamps, and of whom it is said, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut." What must it be to be inside that door? Happy souls—wise and favoured virgins who are admitted there!

But another parable in this chapter tells us something of heaven's happiness, or rather of the happiness of those who are to dwell there with Jesus. Such are represented as servants to whom their master has entrusted goods to be employed for him during his absence. And what is the reward to be bestowed at his return on those who have faithfully occupied their respective talents in his service? "Well done, thou

good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler of many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Oh, yes, it will be a part of heaven's happiness, though heaven be not mentioned here, for those who have made Christ's interest their own, and have faithfully used for Him the few opportunities here afforded them for glorifying Him, to be admitted by Him to a participation of *His* joy, with inconceivably augmented opportunities for serving and glorifying that Lord, to serve and honour Whom is all their happiness and delight. "I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Passing over Mark's Gospel as not differing materially with regard to the present subject from Matthew's; in Luke we find throughout in a special way the moral expression of what heaven is. We don't wait in this Gospel till Jesus is thirty years of age, to learn heaven's joy over Him as incarnate and on earth. The very night on which He was born, the angel of the Lord visits the pious shepherds as they watch their flock; the glory of the Lord shines round about them, and the angel announces to them, in language sufficiently expressive of his own interest and delight in the message he conveys, the tidings of the Saviour's birth. And ere the words have well fallen from his lips, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." What a testimony this that Jesus is the centre of heaven's joy! And what a reproof, too, of man's—of our—indifference to that Blessed One Who has condescended to link Himself with us as He never did with the angels in heaven.

In Luke ix. we have an account of the vision seen by Peter, John and James, in the holy Mount. This vision, we are told by Peter, represented "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." They had not followed cunningly-devised fables, in making known

this power and coming, "but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (see 2 Pet. i. 16-17). Three of the evangelists give us an account of this vision; and there are circumstances noted by each one, which are not mentioned by the others. Altogether, it presents us with a delightful view of the blessedness to which the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will introduce us. There is the beholding Christ in glory. What will it be to gaze on that countenance, once marred for our sins, and covered with gore, but now, even as for a little season on the holy Mount, resplendent with glory? He "was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." So says Matthew. "And He was transfigured before them; and His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Such is the testimony of Mark. "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." So writes Luke. But how shall we bear to gaze on such glory? Ah, we shall be in like glory ourselves! "There talked with him Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory." To see Jesus, to be with Him, to be like Him—is this not heaven? But further, "they talked with Him." Each evangelist tells us this. "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with Him" (Matthew). "And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus" (Mark). "And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory" (Luke). Observe, they talked with Him. Each Gospel thus expresses it. It was not that He spoke to them, and that they stood at a distance, as servants, receiving His communications. They talked with Him. They were in familiar intercourse. And shall not we in heaven? Then what must heaven be? But what was their theme? It is Luke that informs us of this. They "spake of His decease (or exodus) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." And will not this be our theme of eternal wonder, and ever new, if not

ever-increasing delight? But further still: "a cloud overshadowed them." What was this cloud? "There came a voice out of the cloud," we are told in the Gospels. Peter says the voice came to him "from the excellent glory." No wonder that Peter and the sons of Zebedee feared as they entered into the cloud. What man, still in mortal flesh, could bear to be enshrined in that "more excellent glory?" But Moses and Elias could sustain it. It was their element, so to speak. It shall be ours in heaven. What were the words uttered by this voice, which came to Jesus? Mark this. "There came such a voice to *Him* from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Ah, yes! this is heaven's deepest joy; fellowship with the Father Himself, in the delight with which He views His beloved Son; and fellowship with Jesus, in His delight to be thus the object of the Father's love. One is reminded of the lines:—

This joy, e'en now, on earth, is ours,
But only, Lord, above;
Thy saints, without a pang, shall know
The fulness of Thy love.

Blessed Jesus, draw us onwards by the attraction of Thy love!

W.T.

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

Fragment.

"God will stand justified in the conscience of every single individual on the face of the earth, just as He did in the conscience of Adam in Gen. iii.

"*All* may charge and accuse Him, and lay the fault and the blame at His door, as Adam did; but *not one*, any more than Adam, can have courage in the conscience to come out and boldly, without hesitation, to His face, tell Him so. All these bear witness, against themselves, and for God; for this cowardice in the conscience bespeaks the common universal guilt."

To-day and To-morrow.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."—Matt. xxiv. 42.

THE dark stream of evil is flowing apace,
And man is still walking a stranger to grace,
While daring rebellion is on the increase;
Yet this mars not my joy, nor hinders my peace.

For my heart is engaged with its own happy song;
The Lord Who has loved me will come before long;
It may be to-morrow, or even to-night,
That I shall behold Him in unclouded light.

The house and the land, and the wealth in the chest,
Bring plenty of trouble, but never bring rest.
The Lord is my portion, and when I have grief,
His rich consolation gives instant relief.

I list not to doubts that my reason may bring;
I trust to His mercy, and cheerfully sing,
It may be to-morrow, or even to-day,
That Christ will descend to call us away.

I know not the way He will bring it about,
But I know He will come with the archangel's shout;
I know not the hour, whether morning or night,
But I'm waiting with patience and untold delight.

How Demba Daou came to the Knowledge of the Truth.

(Related by Himself.)

I WAS born in the year 1906, of Mohammedan parents who belong to the "All Colours" or the "Pheul." This was the ruling race in West Africa until the French took possession of the Soudan, and it was they who introduced Islam there with the help of the "Holy War." The Pheul comprises different tribes which are distinguished according to their religious attitude, even if they all speak the same language. Our tribe belongs to the most zealous adherents to Islam; we are called the "Thidyanyankobe," that is the "Exclusives" (narrow ones).

I was not a little proud of my name, "Demba Daou," "Moslem Warrior," which my father, as a zealous Mussulman, had given me, especially as I attended the Koran school. There I learnt to read and repeat the Koran by heart without, however, understanding the sense of many of the verses.

Now most of my readers will not know that the Koran quotes the Holy Scriptures and that under three headings, "Taoureta," "Zabourou," and "Linzile," which together nearly signify "The Holy Book of the Old and New Testaments." Such oft-repeated mention of this book, which was unknown to me, awakened my curiosity, and I often asked my father about it. He and other teachers of Islam maintain that the Bible is really inspired of God, but that the Jews and Europeans had burnt the greater part of it, and altered the few parts that remained, so that the Holy Scriptures no longer exist. And this is the universal opinion of the Moslems.

When I heard that, I was much astonished that the great and mighty God had not kept better watch over His word, and I felt convinced that the scriptures must be somewhere to be found. And I should have liked to possess them, because it was said that the

Europeans owed to them their wisdom, riches and power, things which seemed to me desirable enough. For anything further I did not wish at that time.

One day my younger brother Sidiki saw two white men in the town—we lived in Bammako, the capital of French Soudan—one of whom spoke Arabic. They had talked of the Lord Jesus, and in parables, which we negroes like so much. They were two American missionaries, Mr. C. Reed and Mr. E. C. Hadley, who wished to settle in Bammako. I found them out and conversed with them, and Mr. Reed gave me at first parts of the Bible in Arabic; later on I even received a whole Arabic and a French Bible. They naturally expressed the wish that I should become a child of God, but I myself only wanted to increase my knowledge and to excite the admiration of my people by the beautiful books. For black men have an unlimited respect for “big books,” and my ambition was to appear learned. And so it happened that my visits to the missionaries soon ceased.

Some months passed. One day I showed my Bible to the most respected of my Moslem teachers in Bammako and asked him the correct title of the book. He said it treated of Taoureta, Zabourou and Linzile. By this confirmatory answer I put faith in Mr. Reed's words, and visited him again, and at the same time I asked the wisest Mussulmans about the Bible. From that time Mr. Reed took an increased interest in me and asked me to help him in the translation of St. Luke's Gospel into the Bambara language. For remuneration he offered me a salary and instruction in the French language, and as I wished to earn some money I accepted his offer.

When I one day perceived that the New Testament taught the deity of Jesus Christ and the Triune God, both of which are not acknowledged by the Moslems, I limited myself to reading only the Old Testament. But later I was struck by the following remark of Mohammed: “Glory be to God, the only holy, peace-

loving, true and protecting God. I declare that Jesus, the Son of Mary, is the Spirit of God and of His word. God created Jesus through His Spirit." And according to the Koran, chapter iii. 40, the angel had said to Mary: "God proclaims His word to you, He will call Him Jesus, the Messiah, Son of Mary, great in this and the other world, and the confidant of the Highest." By this and many other parts of the Koran I became convinced that the Koran also speaks of the deity of Jesus Christ, although it contradicts itself, saying in other places that Jesus is only a man, like Adam.

And now I searched the Old Testament to find the name of Jesus without finding it. But I discovered there numerous references to the New Testament, so that my attention was again directed to that part of the Bible. And although it was difficult for me to admit it, I was obliged to see that Jesus was God, and not only a Prophet. Some time after I attended a Mohammedan service where the priest expounded the Koran in Arabic. He also said that Jesus, the Son of Mary, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, but he refrained from further exposition, merely saying: "This part is a mystery; we will proceed further."

When I heard this I withdrew from my tribe and relations and confessed the deity of Christ. I was filled with doubts about the Koran, which contradicts itself, but just as fully convinced that the Bible is the word of God, especially as I read in the last chapter of the Koran: "Mohammed is only an ambassador of God, others preceded him, and he has come to confirm the Holy Scriptures which were given before the Koran."

Strengthened by this inner conviction I gathered young people around me and testified to them that the Holy Scriptures were inspired by God. I raised the Bible which I had in my hand and said: "This is the word of God, it never contradicts itself!" I proved to them how often the Koran contradicts both itself and the Bible, which it professes to confirm. Then I

said to them: "Brothers of my tribe, I will follow the Bible, the whole Scriptures, from beginning to end; I can no longer believe that the Koran is the word of God. From now on I will follow Jesus Christ the Son of Mary and the Son of God. He is the true God and Mohammed was only a man. I am no longer a Mohammedan, but a disciple of Jesus."

My father regarded this change in me as a disgrace to his house, though he hoped I should soon alter my decision on account of my youth. My brother Sidiki shared my convictions, but did not dare to make his confession.

From that time I came into closer contact with the American missionaries. I paid visits with Mr. Reed, and we conversed together with the Bible in our hands with any who passed, hidden under the great trees of bush. But in spite of my believing in the deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, I had never had a thought of my being a sinner. I was specially fond of reading the Gospel of John. Here I found the words of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and I read at the end of the same Gospel that the Lord was crucified by the Jews. Now a new difficulty showed itself, and I could not believe that the Son of God had died for my sins; I became very uneasy. But soon after I read in Genesis the account of the creation and the fall of man, and I understood that God had to come down in the Person of His Son to destroy the works of the devil, and to save sinners through the work which He accomplished on the cross of Golgotha. Now I could bear witness in the town that Jesus, the Son of Mary, and the Son of God, is my Saviour and the Saviour of the world.

When my father saw that I persevered in the truths of Christianity he began to persecute me. But to return to Islam, after I had believed on "Him Who has the words of eternal life," was impossible. The first person to whom I preached the gospel was my sister Aminata. She confessed that she wished to follow

Jesus, her Saviour, but she was young and fearful like my brother Sidiki. Later she was truly converted, and served the Lord with much devotedness amongst the sick, but soon became ill herself, and died in her 19th year.

Afterwards I accompanied the missionary Reed on some of his journeys, for which I was paid by his Mission Society. My father thought I had been won over to Christianity by these material advantages, and warned me seriously. He promised me great privileges if I would return to Mohammedanism. I answered him that I was not following a man—if I did that I would first follow him and my mother to whom I owed everything. He asked me repeatedly if this were so, which I constantly affirmed. Then he said to me in conclusion, "My son Demba, I give you up to God, since you have promised to follow Him alone." From this time onwards he ceased persecuting me, took me again to his heart, and gave me his dying blessing on October 10th, 1928.

But not only my father but others also said I preached the gospel for money. And so I decided to go in faith, putting aside all hindrances to the gospel and be able to say that I stood alone in the Lord's service.

I came to Europe to get French rights and the French language, as I think them both useful in His service. It has saddened me to see the different sects of Christians in Europe, but the Lord through His mercy has shown me that in the midst of all the confusion it is possible to be a witness for Him and to hold fast the truth concerning His assembly.

"Hold on, my heart, in thy believing.

The steadfast only wins the crown.

He, who, when stormy winds are heaving,

Parts from his anchor, must go down ;

But he who holds to Christ through all

Will stand, though heaven and earth should fall."

ANON.

A Word to the Christian.

THE Lord's day is our day, the first day of the week. The Jew rightly and properly kept Jehovah's sabbaths. As to this, there are languages in Europe more correct than what we hear more commonly spoken around us. The Pope's tongue, the Italian, keeps up the right distinction; it always speaks of Saturday as the sabbath day, and Sunday as the Lord's day. How curious that it should be so, where such gross darkness reigns on almost everything else!

In our own land and for a long time has been a great deal of confusion as to the sabbath and the Lord's day. Let none be offended at the remark; for its truth is certain and of importance. The Lord's day differs from the sabbath, not by a lower but by a higher degree of sanctity, not leaving Christians free to do their own will on other days, but by calling them to do the Lord's will on that day in a complete separation to His glory, the holy services of divine honour in works of faith and labours of love. In short, the Lord's day differs essentially from the sabbath in that it is the day of grace, not of law, and the day of new creation, not of the old. The consequence of seeing this will be very important differences indeed in heart and practice.

Suppose a Christian had the strength to walk 20 miles on the Lord's day, and to preach the gospel six or seven times, would he be guilty of transgressing God's will? Who would venture to think so? Yet if really under the sabbath law, what can absolve from the obligations of that day? All under the law are bound within defined limits. Are Jews free to use the sabbath in indefinite labour even for what you know to be the active purposes of goodness? We must obey in our relationship.

Granted that the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath; but are the Jewish disciples also lords of the sabbath? You cannot do freely what you count ever so good: Jews are under stringent regulations as to that day. If the sabbath were your day, you are required to keep

it as such. As you, a Christian, have to do with the Lord's day, seek to understand its meaning, and be true to it. Without question the Lord's day is a day of consecration to the worship and to the work of the Lord. It is not the last day of a laborious week, a day of rest that you share with your ox or your ass. It is a day that is devoted to the Lord Jesus, especially to communion with His own in the world. Nor is there sin in the most strenuous labour for souls then; on the contrary, such labour in the Lord is good and blessed wherever it is found, if He guide in it (and we need this).

W.K.

Heaven—3.

AS we pass on with Luke, we find, strikingly marked, the earthly condition, and the temper of mind, which in Jesus corresponded to the glory, which, for a moment, we have been, as it were, permitted to behold. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." This marks the condition:—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." These words, in answer to the disciples who would have called down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, indicate the temper of mind of Him to Whom all this glory belongs. Both passages are in the same chapter with the account of His transfiguration.

Heaven is noticed in the next chapter as the place where the disciples' names were enrolled. Of the earthly remnant, in days to come, we read, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautified and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem" (Isaiah iv. 2, 3). But our Evangelist, or

rather our Lord Himself, Whose words are recorded by the Evangelist, speaks of an even nobler registry than this: "Rejoice," says he, "because your names are written in heaven." Israel was giving sad evidence of its unpreparedness for those days of blessing on the earth of which prophets had written and psalmists had sung. In this very chapter, Jesus had been lamenting over the cities in which His mighty works had been wrought. His disciples were the companions of His rejection. But if there was to be no present registry of the living in Jerusalem; if Jerusalem itself was to become a desolation, as it did shortly afterwards, the disciples were to know, and we were to know, that there is a registry kept in heaven. Happy they whose names are recorded there.

Luke xii. 37, intimates as to those servants who are found watching when the Lord comes, that He will Himself become the servant of their joys. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them." Minister, in grace, to our necessities here, Christ will yet become minister to our joys in glory.

Then in chapter xv., who is there who has not found there such an expression of what heaven is, as has caused his heart to leap within him for joy? If heaven be the place of glory, it is also the abode of grace. Not a heart there but what beats in unison with the grace of Him Who reveals Himself as "the God of all grace." Did heaven look down with interest and solicitude when the Good Shepherd came thence, to seek in this dreary wilderness the lost one from His flock? And when He returns home, with that lost one on His shoulders, calling together His friends and neighbours to rejoice with Him, has heaven no response to such a call? "I say unto you"—and Who so able to tell us of heaven's mind, and heaven's ways?—"that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." And

again, as to the woman and the lost piece of silver, and her rejoicing with her friends and neighbours that she has found it, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." And though heaven be only mentioned in the parable of the prodigal, by the prodigal himself, when he says to his father, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight"; what is the effect of the entire parable but to place us, as it were, in the centre of heaven's joy, and make known to us that the wondrous occasion of this joy is the fact of our being there? "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found!" True, there is not a word of the prodigal's joy, nor would it be the place for such a word. When God rejoices, and all heaven rejoices over his recovery, silence as to himself and his feeling best expresses the deep, unuttered, unutterable joy which fills his heart. True also, that in the parable there is an envious, discontented, complaining elder brother. But he represents no one that will actually be found in heaven. His character is drawn to convict and confound the Pharisees, who, rejecting the grace of Christ themselves, as unneeded by them, repined at its overflow to others, who consciously to themselves, and manifestly to all, did stand in need of it. And then, as a matter of fact in the parable itself, the pride and envy of the elder brother keep him *outside the house*. The prodigal enters, arrayed in the best robe, with a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. The father is there, rejoicing over the lost one he has regained; and the very servants of the house, taking their tone from him, participate in the deep joy which swells every heart. How their words to the elder brother show with what zest they enter into the spirit of the whole occasion! Their hearts are full. "Thy brother is come! and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound!" But "he was angry, and would not go in." Excluded thus by his own sullen pride and

envy, his presence mars not the joy that reigns within. Would that any who are too self-righteous to enter heaven on the same ground as "publicans and sinners," might be led to lay this to heart! But oh, what a view of heaven and heaven's joy does this wondrous chapter afford us! And if by faith we have entered there in spirit already, and had our hearts assured by the grace that not only welcomes us, but finds its own highest, deepest, richest joy in receiving us, vile, worthless, and beggared, as we were, it does not the less instruct us as to what we shall find heaven to be when actually there. A heaven of glory would be no heaven to sinners, or to those who have been so, were it not the heaven of perfect grace this chapter shows it to be.

