

W O R D S O F H E L P
from the Scripture of Truth

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WORDS OF HELP

from the
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

GO and STOP.

DURING a recent visit to my native land after an absence of many years, I have found myself surrounded by changes, looking upon things new to me, and upon but few of these with unalloyed satisfaction. The road signs for the guidance of the motor driver on the now crowded highways, have spoken sweetly and pleasantly to me as a wayfarer on pilgrimage through this world, and in a small way a servant of the Lord carrying His word.

On such journeys I have been kindly driven on many a highway, not left to find my own way as when a young man, but relying on the ability and experience of my host of the moment. And as the long miles have succeeded one another, at cross-roads I have watched the controlling salutary road signs, and applied them to myself as well. The green lamp bearing the word GO has spoken its pleasant message of the clear road and freedom to advance upon our way, often through uncounted vehicles heading in every direction. We have our objective where there will be folks waiting to hear of Jesus, desirous of the word of the grace of God. We know our road thither. The green lamp with the brief word GO on it; sometimes just a big board with the same two letters; grants the right of way to go cheerily forward. Well up to time, and the miles dropping quickly behind us.

But stay, in a moment there is a change, a stop. The green light has gone, the red one has come on. It is now STOP, and with authority that has to be

heeded implicitly and at once. This has reversed our circumstances completely. We have to obey, to stay where we are, and quietly to await the withdrawal of that arresting sign. How long the stop may hold is indefinite: it is not in our hands nor under our control. The finger, indicating but now how many miles we were running, has dropped to nothing. We have to rest awhile. We are reduced from an active to a passive state. It is foolish to chafe and fret against the check. It is criminal to try to go against the order to stop. It is our business not to forget the journey but to keep on the alert, in readiness again to go as soon as the red light gives place to the green, while stopping in patience to be ready again to go on with diligence.

It soon fell out with me that a happy opportunity of ministering the good word of God daily in one place and another engrossed me. And before long, breathing the colder air of England was too much for respiratory organs long used to the tropics. My vista of the open road gave place to the narrow walls of a bedroom. The red STOP had come on for me in place of the green GO. In a little I was up again for a bit, and how happy to go on again. The same experience was repeated, and repeated again, giving cause for reflection.

It was wholesome to reflect on the nature of the Authority over me, not a public authority but a personal one, in fact the only real one, the authority of Him to Whom all authority is given. It was blessed to remember Who it was said GO at one time, and STOP at another. I had no wisdom for any independent going, a proved capacity for straying and for nothing else. I had every ground for quietness and confidence in Him, alike when let go and when made to stop.

During a six months of sojourn in the colder climate there were four spells of stopping allotted to me. In every case the Lord stopped me unexpectedly, upon a

bit of road where much gracious kindness was shown to me by those on to whose hands I was thus thrown for temporary repair. It is blessed not to be left to run to and fro recklessly. Blessed to be in the hands of Jesus Who has received us, and values us as little gifts bestowed upon Him by His Father. He will never let us go out of His hands, nor is it in His heart to turn us loose to stray aimlessly. He inspires us by His love and directs us in service. It is our urgent duty to have our minds within us in marching order, ready to go on in service just as given the clear road.

The attraction of spinning along a straight bit at fifty miles an hour has its dangers. Often we may prove that the more of haste the less of real progress. Sometimes it is good to move on slowly a few yards at a time, to make the most of small opportunities. In spiritual things we have not capacity to gauge the measure of what is small and what is larger in serving Him.

In weakness, and limited to opportunities that seem small, we may still welcome the direction of Him Who said "Feed My sheep" and "Feed My lambs." Welcome His saying GO at one time, and welcome His saying STOP at another. I write under serious concern as to my own duty to do this, with perseverance and with patience. I write it for others, my fellow-servants, at the request of one of them.

A.C.

"Christ glorified in heaven is the proper object of the Christian's daily contemplation. He knows and delights in the walk of Christ, as he follows Him in spirit here below; he rests exclusively upon the blood of Christ, as that which purges his guilt; but the object of his soul, which transforms and acts upon him from day to day, is Christ beheld in glory."

W.K.

The Pagan Principle: A Solemn Warning to all Christians.

(“ To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom.”—
1 Cor. xii. 8.)