In what blessed harmony with all this is what we find in Luke xxiii. 43. The poor dying malefactor, who, after first uniting with his fellow-criminal in reviling Jesus (see Matt. xxvii. 44), had his heart so touched as to confess Jesus, and reprove the other, who continued his revilings, entreated the One Who was dying by his side in the well-known prayer, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He had the Old Testament Jewish expectation of Messiah's kingdom, and he now also had faith to acknowledge as the Messiah the sufferer by his side, entreating that he may be remembered by Him in the days of His yet future kingdom. Our Lord reveals to him something much more near and intimate. Paradise was to receive His own spirit, when He resigned it to His Father; and in that paradise the soul of the poor dying thief was to be with Him. "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Of Luke xxiv. it may be remarked, as, indeed, of all the accounts the Gospels contain of the intercourse between Jesus risen and His disciples, that they afford us some light as to our heavenly state. However it may be true of the souls of departed saints, that, absent from the body, they are even now present with

the Lord, we are assured that it is in resurrection we shall enjoy the heavenly glory. And no one can read these records of the interviews between Christ and His disciples, subsequent to His resurrection, without remarking the similarity between His appearances to them and the various appearances of angels, as described both in the Old Testament and the New. What would be an obstruction to gross corporeal frames, such as we at present possess, was none to the resurrection-body of our Lord. So different was the manner of His intercourse with His disciples from all that they had witnessed prior to His death, that on one sudden appearance noticed in this chapter, "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." He invited them, however, to satisfy themselves that it was He; and more than this, that it was His body they beheld. "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself : handle Me and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." He even ate before them, that not a doubt might remain on their hearts. Yet what do we find in this chapter? First, He walks by the side of two of them as, they suppose, a total stranger; then, after causing their hearts to burn within them by His discourse, constrained by their urgency, He turns in with them, to partake of their hospitality. In the act of taking bread, blessing it, and giving it to them, their eyes are opened, and they know Him; but He vanishes out of their sight. They return to Jerusalem, and find the eleven, gathered together with others, saying to one another, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." The two from Emmaus then relate what had passed with them; and it is as they speak, Jesus appears in the midst on the occasion already referred to, when they thought it was a spirit. The doors were closed, for fear of the Jews, as we learn from John's Gospel; but this was no obstruction whatever to Jesus. When He had been with them after this sort for forty days, "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while

He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." However He might in His resurrection-body visit for a time those who were still in bodies of flesh and blood, manifesting Himself to them as we have seen—heaven, not earth, was the home of His resurrection-body. Heaven was His home, as we know, in other and higher senses than this. But even His body, the derivation of which, by the power of the Holy Ghost from His virgin mother, was His one great link to earth, is now, as the apostle has it in 1 Cor. xv. 44, a "spiritual body," and rises to its own proper home and element in the heavens. The blood having been poured out in atonement, He having laid down the life He had taken on assuming flesh, He has received it again in resurrection. He can say, "a spirit hath not flesh and *bones*, as ye see Me have"; while the apostle assures us that flesh and *blood* cannot inherit the kingdom of God. This is much too sacred a subject for speculation, or anything indeed but the spirit of lowliest worship; yet may we rejoice to see in all this intimations of what our own future state will be. We, too, as we know, are in resurrection-glory to reign with Christ over this world below. But, however we may be commissioned and enabled, in fulfilment of the errands and offices we shall then discharge, to appear occasionally to the inhabitants of the millennial earth, as the risen Jesus did to His disciples, heaven is the proper home of such bodies as we shall then possess. Conformed to Jesus in resurrection, where His risen body has found its abode, our bodies shall also find theirs; while it will be as easy, doubtless, for a spiritual body to appear, and vanish, and instantly transport itself from one place to another, as we have seen was the case with the risen body of our Lord during the forty days succeeding His resurrection. One only thing let us bear in mind, it will not be to please ourselves, or to do our own will, that the wondrous powers of the resurrection-body will be employed; we shall then, blessed be God! have lost all desire for this. And if we be "like unto the angels," and more

than this, like to our risen Lord, as to the capacities of our bodies, we shall be like them, too, in perfect subjection to the will of God. The Psalmist speaks of the "angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." And we know Who it was that said—"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Whatever capacity we may possess in resurrection for transporting ourselves from heaven to earth, or from earth back again to heaven, we shall never once either do it, *or desire to do it*, in any other errand than to do, as our Master, the will of Him that sends us. What would be the utmost physical capacities without this moral, spiritual perfection—this entire, delighted subjection of heart, mind, and will to God?

W.T.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Dying Words of Infidels.

"**H**OLD ON!" was the exhortation given to a dying infidel by his associates. "Will you tell me what to hold on to?" he asked in reply. As usual, they had nothing to support the soul. Infidelity is often renounced in the heart-searching light of the dying hour. Consider these dying words of noted infidels:—

VOLTAIRE, 1778: "I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth, if you give me six months' life!" [This was said to Dr. Trochin, who told him it could not be.] "Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me. O Jesus Christ!"

CHURCHILL, 1764: "What a fool I have been!"

HOBBS, 1679: "I say again, if I had the whole world to dispose of, I would give it to live one day. I am about to take a leap in the dark!"

GAMBETTA, 1882: "I am lost, and there is no use to deny it!"

GIBBON, 1794: "All is now lost, finally, irrecoverably lost. All is dark and doubtful."

THOS. PAINE, 1809: "O Lord, help me! O God, what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God!—but if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for I cannot bear to be left alone! Send even a child to stay with me!"

Reader, the world has witnessed the triumphant deaths of hosts of brave confessors of the Christian faith. It never yet heard one of them expressing any regret of having given up this life for Christ, though it has very often heard the dying wails of those who failed to do so in time. "Oh, that [you] were wise, that [you] would consider [your] latter end!"—Deut. xxxii. 29.

Think, too, dear reader, of Paul's commission from the Lord Jesus in heaven to the Gentiles: "I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me."—Acts xxvi. 17, 18. *Selected.*

Preservation and Guidance.

(Psalm xxxii. 6, 7.)

EVERY Christian that desires to serve the Lord acceptably in a day like the present must feel the need of the two things for which David prayed in the 32nd Psalm, after getting the restoration of his soul from the path of transgression. The more ardent the desire to walk in communion and obedience, the greater the need of guidance in a day when outwardly the church of God is in ruins as to her ordained place of "the pillar and ground of the truth."

We do well all to remember that every Christian is not only a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, but a servant of that same blessed Person as Lord and

Master. In this connection it may be noted that in the scripture in 2 Timothy ii. 21, which exhorts us to separation from evil in order to be "fit for the Master's use," the word in the original for Master is "*despotees*" (despot). Who will deny Him the right to our service, or treat it as other than a privilege, seeing He has bought us with His own blood?

To turn again to the 32nd Psalm, how important and instructive it is to note the order of the soul's experience! The announcement of the blessedness of restoration is followed by the removal of all reserves in the heart, and then the soul's hiding place is *in God*, instead of away from Him; and preservation, and songs of deliverance follow.

But now as to the important question of guidance in this day of confusion, of division and the strife of tongues, when all the marks of the last days are so evidently seen around us, how encouraging is the promise, "I will guide thee with Mine eye; be ye not as the horse or the mule that need to be held in with bit and bridle." We must be near to a person if we are to be guided by his eye, and the Lord's own word to us is, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew vi. 22).

There are some interesting and very practical lessons in this matter of guidance, in the history of three of the latter kings of Judah, as given in the book of Chronicles—Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah.

Jehoshaphat was blessed by God, and made an exceedingly good start to his reign of 25 years, but when blessed with riches and honour in abundance he joined affinity with Ahab, the wicked King of Israel, and was only saved from death on the battlefield by a signal act of mercy from God. He was publicly chastened for "helping the ungodly," and in the mercy of God accepted the chastening, and exhorted his people to "act in the fear of the Lord, and with a perfect heart."

Most instructive is the record of the way he accepted the reproof given by the prophet Micaiah; and the con-

fession he makes in the midst of his people when threatened by the combined armies of the Moabites and the Ammonites is so beautiful that we cannot refrain from repeating part of it here.

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah : and Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord, even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord” “Art thou not our God Who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend for ever?” “O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us ; neither know we what to do : but our eyes are upon Thee. And all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives and their children” (2 Chron. xx.).

The answer to this is most striking : “Thus saith Jehovah unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude ; for the battle is not yours but God’s.” And, thus encouraged, they went into battle with a song of praise. “And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord (Jehovah) set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah ; and they were smitten.”

What a lesson of encouragement for a day like the present, when we are often dismayed by the progress of evil, and the apparent success of the enemy of our souls ! We are warned very plainly that “the weapons of *our* warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Cor. x. 4). So when discouraged by our weakness, let us think of this picture of Israel in a dark day going into battle with a song of praise.

Things went from bad to worse in the history of Israel after Jehoshaphat’s death. His son walked not in the ways of his father, and was followed by others in the same evil course until Hezekiah came to the

throne in one of the darkest days of Israel's history. The doors of the house of the Lord were closed, and the place unclean from neglect. The people had turned their backs to it. The Levites, whose office it was to care for the house, had first to be cleansed, and we are reminded of the word, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah lii. 11). Here again we see that the deeper the state of ruin, the brighter the answer to faith that lays hold of God Himself and His resources. The history of Israel is strikingly similar to the history of the church of God with regard to dark periods of depression and failure, followed by times of revival and blessing.

But in every case the revival is the result of taking the true place of humiliation and confession and returning to the point of departure, which is always the point of return. We note that Jehoshaphat's care was for the external condition of his people, and how they stood in relation to Israel and the other kings of his day; while Hezekiah's chief care is for the Lord's house and its condition. And the grace of God towards him is seen in the allowance of the special privilege of keeping the passover in the second month, instead of the first, because of the condition of the people. There was no pretension to be what they were not, or any claim of strength, but "There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem."

Thus we see that for something like 300 years there had been no such a passover. How it reminds us of that word, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and has not denied My name" (Rev. iii. 8).

Passing over another dark period in Israel's history, and the sad reign of Manasseh, we come to another revival, another bright spot in the chequered history of God's earthly people. Josiah, a boy of eight years of

age, is called to sit upon his father's throne, and his reign from the first presents a striking contrast to that of his father. All the more remarkable when we remember that Manasseh was a bad son of a good father, while Josiah was a good son of a bad father. But this revival under Josiah had one special feature that has marked in a greater or less degree all true revivals in the Christian dispensation or before, viz., a return to the word of God. All pretension to a fresh revelation has been proved time and again to be vain. We think of Joshua succeeding to Moses in the leadership of Israel as given in the first chapter of the book that bears his name; and what is the foundation of hope for his office of leader but "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth"?

So with the young king Josiah, they had not gone far with the work of reformation before the cry is heard from Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah." "And it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the law that he rent his clothes." From that hour his anxiety is "that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses"; and the result is seen in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, that "There was no pass-over like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept" (2 Chron. xxxv. 18)—(a period of about 400 years).

This is an example, surely, for our day of weakness, on the one hand, and pretensions of a Laodicean character, on the other.

We conclude this paper with an extract from the writings of a servant of the Lord, made about sixty years ago on the same subject, which forms an excellent comment on it.

"Perhaps the most interesting point of difference between these three kings, and which has most to do with a real positive action for God in the present day, was when Hilkiyah, the priest, found the book of the

law in the house of the Lord, 'and Shaphan read it before the king; and it came to pass when the king heard the words of the law that he rent his clothes.' It is a solemn thing when our distance and departure from God are estimated by no less a standard than *the word of the Lord*, and this was Josiah's measuring line: 'Great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book.'

"Jehoshaphat was an example of how God deals with a man who has affinity with evil; and what a note of warning we may say in passing for the alliances and associations of our day! Hezekiah witnessed of the manner in which God encourages and works with the man who knows what the Lord's name is rightly connected with on earth and therefore cleanses the house from all filthiness, and intelligently prepares it for the glory of God, and the true worship of His people. Josiah, however, like John, the beloved disciple, goes back to '*the word which ye have heard from the beginning*,' and there he reads what is true, and accepts nothing else for his practical work and service."

May the Lord grant us, dear reader, grace and faith to do likewise.

T.R.

Fragment.

"The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid" (Psalm lxxvii. 16). So saith He, "Winds, blow not; seas, rage not; fire, burn not; lions, devour not; sun, move not; clouds, rain not; devils, hurt not; waters, overwhelm not; sword, destroy not"; AND THEY ALL OBEY.

"It is easy enough to see *great* grace, but it requires *great* grace to see *little* grace."—W.K.

Teach me Thy Way, O Lord.

(Psalm xxvii. 11.)

“TEACH me Thy way, O Lord,”
By faith my soul draws nigh,
To gaze with love and rapture
On Him, Who came to die.
I was the rebel sinner,
So wayward and self-willed,
But He, by seeking, found me;
My heart with joy He filled.

“Teach me Thy way, O Lord,”
I long to know Thy will;
There's peace and joy and gladness,
With heart set free, and still.
'Tis my desire to please Thee,
And listen to Thy word,
Each day with contrite spirit,
Which nothing can disturb.

“Teach me Thy way, O Lord,”
Thy way is always best,
And when in true obedience,
My soul is doubly blest.
Thy thoughts are pure and holy,
Much higher far than mine;
With cords of love and mercy,
Thou dost my heart entwine.

“Teach me Thy way, O Lord,”
I dare not trust my own;
The flesh is weak and sinful,
By Satan soon o'er thrown.
Give me a meek submission,
Thy loving voice to hear;
With prayer in every trial,
To drive away each fear.

G.A.H.

Hope for the Future.

SOME years ago, there lived in the West of London a Christian gentleman whose time and means were spent in the Lord's service. One day he had gone out visiting among the poor and needy when it came on to rain very hard and he was glad to take shelter in an archway. The other occupant of the archway was a poorly-clad man whose thin clothing was soaked with the rain. He held a basket in his hand. "You have something to sell?" he was asked. "Yes, sir," and opening his basket he displayed a few oranges. "I suppose you haven't sold much to-day?" "No, sir, people won't stop in the rain to buy oranges." A little help was offered and gratefully accepted and then the question was asked, "You don't seem to have very much to look forward to in this life; have you any hope for the future?" "Nothing but the cross," was the unexpected reply. "And what has the cross done for you?" "It has given me *a Saviour*," came without any hesitation from the orange-seller's lips. What a joy for these two fellow-travellers to meet thus on the road of life, both with the cross of Christ as their hope for the future!

And did that hope fail them? No, indeed. Not many years afterwards, one of them lay on a dying bed and among the last words uttered by him were these: "I am going out into the sea of eternity and my only hope is the blood of Jesus."

Quite recently two persons were in conversation in an office. One of them, a messenger, remarked that he was about to retire and spoke about the future. "There is only one hope for the future and that is the blood of Christ," said the other. "And that has been *my* hope for many a year," said the messenger.

Reader, may I ask you the question, "Have you any hope for the future?" Do you value the cross of Christ or are you trusting to your prayers, your goodness, your kindness to your neighbours, or anything

else? Believe me, God will not accept them, but He has accepted the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, offered on the cross of Calvary. Remember, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

"In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

Heaven—5.

IN John iv. we have one passage which opens to us very sweetly something of our own future joys. In the absence of the disciples, Jesus had been sowing the precious seed in the heart of the poor Samaritan woman. She had gone into the city, rousing by her exclamations the men of the place and thus preparing them for the reception of Christ Himself. There rises before the eyes of Jesus the prospect so delightful to His heart of being two days amid this happy throng, imparting to them eternal life by making Himself known to them as "the Christ, the Saviour of the world." His disciples are to participate in this joy. They are to reap where He has sown. But sower and reapers are to rejoice together. "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours." And as to us, beloved, what was the whole lifetime of Jesus here below but a seed-time during which He laboured for us? And what will all eternity be but the harvest during which we shall "reap that whereon we bestowed no labour"? And yet what holy fellowship of eternal joy between the One Who sowed and the multitudes

“who receive wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal” ! Truly “He that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.”

But if, as we have seen in chap. iii. and might have seen also in chap. i., the seed sown by this heavenly Stranger was such as found no kindredness in the soil of the natural human heart ; if a new life was needed for the reception of the testimony of the One Who was from heaven, and above all, it follows, as a matter of course, that the harvest produced by this seed is a harvest to be reaped in resurrection. And what prominence, accordingly, is given to the subject of resurrection in this Gospel of the Divine Glory of the Son of the Father. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.” Nor is it only in the quickening of dead souls now that the power of the voice of the Son of God is manifested. It is manifested thus, blessed be His name ! But it is to be displayed in quickening dead bodies too. “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.” It is with the resurrection of life that the subject before us connects itself. And how Jesus seems to delight in the prospect of this ! Four times over, in chap. vi., does He anticipate it. “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, *but should raise it up again at the last day*” (ver. 39). Then again, “And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life ; *and I will raise him up at the last day*” (ver. 40). Again, “No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him ; *and I will raise him up at the last day*” (ver. 44). Then, finally, “Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life ; *and I will raise him up at the last day*” (ver. 54). How true what another has remarked on the expression used

in these passages—the last day. “As regards John vi., the Lord is evidently substituting a blessing in resurrection for any royal Jewish blessing. Owned the prophet and refusing to be king carnally, He goes up alone on high, and the disciples are sent away alone, toiling on the sea (a Jewish remnant strictly) and arrive as soon as He rejoins them; but He is fed upon in humiliation and death in the interval; and hence to such the blessing comes in resurrection: he (that is, the believer) will be raised up in the last day . . . The last day is in contrast with their present blessing as under their expected king . . . He does not come and set up the Jews, but the Father draws, and a man comes to Him, and the way He blesses him is in the power of eternal life, raising him up when the close of all this busy and rebellious scene arrives: *that* shall be his portion in *that* day—not Messianic security now.” Towards the close of the chapter our Lord hints at His return to the heaven from which He had descended. “Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?” To one grand present result of His ascension into heaven He testifies in the next chapter. The time had not come for Him to show Himself openly to the world. Alas! when it does come, it will be for judgment; and woe to the world then! He goes up privately to the feast, however; and to the officers who are sent to take Him He says, “Yet a little while I am with you and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come.” But while thus absent from the earth, and hid where the unbelieving cannot come, what is the character of this absent, rejected, exalted, heavenly Christ? What are His relations to poor sinners and to His people, who have been brought to know and to own Him? How blessed the answer! “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Ghost, on earth, was to be the witness of the heavenly glory of this earth-rejected Christ ; and while out of the belly of the believer rivers of living water were thus to flow, any poor thirsty sinner was to know how welcome he was to come to Christ and drink. Perfect, illimitable grace, and the presence here of the Holy Ghost from heaven, were to be, as to the enjoyment of them, the fruits to us of the exaltation of the rejected Son of man.

Passing over our Lord's controversies with the Jews, in which He continually speaks in such language as—"I know whence I came, and whither I go" ; "Ye are from beneath, I am from above" ; "Ye are of this world, I am not of this world"—passing over, likewise, the bright display of His glory in the raising of Lazarus—we arrive at chap. xiii., where this heavenly One begins to unfold to His disciples the deeper secrets and mysteries of that place whence He came, and whither He was about to return. First, we have the symbolical instruction conveyed by the washing of the disciples' feet ; then we have the direct communications of Christ to the eleven, when Judas had gone out.

"When Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." His hour was come to depart out of this world to the Father ; but He was leaving in the world those who are here styled "His own" ; and He would leave with them the pledge, assurance, and representation of that in which His love would be "to the end" occupied for them. It was an humbling—what man would call a menial—act, by which He taught them this lesson ; but we are here let into the secret of the humility which could stoop so low as to wash the feet of the disciples. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself." The consciousness

of being above all was that which enabled Him to take a place of service at the feet of all. So is it in His measure with the saint. The apprehension by the Spirit of heavenly things enables him to take the lowest place on earth. What could earth's dignities be worth to the Son of God? What are they worth to the heart that knows, through grace, the secret of fellowship with Him?

But all this was in the presence of the traitor. "Ye are clean, but not all." "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." When the traitor was gone out, the heart of Jesus, pent up as it were till then, pours out itself in the midst of the remaining few. The Son of man was now glorified, and God was glorified in Him; and if God was glorified in Him, God would glorify Him in Himself, and would straightway glorify Him. Now He speaks plainly of what He had but hinted at before. He was to be but a little while with them; and as before He had said to the Jews, now He said to them—"Whither I go, ye cannot come." This He explains to Peter — "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me *now*; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." He would not have their hearts to be troubled; they had believed in an unseen God; and now that He was no longer to be an object of sight, He would not cease to be an object of faith. They believed in an unseen God—they were to believe in an unseen Saviour also. It was the Father's house to which He was going, and in it were many mansions. Had there not been accommodation for them as well as for Himself, He would have told them: He would not mock them by awakening hopes only to be disappointed. "I go," says He, "to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Heaven was not only to become everything to them because of its having received their Lord, and because of its being

the place whence they expected His return. No, He plainly tells them that, besides this, it is to be their own abode; and that His errand, when He comes again, is to receive them to the place He has gone to prepare for them, that where He is, there they may be also. Then He adds, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." He had told them He was going to the Father, and had spoken of the many mansions in the Father's house. Now what is it makes the Father's house what it is? Doubtless there are glories and privileges there, infinitely surpassing human thought. But what is it stamps its character on the Father's house? The exile from his native land, when his thoughts wander to the home of his infancy, and he fancies himself again in his father's house—what is it that is the soul of his imaginings? The furniture, the pictures and the grounds? No, the situation may be ever so pleasant, the furniture ever so rich, the decorations ever so superb—it is none of these that give form and colour and substance to the vision of home that floats before the eyes of the banished one: "My father's house," is his idea.

Well, Jesus had said He was going to the Father; and from their knowledge of the Father, they may conclude what the Father's house must be. But how did they know the Father? In knowing Jesus. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Jesus was Himself the Revealer and the revelation of the Father. In knowing Jesus, they knew the Father; in knowing the Father, they knew where Jesus was going—for He told them it was to the Father's house: and in knowing thus the Father's house, they not only knew the place, but also the way. "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." But though the Saviour gives them credit for knowing what had been so fully made known—what they had such opportunities to know—as matter of fact they did not apprehend it; they were dull of hearing. First one, and then another, makes this manifest by his questions. To all these

questions our Lord patiently replies, promising that on His departure He would pray the Father, Who would send another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who should not only be *with* them, as He Himself was, but *in* them. And then He says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." W.T.

The Coming of the Lord.

(1 Thessalonians 1.)

THE Lord is coming. Yes, that is true. It is *the Lord*; but I am a son of God, and I wait for God's beloved Son to come from heaven. The very inward life of the believer is formed in connection with the coming of the Lord. The night was dark when these epistles were written; but, as in a star-lit night, there was a bright shining of the Star in heaven. However dark the night, and however many difficulties there are, we should be able to see that bright Star. These Thessalonians were not fully instructed as to the coming; their minds were not at peace about those taken to be with the Lord; but Paul does not write as if they were puzzled and perplexed, but brings out the mind of the Spirit quite simply.

This first epistle was probably the first of all the epistles; and when the Lord thinks of us, what are His thoughts of us? Of the deep sands of the wilderness? No; He knows there is a certain responsiveness of heart in us to the thought of His coming. His thought is, that we are waiting for Himself from heaven. If He let them come to their wits' end, it was that He might show them He could meet all their needs, and let in the droppings of His love. He always takes occasion of every difficulty to show forth Himself. If I get near the Lord Jesus Christ, I find that there is in His heart a speciality of thought and affection for a people down here, who are waiting for Him—not for the glory, that is quite another thing. He has everything that He can personally want; but there is a craving in His heart

that cannot be satisfied till He shall come to take us home to Himself. And can I think of this, and not want to see Him? Formed for Christ's own individual presence, the heart cannot say, "satisfied," till it gets there.

Notice the place He recognises them in. Verse 1 : "In God the Father"; there is no meaning in this to an unconverted mind. On the earth among men, how can a people be "in God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ"? "Work of faith." There are many works that have the very opposite place in man's mind to what they have in God's. Man takes what would make a very good roofing, and tries to make his foundation of it. Are there no works the natural result of being "in God the Father"?

"Patience of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ" is sweeter and fuller, and I read it so. Has God made you a king and priest? Yes; but you do not look much like it now? No; but His hope does not stop short of the time when you shall be so. It is an immense help to remember that the Lord Jesus never forgets His coming. There is a fixedness of heart in Him to come and fetch the Bride home to the Father's house, and I can have sympathy with Him in that. The morrow of the believer is formed on the yesterday of the believer, and is connected with His to-day. Where does a soul get peace, but by going right inside within the veil where Christ sits? You must see the connection of what Christ did on the cross with the throne of God in heaven, if you are to have a hope that maketh not ashamed. The anchorage ground of your soul is in Christ within the veil as the accepted sacrifice Thence I have brought out the knowledge of my guilt, and of my acceptance before God. Have you brought out nothing else from the presence of God? Not the love that He bears you? Was all the love of Christ spent in proving to you that your acceptance is perfect before God. Oh, no; I cannot have been intelligently in the presence of the Lord without knowing not only that I want Him, but that He wants me. The beginning

of blessing is in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not get to the other terminus till He has fetched us home, till the journey ends in the blessedness to which it is meant to conduct us. My to-day, whether of fifty years or less, what is it but a constant proof of His love? Himself is my yesterday; Himself my to-day; Himself my to-morrow, my Hope.

Verses 9, 10. One of the marks of the people of God is serving the true God; and another is waiting for His Son from heaven. What are you if you are believers? Are you not channels that God has digged for the rivers of eternal life to flow through? Is it no important question to Him if the water flow through them? What are you if you are not that? Nought.

In the greatness of His eternity the Lord can quietly come down and say, "I am watching you; you are my servant." A poor bed-ridden cripple, whose heart is happy in the Lord Jesus Christ, can bear no noise, no light; perhaps the lip dry, the eye dim. God knows that one, if he has the eternal life, as handing up to the living God his little quota of service by filling the little place He has put him in. How can each serve? That is a question between God and the individual soul. God in saying, "Give Me," knows He is endearing the Christ Who must be looked to for grace and power to give; but He does say, "Give Me." What can the poor sinner give to God? There are cups of cold water to be given.

Verse 10. "Our deliverer from the wrath to come," as showing His competency to settle everything even as you go through the wilderness—the present delivering power of Christ, while it is called to-day, for all the difficulties of His people. I should like this question put to our hearts by the Spirit of God: Does God love me? Has the Lord my name written on His heart? Has He had so to do with me that He has formed me for His presence? He in heaven in His Father's presence; I down here serving Him and waiting for Him? The soul formed on His coming cannot be satisfied without Him. The Lord does know all that

passes inside you, whether He is the centre round all that is in your heart is wrapped or not. You cannot have blessing if you have another centre than God. What can be sufficient for you but God's centre, Christ?

G. V. W.

The Rock of Our Salvation.

(Luke vi. 46-49.)

WE read that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Doubtless such an one has heard the Lord's word with gladness, and prides himself on knowing His will : for it is inherent in man's nature to have some religion ; even the heathen having their gods of wood and stone, which neither see nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But, alas ; how many never get beyond profession !

Some men are content to follow their conscience, but they should remember that the apostle Paul, before his conversion, followed his conscience, yet persecuted the church of God ! And he who was outwardly zealous in the Jews' religion above many of his equals in his day, had to be brought to know that all his own righteousnesses were as filthy rags ; so that he confessed himself a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, although what he did was done ignorantly in unbelief.

Dear friend, if you have but mere Christian profession, the time will come when the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches will choke the word, and it will become unfruitful ; for the word has never reached your conscience so as to stir you up, and convict you in the sight of God of being but a lost and ruined sinner, wholly without resource in yourself to remedy your sad state. Such is the clear teaching of Scripture, even in the passage referred to at the head of this paper. If you are resting your hopes for eternity on anything else than the solid rock of eternal truth concerning yourself and concerning Christ, you are but building on sand which will not abide the storm of judgment.

God knew the terrible need of man, and so He sets before us plainly, that it was when man was without strength, that Christ died for the ungodly; for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. But man often seeks to make the best of both worlds, and is unwilling to give up the pleasures of this life. He is heedless of the fact that to be a friend of the world which has cast out and crucified the Son of God, is to be an enemy of God!

Man in his lost estate is dead in trespasses and sins. He stands condemned before God: for, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." And this is the condemnation, that Christ came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. But Christ alone is the one Mediator between God and man, and He came into this world that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly, even life in resurrection. "For as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13, N.Tr.).

God shows us in His word what we are by nature as fallen creatures in His sight. And is not this the truth we need, however much it strips us of all our pride? The Scriptures say, "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . there is none that seek after God . . . the way of peace have they not known, and there is no fear of God before their eyes." Can we ever thank God enough for showing us our lost condition, and, that through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, His righteousness has now been manifested, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe? Even in the glorified state, when the Lord Jesus has brought His own loved ones home into His Father's house of many mansions, their song will still

be of Him as the Lamb that was slain, Who redeemed them to God by His blood.

Being justified then freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we have peace with God; and through Him, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. What wonderful grace on God's part, not only to show us where we are, but in spite of all our sinfulness, to reveal what Christ has done for us, so that we may flee from the wrath to come, and live henceforth to the praise of Him Who, in giving His life for us, was Himself condemned, despised and undone!

The words the Lord Jesus had to say to His disciples were words that let them know how it was that He would be the Rock of their salvation. "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death. And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again."

During His ministry, the Lord Jesus told His disciples that all things must be fulfilled concerning Him, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, how that He must suffer, and rise from the dead the third day, so that repentance and remission of sins might be preached among all nations. But it was only after His resurrection, when the work of redemption was fully accomplished, that He opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures.

Then it was the disciples saw what a full provision there was in Christ for them: for He, as the Lamb of God's providing, although despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; had, in the counsels of God, been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification; He Who knew no sin, had been made sin for them, and by His death the penalty of sin had been paid, that they might have

eternal life. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

The words the Lord Jesus spoke are words of life and truth, and able to convert the soul; for He always spoke the very words the Father gave Him to speak. "But the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 12, 13).

The invitation has gone out to every one, without exception, "Whosoever cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out"; but, without faith it is impossible to come. The word of faith, the apostle says, which we preach is "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

What blessed words of comfort to the lost and the perishing, that the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth! He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

"Oh, what a debt we owe
To Him Who shed His blood,
And cleansed our souls, and gave us power
To stand before His God!

Saviour and Lord, we own
The riches of Thy grace;

For we can call Thy God our God—
Can bow before His face.

Thy holy Father too
We worship as our own,
Who gave with Thee the Spirit's cry
To us His sons foreknown."

H.K.

The Things that are Caesar's.

WITH reference to the powers of this world, the question asked of Christ was this: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" See Mark xii. 13-17. We need to note the answer, for from it we learn what the Christian's attitude is to be with regard to this present evil world and the powers that govern it. A more important question could scarcely be raised. For God's earthly people to be under the heel of a foreign power, even though through their own fault, was the most grievous and humiliating situation conceivable. What to do in regard to this was the burning question of the hour. Notice, Christ does not tell them to offer resistance. His reply is, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." This is all the more remarkable, because the conditions then existing were wholly contrary to what God intended, and Christ could easily have altered such conditions had He wished. But He leaves the matter just where it was. The fact is, He never interfered in the world's matters, and if He did not, was He likely to advise others to do so? He found the Romans in power, and He left them in power. He was born under their yoke, He died under it. It was the Roman power that crucified Him. Christ never once resisted that power. The only time He used force was to drive the money-changers out of the temple. But the temple was His Father's House, God's things.

The point for us is that the Lord did not allow Himself to become embroiled in the politics of the world,

nor would He sanction the use of carnal weapons. The burning political questions of His day He left on one side. Amongst His disciples were found Simon Zelotes, who represented one party, and Matthew, the publican, who stood for another. But we do not find that Christ encouraged either; and both Simon and Matthew were content to be His followers, and to leave other matters alone. Simon Zelotes was called away as much from his adherence to the party in opposition to Rome as Matthew had been called from the receipt of custom.

What profound wisdom is displayed in the answer we are considering! The Lord can settle the whole question as to our relation to the powers that be in a sentence: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

They might well marvel at Him. He does not say, "You have got to put Caesar right," nor does He put His people in Caesar's place. Well would it have been for both the church and the world if the church had attended to God's things. In descending from her own high calling she has injured the world as well as herself. Instead of rendering unto Caesar she has sought sometimes even to be above him. One thing which has contributed as much as anything to the ruin of the church as a witness for God, and made her ineffective in the service of men, has been her interference in the affairs of the world. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world, if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight." This was His good confession. Do we know better than He? The world's things, as such, do not bear Christ's image and superscription, or God's, any more to-day than formerly. The only superscription that the world has so far given Christ has been an *accusation*. "And the superscription of His accusation was written over" — an accusation written above His head—on a cross. And all the world was concerned in it, for it was written in Greek and Latin, and Hebrew. The world did not acknowledge His claim. It was not an acknowledgment, but an accusation. And this has never yet been revoked. No

believer, surely, wants to govern a world of this description, for it is the same world still. Paul, in Romans xiii., explains further the attitude of the Christian, "Be subject." "Pay tribute." "Render to all their dues."

So there are God's things and Caesar's things. Let us be careful that we render to God the things that are God's. In this way we shall render the best service to the world. In reality, the conflict is between God and Satan, for Satan is the prince of this world, and man cannot cast out Satan, only God can do that. One day God will answer the accusation we have referred to, but it will be by overturning the powers that be, and all rule and authority and power will be vested in Christ (Rom. xvi. 20). ***

Further Notes of a Bible Reading on Colossians with Mr. Darby at Rochdale in the year 1877.

i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church." The "sufferings" are limited to Paul in this aspect. We all have our little measure. The truth that tests faith is always that which brings suffering, it is always a truth new to me which tests faith. The Jew could take up the name of the one God, and make their boast in it, but the Lord said in John xvi. "Because they have not known the *Father*." And they killed Stephen, etc. No one speaks of the church of God but Paul. The historical church never had the full gospel, i.e., since the sacred scriptures were filled up. All the gospel side of things, as conscience, justification, etc., are all individual.

My relationship with the Father (Eph. i.) comes first, before he touches on the other, that of the body. Nothing but the Holy Ghost can keep individuality and unity together. I am individually capable of knowing the mind of God.

The current idea is that there is forgiveness up to a point. It is, however, full forgiveness all through. Many a true soul's happiness is by contrast; he has got out; where? into the wilderness. This is the condition of very many souls, and all the hymns have the idea of "I am saved," but God is a Judge still, and they still see judgment in Him, there is *no joy*. But ALL are raised together with Him. What characterises the Christian condition is the presence of the Holy Ghost, and waiting for Christ. The place for man is the glory of God. I *know* my relationship, God dwelling in me, that is how I know His love — and I have perfect, present, divine, favour. There is not a word about the free-will offering in the passover. It is not what we are saved *from*, but what we are saved *to*, that is all important. Now I come with a free-will offering.

The feast of Tabernacles is not fulfilled at all. Deut. xvi. 17, "According to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee." If the crop was bad they had not one good thing to bring. It is my own fault if *I* have not an offering to give to the Lord.

The harvest speaks of discriminating judgment; the vintage of taking vengeance, see Rev. xix. 15.

The current gospel is all man's side; God's side is much left out.

The question of the world came to this with Christ; either sin was to reign in the world, or a holy God. A High Calvinist takes up Ephesians, but not Romans, so man's responsibility is all left out.

The Spirit of God was never called the Holy Ghost till after the cross.

"Wood," "hay," "stubble," may be either persons or doctrines.

The Holy Ghost does *not* dwell in a local meeting. No single assembly is the temple of God. There is no such thing as the presidency of the Holy Ghost. Christ is the Person really present, not by His Spirit.

i. 27, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;

which is Christ in you the hope of glory.” I have no present but what is future, as a Christian, and no future but what is also present.

Forgiveness simply does not teach us the mystery. If a person is not sealed, he has not got into the christian place, he is *safe*, but not *saved*, he has not been brought into the place that God has in His mind for him. Blood on the lintel—safe; through the Red Sea—saved.

ii. 1, “Conflict” that all should get into the mystery. Conflict here is prayer. “The mystery” in Rev. x. 7 refers to government. Their danger was getting back into the things of man on earth, Christ is the cure for this evil, Christ being everything to the soul. Christ is complete for me, and I am complete for God. Here am I before God, I want nothing. “Holding the head” is individual. “Joints and bands” are not necessarily gifts. There is no miracle gift in Ephesians.

Eph. iv. 12, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”; the first object is perfecting the saints. Eph. iv. 22, “Off,” all saints have put off the old and put on the new, see Col. iii. 10. I often say there are three kinds of men in me; 1. Christ at the bottom of my heart. 2. A good, fair conduct, pass well, never do anything to subject myself to discipline, without a thought of God in my heart all day long. 3. Christ everything.

“Mortifying” is putting to death. There are three characters of sin; violence, corruption, falsehood. We are to walk in the communion of what we are to God. In 1 Cor. xiii. there is not an iota of activity in good. “Kind” in verse 4 is disposition. In Eph. vi., subjective state comes first, then the sword of the Spirit. Activity has no place till man is *down*; then God can make him active.

iii. 15, should read “peace of *Christ*.” iii. 16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” speaks of intelligence; verse 17 of walk—“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

“An Holy Priesthood.”

(1 Peter II. 5.)

PRIESTS within Thy holy temple,
Draw we near to Thee, O God !
Cleansed and fitted for Thy service
By our Saviour's precious blood.
By the Holy Ghost's anointing
Consecrated to Thy praise,
Clothed in robes of spotless whiteness,
We our songs of worship raise.

Christ, our great High Priest, is leading
With His voice of power divine,
Praise in which the feeble accents
Of His “many brethren” join.
His the voice that soundeth ever
Sweetly in Thy listening ear,
While, attuned to *His* perfection,
Thou our stammered notes dost hear.

From the golden altar riseth
Fragrant incense to Thy throne :
Thus our songs can find acceptance,
Perfumed by His name alone.
At Thy feet, our God, we worship—
We would now Thy glories tell,
Offering to Thee praise unceasing,
As Thy priests within the veil. C.H.V.P.

“Heb. i. 1, 2, 3, evidently speaks of our Lord as Son in the highest sense, that is, as divine. So—almost everywhere in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John. ‘The Only Begotten of the Father’ does not refer to His place as born on earth or risen from the dead, but expresses His eternal relationship as a divine person.” (*Bible Witness and Review*, Vol. 1, page 347.) (1877).

Heaven.—6.

“**A**T that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” It is not only that this could not be known before the ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Ghost—I speak of the latter clauses of the verse—the thing itself did not exist till then. They ought, indeed, to have known that Christ was in the Father, and that in knowing Him they knew the Father; but they were not *in Him* till He had taken His place on high as the glorified Head of His body, the church; nor was He *in them* till the Holy Ghost descended, to constitute as well as to make known the fact. Far as these things must have surpassed the power of apprehension they then possessed, they were not to lose anything by this. “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” “Henceforth,” He says in the next chapter, “I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you.” True, indeed, these passages describe our present place of privilege and blessing; but do they the less assure us of what our future portion will be? Will any of our privileges be curtailed in heaven? Do we now know that Jesus is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us? And will not this continue for ever? And shall we not better know the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of blessedness it expresses, when we are with the Lord in the Father’s house, than we do at present? Does He now treat us, not as servants, but as friends, keeping no secrets from us, making known to us all that He has heard of the Father? And will there be more reserve in the intercourse between this blessed One and us in the glory than on earth? Impossible! True, we shall be in no nearer relationships to Him than

at present ; but it is because that cannot be ; and though we shall be in no nearer relationships, we shall be in a position to enjoy the blessedness of those which already exist, unhindered by all that mars our enjoyment of them now.

But full as were these communications of Christ to His disciples, their state would not admit of all being told to them. There was no hindrance on Christ's part ; He yearned to pour out to them all that His heart contained. But until the Spirit came, they were incapable of receiving the whole of what He had to impart. "I have yet many things to say unto you ; but ye cannot bear them now." But there was One to come Who should fully supply the lack. "Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth ; for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak ; and He will show you things to come." It would appear from this that the things in which the future blessedness of the saints consists, were specially included among those things which the disciples could not then bear, but which the Holy Ghost, when He came, was to make known. But if the disciples could not as yet bear these things, and if to them, therefore, the Saviour did not declare them, there was One to Whom He could absolutely without reserve pour out all the thoughts, and feelings, and wishes of His heart ! Yes, and to the Father He does thus pour out His heart in the presence and hearing of the disciples. It is for us He prays, as well as for the disciples, even for all "them which should believe on Him through their (the apostles') word." Much of His prayer relates to our position here below ; but it is not confined to this. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them ; that they may be one even as We are one : I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Does not this afford us a soul-enrapturing view of what lies before us ? Christ in us, and the Father in Him, that we may be made perfect in one.