WHAT is it that reigned in the world before the coming of Jesus Christ? The pagan *religions*? It was more than that—it was the eternal paganism, the root of all paganisms, the principle which we find at the bottom of all revolts against God—the pagan *principle*.

Let us seek to define it. If I would characterise it in one word, I would say it is the attempt to do without God.

Nothing so alarms our evil heart—and we all know this by experience, do we not?—as to find ourselves alone in the presence of God. A man will do anything and everything to avoid this direct and individual contact; he will invent for this purpose religions in order to avoid religion. Give him the Pantheism which covered and still covers the Eastern world, the pagan principle is not alarmed; there is no personal God in the presence of Whom the conscience need be afraid. Give him the Polytheism of ancient Egypt and Syria, natural forces transformed into gods, the pagan principle will adapt itself marvellously to this also. Give him the Greek and Roman Polytheism, the deification of man, the pagan principle will remain at ease. A deified man is, after all, a man. One may accept these religions and do without God.

I go further. We may accept true religions and remain profoundly, radically pagan. Take that Pharisee; he admits many true doctrines with regard to God, but he has built up between God and his soul an impenetrable rampart — his formalism and his religious pride.

Take that rationalist; he retains more than one right idea borrowed from Christian revelation, but he constitutes himself the judge of it, taking that which pleases

him, rejecting that which he does not approve. He has installed human reason in the place where God should be.

Let us go a step further. The indestructible paganism of our hearts has invented a surer way of satisfying them. The grand method for doing without God is to make of religion not a matter of the soul, of each individual soul, but a national matter.

Admit this, and the pagan principle will take alarm at no belief, not even at Christianity, the most complete and the most orthodox. What does it matter? This Christianity is not mine, nor yours; it is that of our country, or of our family, or of our ancestors. It is no longer a question of conversion, or of faith, it is a question of custom and of heredity.

Let us look into our own hearts. Where is our natural resistance to the gospel? What are we afraid of giving? Forms, ceremonies, external adhesion, national and hereditary? Nothing of the sort. We are afraid of giving *ourselves* and this is precisely the Christian principle *par excellence*—evil recognised as being the complete corruption of the heart, the revolt of the heart against God; good being recognised as the conversion of the heart, the return to God.

There is more unity in the world than we are apt to imagine, both in the case of good and of evil. Has it never struck you that the great doctrine of individualism is at the base of all that is good, as, on the other hand, the doctrine of collective beliefs is at the root of all that is evil? That which has produced, in the first case, the universal priesthood of believers, the true idea of morality, the free surrender of the heart, is the Christian principle. That which has produced a sacerdotal class, convents, Roman Catholicism, the servitude of souls, is the pagan principle.

The former is individual, the latter is collective. Let us suppose Christians living in the first ages of the church—(would to God there had been such!)—who denounced the abandonment of apostolic order, who

attacked the old pagan spirit which was gaining ground; who had foreseen in the near future the magic action of sacraments, the inroads of tradition, of human authority, of a hierarchy, of a sacerdotal class; the wise and prudent would have mocked at such, for the greatness of small deviations is known but to few. "Leave alone these narrow-minded, fault-finding men, who are always picking out small errors."

Yes, small deviations; but the larger follow, and at the bottom of each one we discover an excellent, a pious man. Such were the apostolic fathers — they lived by faith and they ruined the faith; they gave their lives for the gospel, and they were the authors of all the evil which, for ages to come, was to oppose the gospel. Let us look at the beginning of the great deviation of which Rome presents the most perfect type, we shall find it in the inoffensive tendencies of the early fathers — tendencies which developed in an uninterrupted course through the centuries that followed.

First, we find the truth of justification by faith, then little by little justification by sacraments and by works. First the Saviour—the one Saviour—then by degrees other intercessors, other merits. First, the new birth, then as time went on, adhesion to a church, acceptance of a form, performance of a ceremony. First, the church of God, by degrees a hereditary and national religion. First, baptism, the expression of saving faith, then by degrees baptism apart from faith, and salvation by baptism. First, the infallible scriptures open to all, then decrees of councils and tradition. First, the universal priesthood of believers, then, little by little, a separate class of clergy.