The glory given to us which the Father has given to Christ; and this to be manifested, so that the world itself, seeing us in the same glory with Christ, shall know that we have been the objects of the same love. But more than this. Our Lord credits the love of His saints as delighting to behold His glory, and witness the love, of which He is, and has been from all eternity, the Object. And which does give the deepest delight to our souls, beloved—the prospect of sharing Christ's glory ourselves, or the prospect of beholding His glory — the glory with which that Blessed One Himself is crowned, while witnessing, at the same time, all that creatures can witness of the love wherewith the Father has from eternity loved the Son? Well, all this is to be ours. “Father, I will (or I desire) that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” What a testimony of His affection towards us, that He should so trust ours to Him as to ask on our behalf as the very best thing He could ask for us, that we might be with Him where He is, to behold the glory which the Father has given Him! And if our hearts be but dull and insensible to these touching proofs of His affection now, they will not be so then. Would that they were more tender now! More ready to respond to this love which so truly passeth knowledge!

The only other passage in John I would notice is that in which He says to Mary, after His resurrection, “Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.” In ascending to His Father, He placed us in one common position with Himself before the Father, before God. Wondrous words! Who can fathom their depth of blessed meaning? “My Father and your Father! My God and your God!” What must heaven be, where this is not only known by faith as at present, but unhinderedly enjoyed in all the depth

and extent of what it means? It is thus in the Gospel of John, that the truth begins to dawn upon us, of our union or identity with Christ. W. L.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Pray Without Ceasing.

(1 Thess. v. 17.)

TO enter into the meaning of these words I must myself be in touch with the living God.

Prayer has been compared with the telephone because in using the telephone we speak to one who is invisible as though we could see him and the unseen one answers us. We cannot telephone, however, without a telephone, nor can we get through to our friend unless the instrument is properly connected. This is equally true of prayer—we must be in connection with the living God. Otherwise it is impossible to “pray without ceasing.”

He will indeed hear the cry of a poor guilty sinner, for it is written “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” but it is only after we have called upon Him and we are saved that the connection with Him is made. For then it is our joy to know that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers.

So then, to “pray without ceasing” we must first have “repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” But even this is not all. The connection may be quite properly made and yet there may be interference. In like manner there are things that interrupt the free intercourse of the soul with God. See 1 Cor. v. 35; 1 Pet. iii. 7.

Let us consider some of the things that hinder our prayers. The prophet Isaiah has something to tell us about this in chap. lix. verses 1-3. We learn from him that prayer to God is hindered by the allowance of things that are sinful. Our sins, whether of deed or word, cause our prayers not to be heard. Alas, how often this occurs! What the Lord Jesus said in the sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 23, 24) is good for the

children of God in our days. Prayer is also hindered by an unforgiving spirit or by a hard, overbearing manner. There is perhaps ill-will in your heart towards someone. Perchance you have a long-continued grudge against your neighbour. Oh, do make it up, for whilst your heart is filled with enmity you cannot pray aright. When you have something against your brother, forgive him with your whole heart and tell him so. And when he has something against you, ask his forgiveness.

You know, I daresay, that the fifth supplication in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, because it was given by Him; is sometimes called the dangerous petition. "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Do you pray to be forgiven even as you forgive? Oh, consider this carefully, perhaps it is just here you may find why your prayers are not answered.

In 1 Tim. ii. 8, 9, Paul draws our attention to some obstacles that may hinder our praying. Of the men he says they should lift up "holy hands," "without wrath or doubting." By "wrath" is meant the violent, quick-tempered temperament, and by "doubting" the critical inclination which is found so often in men. With women the obstacles are of another kind. The apostle says that they should "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness, and sobriety, not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array." Things of the deepest importance. If these admonitions are unheeded, prayer will certainly be hindered. For they who think of themselves too much, whether of their own dignity or of their personal appearance, are giving heed to the outward man rather than to the inward man which should be renewed day by day.

There is another point to which I would draw your attention. James says in the fourth chapter of his Epistle, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." In these words he would remind us that all prayer that has self for its object goes unanswered. There are many such selfish prayers. Examine *your* prayers and see whether

there is not very often much selfishness behind them. It may prove that you have yourself prevented the answer being given to your prayers. It is when none of these things intercept our prayers that we are able to "pray without ceasing."

But what is the meaning of it? Must I put my hands together and stay on my knees continually? You know better. The meaning is that we must be of a prayerful disposition at all times, ever in entire dependence upon God.

And what are the things we should pray for? For *everything*! Not only for the great things but also for the little things. We often neglect to pray for little things. With great things we realise our helplessness and are ready to pray to Him Who is so ready to listen. But in small things we are apt to think we can manage for ourselves. Therefore, to our great loss, we omit to pray. If you think it unnecessary to pray about small things you have yet something to learn. You know, I am sure, what I mean, but though you fully understand you must still learn the meaning of those words of Christ—"Without Me ye can do nothing." In theory you quite agree with me. Certainly without our Lord we cannot do anything. But what about the practice? What about the daily life? Apparently you can do a lot without Him! "Pray without ceasing." Will not your daily work succeed better when you do it with your eyes upon the Lord? How very different will be your demeanour towards your superiors, your equals, your inferiors, if you put your whole life under the guidance and protection of the Lord Jesus! How often we have suffered defeat because we have not prayed! It is only when in communion with the Lord that we can conquer.

Don't think you can come to Him too often. Don't think you cannot go to Him with every trifle! He delights to have us go to Him continually.

Think not to "pray without ceasing" is a burden. It is not that we *must* do it but rather that we *may* do it. Oh, what a precious privilege! You may go to

Him about all things great or small, you may pray to Him as to your daily life as well as about the spiritual life. He will be both light and guidance to you. He will help you, He will give you strength and peace. He possesses all you need. You have only to come to Him and ask of Him and He will supply your every need and teach you whatever you may desire to know. Everything is ready. So if you want to be blessed, and if you really desire to glorify the Lord in your life, listen to the exhortation of the apostle Paul and "pray without ceasing."

From the Dutch.

The Rock of our Salvation.—2.

GOD lovingly warns us not to live in a fool's paradise, content to have our portion in this life, heedless of the future; when untold riches are ours for the taking. David said, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." How Solomon realised the vanity of things down here, when he said, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment."

God does require that which is past; and true wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that keep His word. Will not God hold you responsible for accepting or rejecting His offer of mercy? But His word to you is "To this man will I look, even to him that trembleth at My word"; for He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live; and so He lingers over you in His mercy.

There is a time for everything; but what time are you giving to such a momentous question as the things

of eternity? The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. God desires to lead us on, that we may stand perfect and complete in all His will. But we must commence rightly in God's way, by believing on Him Whom He sent to be the Rock of our salvation; and, then, when He appears, we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

It is but an empty profession to be content to follow the religion of your parents, without proving your steps by the word of God; for mere formalism is described by the Lord as being neither hot nor cold; and such a state is so nauseous to Him that He will have nothing to do with it; but, because it is lukewarm, He will spue it out of His mouth. Every man's profession will be tested; and there is a continuance in well-doing, which shows a not-forgetful hearer.

The children of Israel drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. He alone is the Rock of our salvation, and through Him we shall be able to give thanks unto the Father, because His work is so complete, that on account of its excellence, the Father makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We shall then be able to rejoice that God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus, he acknowledged that He was a Teacher come from God; yet he had to learn the necessity of being born again: "For except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The Lord leads him on, and reveals the necessity of Himself being lifted up on the cross, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life: for, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Not only is Christ the Rock of our salvation, but He is the living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; and because He is so, we also who believe are living stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. What can be more pleasing to God than for His children to be showing forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light? "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, Thou hast perfected praise." But unless ye be converted and become as little children, the Lord said, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Now all who believe in Him are builded together as an holy temple in the Lord, to form an habitation of God through the Spirit.

"In Him it is ordained to raise
A temple to the Father's praise,
Composed of all the saints who own
No Saviour but the 'Living Stone.'

View the vast building, see it rise;
The work how great, the plan how wise!
Oh, wondrous fabric, power unknown
That rears it on the 'Living Stone'."

The confession of Christ as the Son of the living God is that rock upon which Christ is building His church, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail; and God has graciously preserved the testimony of the Scriptures for us, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through His name. He is indeed the Rock, which will resist all the storms that can come against it.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament testify of the Lord Jesus; and He, through the Spirit, is the key for unfolding them to our understanding. What a new world is opened to him who is made a child of

God through faith in Christ Jesus ! . He is brought into the family of God to know the secrets of the Father's heart ; and the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in that heart, and is there to take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto him. The believer can then appropriate that wonderful scripture, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" ; for all the promises of God are yea and amen, or filled up and accomplished, in Christ Jesus. Nothing then can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, your Lord.

H. K.

A New Freedom and a New Rule.

" Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

—Galatians v. 1.

" But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avaleth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (N.Tr.). And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy ; and upon the Israel of God."—Galatians vi. 14-16.

WE would like to have commenced our remarks on these scriptures by quoting a few more verses from the fifth chapter of this Galatian epistle, but our readers will allow us to exhort them to read the first ten verses of chapter five when reading these comments.

The true grace of God in which we stand as Christians is expressed towards us in two distinct ways — deliverance from the rule and judgment of sin through the redemption work of Christ ; and secondly, this same grace forms and governs our path through this present world.

The knowledge that deliverance has been wrought for us in the death of the Lord Jesus from our sins and their consequences, is a blessing in itself of incalculable value. Well indeed that we can truthfully say and sing :—

"Death and judgment are behind me
Grace and glory are before."

But the Galatians had no doubt rejoiced in true

Christian liberty, and other blessed consequences of the death and resurrection of Christ for a time after their conversion; yet what a serious condition they were in when the apostle Paul wrote this letter to them! He is compelled to say they had been "removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

What is this perverted gospel that he speaks of so seriously? None of his epistles is characterised by more serious warning and urgent entreaty, yet they had not given up Christianity, or accepted a false Christ, but had been persuaded into a mixture of Judaism and Christianity that so completely falsified the true character and results of the glad tidings of the Christ, that he actually speaks of them as "fallen from grace."

We have met with professing Christians who from the effects of erroneous teaching have used this expression—fallen from grace—as if it were possible for a true believer—once saved—to fall from grace, and be lost for ever—if not again renewed. But this is not what this scripture means, nor is it possible for a true believer to be lost eternally; it is nowhere to be found in scripture, nor is it the condition of things which the apostle is here reasoning about, solemn though his words are. The Galatians had not given up Christianity, nor embraced a false Christ; but had been beguiled into the acceptance of a mixture of Judaism with Christianity, that falsified the true character of the gospel, and brought them under the bondage of law-keeping for justification.

It is this that gives occasion to the heart-stirring exhortations of their father in Christ. They were His workmanship, His own converts; and He recalls the time when they would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him in the depths of their love and devotion. Yet now what a change! They had turned away from him and had been beguiled into the acceptance of a falsified gospel that he characterises as a yoke of bondage; and finally exclaims—"Christ has

become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

What, then, is the true liberty in which we are to stand fast? The freedom wherewith Christ has made every true believer free. Is it a freedom to do our own will with no better rule or guide than what may suit our own ideas? Nay! What says the 27th verse of the third chapter of this epistle? "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ"; and so we are now redeemed from that condition described in the fifth verse of chapter four as being under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons: "And because we are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, Abba Father." This, then, is to be the rule or law of Christian life, and not the Ten Commandments.

This brings us to the second part of our subject, and to the 16th verse of the last chapter of the epistle; "and as many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." What rule? The rule of the new creation, "in Christ Jesus," where neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision.

Perhaps an illustration borrowed from the material world may help us. It is well known and universally accepted that this earth on which we live is governed by the law of gravitation, as we learned amongst our early lessons at school. It is the secret of what was to us the greatest wonderment, when we learnt that the earth on which we live is round, and always spinning around with immense velocity. We remember our wondering questions—why we don't fall off, and how the ships keep on their way and so on; but nevertheless it is the accepted law of this universe. Now another lesson from school—we were told that if it were possible to throw a stone or a ball so high and far, that it would come under the attraction of the moon, the ball would not return, but fly, with increasing velocity, towards the moon. These illustrations may serve our purpose, and we have only to ask further—what is to be the governing principle of our lives as Christians? Not

the law by which we could neither gain life nor righteousness, but Christ. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2).

This well-known scripture is another striking verification of the new freedom and new governing rule of which we write. Why does it not say in the first verse of the chapter—there is no condemnation to them which believe and are justified? Because that blessed fact has already been proved beyond all contention by the former chapters and is affirmed in the fifth. This is followed in the sixth and seventh chapters by additional blessings resultant from the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, culminating in the triumphant note of the first and following verses of the eighth chapter. Here plainly we see that by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ the believer is not only justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, but that he is brought into a new place—in Christ Jesus—and governed by a new law—the law of the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus*.

Another illustration from every-day life may be helpful to some reader before we close. We have heard of a faithful slave who was rewarded for his long and devoted service by adoption into the family of his master, with all the privileges of sitting at the table with the family, and so on. But the good man, after a brief test of his new privileges, begged to be allowed to return to his old manner of life in the kitchen. He felt his difference of colour and was unable to adapt himself to the new conditions—he was not at home in it. Why? For the same reason that forgiveness alone would not make the believer happy in heaven. Our reader may say why surely everyone will be happy there. Truly so. But you must have a nature suited to the place. Truly great is the blessing, and cannot be better described than in the words of the scripture itself. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,

these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father" (Romans viii. 14 and 15, R.V.).

T.R.

“One Thing I Do.”

MORNING and noon, and night,
Through days o'ercast and bright,
My purpose still is one;
I have one end in view,
Only one thing I do,
Until my object's won.

Behind my back I fling,
Like an unvalued thing,
My former self and ways,
And reaching forward far,
I seek the things that are
Beyond time's lagging days.

The day declineth fast,
At noon its hours are past,
Its lustre waneth now;
That other heavenly day,
With its enduring ray,
Shall soon light up my brow.

Oh! may I follow still,
Faith's pilgrimage fulfil,
With steps both sure and fleet;
The longed-for good I see,
Jesus waits there for me,
Haste! Haste! my weary feet.

W.H.D.

Life and its Manifestation. .

TAKE the case of the impotent man (John v.) Jesus said to him, "Rise." Who heard that word? Clearly the man still impotent. But in obeying the word he was impotent no longer—he was healed. What was his condition when he rose? Health. What produced the change? The life-giving word of Jesus. "His word was with power." Even as He said "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Do we ask, what is the "nature" of their life? We find that Christ manifested it. And as to the believer, it is written, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6).

In their origin we learn the respective natures of the man and the beast. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life (Gen. ii. 7). This is not said of any animal. Consequently man's soul is immortal, and he has responsibility toward God which an animal has not. When man dies, his spirit returns to God who gave it (Eccles. xii. 7). All live unto God (Luke xx. 38). Man sinned, and consequently is appointed to die; but he must rise from the dead, and pass into a new condition no more subject to change, whether of eternal torment or blessedness. But this blessed condition supposes a new life communicated to him, depending on divine quickening power, and inseparable from faith. "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17, etc.).

Jesus says, "I AM the resurrection and the life." No such language can be used of human or angelic life. We are on holy ground. Jesus is the Word, Who was God, and Who was in the beginning with God, the Word Who became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Of Him it is written, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." This is God's revelation of Himself. What sovereign grace!

There is One alone Who "hath immortality," Who can "lift up His hand to heaven, and say, I live for

ever" (Deut. xxxii. 40). The source of life is in Himself. He hath it, and can both manifest and communicate it. This life was Christ. He was it. Its sphere is where He is (John xii. 2, 6). Divine and heavenly in its nature, it adapts itself in sovereign grace to lost man, and to all the circumstances in which man is found, even in death and judgment. As the light of *men* it shone (not for fallen angels). It shone in the darkness, though the darkness comprehended it not. Yet it could and did make itself known in its own creative power. "The Son quickeneth whom He will."

The risen Jesus breathed on His disciples the breath of His risen life. After saying "It is finished," and accomplishing redemption, He expressed *in His Person* that "life more abundantly" which He had said His "sheep" should have—a life which carried with it the relationship with the Father in which He was, and which He came to declare (John i. 18, 32-34). There was also the divine guarantee that the Holy Ghost would be given. When He breathed on them He said, "Receive ye [the] Holy Spirit." He thus described that breath of life; and as surely as He "went up," so surely He would send upon His own "the promise of the Father." But the indwelling of the Spirit is a distinct thing from the life. The Spirit is given to those only who have life already, i.e., to believers; for the believer "HATH eternal life" (John iii. 36, v. 24, vi. 47). "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive" (John vii. 39).

This is a plain proof that those "believers" had *not* the Spirit *then*. Christ was the Son eternally with the Father. He makes us "children" as the result of His death and resurrection, bringing forth fruit of His own order, as He said, "If it die it bringeth forth much fruit," else the blessed, perfect "corn of wheat" could only have remained "alone" (John xii. 24). In *incarnation* we see in Jesus what the eternal life is personally—the life "manifested" (John xiv. 6, 1 John i. 2). In *resurrection* the life is set forth in its proper character,

as communicated to us—life “abundantly,” to those for whom Jesus died (John xx. 17, 22). He could here call His disciples His “brethren.” In *ascended glory* we see the life expressed in Jesus in its own sphere—*with the Father*. The Holy Ghost is sent down to take of His things, and communicate them to us, that we might be brought into communion with the Father, and with the Son in what He actually enjoys. The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God, and enables us to address the Father directly, approaching Him with the cry, “Abba,” having in our hearts the sense of this personal relationship with Him.

The same Spirit Who is the power for the walk is “the *Spirit of His Son* (Gal. vi. 5), so that we may know the full blessedness of that cry, even as Jesus used it (Mark xiv. 36). May our hearts enter more into it! “Because *ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba Father.” The full Christian position, as set forth in the “little children” of 1 John ii. 13, 18-27, supposes not only life characterised by the knowledge of the Father, but the “unction” or “anointing”—the indwelling of the Spirit (1 John iii. 24; iv. 13). W.J.L.

* The term “little children” in 1 John ii. 13, 18-27 implies the very youngest believers, whereas the term as used elsewhere in John means all believers (see 1 John ii. 1, 12, 28; iii. 7, 18; iv. 4; v. 21).

A Letter on New Testament Prophecy.

5th April, 1932.

MY Dear Brother,
I am, like yourself, much surprised to hear that — so definitely considers prophecy to have come to an end.

If it applied only to the foretelling of future events I could understand his contention, but the scriptures give no hint of such a purpose in the gift. We have,

and still do, take 1 Cor. xiv. 3 to be a definition of the purpose and scope of the gift of prophecy. "Edification, and exhortation, and comfort." It has often been remarked that there is no intimation of fresh revelations, or even unfolding, but "he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly." And certainly the need of that never ceases.

I do not remember anything in J. N. Darby's or W. Kelly's writings that hints at its withdrawal. 1 Cor. xiii. 3 classes it with other special gifts as of no value without love. Does not that imply its continuance? And when speaking of its power in the assembly it is said to act upon the conscience even of an unbeliever who may be present.

W. Kelly, in the Bible Treasury for March, 1877, says "Prophesying was of all gifts the most precious, and suited to build up, or otherwise act on the saints and even those outside for good," etc. But there is nowhere a hint as far as I have read of the gift ceasing with the apostles or after their day.

That there is a marked absence of ministry that reaches the conscience now-a-days many of us feel. Even at the Annual Conferences and similar times we do not get it, and come away with the conviction that the Holy Spirit has not spoken through His servants in a way that affects both heart and conscience, not only then and there but long after—indeed as long as life shall last; and we may well pray for this in our day even if we do not recognise prophets or prophetic gifts amongst us. I would say Amen if a brother were led to pray for it, and I trust welcome it in action. Memories of former times press on me as I write this.

Affectionately yours in Christ,

T. R.

Revelation i. 3.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written; for the time is at hand.”

WHAT a serious mistake in the face of such words as these for Christians to think that this book or any part of it is unprofitable, and that it may be safely set aside either as too difficult to understand, or, if understood, as having no practical bearing upon the soul! It is remarkable indeed with what special care the Lord has commended it, not only here at the commencement but at the close, where we read, “These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent His angel to show to His servants the things which must shortly come to pass. Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.” It would seem that the Lord’s prescient eye anticipated in such warnings the neglect with which the Apocalypse would be treated by His servants, and that He was thus solemnly guarding them against it by commending the book emphatically to their study and use. It is a little remarkable, by the way, that a somewhat similar admonition occurs in the close of 1 Thessalonians, which was the first of Paul’s epistles, and the one which above all others develops the grand truth of the coming of the Lord. In Rev. i. 3, the Lord takes pains to encourage every possible class of people who might come in contact with the book. Not only the individual who reads is pronounced blessed, but those who hear its words and keep (or observe) what is written therein. And certain I am that the Lord does not fail to encourage His saints who count on His assured faithfulness and blessing. He has never turned aside from using it for good, and especially in times of danger, spite of all contempt or perversion.”

W.K.

The Rest Above.

PATHS of life, my feet are treading
Lead me to the rest above ;
And I see the goal before me,
Shining with eternal love.

Christ is there ! my Saviour's presence,
Bids my throbbing heart rejoice,
Soon to see Him, soon to meet Him,
Stand before Him, hear His voice.

Soon mine ears shall hear the singing
Of that City grand and fair,
Soon I shall in white adore Him,
Loved, revered, and worshipped there.

Yes, my heart, 'twill soon be over ;
All the strife, and all the pain,
All the sin, and all the sorrow,
Never to be known again.

Come, my Lord, yes, come, Lord Jesus !
As I stretch my hands to Thee,
Broadens out the goal before me,
Love and love's eternity.

HEYMAN WREFORD.

Heaven—7.

IT is thus in the Gospel of John that the truth begins to dawn upon us of our union with Christ. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (this from chapter xiv). "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (this from chapter xvii). "My Father and your Father, My God and your God" (this from the passage just quoted in chapter xx.). How natural the transition from this to Acts ix. ! The earlier chapters of Acts follow on after Luke's Gospel. We have seen the end of this already in Stephen's death. A young man is first introduced to us in the record of that event as holding the clothes of those who stoned the martyr. Acts ix. records the conversion of that young man. And to him from the very outset was revealed in a special manner this oneness of the saints with Christ in glory. Stephen, looking up, had seen heaven opened, and the Son of man stading at the right hand of God, ready to receive the spirit of His martyred servant as soon as his murderers had accomplished their work of cruelty and blood. Here Saul, who was one of them, or at least consenting to their deeds, and eager to imitate them, is stopped at mid-day on his way to Damascus by a light shining round about him, brighter than the light of the sun. Struck to the earth by the insufferable blaze, he hears a voice crying to him in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" To his agonising enquiry, "Who art thou, Lord?" he receives for answer, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." Thus it is made known to him with the first entrance of divine light into his soul, that Christ and His saints are one. If he sees not heaven opened, as Stephen did, he sees the Lord; and His glory makes him blind for three days. And to him at that moment is it at first explicitly revealed that the saints whom he has been persecuting are so identified with this Lord in glory, so absolutely one with Him that He calls them Himself ! "Why per-

secutest thou Me? I am Jesus, WHOM thou persecutest!" Of this fact he becomes, from this time, the devoted and indefatigable witness. First, he preaches that Jesus is the Son of God; secondly, he testifies that the church is one with Him. This is what he terms *his* gospel, the dispensation committed to him; and in the face of stripes, and bonds, and imprisonments, and death itself, in almost every horrid form, he goes on to testify both to the Jews and Gentiles, but specially to the latter, this mystery, hid from all ages and generations past, and only now revealed by the Spirit to Christ's holy apostles and prophets. But let us turn at once to the Epistle in which he specially treats of it.

The Epistle opens with the well-known words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Observe, heaven is the place of our blessings; and they are not blessings that we wait for, but have: "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Need we wonder at the ascription of praise with which the mention of those blessings is introduced? Rather let us wonder at our own dull, stupid hearts, which can hear and read of such things with so much unconcern. Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinated to the adoption of children, and accepted in the Beloved; having redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins, made to know the mystery of God's will, and having obtained an inheritance in Christ—an inheritance, the earnest of which we at present possess in being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Such are the blessings here enumerated. But what is this mystery of God's will, which, treating us as His confidants, He has thus made known to us? "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even

in Him." The unity of all things in heaven and in earth in and under one Head, even Christ, this is the glorious mystery, the knowledge of which has been entrusted to the church. But what is the church itself—made thus the vessel of this divine knowledge? First we must learn what Christ's place is; and thus we shall learn what is the hope of God's calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; but, be it remembered, that for this we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him—we need the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened. The apostle speaks of "the exceeding greatness of His (God's) power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him (here it is we learn what the church is) to be the Head over all things to the church, WHICH IS HIS BODY, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all!" Such is the height of glory to which He is raised, Who, for our sakes, went down into the dust of death. It is in the dispensation of the fulness of times that all this glory is to be manifested; and it is then we shall possess with Christ the inheritance which in Him we have obtained. The inheritance here is not heaven; it is our participation with Christ of His inheritance of all things. All things are put under His feet, and we are His body; all things both in heaven and in earth are to be headed-up by Him, and we are the body of Him in Whom this is to be accomplished; He is raised far above every name that is named, whether in this world or in that which is to come; yet we are His body. God has given Him to be the Head over all things, *to the church, which is His body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. So absolutely are we one with Christ that having glanced at our fallen state by nature, the apostle pro-

ceeds to say, "But God Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus are we co-quickened, co-raised, and co-seated with Christ in heavenly places. Such is the church's estate. Why is all this? "That in the ages to come (when Christ possesses His inheritance, and we possess it along with Him), He (God) might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." In the presence of the exceeding riches of His grace, and of the heavenly unity in Christ, into which it has introduced poor sinners, by nature dead in sins and children of wrath, all human distinctions vanish away. Even those once instituted by God Himself between Jews and Gentiles have no existence here. Both are by nature dead in sins; both have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. "That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross," the blessed Saviour endured its unspeakable anguish and horror. He suffered thus, "to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace"; and now, "through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." In Christ Jesus, the chief corner-stone, "the whole building; fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." This is what the church will be when in glory, while even now it is builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Passing over chapter iii., the closing verse of which testifies that the church is to be a vessel of the Father's glory by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, we meet with a passage in chapter iv. which can hardly fail to remind us of a passage already considered—John iii. 13. Christ's ascension on high having been referred to, the Apostle proceeds, "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He

might fill all things." Yes, there is One Who could only ascend by first descending; and He did descend, even into the lower parts of the earth; that having thus vindicated and accomplished the glory of God in the scene of sin, and Satan's most complete triumph, He might, ascending up far above all heavens, fill all things, so that for God's glory, and the creatures' blessing, and the saints' joy and triumph, there is not a point between the dust of death and the throne of the Eternal, "far above all heavens," where Christ is not, or has not been. And it is to this wondrous One that we, according to the doctrine of this epistle, are united. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." The heart finds it difficult to pass by all the precious teaching even of this chapter on this unity of the church with Christ; but, reminded that heaven is our present subject, we must pass on.

Two things in chapter v. demand consideration: first, Christ's love to the church; secondly, the church's relation to Christ. It is incidentally, as it were, amid the exhortations to walk worthy of our wondrous vocation, that this instruction occurs. But it is often thus that the most deep and blessed instruction is imparted. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Beloved, this is what is before us. It was for this Christ gave Himself, and it is for this that the whole process of washing of water by the word takes place. The church, from all eternity the object of Christ's affection as the gift to Him of the Father's love, already redeemed and now being purified, is finally to be by Him presented to Himself, an unblemished, holy, glorious bride, free from spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing—to be the eternal delight of His heart, in the satisfaction of that love in which HE gave Himself for

her, to present her thus to Himself. The apostle having further said, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh and His bones"—adds (and well may he add), "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

But while Christ's love to the church, and its eternal satisfaction when He presents the church to Himself in glory, is surely one of the highest (if not the highest) elements in heaven's joy, there is something taught here as to the relation of the church to Christ, which must not be overlooked: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." The conjugal relationship is so close and intimate that, by Divine ordinance from the beginning, it supersedes every other. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." This ordinance is not repealed in the chapter before us; but it is set up on the new basis of this conjugal relationship between Christ and the Church (see verse 31).

But while the church is thus brought into relation to Christ—the closest and most intimate that human language can express, or the heart of man conceive—what does this involve on the part of the church? The most perfect subjection to her Lord and Bridegroom. And it would be thus even now (it will be so in the glory), that the church would find her own proper, becoming, satisfying delight in yielding absolute, unquestioning, universal submission to the One Who has made her His at such infinite cost to Himself. Thus in all things He has the pre-eminence. I speak not now of His Godhead-glories; but in all the offices He fills, in all the relations He sustains. However we may be by grace associated and even identified with Him, in each one He is necessarily pre-eminent. If we be in

Him a habitation of God, growing up into a holy temple, He is both the foundation and the chief corner-stone. If He be not ashamed to call us brethren, we know Him to be the firstborn among many brethren. If He and we rise from the dead on one common principle, so that we together form a glorious harvest of full, ripe sheaves, we know Who it is that is the consecrated Sheaf of first-fruits—"the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead." If the church be His body, He is the Head of His body, the church. And if, as here, the conjugal tie is used to express the marvellous unity of the church with Christ, and the unbounded affection with which He regards her, her place in this relationship is that of the weaker vessel, subject unto Christ in everything. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church." Blessed Jesus! we shall one day fill our place in this ineffable mystery, even as Thou hast filled, and dost fill, Thine. "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord," we, who through grace can even now call Thee Lord (but contradicting ourselves, alas! by our waywardness and self-will continually)—we shall call Thee Lord, and own Thee such, in every movement of heart, will, desire, affection; subject to Thee, and finding our perfect happiness in being subject to Thee in everything!

W.T.

(To be continued, D.V.)

"Do not reckon yourself lonely: it is a good thing to be alone with God; I have been always alone, but I bless God for it. Not that communion of saints is not happy and a blessing: Paul thanked God and took courage. But it is alone with Him that we get stuff, and there only; where else should we? And in these last days the true lasting work must be from Himself."

J.N.D.

Safety in Flight.

SO many are the dangers that threaten us who are God's children on our way to glory, that continued watchfulness and activity are necessary lest we fall into sin.

Satan is our greatest opponent. But for our encouragement it is written, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James iv. 7). We have also to fight the good fight of faith whilst here in this world, nor will the conflict cease till we reach the end of our journey. In Rev. xxi. 7, we read, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

But victory is not always to be won by resisting or by fighting. In many cases the only way of safety lies in flight. That is why we find the word "flee" so often in the scripture admonitions of the New Testament. And we may be sure that when God says "Flee," the danger is a very real one, and any hesitation in obeying this precept may prove disastrous. There are many proofs in God's word that if we fail to heed His warnings we shall fall. Let us then listen very seriously to God's warning. He bids us FLEE!

First of all let us look up the places where we find this warning voice and read them carefully. In John x. 5, we learn that we should flee from the strange shepherd; in 1 Cor. vi. 18, that we should flee from fornication; in 1 Cor. x. 14, we are called upon to flee from idolatry; in 1 Tim. vi. 11, from the love of money and all its attendant evils; and in 2 Tim. ii. 22, from youthful lusts.

And now let us see what each separate warning teaches us regarding our Christian life.

Many believers have fallen into sin because they thought they were strong enough to resist without fleeing from the evil. They have not turned away their eyes from questionable pictures, or from impure books, and as a result they have been overcome and have fallen into many a sin.

David, walking on the roof of his palace, fell into most terrible sins, ranging from lust, through theft and lying, to murder, and all because he did not turn away his eyes when he was tempted.

Joseph, on the other hand, fled immediately when the temptation was presented and so escaped. Dutch history tells us of the great electoral prince of Brandenburg who at the age of fifteen was sent to the Hague to be educated. He was introduced by false friends to a night-club, an association of young men living in lewdness. One evening when he was directly tempted he fled and left the Hague immediately never to return ! We can conquer by fleeing !

In John x. 4, the Lord Jesus says that His sheep follow Him because they know His voice. But, He continues, they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers. This is not a warning but simply the stating of the positive and negative characteristics of His sheep. The eternal life He gives them is evidenced in two ways—they follow Him, the Good Shepherd, and they flee from a stranger.

Before our Lord came, many strange shepherds had come to Israel, but *His* sheep had not listened to them. Then He Himself came, and at once His own sheep heard and knew His voice and followed Him.

Now when the Lord tells us that the sheep flee from strangers as a matter of course He is but reminding us how we should behave when in the presence of those who bring not the doctrine of Christ. Has it always been like that with us? Have we always fled from the strange shepherd? Perhaps we have all too quickly turned our ears to listen to what he had to say. If we allow ourselves to be guided by the promptings of the Holy Spirit we shall certainly flee from the stranger.

1 Thess. v. 21, is often quoted, where it says, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," in order to have an excuse for following a strange shepherd. They read the word "prove" as though it

were "examine," but this is not so. If we read this scripture in connection with the rest of the chapter we shall see that we are not urged to examine all things in the world, but that we are warned not to extinguish by wrong criticism the working of the Spirit in our meetings, and not to despise prophesying; we are warned, too, not to accept all that is said, but in a disposition pleasing to God, to prove all things and then to hold fast that which is good, taking it with us that we may enjoy its blessing. In other words, instead of desiring to examine as many things as possible, we have to flee from the strange shepherd.

In our days there is great danger in listening to a strange shepherd. Very dangerous doctrines are preached in the most alluring manner. The enemy knows very well that as a beautiful display will draw many spectators, so, beautiful words, fitly spoken, attract listeners. We are often drawn to these strange teachers out of curiosity and perhaps from a desire to appear well informed and broadminded. There are many worldly things of which we ought to know nothing, yet we fear to be thought ignorant. But the word of God should decide for us in all things. And the Lord says to every one of us : If you are My sheep I expect you to flee from the strange shepherd.

There is great danger of listening to the voice of strangers through reading books that are recommended to us. Many books under beautiful titles and claiming to be religious are most dangerous. Yet how often we long to examine secretly what these books have to say, quite forgetful that the Lord has told us to flee.

How many wrong things are broadcast through the wireless ! We acknowledge that many good things are given, too ; but experience has proved that even in Christian families things are listened to from which we should flee. Let us all be watchful lest we should be moved through natural curiosity to desire what is of the world, thus disregarding the warning of God's word to flee.

Not to flee, moreover, is a proof of self-confidence,

and this is bound to bring us into trouble when it is not condemned.

How great is the number of those who have been deceived by the reasoning of their own heart and so have been robbed of the truth !

Even *listening* to the strange shepherd is a proof that there is something wrong in the spiritual life, as the following story may show : One day a traveller in the East arrived at a place where shepherds watered their sheep. On that day there happened to be three shepherds with their respective flocks all mingled together at the waterside drinking. As he looked at them he wondered how the shepherds could possibly know their own flock and separate them again when the sheep had satisfied their thirst. But when the sheep had drunk enough one of the shepherds took his staff and cried "Mehn-ah" (which means follow me), when immediately his own sheep followed him. Then another of the shepherds called out to his sheep, "Mehn-ah," and again his own sheep came after him at once. Now having seen this the traveller asked the third shepherd whether the sheep would follow *him*, the traveller, if he called to them "Mehn-ah." The shepherd shook his head, but said, "You may try if you like." The traveller, to ensure success, first put on the shepherd's cloak, and wrapped his turban round his own head and took the shepherd's staff in his hand. But when thus arrayed he called "Mehn-ah, Mehn-ah" the sheep remained where they were ; a few looked up at him surprised, but not one of them followed him. Do they never follow another shepherd? he then asked. "*Yes, they do,*" was the significant reply, "*but only when they are ill.*"

Only when ill ! How solemn a reminder to us are these words of the oriental shepherd ! If our soul is in health we shall be preserved from following any other than the Good Shepherd.

But someone will say, "I do not think of following a strange shepherd. Far from me be the thought. I

thank God I know the truth and understand His will, and I am determined to abide in the truth.”

Ah, how readily we believe that strength of will is sufficient. We think we can keep ourselves. But when we are put to the test we discover how weak we are, and so we learn by experience that the only way of safety is to heed the voice of the Good Shepherd. He knows us through and through, and He knows what great dangers arise even in our own hearts. And that is why He wants us to flee from every other shepherd and to follow only Him. If we obey His voice we shall be kept from evil.

But we must know *His* voice. We must endeavour to get a stronger hold upon the truth by reading scripture prayerfully and by seeking the aid of good teachers who faithfully expound the word of God either orally or by written ministry. If we truly desire to honour the Lord Jesus we must examine our ways and ask ourselves—What do *I* listen to? What do *I* read? Are the Lord and His word enough for *me*? If we follow the Good Shepherd in simplicity of heart, taking heed to His voice and fleeing from the stranger-shepherd, however attractive he may be, we shall be safe indeed and shall prove the truth of our Saviour's words, “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” We shall be able to go upon our way in sweet and happy communion with our Lord through all the dangerous and difficult paths of life, until at the end of our journeying here we fall asleep in Christ, or, more blessed still, are caught up to meet the Lord in the air! So to pass from earth to heaven without dying! And among that glorious company who with changed bodies join the throng of those raised from among the dead, to gather together unto Jesus, to surround Him, to enter with Him the Father's house and to find our joy in Him through all eternity!

*From the Dutch. A free translation,
slightly extended.*

Seven Papers on Worship.

I.—WHAT IS WORSHIP?

“**I**F thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water” (John iv. 10). These words tell us of the streams of God’s grace which flow down through the Son, by the Spirit into our hearts, and just as a river has its eddies, and the water in those eddies flows back again towards its source, so it is with *worship*. It is the outflow of a heart that has known God as a *Giver*; that has known the Son, through Whom the gift flows down from heaven; that has tasted of the living water of God the Holy Ghost; and having drunk, has found in that Holy Spirit a source of living water within his heart that springs up into everlasting life, and flows back again towards its source in adoration, worship, and praise (John iv. 10, 14, 21). It is the answer of a soul that has found out that it is by God’s will that he is saved and sanctified, that that will has been carried out by God the Son, by a sacrifice that has for ever put away his sins, and given him a perfect conscience; the Holy Ghost testifying to his heart, “Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. x. 7-17). Such an one will cry, “Abba, Father,” which name is revealed to us Christians for the adoring worship of our hearts, and will be one of the true worshippers whom the Father seeks, during this dispensation, to worship *Him* in spirit and in truth (John iv. 23).

But we must go to the Greek Testament, in which language the New Testament was originally written, to see the exact meaning of the word “worship.” Two chief words in the Greek language are generally used to express it, *proskuneo* and *latreuo*. The former word signifies, to do reverence or homage by prostration, to pay divine homage, worship, adore (Matt. ii. 2, 11; iv. 10; John iv. 20, 21; Rev. iv. 10). The latter

is used in Hebrews iv., x., rather in regard to the public worship of the sanctuary, and is translated often by the word "serve," "service" (Heb. ix. 1, 6, 9, 14). In other verses, however, it is rightly translated worship (Heb. x. 2; Phil. iii. 3). The general idea then is, giving praise and homage to God and the Father for what He is in Himself, and for what He is for those who approach Him. Thus we see that it is the very opposite of prayer, which asks something from God, whereas worship gives to God. Prayer may be truly mixed up with it, and be included in the general thought, but I may pray without one thought of worship, beyond the mere acknowledgment of God.

Going to hear an evangelist preach is not worship. The evangelist addresses himself to the world, whereas worship flows back to the Father *from the children's hearts*. The mixture, then, of the two together in one service is mischievous, and calculated to destroy the division which God has made between *the world and the church*. Going to hear any kind of ministry is not worship though it may produce it. Ministry flows down from God to the people, whereas worship is what ascends from the people to God.