Thus time passed on, and when baptismal regeneration was definitely pronounced, the pagan principle was avenged. The soul need no longer be brought face to face with God; baptism no longer served as an expression of personal faith, but had become an act of magic transformation in which faith had no part. And

from that moment *the barrier between the church and the world was overthrown*, a hereditary religion replaced the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

And how is it in our times and in Protestantism? Never was a time when it was more difficult, I will not say to profess evangelical Christianity — that is perfectly easy—but to take it seriously. The pagan principle stalks abroad amongst the easy-going profession of the gospel. Having put on a Christian garb in the first century and a Protestant garb in the sixteenth, it would willingly be orthodox in the twentieth. It matters nothing under what form it appears, provided that personal faith and the true conversion of the heart are kept out of sight. Protestants and Catholics have alike overlooked the principle of which the first centuries completed the destruction—the principle of the *church of God*.

No epoch in history — pardon me this apparent paradox—is comparable to the first three centuries in regard to the gravity, the extent, the depth, and the durable influence of the evil which was then wrought. It is the epoch of the restoration of the pagan principle invading the church of God. The church, the body of Christ, was the first truth to disappear, and the last to reappear. It must be so. That truth is the great adversary of the eternal paganism of our hearts.

What is the church? The assemblage of Christians who have been baptised into one body by the Holy Ghost. And what is a Christian? He is a man who has believed on Jesus Christ and whose faith in Him and His work has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. He has passed from death unto life. He is born again, he is one who has been converted to God. The church, therefore, is an assemblage of converted people, a marvellous apparition in a world that had seen but national religions—religions hereditary and collective; men who were believers in the same way as they were citizens, whose belief was a matter of course, and entirely impersonal.

The church, on the other hand, implied a direct relation of the soul with God. Such it was for one short day in the time of the apostles. No man had as yet invented a faith which was not the new birth, and Christians who were not converted men. The church was based on the idea of conversion. The pagan principle set to work to undermine the idea of conversion. It imagined Christians members of the church who were not children of God. It imagined purification and salvation by sacraments. It imagined sacerdotalism. The church was no longer the assemblage of those who were saved; it was a vast institution thrown open to all who would repeat a formulary, undergo a sacramental transformation, obey human direction.

Such had been the working of Satan in the first centuries. The Christian principle, the church, had vanished, and the enemy could now attack the doctrine. Faith being no longer personal, justification by faith disappeared. Salvation was transformed into orthodoxy, truth into tradition, the elders of the early church into a hierarchy—and more was to follow as the ages passed. Thus began, and thus has continued, the profanation of the outward house of God. A profanation of the professing church, thrown open to the world, and fallen to the level of the world, who find nothing there to condemn the paganism of the heart, in ceremonies and forms, and in the enforced repetition of creeds which necessitate no saving faith in Christ. And in a lifeless profession, lifeless souls are well at ease. For a short moment had the outward profession corresponded to the living reality, but the name to live and the profession of eternal life were soon to have no common limit. The name would extend far and wide, and in proportion would the reality include a diminishing number of living souls. The true church which is the body of Christ, the nominal and false church which is His opponent, both included in Christian profession, both responsible for

the name by which they are called, but distinct as light from darkness in the Eyes that are as a flame of fire, discerning the evil and the good. The one to be presented to Himself at last a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle; the other to be spued out of His mouth for ever.

From the French, revised.

H. F. 3.59

Some Remarks on John vii. 37-39.

THERE was a remarkable circumstance in the Feast of Tabernacles; there was an eighth day, or, as we should say, a first day of the week; which was not the case with the other feasts. (See Lev. xxiii.) This was the feast of ingathering. Now this eighth day, the first day of the week, is the resurrection day. The whole seven days the people were to rejoice before Jehovah; such was their portion in their rest. But the eighth day was the solemn assembly, "the great day of the feast."

This surely marks the connection and introduction—the extraordinary connection of the resurrection church with the rest that remained to the people of God. Our Lord's reference to this "great day of the feast" marks and confirms, indeed establishes, this. Upon the last day, this great day of the feast, He cried and said, "If *any man* thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," and "out of his belly shall flow, as the scripture hath said, rivers of living water." "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive."

In the first place, there is the admission of the Gentiles here, "If *any man* thirst," and there is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Witness of heavenly things; the refreshing streams of divine grace, bearing testimony to the glory of the ascended Jesus at the right hand of God. When this stream flowed forth, Jesus was not yet manifest to the world; nor would He be till He came in glory. In the meanwhile, His thirsting

saints would be in the wilderness, "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is," waiting for the glory, for the first day of the new and eternal week, when Jesus would appear.