Alas, alas, the idea of worship is well-nigh lost in Christendom. The world is invited to worship God, the people of God are mixed up with it, and then in the same meeting oftentimes the gospel is preached to the unconverted. The word of God carefully keeps the two things apart; Satan has mixed the two up together, to the great detriment of God's children, and dishonour to the Lord; for it is written, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination" (Prov. xxi. 27; see also Isa. i. 10-15; Ps. l. 14-21). But let us look at two or three instances the word of God gives us as to what worship is.

When Israel came into the land of Canaan, they were to bring the first-fruits of that land to the place where the Lord had chosen to put His name, and offer it to the Lord (see Deuteronomy xxvi.). The offerer was to go to the priest, and to him profess that he

was come into the land which the Lord had given to them. How beautiful ! It was as an Israelite already come into the land, and professing it, that he offered his basket of firstfruits to the Lord. It is as a Christian already seated in heavenly places in Christ, and confessing it, that we worship the Father (compare Eph. i. 3 ; ii. 4-6, 18). Then he was to say to the Lord, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous ; and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage : and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour and our oppression : and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders, and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which Thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God." Such is worship. The worshipper is himself seated in the heavenlies in Christ and blessed with all spiritual blessings, he gives back to the Father the precious fruits of praise and adoration which spring from a heart filled with Christ.

We have a beautiful picture of worship in Matt. ii. 1-11. The wise men having found the Christ they were seeking, in the manger of Bethlehem, right outside the religious centre of worship at Jerusalem, they fall down and worship Him, presenting their best treasures as gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Lastly, in Rev. iv. 5, we see what worship in heaven will be, and surely that is what we should follow most closely. In Rev. iv. 11, it is the worship of the Creator : "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Not a word of prayer in it. It is the ascrip-

tion of praise for what God is, and for what He has done. In Rev. v. 9, it is worship to the Lamb for redemption: "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Such even now should be the pattern for our worship; but, alas! how few worship-meetings do we find where such worship is expressed! Reader, do you understand what such worship means? Do you find yourself in a meeting where such worship is expressed?

Yet, beloved reader, Christ is made unto all believers sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30); that is, He is the measure of our separation to God. He is set apart for God's use, in His very presence as the high priest Aaron was set apart for the service of the sanctuary; so are we. We are sanctified through His offering; we are separated to God; we have boldness to enter into the holiest through His blood (Heb. x. 10-19). We are seated in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. ii. 6). Let us give then unitedly, and all together, the fruits of this heavenly land, an offering to the Lord. Let us own the Lord Jesus in heaven as the only centre of worship, as we see in Rev. v. 6-10, the redeemed saints in heaven will do, and as we see in Matt. ii. the wise men did when He was a young child on earth. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, and say, "Thou art worthy." Reader, do you know what such worship means? Surely, if you do, you must see that the general worship that goes on around falls far short of it. Is such worship what agrees with heaven? Will such worship do for the holiest? Are the worshippers that fill the churches of Christendom sanctified ones? Yet you must be that for worship in the holiest. The Lord give the beloved reader to consider what is God's due, and to see that worship is a gift which is to be given to God, and therefore must be perfect to be accepted; lest any should get His rebuke, "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye

offer the lame or sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 8, 14).

" 'Abba, Father,' we approach Thee,
 In our Saviour's precious Name;
 We, Thy children, here assembling,
 Now the promised blessing claim:
 From our guilt His blood has washed us,
 'Tis through Him our souls draw nigh;
 And Thy Spirit, too, has taught us,
 'Abba, Father,' thus to cry."

Reprinted.

Love and Chastening.

LET us listen to one of the most tender appeals that ever fell from the lips of the Saviour.

"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent." Is not this what our Lord is doing to-day? In the midst of a scene of indifference He is calling upon His people to be zealous, and in order that they may be, He administers rebuke and brings them under discipline. On every hand this is apparent, so that we know we are in Laodicean times, not only by the general condition around us, but by these particular dealings with those who are the objects of His love.

"As many as I love"—why "as many"? Do not these words again remind us of the aspect before mentioned—not the church seen in its purely Divine character as that which Christ loved, but a vast professing body, bearing His name yet to a large extent faithless and unreal. In the midst of this there are those Christ loves. Are you, my reader, one of these? Am I? Have we learned His love and responded? We

have not, if we are boasting we are "rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." But if ever we had the sense that we were in need of *everything*, and sought Christ in repentance and faith, and made the tremendous discovery that the need we are conscious of He died to meet, that His blood atones for our guilt, and His Person satisfies the heart—if we have come to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge—then, indeed, we can take our place amongst the "as many."

But it may be asked, "If He loves me, why does He rebuke and chasten?" These are some of the very proofs and tokens of His love, and they are by no means the least of them. Are we conscious of such dealings? To be let alone—in cold contempt apart—given up to our indifference and the enjoyment of that which ministers to self-satisfaction—this is not to be loved, but to be left. But if He is taking from you one thing after another, only to make you richer in finding out more of what He can be to you; if He is laying upon you one burden upon another, just to make you lean harder upon Him; if one sorrow after another is allowed to darken your life, only that the brightness of His presence may be known; if rebuke and chastening are your lot, and you are repenting—then, indeed, you may rejoice, for God has put the marks of sonship upon you, and you are loved. Thus you will become conscious of all that that love wants to do for you. You will have discovered that this love is so real, that it cannot leave you to be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But the fruit—the most precious fruit—of those rebukes and of that chastening will be that you will love Him, and, loving Him, nothing will satisfy you but His company. Thus you will be prepared for the blessing which follows:

"Behold, 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."

The supreme blessing Christ offers here is His com-

pany. And what greater or more desirable blessing could there be? What are riches, possessions, gifts, if the presence of the loved one is unknown? At the beginning of the church's history she was richly endowed. Powers and gifts were conferred upon her which are unknown to-day—God bore witness to His word with “signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.” Yet amidst all the blessings of those earlier days, when great grace was upon them all, and miraculous powers were manifested, none was superior to what is promised to the overcomer to-day: “I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me.” For can there be anything greater than Christ Himself? anything sweeter than communion with Him? If He gives Himself to you He gives everything. And this is the promise here to the one that will open to Him.

In the passage before us, Christ is at the door, and draws attention to the fact. What response shall we make? He speaks. He addresses the heart. He seeks a place in your heart and mine. In John xiv. He speaks of the many abodes in the Father's house, and tells His disciples He is going to prepare a place for them. In the meantime, He asks for a place in our hearts, and promises to come and manifest Himself to the one that loves Him. He prepares an abode for us in the Father's house and we are to prepare an abode for Him in our hearts. In the midst of a vast profession He is seeking hearts that appreciate Him and will entertain Him. A time of failure and weakness may prove a gain in this respect, that it leaves the soul at liberty to be the more occupied with Christ. The day of small things may thus prove a day of great things to the soul that knows the secret of His presence. In a scene of failure and apathy the best may still be enjoyed by the devoted heart. * * *

“He made Himself the servant of all, from His Father, down to the poorest and vilest of sinners. Shall we not love Him?”

J.N.D.

Underneath.

LIFE'S silence so seldom is broken;
 Its secrets we may not unfold;
 Some soul-words can never be spoken—
 Some deep things can never be told.
 The surface is seen by so many,
 But the shadowy depths are unknown;
 The outward is open to any—
 The inner is lived all alone.

No less than Thine infinite loving
 My infinite yearning could still,
 And daily Thy power I am proving
 To gladden and quieten and fill.
 Thy tenderness, Lord, and Thy sweetness
 Have made me for ever Thine own,
 And all of Thy wondrous completeness
 Is enough for the heart Thou hast won.

But though I would ever be telling
 How love over longing prevails,
 The praise from my full heart upwelling
 In feebleness falters and fails.
 And oft I have visions of glory,
 But never can show what I see;
 And in telling the wonderful story
 I tell but *so little* of Thee!

Oh, could I show others Thy beauty,
 Thou fairer than fairest of men,
 'Twould be daily a rapturous duty
 To tell it again and again!
 To show how Thy mercy has won me,
 To tell what a Saviour Thou art,
 And prove how Thy love and Thine only,
 Meets the measureless need of my heart!
Gleaned.

Heaven.—8.

INSTEAD of entering here into the detail of the walk suited to the heavenly mysteries unfolded in this Epistle, I would turn back for a moment to an important chapter, purposely omitted till now: it is 1 Cor. ii. The apostle is here addressing those who affected the wisdom of this world, and is reminding them how his speech and preaching had not been with persuasible (see margin) words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. "Howbeit," he says, "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." The apostle had a wisdom to speak among those who were able to bear it—a hidden wisdom—the wisdom of God in a mystery—a mystery which had the rulers of the Jews known, "~~they~~ would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Had they known that He was the Lord of glory, and that the effect of His crucifixion would be to introduce Gentiles as well as Jews into the place in which the Epistle to the Ephesians exhibits the church, they would not have perpetrated the deed. But the Corinthians themselves were not in a state to receive the knowledge of this mystery: they savoured too much of human wisdom, being carnal, and walking as men; and so the apostle could not write to them as spiritual or "perfect," but as unto carnal, even as to babes in Christ. But though he could not open out to them this mystery as he did to the Ephesians, he adverts to it as above; and more than this, he proceeds to speak of the power by which, and the way in which, it is made known — and thus affords important light

on our whole subject, as to the way in which it practically operates on the walk.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Thus far the prophet could go in Old Testament time; and these are the prophet’s words quoted from Isa. lxiv. 4. But the apostle adds—what the prophet could not say—“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” This is that power of apprehending heavenly things which we found to have been so lacking even in the disciples all the way through John’s Gospel. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” The mystery which had been hid from ages and generations was surely among the deep things of God which He only knows, and which His Spirit only can make known. But “now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” And while “revealed them unto us by His Spirit” may specially refer to the apostles—as in Eph. iii., “as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit”—the passage just quoted as to the having received the Spirit of God that we might know the things freely given to us of God, surely includes us all. So, while verse 13 describes what in the full sense could only perhaps be said of persons inspired as the apostles were, from verse 14 to the end is surely of universal application. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth (discerneth) all things, yet he himself is judged (discerned) of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” The spiritual man, taught

of the Holy Ghost, either by direct revelation, as the apostles and prophets, or by the reception of what they have declared and recorded, discerns all things. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: they may be declared to him, or he may have them in the written word, but he receives them not; neither can he know them; they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man, receiving the things of the Spirit of God, discerns all things, while he is himself discerned of no man. Placed in such intimate relation to Christ that nothing is now withheld, but everything revealed; those things which eye never saw, ear never heard, heart of man never conceived, are now revealed unto us by the Spirit of God Who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; there is now an answer to the challenge which in the prophet's mouth met no response; "but we have the mind of Christ." The spiritual man has thus intelligence by the Spirit of God of a whole world of objects invisible to others; and acting from motives which these unseen objects supply, his conduct is inexplicable to others; he himself is discerned of no man. The mind of Christ thus makes him in measure what Christ Himself was perfectly when He was here. By virtue of His Godhead He was, even while on earth, the Son of man *in* heaven. He was thus amid human relations and earthly circumstances manifesting the mind of heaven; acting from motives associated with those things discerned by Him, but hidden from all else—the things of which He said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Now, in his measure—*yea, and according to the measure of his spirituality*—the spiritual man resembles Christ in this. He has not, like Christ, been literally and actually in heaven. But he is one with Christ Who is there, so that he is said to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. And the Holy Ghost, Who unites Him to Christ in glory, is, by virtue of His Godhead, both in heaven and earth, as really as Christ was when He was here upon earth. By virtue of this indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the

spiritual man discerns heavenly objects, and knows them too as things freely given to him of God. He has thus a vast world of objects with which he is conversant—objects of delight, and affection, and desire, and hope, of which the world knows nothing. Is it any wonder that his conduct should be a riddle to the world—that he should seem a stranger here? Would that it were more so with us, beloved? That dwelling amid, meditating upon, and occupied with, those things of heaven, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, our thoughts, tempers, habits, and ways, might be cast in a heavenly mould! Thus, and thus alone, we should be enabled to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

It may seem strange to pass at once from this chapter to a passage which speaks of perfect knowledge as a part of our future happiness. I refer to 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away . . . For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." But there is no real contrariety between this and the statements of chap. ii. True, we are even now one with Christ. True, the Holy Ghost dwells in us; and while He searches all things, yea, the deep things of God, He makes known to us the things freely given unto us of God, so that the spiritual man discerneth all things. True, we have thus the mind of Christ. But who of us is not aware that while all is thus perfect on the part of God, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost, of the written revelation by which He acts, those on whom, and in whom, He acts, are far from perfect indeed? Nay, in the very portion where such great things are said as to the present privileges of the believer, the apostle declares he could not act towards the Corinthians on the ground of those privileges, they walked so carnally. And is carnality no hindrance to us? Who of us but might know the mind of Christ, and all the

blessed objects of faith, hope, and love, better than we do, were we not hindered by it? And as to the communication of the mind of God by those who were inspired for that purpose, while it is true that all is now revealed, was it by one vessel that all this was accomplished? Had not Peter his line of truth, and Paul his? Thus, as the apostle says, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part." How blessed when that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part is done away! We shall not know in part in heaven. Prophesying, whether in part or in full, will not be needed there. No more seeing through a glass darkly then. We shall see face to face. We shall know even as we are known. If to know the Father and Jesus Christ, even as now by faith, be eternal life, what shall our enjoyment be, when all the hindrances which are inseparable from the poor earthen vessels of this knowledge, of this life, shall be done with for ever, and we shall know even as we are known?

W.T.

Seven Papers on Worship.

2.—WHOM DO YOU WORSHIP?

CHRISTIAN, whom do you worship? This may seem a very plain question to you; but I mean it. You answer, perhaps, "I worship God as everybody else does, of course." "Well," I answer, "if you get to the heart of many so-called worshippers, who fill the churches of Christendom, they do not worship at all. God is not in all their thoughts. I know this is not true of the Christian; but it is on this very account that he should be able to answer the question, Whom do I worship?"

Whom did the Lord Jesus worship? Look at Matt. iv. 10: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." See also Matt. xi. 25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because

Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for it seemed good in Thy sight." The Lord Jesus worshipped God—His Father. Whom did Paul worship? See Eph. i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." He worshipped the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew a God and Father Who had blessed him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and the consequence was that an upward stream of adoration and praise went back to that God Who thus let His streams of grace flow down into his heart.

Whom did Peter worship? Listen to 1 Peter i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Peter knew a God and Father Who had begotten him again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and this thought so filled him with praise that the upward stream of worship flowed back to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ Who had thus so blessed him.

And Who is this wonderful Being Whom we are called to worship? Hear what a voice answers: "And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens open, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased" (Mark i. 10, 11). Here the Trinity is revealed: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; three unmistakable Persons, yet, as He said of old, The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). The seraphim veil their faces before Him, and say unceasingly, Holy, Holy, Holy (Isa. vi. 2, 3). The four and twenty elders fall down and worship Him, crying out, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev.

iv. 10, 11). The Son, however, must have equal honour as the Father, "for by Him were all things created" (Col. i. 16). The Holy Ghost must have equal honour, for "by His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens" (Job xxvi. 13). God is the SAVIOUR GOD also, Who hath saved us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." See Titus iii. 4-6. As one of feeble mind (but who had the wisdom of God) once said, when called upon to describe the Trinity:—

"I SEE! I SEE!

WHAT DO I SEE?

THREE IN ONE, AND ONE IN THREE;

AND ALL THE THREE ARE ALL FOR ME—

ALL FOR ME!"

Reader, here is the God you are called upon, not to reason about, but to bow your head to and adore.

But again, What is this God Whom the Lord Jesus (as man), Paul and Peter worshipped and adored, and Whom you and I are likewise called to worship and adore?

"God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." He is a God that cannot have fellowship with evil, so that "if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (See 1 John i. 5, 6). Is that the God you worship? Then take care you do not walk in darkness yourself, nor worship with those with whom you can have no fellowship.

But again, What is this God Whom we are called to worship? "God is love," and "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 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. 8-10). Is this

the God you worship? Do you know a God Who is in Himself love? Who loved you as an ungodly one; Who, when you were yet a sinner, gave Christ to die for you; Who, when you were still an enemy, reconciled you to Himself by His Son's death? Then joy in such a God fully revealed (Rom. v. 6, 11). Worship Him with full confidence yourself, and in company with those who have the like confidence because they know Him.

But again I ask you, fellow-believer, whom do you worship? The Lord, speaking to the poor woman of Samaria, in John iv., said to her (verse 21), "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship *the Father*." The Father's name was presented to this poor sinner, as the object for the adoring worship of her heart when renewed by His grace. It drew her on doubtless; for what is so sweet to an orphan's heart as the Father's name? But still she could not, and did not, understand it then. The hour was coming, however, when she should know it. It was then only known to the Son. Even the disciples, who were the constant companions of Jesus, did not understand the Father's name when revealed to them before the cross (see John xiv. 7, 10), though they had been taught to say it in a *form of prayer* (Matt. vi. 9-13). No, dear reader, Jesus must die and rise again before He can associate any with Himself in this new revealed relationship of children of God; as He said, "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. 24). He must die and rise again, I say, before He can appear to Mary Magdalene, and say, "Go to *My brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto *My Father* and *your Father*; and to *My God*, and *your God*" (John xx. 17). He must also ascend to heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down, before the newly-adopted sons (John xx. 17, 22) could cry, "Abba, Father."

Do you see, dear reader, that the Father's name can only be known and adored by sons? Your natural

Father's name is only known as such to his own family : so it is only those that are "accepted in the Beloved" who really know the Father's name. His name is only held in honour amongst the sons. Jesus said, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. ii. 12). Are you, beloved reader, worshipping in an assembly in which the Lord Jesus is free to lead His people's praises, and is declaring the Father's name in the midst of the assembled brethren?

"Blest be the God and Father
Of Jesus Christ the Lord,
To Whose blest name we gather,
Obedient to Thy word;
For blest with heavenly blessings
It is in Christ we stand,
And filled to overflowing
We loud Thy praise resound.

"As children now adopted
From Adam's ruined race,
By Jesus the Anointed
We praise the Father's grace.
For He it was Who wanted
Children to fill His home,
Full graced in God's Beloved,
Through endless years to come."

"We do not know how deep and wide divine thoughts in connection with man go ; but we know the Father has given us to Christ, and we shall be like Him, and brought, identified with Him, into the Father's house. Those whom the Father has given Him, at all cost He will bring back to Him, according to His own heart and purpose. It is a bright and blessed prospect."

J.N.D.

What is That in Thine Hand?

“WHAT is that in thine hand, Moses?” “Only a rod, Lord, with which I tend my flock.” “Take it and use it in My service.” And Moses did so. And greater things happened in Egypt than had ever been seen before. “What is that in thine hand, David?” “And David . . . chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine . . . And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine . . . so that he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone.” And so Israel’s great enemy was defeated, not by sword or spear, but by what David had in his hand.

“What is that in thine hand, my dear boy?” “Five barley loaves and two fishes.” And although Andrew thought, “What are they among so many?” he brought the boy to Jesus with what he had in his hand. “And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down, and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.” And so a multitude of five thousand men, besides women and children, were fed and satisfied by what this boy had and surrendered.

“Poor widow, what is that in thine hand?” “Only two mites, Lord. It is very little, but it is all I have, and I gladly give it to Thee.” She did so. And her deed has since moved many to devote goods and money to the Lord.

“What is that in thine hand, Mary?” “Only a flask of precious ointment, Lord, that I want to consecrate to Thee.” Mary did it. And the odour not only filled the house where she was, but the Lord Jesus praised her deed before everyone. “She hath wrought a good work on Me.” And the remembrance of her act of love has remained alive unto this day and been a beautiful example to thousands.

“What is that in thine hand, Tabitha?” “Only a needle, Lord.” “Take it and use it in My service.” Tabitha did so, and the poor of Joppa were clothed by her labour of love. And her example still stimulates Christian women to loving work for widows and for the poor.

“What is that in thine hand, reader? Seekest thou great things?” said Jeremiah to Baruch in the name of the Lord. “Seek them not!”

Let us be content with what is simple and not despise the day of small things; and faithful in little, devote ourselves to Him, who will use *all* that He Himself gave us, however small, in His service.

Serve then the Lord with what is in thy hand. And “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”

From the Dutch.

The Significance of the Incarnation and Death of Christ.

(Col. 1. 18-22.)

THE Lord Jesus is spoken of as *first-born* in two distinct ways. He is the *first-born of all creation* because He is its Creator. It is the dignity that belonged to Him (see Psalm lxxxix. 27). He is the *first-born from the dead* for another reason. The Son of His love has become man—become incarnate; He has died and risen again, and because of this He is the first-born from the dead. It is in connection with this that He is the Head of the church. He was not in this relationship upon earth. He was not so as simply taking humanity. Incarnation is an entirely distinct truth from His headship of the church. This involves the further truth of union.

Christ's headship of the church, as His body, is introduced by His being risen from the dead, and by the place given Him in heaven. Many confound union with incarnation. There could have been no union

with Him until He had died and risen, and the Holy Ghost was given to unite us with Him in that risen condition. Then, and not before, we have the body, the assembly. He had a human body as born of the woman, but there is no union with Him on this basis. But the mystical body is from heaven, formed by the Holy Ghost sent down after Christ rose from the dead. For by one Spirit are we (believers) all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

There is another unfolding of His glory, another reason assigned for Christ's indisputable pre-eminence. All the fulness of the Godhead was pleased *in* Him to dwell and *by* Him to reconcile all things unto God. Man was utterly gone, hostile, dead. No moral glory, nor even the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ, could win him back. The incarnation in itself did not and could not avail to reach his desperate case. It was not through Christ's birth or living energy, but through death—not by His doing, blessed as it all was, but by His suffering—by the "blood of His cross." This contradicts the notion that the incarnation was the means of reconciling us.

All creation was ruined in the fall: and here we have the vast plan of God first sketched before us, the reconciliation of *all things*, not of men only but things. It was the pleasure of the Godhead to do this. But there was rebellion, there was war. Peace must be made—it could only be made by the blood of Christ's cross. In a word, reconciliation is not the fruit of the Incarnation, most blessed as it is; for it was altogether powerless, as far as that is concerned. It brings before us grace and truth in Christ,—God Himself in the most precious display of His holy love: it brought God to man, not man to God. But so far gone was man that this could not deliver him: sin cannot be thus got over. Even God Himself, coming down to earth in Christ's person, His unselfish goodness, His unwearied, patient love, not anything found in Christ nor all together, could dispel sin or

righteously recover the sinner. Therefore, it became manifestly a question of reconciliation "through the blood of His cross."

Thus the Lord Jesus has done all that was needed for God and man. All is done, the price is paid, the work is accepted; so that here, too, we may say "all things are ready." The foundation for all is laid; but it is not completely applied. Meanwhile, it is applied to us who believe. So perfectly efficacious is this death of Christ, that God Himself can find no flaw or charge against us. He is going "to present us holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight."

(Adapted).

Baptism for the Dead. What is it?

LET us, first of all, quote the passage where this much-misunderstood Scripture is found.

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised : and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable . . . else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? Why are they then baptised for the dead ? and why stand we in jeopardy every hour ? " (1 Cor. xv. 16-19, 29, 30.)

The above words form a part of Paul's glorious vindication of the truth of the resurrection. With telling force he shows that every blessing of the believer rests upon the marvellous fact of the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. If Christ be not raised their faith was vain—they were yet in their sins. The very salvation of the believer is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ. If He was not risen from the dead they could not know the forgiveness of their sins, for not only is it true that He was "delivered for our offences," but, also, that He was "raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25).

But again, those who had died had lost everything if there was to be no resurrection from the dead. Though they had believed on Christ, and had worshipped Him, and worked for Him, and loved Him dearly all their days, of what value was it if all was over at death? The resurrection of the believer is as necessary to his eternal blessedness as is the resurrection of Christ. Truly if in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most to be pitied. Sorrow and reproach are our portion here, and not seldom, persecution, and affliction, and even loss of life for Christ. If *that* be all, and there is no hope beyond the grave, our lot is indeed most sad. But, thank God, there is hope beyond this life, there is to be a resurrection; and beyond all the present affliction there is an eternal weight of glory! Were it not so they who had been baptised for the dead, that is, to take their place, were under a great delusion, and were following a mere chimera.

Very different was their faith as to this. When they were baptised they clearly apprehended the truth of resurrection or they never would have thus entered upon a life of reproach and stood in "jeopardy every hour." They knew, too, that they were stepping into the places left vacant by those who had fallen asleep in Christ. They were in very truth baptised for the dead. They had seen the life of faith and perhaps had witnessed the triumphant dying of those who had fallen asleep in Christ, and, now that they also believed in Christ, they were desirous of following in the same path that they who had died had done. Hence they were baptised to be witnesses for Christ in place of those who had entered into rest, which is the true meaning of this much-debated phrase.

Very plainly this is a truth which is worthy of being more pressed and more earnestly instilled into the heart and mind of everyone who seeks to be baptised. For baptism is not only an individual thing, which indeed it is, but it has also the character of an entering upon a place of collective witness. So that each person who

puts on Christ in baptism is at the same time helping to fill up the ranks of those who are the avowed disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Baptism "for the dead" is of course what is true of every baptised believer. Some, it may be, more vividly apprehend this side of the truth than others, but whether that is so or not, the truth remains that all who are baptised as Christians are baptised for the dead, that is, to fill up the ranks of those who have died.

In the history of Saul of Tarsus, as related by the Holy Spirit, we may see, in illustration of this principle, a link subsisting between Stephen, the dying martyr, and Saul, who was "consenting to his death." Stephen laid down his life, praying for his persecutors. And declaring that he saw Jesus standing in glory, he prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and with a loud voice, so that all might hear, he added, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and so fell asleep in Christ. Saul at that time was standing very near, for he kept the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, and therefore must have heard what Stephen said. Not long after this striking scene, whilst on his journey to Damascus fully intent on bringing many others to prison and to death, he was himself arrested by the outshining of the glory of God, and by a voice from heaven calling to him by name, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Trembling and astonished, Saul cried, "Who art Thou, Lord?" To which the Lord Jesus replied, "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest."

When Stephen spoke of Jesus, in his hearing, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Saul had not believed, but now that he heard Him for himself, he could no longer doubt; and soon after he was baptised, calling upon the Name of the Lord, thus washing away his sins, the sin of complicity in the death of Stephen being not the least. (See Acts vii. 54-60; viii. 1; xxii. 4-8; xxvi. 9-18.)

Thus do we find in the Scripture history of these two men a vivid example of one falling asleep in Christ, being almost immediately replaced by another and yet more eminent witness for Christ. Surely, as it is the Holy Spirit Who says of those who are baptised that they are baptised for the dead, it behoves the Christian to remember this and to see that he witnesses a good confession of Jesus Christ.

It may be well in conclusion to observe that competent Christian scholars have agreed that the language of this text, in the original, when taken with its context, quite forbids us to think that the words "baptised for* the dead" refer to, or indicate, any special class amongst the baptised. This, therefore, only strengthens what has been said above and shows that the phrase is but a vigorous description of what is true of every person who "believes and is baptised."

* In the Greek the word translated "*for*" is literally "*over*." The idea underlying this phrase seems to be that he who in battle took the place of one who had fallen did so "*over*" the body of him who was slain.

The Soul's Progress

AS PRESENTED IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

1. **My Beloved is mine, and I am His. He feedeth among the lilies.—ch. ii. 16.**
2. **I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine: He feedeth among the lilies.—ch. vi. 3.**
3. **I am my Beloved's, and His desire is towards me.—ch. vii. 10.**

I THINK it will be found that there is something very precious and beautiful in the order in which the truth is set forth in the above passages of scripture.

The *first* I take to represent the joy of the soul when after being tossed about on the dark billows of soul anxiety, it finds itself safely anchored in the harbour of peace. In other words, we, whose only thought of

God was to be afraid of Him, have learned that we were sinners exposed to His judgment, but that He has laid upon His own dear Son the iniquity of us all—and so, believing we are free. There is thus a personal link, a divine relationship formed, between the soul and the Beloved of God, who thus becomes "*My Beloved*" and I get the assurance that "*I am His*" for ever. For those who are of the flock of the Good Shepherd, for which He died, can never perish, and none can ever pluck them out of His hand (John x. 28, 29). Further we have made such progress in the new scene into which the grace of God has brought us, that we have learned something of what is suitable to our Beloved and so we read "*He feedeth among the lilies.*" We know what pleases Him and thus how we can enjoy communion with Him. And oh! wondrous grace! He seeks our company. For in the verses which precede the passage quoted, the Beloved says, "Let Me see thy countenance; let Me hear thy voice."

And it is the blessed realisation of this that leads to the change in the order in the next scripture quoted at the head of this article. For look, in ch. vi. 3 the order is reversed and the prominent thought presented is "*I am my Beloved's,*" which is followed by what was first before: "*My Beloved is mine.*"

Let us consider for a moment what this change implies for us. We have passed on from the assurance of salvation and known relationship, to occupation with the Saviour and rest in His love. We are getting to know and delight in "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii. 19). But how slow we are to take it in! One is reminded of the story of Joseph's brethren, who were treated in such wonderful grace by the one against whom they had sinned. Joseph showed them how God had over-ruled their sin and sent him into Egypt to be their saviour in the time of famine (Gen. xlv. 7). He then gave them the kiss of forgiveness and peace. So they lived for about twenty years—that is during the remainder of the life

of their father—under Joseph's protection and care. But when Jacob their father dies they show that they had not learned Joseph's heart at all, for they thought, Joseph will now hate us and punish us (Gen. l. 15). This failure to appreciate his thoughts towards them caused Joseph to weep. For we know how painful it is to be misunderstood by those we love. But grace abounds, and his answer to them was, "I will nourish you and your little ones."

And must not our Deliverer often be grieved at our slowness to take in the greatness of His love? For

"His is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death."

But let us pass on to the *third* scripture presented for our consideration. "*I am my Beloved's and His desire is towards me.*" Here we have lost sight of self, except for what we are to Him. We are taken up with the greatness of His love; and is not that how He would have it to be? Look at the cleansed Samaritan leper in Luke xvii. 16: "He fell . . . at His feet, giving Him thanks." This is the attitude of soul for each one of us. We belong to Him, we owe everything to Him, and in His wondrous love and grace He seeks our company, our worshipping remembrance of Him. What a delight it is to carry this thought with us to the Lord's Table! We belong to Him, redeemed by His precious blood, and His desire is towards us; surely our answer must be, "The desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee" (Is.xxvi. 8).

But this attitude of soul is not for *an occasion* only such as our presence at the Lord's Table, but is to be the privileged condition of our lives. A good many of us can remember the time when, having come to Christ to meet the needs of a guilty conscience, we have afterwards found in Him the satisfying object for the

heart. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, expresses this so beautifully when he writes (Gal. ii. 20), "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." What a life! and this is the Christian life, not an apostolic one only. A life based on the fact that I belong to One Who loves me and to Whom I owe everything. What a joy it is to please those we love! And what a character it gives to service, to and for Christ, if it is the result of knowing that His desire is towards me!

"Oh, may no earthborn cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

J.M.W.

To have Christ, practically to work with Him and after Him, to have communion with the Father and the Son, to walk in unfeigned obedience and lowliness, to live in realised dependence on Christ and have His secret with us, and realise the Father's love, to have our affections set on things above, to walk in patience and yet confidence through this world—this is what we have to seek; and if we realise it we shall be a testimony, whether individually or collectively, but only in possessing the things themselves, and as they form us through grace, so that we are one.

Wherever Christians, so far as I have seen, set up to be a testimony, they get full of themselves, and lose the sense that they are so, and fancy it is having much of *Christ*. A shining face never sees itself. The true heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone. The right thought is not to think of self at all, save as we have to judge it. You cannot think of being a testimony save of *your* being so, and that is thinking of self,

Letters of J.N.D., vol. iii. p. 145.

I Remember Thee.

"Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals."—Jer. ii. 2.

MY Lord, dost Thou indeed remember me,
Just *me*, the least and last?
With all the names of Thy redeemed,
And all Thy angels, has it seemed
As though my name might perhaps be overpassed;
Yet here I find Thy word of tenderest grace,
True for this moment, perfect for my case,—
"Thus saith Jehovah, I remember thee!"

My Lord, dost Thou remember *this* of me,
The kindness of *my* youth?—
The tremulous gleam of early days,
The first faint thrills of love and praise,
Vibrating fitfully? Not much, in truth,
Can I bring back at memory's wondering call;
Yet Thou, my faithful Lord, rememberest all,—
"Thus saith Jehovah, I remember thee!"

My Lord, dost Thou remember *this* of me,
My love, so poor, so cold?
Oh, if I had but loved Thee more!
Yet Thou hast pardoned. Let me pour
My life's best wine for Thee, my heart's best gold
(Worthless, yet all I have), for very shame
That Thou should'st tell me, calling me by name,—
"Thus saith Jehovah, I remember thee!"

My Lord, art Thou indeed remembering me?
Then let me not forget!
Oh, be Thy kindness all the way,
Thy everlasting love to-day,
In sweet perpetual remembrance set
Before my view, to fill my marvelling gaze,
And stir my love, and lift my life to praise,
Because Thou sayest, "I remember thee!"

F. R. H.

The Conversion of Martin Boos.

A HANDSOME youth and a brilliant student, he had carried off the first honours at the University of Dillingen. Subsequently he took priest's orders, and was made a canon at Grünenbach, settling down into the lot of a quiet Roman Catholic priest, with but little spiritual insight beyond the dogmas of his creed, yet yearning for that more satisfying experience of union with Christ, of which he had heard in the lectures of one of the professors.

The endeavour to elevate the soul by bringing the body into subjection was tried, with the usual result of failure. "I gave myself," he says, "an immense deal of trouble to lead a truly pious life; for instance, I lay for years together, even in the winter season, upon the cold ground, though my bed stood near me. I scourged myself until the blood came; I clothed my body with a hair-shirt; I hungered and gave my bread to the poor; I spent every leisure moment in the precincts of the church; I confessed and communicated almost every week." In the eyes of the people he passed for a saint, but the saint was miserable and cried out, "Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" The answer to this question became the turning-point in his life. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty," and by means as comparatively insignificant as David's stone and sling the victory which no weapons of his own could gain was to be won for him through another. We give the simple narration in his own words.

"In the year 1778 or 1779, on visiting a very humble and pious soul on her sick-bed, I said to her, 'You may certainly die very peacefully and happily.' 'Why so?' enquired she. 'Because you have lived so piously and holily,' replied I. The sick woman looked gravely at me, and said in a tone of astonishment, 'What a miserable comforter you are! What would have be-

come of me? How should I have been able to stand before the judgment-seat of God, where we must give account of every idle word? I should certainly be lost, if I built happiness and heaven on myself, and by my own merits and piety. Who is clean amongst the unclean? No; if Christ had not died for me, if He had not atoned for me and paid my ransom, I should, with all my good works and pious life, have eternally perished. He is my Light, my Salvation, and my Felicity. Trusting in Jesus, my Saviour, I can die comfortably."

Now the light of the gospel fell in upon the soul of Boos; the dying woman had answered once and for ever his miserable cry. After this memorable transition he began in earnest to preach Christ. "Flames of fire," says his biographer, "darted from his lips, and the hearts of the people burned like straw. He declared their sins, and when they cried, 'What shall we do?' he gave them no answer; 'Repent?'—no answer; 'good works?'—no answer; 'confess?'—no answer; until the question was driven deep into their souls. And then they knew how vain was any answer but one—CHRIST."

From this time his preaching gave evidence of what he had himself learnt in the school of experience. "*They are dearer to God that seek something from Him than they that seek to bring something to Him,*" were his memorable words.

Wherever men can truly say, "We speak that we do know," the hearts of hearers will be gained. As in the days of Christ's ministry multitudes gathered to hear Him, so where Christ is proclaimed by His faithful servants the good news of the gospel spreads and crowds are attracted by its gracious message. The sinner finds his Saviour, and to many who have long sought rest for their souls the oil of joy is given in exchange for mourning.

A former friend of Boos, named Fenneberg, who had been, like himself, a professor at Dillingen, and

was then a curate, wrote to him out of the fullness of his heart, saying that he was like Zacchæus, waiting in the tree till Christ should pass by. "Then wait quietly in the tree," replied Boos. "Christ will soon enter thy house and thy heart."

Selected.

How to Promote a more Spiritual State.

(Notes of an Address—revised.)

(Scriptures read: Colossians i. 9-22; ii. 2-12; iii. 13-16.)

IT may surely be regarded as a good sign that there is a desire amongst a large number of Christians to-day for a deeper, more definite spiritual life. We hear of frequent "Conventions" and similar meetings called for the purpose, and trust that it indicates a feeling that for the most part there is a feebleness of testimony to the grace and power of the gospel, and but little answer to the truth in its call for separation from the world and its ways. The old well-known hymn, "Oh, for a closer walk with God," expresses the desire of many a Christian heart, burdened with the sense of the low spiritual tone of much that is called Christianity.

We have read these portions of the Epistle to the Colossians in the hope of finding from the Scripture itself an answer to these godly desires, and by the Lord's grace something to awaken them where they do not exist. The prayer of the apostle in the ninth verse expresses it perfectly "that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His (God's) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

It is well known to believers instructed in the word, that in the Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to the Ephesians, the true character of the Christian's

heavenly calling and hope is especially given; and evidently this one to the Colossians was written with a view to point out the danger the assembly (at Colosse) was in of being drawn away from the truth by philosophy and other snares of this world's wisdom and ways.

But this being so we cannot but note a marked feature of this Epistle, that very little is said of the Holy Spirit Himself. Only once (in the eighth verse of the first chapter) is the Spirit named, and a very sweet reference it is to the Colossian believer's "love in the Spirit"; a happy proof of their spiritual state surely.

On the other hand, in no one of the Epistles is there so much said of the Lord Jesus Himself in all the varied glories of His person and work. Let me point out a few only of these. In the 15th verse of chapter one, we are given the general place and title of the Lord Jesus in the counsels of God as man. He takes it as "the Son," and He takes it as having created all, and also in sovereign grace as the firstborn from the dead. In the 16th verse we have what Christ did, and in the 17th what He is, and what He became, and then in the 18th what also He is as "Head of the church, His body, the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Indeed "all things were created by Him and for Him, and are maintained by Him."

And here we, believers, are brought in—sinners of the Gentiles though we were, alienated and enemies, but now reconciled to God, and included in the great scheme of reconciliation of all things unto Himself; and also included in that wonderful "mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations," but now is made known, even "the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is, in short, the church.

But let us not think that this precious portion will make us indifferent as to the Holy Spirit's presence and power. On the contrary we know it as the most

indispensable of all the gifts; the power for the enjoyment of all that God the Father has ordained for us is in the Holy Spirit. The Lord Himself said when here, "He shall take of Mine and show it unto you." It is therefore clear that the answer to the desire of the believer who is anxious for a deeper enjoyment of the portion that belongs to us all, is not so much more of the Spirit; but more of Christ by the Spirit's power dwelling with us, in us, and upon us (John xiv. 16, 17, and 26).

Now turning again to our Epistle and passing over much of the deepest interest, we reach the climax, if I may venture to call it so, in the 11th verse of the third chapter; "And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ all and in all," or, as given in the new translation, "Christ everything and in all."