But as to each, during this waiting time, his belly would be a well-spring of living waters; his own soul, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, would be the channel of boundless refreshment; each one that once thirsted would be a source of refreshment to others. It was not merely he was born of the Spirit, it was not only that the Spirit dwelt in him, as a well springing up in him unto everlasting life; but it should be from his soul a river flowing forth, a river of the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Thus the force of the eighth day is made very distinctly apparent.

The feast of the ingathering properly embraced Israel, the people of God, restored out of the wilderness to the land of God's rest, to rejoice there, gathered back out of all lands. But it involves with it another scene, dimly marked and given room for, in which indeed Israel, and the world, too, had resulting blessings, but blessings which flowed from higher sources, though they might refresh the gladdened plains below; exhaustless, boundless sources of heaven-caught supplies.

Then should Jehovah pour forth His fulness in answer to the desires, quickened and exalted, of the souls athirst. Then should be a time when the mountains, catching the full rain of blessing from above, shall but distribute them by the valleys which the Lord has formed, and the wide scene beneath shall be refreshed by goodness and blessing in the low places far distant and athirst. Blessed be that day when the blood of the Lamb, through which all has been accomplished, shall be seen in all its glory, in all its value—the blood which has cleansed and redeemed us for communion with the Highest, and purged the defiled inheritance, the now accomplished and perfect rest of God in love and peace."

ANON.

Brief Notes on the Acts of the Apostles—3.

THE next chapter (xx.) opens with Paul's departure for Macedonia, where he exhorted much, and then came to Greece for three months; but when Jewish plots threatened, he resolved to make his way to Jerusalem through Macedonia. At Troas we have the instructive account of a Lord's-day; and Eutychus suffers for his drowsiness, but is restored through the apostle to the comfort of all. From Miletus the apostle sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church, and gave them that really edifying charge which fills the latter part of the chapter. He feels as if his work was closed, dwelling on its character for their profit. He does not doubt that bonds and afflictions await him; and as he was clean from the blood of all, he calls on them to take heed to themselves and to all the flock wherein the Holy Spirit set them overseers, to feed God's assembly. He knows of a sad change after his departure, not only grievous wolves coming in, but from among themselves men rising up, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples. Not a hint of succession as a safeguard, but a sure declension. Yet he commits them to God and to the word of His grace. This is the resource in perilous times. And in the spirit of His grace had Paul laboured, as they ought, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, the reflex of Himself. No wonder that they wept, especially at the word that they were to see his face no more.

As far as the inspired history speaks, the active service of the apostle was closed. His latest Epistles give evidence that he wrought freely between his first and second imprisonments in Rome. But his visit to Jerusalem (chap. xxi.), against which he was cautioned, issued in his arrest, and the book terminates with Paul a prisoner. It was thus the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, rejected by the Jews whom he loved, and

the Gentiles urged by them not only to imprison but to kill him.

On his way he enjoys Christian communion at Tyre; then from Cæsarea he goes on in the face of warning, and in Jerusalem yields to Jewish feeling, which brought on the opposition it was meant to allay: all Jerusalem in uproar, and the multitude demanding his death.

In chap. xxii. he addresses his defence in Hebrew to the excited Jews, who hear the wondrous tale of his conversion, but are convulsed afresh. Mission to the Gentiles they would not endure; as he should have learnt from the Lord's words to him in a previous trance. As the Jews raged murderously, so the Roman tribune or chiliarch violated law in his haste; and in Jerusalem the apostle did not display the power which marked him in his own proper field outside.

Nor in chap. xxiii. do we see the same superiority to circumstances, as usual, before the council, where he set the Pharisees in his favour against the Sadducees. But the grace of the Lord was as perfect as ever to cheer him, when he needed it sorely: he was to bear witness in Rome, as in Jerusalem. Then we find the Jewish plot discovered, and Paul conveyed to Cæsarea under a characteristic letter from the tribune to the governor or procurator, Felix.

Five days after, the high priest and the elders, with an orator they had retained, accused the apostle of that which he refuted with simple truth and dignity, pointing out the resurrection as the occasion of offence. Felix, conversant with Jewish prejudice, gives latitude to Paul till Lysias came down and all was known. But after an interval he and his wife Drusilla, a Jewess, sent for Paul, who, instead of discussing the faith, dealt with the conscience, so that Felix trembled and closed the interview. The "convenient season" to hear more never came. Disappointed of a bribe from Paul, and willing to gratify the Jews, Felix left him bound when Porcius Festus succeeded (chap. xxiv.).

The new procurator (chap. xxv.) was equally unscrupulous. For at Cæsarea he proposed to send Paul to Jerusalem, which he had before refused to the Jews; thereon Paul appealed unto Cæsar, which compelled Festus to act on it. But the arrival of King Agrippa with Bernice furnished a new occasion for testimony before the dignities of this age; and Festus was glad, not only to give these members of the Herod family a hearing of interest, but to gather matter for a report to the emperor.

In chap. xxvi. Paul before all again lays stress on the resurrection as the basis of the promised hope, and tells how he, as determined a foe of Jesus as any, had seen His glory from heaven and heard His voice constituting him a witness, and taking him out of the people and the nations, to which last he was now sent. And this was to turn them from darkness to light and the power of Satan to God, that they might receive remission of sins and inheritance among those that are sanctified by faith in Christ the Lord. Not disobedient to the heavenly vision, he was standing to this day to the call of God everywhere, which drew on him the hatred of the Jews; yet was it in full accord with what Moses and the prophets said should be. Festus broke out as an incredulous heathen; but Paul calmly appealed to the king as one cognisant of the prophets; and his answer proved that he was not unmoved, though seeking to hide it. This drew out from the captive apostle the expression of a heart filled with a happiness he desired for them all, except his bonds. They admitted his innocence: only his appeal sent him to Cæsar.

Then in chap. xxvii. we have his voyage as far as Malta where the shipwreck occurred. We hear not of evangelising; but the proof is plain that faith saw clearly in circumstances so novel where no other eye did. It was reserved for a naval man, a Christian in our day, to clear up terms and facts misunderstood by all previous translators ignorant of things marine.

Yet the great feature was unmistakable; the reality of God's mind and care enjoyed here by the believer.

The last chapter is also full of interest. Paul practically proves the truth of Mark xvi. 18 (first clause and last); and many honours and kindnesses followed for the Christians from the heathen islanders. In another ship, of Alexandria, the rest of the voyage was completed; and they slowly made their way from Puteoli to Rome, met on the road by the brethren at Appii Forum and Tres Tabernae. This cheered even the apostle. Arrived at the great city Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him, and after three days called together the chief of the Jews, and explained the strange fact that for the hope of Israel he was a prisoner through Jewish accusation. On a subsequent day he testifies the kingdom of God, and sets forth Jesus from the law and the prophets, some being persuaded while others disbelieved. So that Paul could but show them now the sentence finally of the Holy Spirit, as of the Son on earth (John xii.) and of Jehovah of old (Isa. vi.). But if Israel cut themselves off, save a remnant (the pledge of future restoration), the salvation of God is sent to Gentiles who hear.

Such is the bearing of this book first and last. Only it is well to add that the apostle's charge in chapter xx. is no less clear that after his departure evil would prevail in the church, as previously in Israel. And we know from Romans xi. that the Gentile, if not continuing in God's goodness (as he surely has not), must also be cut off, and thus make way for the recall of Israel to the universal joy and blessing of the world under the Redeemer.

W. K.

Priesthood.

THE holy calling of the priests of God concerns us, and that not as a beautiful symbol, but as a fact in the spiritual history of every believing man. For is it not written, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"? This is not what we, who are believers, ought to be, but what we are; and yet we may be very far from knowing even that which we are. The Holy Spirit is given to us, for this reason amongst others, that "we may know the things which are freely given to us of God." And as far, therefore, as we are enlightened by God, the Holy Spirit, shall we understand what it is to be His anointed priest.