And now a few words as to the exhortations that follow. In the thirteenth verse if we are seeking a pattern as to forgiveness and forbearance with one another, the pattern is "*even as Christ has forgiven us.*" Then in the 15th verse we should read according to the new translation,—"*Let the peace of Christ* preside in your hearts, to which ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful." And in the 16th verse we read—"Let the *word of Christ* dwell in you richly in all wisdom," etc.; while the section closes with the grand exhortation—"And everything whatsoever ye may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him" (17th verse, N.Tr.).

Now lest it might be thought that this more spiritual life would unfit the Christian for the responsibilities proper to our life on the earth, is it not remarkable that in no other of the Epistles is there found such detailed exhortations as to the proper discharge of our varied relationships and responsibilities? Hus-

bands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, are all referred to: "and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye shall serve the Lord Christ."

What an incentive we find in the exhortations to live that life which is expressed in the words—"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (chap. ii., verse 6), and is not this the true secret of the life of the apostle Paul, as given to us in his letter to the Philippians: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? How ardently he looks forward to the day of Christ when every motive will be revealed, and that the saints may be "filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

The Lord grant that we and all His people may know the answer to that prayer. "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19).

"Lord, Thou hast drawn us after Thee,
Now let us run and never tire,
Thy presence shall our comfort be,
Thyself our hope, our sole desire,
Our present Saviour, while nor fear,
Nor sin can come if Thou are near.

What in Thy love possess we not?
Our star by night, our sun by day,
Our spring of life when parched with drought,
Our wine to cheer, our bread to stay,
Our strength, our shield, our safe abode,
Our robe before the throne of God." T.R.

"Question the eternal Sonship of Christ—question His Deity—question His unspotted humanity, and you have opened the floodgate for a desolating tide of deadly error to rush in." C.H.M.

Heaven.—9.

IT is in 1 Corinthians xv. we get the fullest instruction as to the change these vessels shall undergo at Christ's coming; a change which will equally be accomplished whether He finds us asleep in the grave, or alive and remaining to His coming. One passage would probably be clearer to most minds if the word *heavenly* were substituted for *celestial*. It is the same word as is rendered *heavenly* in other parts of this same chapter. "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also heavenly (*epourania*) bodies, and bodies earthly (*epigeia*), but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another." This is the most important, as further on in the chapter these two are placed in contrast. "It (the body of the sleeping saint) is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." First, we are told there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, diverse from each in glory. Then this blessed contrast between the body as it is sown in the grave, and the body as it rises from the grave. Corruptible, dishonoured, weak, natural, are the qualities of the one; incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, are the properties of the other. The last point is further dwelt upon—there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Then we find that the first Adam was the type of the one; that the last Adam is the type of the other. "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Then we are told that the spiritual was not first, but the natural; and afterwards the spiritual. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." This is most explicit; and equally so what follows: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the

heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Here we get back to the distinction with which the apostle commences this part of his reasoning. There are heavenly bodies, and bodies which are earthy; and each has its glory. Adam's body, doubtless, had a glory peculiar to it before he fell. We know that that of the last Adam has a glory which immeasurably excels it. Well, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Yes, "this corruptible must put on incorruption; this mortal must put on immortality." Death must yet be swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In connection with this triumph over death, there are two passages it may be well to notice. The first is 2 Cor. iv. and v. The apostle speaks of himself as "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," as "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake"; and then, quoting Psalm cxvi., describes the faith, kindred to that of the one whose utterance is there recorded, which supported him under this daily death — "Knowing that He that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." For this cause he fainted not. The outward man might perish — the inward man was renewed day by day. The light affliction, which was but for a moment, he knew to be working for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. What a thought—"a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"!

The things which are seen are unworthy of a look, or a thought, when compared with this. The things which are seen are but temporal; the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know," says the apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In this present tabernacle we may and do groan, being burdened. Even to be absent from the body, and present with the

Lord, is better than to be at home in the body, and absent from the Lord; but it is not to be absent from the body that the apostle sighs. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." "Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven." How blessed these pantings of the renewed heart after its heavenly abode! "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And how we find here that this absorbing occupation of the heart with its own proper hopes and objects produces a walk which others cannot comprehend! It caused the apostle to be accounted "beside himself." Was he anxious to rebut the charge? Far from it. He was anxious to commend himself to the consciences of his brethren at Corinth, who ought to have understood and appreciated his course. "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us." It was not merely that gratitude to Christ, for delivering him from hell, had this effect on the apostle. No; there was the intelligent apprehension of the needs-be for Christ's death, and the object of it, and to that object Paul himself had become entirely devoted. He judged that if one died for all, all were dead; and that He Who, when all were dead, died for all, did so, not that they who lived by His death should occupy themselves with anything in this widespread scene of death here below, but that they might live unto Him Who died for them and rose again. Henceforth, no man was to be known after the flesh. Even Christ is not now known after the flesh, but in resurrection and heavenly glory. If any be in Christ, there is a new creation. To be in Christ is to be introduced into a new creation, of which He, risen and glorified, is the Head. The whole natural scene has with such a one passed away, and all things are become new; and all things are of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. Do we, my brethren, thus realise the power of our heavenly

position, as identified with Christ? Has earth, with everything belonging to it, become, in our estimation, but one widespread scene of death, from which the death and resurrection of Christ have freed us, introducing us into that new creation, of which He is the Head, and which, as to us, will be completed when we are clothed upon with our house which is from heaven?

The other passage referred to is in Romans viii., there we read—"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Here is the same prospect as we find expressed in other words in the passages already considered. But, further, having glanced at our present blessedness as God's children, the apostle adds — "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And such was the effect of this prospect on the soul of the apostle, that it made all earthly affliction light. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Here is a glory anticipated by faith, a glory to be revealed in us. From this the apostle passes on to consider the state of the whole creation, which he represents as waiting for the manifestation of this glory. Made subject to vanity, and groaning and travailing together in pain until now, it is yet in hope of being delivered from its present bondage into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

We find in 1 Cor. xv., that as we have borne the image of the earthy, i.e., Adam, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, i.e., Christ. We shall have heavenly bodies. In 2 Cor. v. the apostle exults in the assured anticipation of this "house from heaven," the reception of which by the saints will be, as to them, the

completion of the new creation, into which a man is introduced by being in Christ Jesus. In the passage before us there are the same anticipations : the quickening of our mortal bodies, the glory that shall be revealed in us, the redemption of our body. But here we find that not only shall we thus reach the utmost perfection of our being, personally conformed as we shall be to the second great Head of the human family, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, glorified together with Him; not only so, the whole creation shall feel the effects of this mighty event — shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty which this glory of the children of God shall diffuse throughout creation. Thus are the heavenly hopes of the saints linked with the brightest prospects for creation itself. Now, as having the first-fruits of the Spirit, and being thus linked to Christ and to God, we are, in our yearnings after incorruptibility, made the intelligent vehicles for the expression of the unintelligent, but not less real, groanings of creation at large. And when creation, reposing peacefully under the sceptre of its now rejected Lord, is vocal throughout with praise, shall we have no connection with it then? Oh, yes, it is for the manifestation of the sons of God it waits; and it is in the liberty of the glory of the children of God it will then rejoice. True, that it will be under the sceptre of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. But are we not His co-heirs? heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ? Yes, if so be we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together.

W.T.

What a wonderful hope is before us Christians—nothing short of the blessed Lord *Himself*! In Eph. iv. it is “one hope”; in Col. i. 27, “Christ the hope of glory.” In Heb. x. 37, the qualifying word for “little” is repeated, giving the force of “ever so little”; and it is reinforced by what follows : “*will* come and *will* not tarry.” Very remarkable words, are they not? May we be found watching according to the close of Mark xiii. !

W.J.L.

Seven Papers on Worship.

3.—HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?

MANY have no more idea of worship than the poor woman had whom Jesus met at the well of Samaria (John iv.) And yet it was to this poor sinner that the Lord made known, first of all, the principles of Christian worship. She could boast of the difference between the Samaritan religion and that of the Jews. She could not understand how a Jew could talk or hold fellowship with a woman of Samaria (ver. 9). She could boast of her people's descent from their forefather Jacob (ver. 12), and could talk fast enough as to whether it was right to worship in the mountain of Samaria or at Jerusalem (ver. 20). But alas ! with all that religion, she was living with a man that was not her husband (ver. 17, 18).

Professing Christians, do you know anything more of Christian worship than that poor woman did? If I were to come and ask you, "How do you worship?" would you not answer me, "Well, of course, I go to church on Sunday, and I was baptised and confirmed, and I go to the sacrament regularly, and I am not like some people who are always going with dissenters?" Or, perhaps someone else says, "I glory in being a Wesleyan, and you know Wesley was a good man, and our church is getting on wonderfully in the world. Others may think it right to go with the Baptists ; but as for myself, my forefathers followed my church, and I mean to stay where I am." Professing Christian, I mean no offence in thus speaking plainly ; these expressions are by no means uncommon around. I want really by them to arouse your conscience as to whether your religion is not merely a cloak to cover your sins, just as it was with the Samaritan woman.

But if you tell me, "I am a Christian, this time—years I was born again ; I then rested on the blood of Christ, and I know my sins are forgiven," then, thank God, you can worship God, and oftentimes your heart

has individually praised your God and Father. Still, my fellow-believer, I would ask you, how do you worship in the assembly? Perhaps you can answer, "Oh, it does not matter where I worship! wherever I find most Christians I like to go, and wherever there is a godly minister I like to hear him. The Lord said (did He not?) that the hour was coming when it did not matter where one worshipped, and I like to go where I can get most good." Yes, dear fellow-believer, He did say, "*The hour cometh*, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John iv. 21). This hour was in contrast to what the system of worship was in the day when the Lord Jesus lived. It was then right to worship at Jerusalem; for Jehovah had set His name there, and salvation was of the Jews (ver. 22). But the hour was coming, after the Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension, when a world-wide worship should prevail, and then it would not matter in what place in the world the Christian worshipped.

But though this is quite true, it greatly matters *how* the Christian worships; for the hour was coming when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (John iv. 23). After the rejection of Messiah by the Jews, and His ascension to the right hand of God, the system of worship was entirely changed. The Father is now seeking worshippers out of the wide, wide world. They are formed by being born again, by faith in the Lord Jesus, and by the reception of the Holy Ghost. God has this gift in store for them. It flows down to them through His dead and risen Son; they receive the Holy Ghost and drink, and immediately He becomes a source of living water within them, springing up into everlasting life (John iv. 10, 14). These are the true worshippers, and they are called to worship in spirit and in truth; for God is a Spirit, and they must worship according to His mind. Thus we see, dear fellow-believer, that whereas, under Judaism, *Jehovah* called out a nation to worship Him, and godly and ungodly

all worshipped together in an earthly sanctuary after a manner that suited the flesh, *the Father* now is seeking true worshippers out of the world. Thus, first of all, only the saved compose the worshippers: secondly, they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Having received the Spirit of God, they were to find in Him their sufficient power for worship; and as He flowed down freely into them as a gift of God, so now He was to be the source of life within them to send back to the throne of God the streams of a pure worship, thanksgiving, and praise, acceptable to God through Christ. The people of God were to find in Him their sufficiency for worship, both individually and corporately. God the Holy Ghost dwelt in the body of each individual believer (1 Cor. vi. 19), as also in the assembly (1 Cor. iii. 16), and that was sufficient. But the worship was also to be in truth; that is, according to the word of God. Judaism and its worship were regulated by the law, Christian worship must be regulated by the New Testament Scriptures. The former system of worship has passed away, the other has taken its place (Heb. vii. 12, 18, 19: viii. 13). Thus in Christianity, God, and Him revealed as Father, is the object of worship (John iv. 23, 24). The Christ the centre of worship (ver. 25); the Holy Ghost the power of worship, and the New Testament Scriptures the rule (ver. 10, 14, 23); and real Christians alone the worshippers (ver. 23).

But in 1 Cor. xiv. we have an account of the manner in which the worship meetings of the early Christians were conducted.

First of all we see, in 1 Cor. xi. 17-26, that when the Christians came together in the assembly (as it is called, ver. 19), when they came together in one place, *it was to eat the Lord's Supper* (ver. 20). The apostle, however, would not allow it was the Lord's Supper, owing to the manner in which they were meeting. He corrects them accordingly (ver. 23). The assembly, when met thus, gathered on the basis of the one body

of Christ (1 Cor. xii.), of which breaking together the one bread was the expression, as well as of the communion of saints with the death of Christ (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). The Lord's table thus becomes the central meeting of Christianity. Every first day of the week the saints met to break bread (Acts xx. 7), as expressing their communion together and membership of one body. The Lord's table being thus the expression of the one body of Christ gathered together, it was the place where the action of that body was seen. And as the Holy Ghost had formed the church and filled it, so He manifested His action in the members when the assembly was gathered together. This is what we see in 1 Cor. xii. The character of that Spirit was love, and this was what was to bind the Christians together (1 Cor. xiii.). Now these Corinthians were taking advantage of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, who had endued many with the miraculous gift of tongues, by childish displaying these gifts of unknown tongues in the assembly when gathered together (1 Cor. xiv. 23). The apostle shows the great advantage of the gift of prophecy over the gift of tongues (ver. 1-13). The one was for edification, the other could not be understood. He mentions four things that might be manifested in such a worship meeting—(ver. 14) prayer, (ver. 15) singing, (ver. 16) blessing or worship, (ver. 19) speaking. But the great point was that their prayers, and singing, and worship, and speaking should be with the *spirit*, and with the *understanding* also. But where was the use of Paul's thus addressing them, if their usual way of meeting was by having one man to do the whole service? Ver. 23 plainly shows the perfect liberty that reigned, which was turned into license. Everybody was speaking with tongues, so that an unbeliever coming in would think they were all mad. After exhorting them not all to speak at once, for the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets (ver. 26 and 32), how does he correct them? Does he appoint one man to conduct the whole service? No; but he says, "*God is not the author of confusion, but of peace*" (ver. 33). That was

the corrective power for them, to remember that God the Holy Ghost was in the midst of the assembly (1 Cor. iii. 16; xii. 4-13). Now here we find the way how to worship God in the assembly; viz., to *own the presence of God as there*. This was truly united worship in spirit (1 John iv. 23, 24).

Dear brother in the Lord, are you in an assembly which worships God after this manner? This is the manner for an assembly to worship God in spirit and in truth.

But let us go over again what has been written :

1st. We have seen that every believer composing the assembly should be a true worshipper.

2nd. The *Father's name* is known and adored by these worshippers; and the Christ, the Anointed One, owned as the true centre.

3rd. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the body of each believer is his power of worship.

4th. The presence of the Holy Ghost is as sufficient for the assembly as for the individual believer. Christ is acknowledged, rules and guides, in an assembly rightly gathered. For further rules as to Christian worship, see Heb. ix.; x. 1-30.

“O Lord, we know it matters not
How sweet the song may be;
No heart but of the Spirit taught
Makes melody to Thee.

Then teach Thy gathered saints, O Lord,
To worship in Thy fear;
And let Thy grace mould every word
That meets Thy holy ear.

Thy precious Name is all we show,
Our only passport, Lord;
And full assurance now we know,
Confiding in Thy word.”

“The Spirit Speaketh Expressly.”

(1 Timothy iv.)

IN one of his *earliest* epistles the beloved apostle Paul speaks of “the mystery of iniquity” that was even then at work (2 Thess. ii. 7), opposing what was set up by God, and seeking especially to annul their greatest hope, the coming of the Lord. It was not in the counsels of God to allow this, however, for there was then, as there is mercifully to-day, One Who hinders the culmination of evil until He (the Holy Spirit) be taken out of the way.

In contrast to the foregoing, Paul speaks in one of his *latest* letters of “the mystery of the faith”; that is all that has come out in the gospel of Christ; then there is “the mystery of Christ,” which, as one has said, is “the distinctive truth of Christianity.” The word “mystery” as used here must not be understood as something that is unrevealed, or something secret revealed only to a choice few, who alone have the power to interpret it, as is claimed by the priests of the Romish Church, or by the clergy of the various establishments. No, indeed! it is not a hidden thing, but a mystery revealed (See Ephesians iii. 1-11), blessed be God! Revealed to all saints by the word and Spirit of God (Col. i. 24-29). It is written that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). And as Paul has given us the completion of the word of God, in the revelation of this mystery, the mind of God so far as the blessing of man and the earth is divinely disclosed.

Then this truth, “the mystery of the faith” had to be held in a pure conscience (1 Tim. iii. 9), a thing hardly possible to those who claim God’s prerogative, usurping the place of the Spirit of God.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the

latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons); speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron," etc. (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2).

Who speaks thus, beloved? He is speaking in an express manner, sounding out a warning in these last days against the seducers of our souls, giving us to know just what we are to expect to mark the latter days in which we live. John, in his first Epistle, also writes to warn us of the antichrist who should come. "Even now," said he, "are there many antichrists; whereby we knew that it is the last time." And again, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you" (1 John ii. 26); leaving us without excuse. To which Paul adds his further testimony, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. iii. 13).

That we are living in these "latter times" no one taught of the Spirit of God can doubt. "Perilous times" are upon us, and a premonition of the impending crisis is filling the hearts of the masses with fear. Every symptom of the predicted apostacy is in evidence. Atheism and infidelity are rampant, while practically every one of those things presented by the apostle in his last letter to Timothy abound at the present time. Many are departing from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Many souls have been snared by the damning influence of "modernism." Many have been lulled into a death-sleep by the soothing opiates of what is commonly called "Christian Science" (but that is a misnomer: it should be called "Christless Science"), which denies every foundation truth of the word of God. How many have had their conscience seared by the maddening influence of "Spiritism"? not to mention other "isms" of like character. All these assume the name of "Christianity" but deny the power of it, and we are solemnly warned "from such to turn away."

The question proposed by our blessed Saviour to His

disciples, as recorded in John vi. 67, N.Tr., should now become a test question for our souls in these evil days, "Will ye also go away?" Can we not truthfully say, as Peter did, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and known that Thou art the Holy One of God." There was not a shadow of a doubt in the apostle's heart at that time, even if he did fail so miserably later on. But this should be a lesson to us also that we cannot trust our own hearts, but must lean wholly on our Lord Jesus Christ for strength to meet every attack of the enemy.

All that is abroad in the world to-day, the evil and confusion abounding, should have but one meaning, one significance, to the children of God: "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." This blessed hope should fill the hearts of His own with joy, and instead of being shaken, as many are, our hearts should be more deeply established (James v. 8), for soon our faith shall be consummated in sight. Yes, beloved, let us wake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed (Rom. xiii. 11, 12). Although there is, alas, much dissension among the dear people of God—those who should be manifesting "the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace," yet all seem to be agreed as to this great truth, the imminence of the coming of the Lord. The "day star" which Peter wrote of as arising in our hearts, as the herald of the approaching dawn, is in evidence on our spiritual horizon: this blessed hope is arising in anticipation in the hearts of God's dear people, and soon we shall enjoy the rapture of seeing our blessed Lord face to face.

Let us heed then His blessed admonition, voiced from the glory, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. v. 23, 24).

R.W.K. (U.S.A.)

Too Big for God to Use!

“**T**OO big for God to use me” !
 This is the reason why
 Poor longing souls are famished,
 Who come, and go, and die !
 O God my Saviour help me
 In deep humility
 To make a full surrender,
 Henceforth to own but Thee.

“Too big for God to use me” !
 But if I am possessed
 With unction through His Spirit,
 Then shall my work be blessed.
 I'll count myself as nothing,
 Seek Christ to magnify,
 And use my gifts in service
 My Lord to glorify.

Not I, but Christ, in future,
 My lifting up shall be ;
 In simple, sacred language
 My Saviour all shall see.
 So much I'll make of Jesus,
 His life, His death, His fame,
 All hearts shall praise and worship,
 And bless His holy Name.

And when in heaven's bright glory,
 With trophies of His grace,
 Which He in service gave me,
 I see Him face to face—
 What joy will be my Saviour's,
 What joy shall be my own,
 That I was not, when serving,
 Too big for God to own !

Selected.