What is it to be a priest? There was a meaning to this word in the ages before the call of Aaron and his sons; there must have been always that distinctive call from the time when man was first a sinner, and when first redemption through blood was revealed to men. The angels need no priests; but of those recognised as such by men, it is said, before the law was given, "the priests which come near to the Lord" (Ex. xix. 22). All men, therefore, could not come near to the Lord, for man is a sinner. But priests taken from amongst men might come near, as those who were to offer up the sacrifice for sin, standing between God and the sinner, brought near in virtue of that sacrifice, and thus bearing witness at the same time to the sin of man and the holiness of God. Yet the priests of old stood but as a symbol of the true priests, and only as a symbol was their office of value before God. For what is the reality of which earthly priesthood was the shadow? Priesthood is Christ undertaking the cause of His people through the wilderness, maintaining us in the presence of God. Priesthood supposes accomplished redemption—not to bring us in, but that which we have when brought in. For the high priest of old was for the redeemed people, not for the heathen, out of whom God had called them.

So as a Priest Christ bears His own on His heart, and on His shoulders in the presence of God. Whenever, on all ordinary occasions, the high priest went into the presence of God, it was in his garments. When he went in he always represented the people. "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel before the Lord on his two shoulders as a memorial." Also "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." Whatever value the priest has in God's sight he transmits to them. The names that Christ is bearing on His heart are the names of His redeemed, of those for whom there is no wrath. They are the names of those for whose need and whose weakness He stands before God. The Christian is always accepted, because always in Christ, and the love of Christ is ever ready for our necessities. The Apostle and High Priest of our profession is Christ. The sinner wants the Apostle — the message from God about acceptance. The saint wants the High Priest. And as He is in the Holiest, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, so have *we* boldness to enter also into the Holiest in Him; to stand in the light of God's presence as kings and priests unto God and His Father. We are consecrated to God to be priests—brought in where Christ is. He has not yet taken upon Him His office as King, but He has taken the priesthood; and, therefore, we are now priests—now brought nigh, now consecrated to God, now accepted of God according to the perfection of Christ.

It is not a pretence that we are put into this wonderful position. No; it is faith in the blood of Christ, that has cleansed us as to purpose and thought, according to the perfectness of Christ. This is simple Christianity. There is no true Christianity short of this. We are consecrated by the blood put upon us, and because the blood is upon us, the anointing of the Spirit can be put upon us also. The Spirit is the seal set upon the perfect work of Christ, upon the perfect cleansing from every relic of sin. Therefore now as

priests unto God within the holiest place, may we offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the pure incense of the worship that is in the Spirit and in truth.

(To be continued, D.V.)

F.B.

The Resurrection of the Wicked.

By JOHN BUNYAN.

GOD hath appointed the day of their rising. He hath appointed their Judge to judge them. He hath recorded all their acts and doings against that day. He hath also already appointed the witness to come in against them. The instruments of death and misery are all ready for them.

He hath appointed the day of their rising, which day John calleth the "time of the dead, that they should be judged," which time Paul saith is a time fixed: "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world."* This time and day Christ brings down to an hour, saying, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." As He hath appointed the day, so He hath appointed the Judge, "He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance to all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead."* This Man is Jesus Christ; for it is He that is ordained of God to be the Judge of living and dead (2 Tim. iv. 1).

All their deeds and works, to a word and thought, are every one already recorded and enrolled in the books of the laws of heaven against that day. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond—upon the table of their heart." And again, saith God, "Write it in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, even for ever and ever, that this is a rebellious people."

* These scriptures refer to the judgment of the living, but this does not affect the line of argument pursued by the author.—Ed. W.O.H.

The instruments of death and eternal misery, are already prepared. "He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; He ordaineth His arrows against the persecutors." Hell is prepared of old, He hath made it deep and large; the fire, the everlasting fire, is also now of a long time prepared; the heavy weights of God's curse are also ready, and their "damnation now of a long time slumbereth not."

But now I say, how ridiculous a business would all this be, if these things should be all prepared of the only wise God, and there should be none to be judged; or if He that is ordained Judge, should not, either through want of power or will, command these rebels, and force them before His judgment-seat. Glad indeed would the sinners be, if these things might be true; glad, I say, at very heart, if they might be in their secret places of darkness and the grave for ever; but it must not be; the day of their rising is set; the Judge is appointed; their deeds are written; the deep dungeon is with open mouth ever waiting for them; wherefore at the day appointed, neither earth, nor death, nor hell, can hinder: "There *shall* be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

He that taketh away the doctrine of the resurrection of the wicked; he taketh away one of the main arguments that God hath provided to convince a sinner of the evil of his ways; for how shall a sinner be convinced of the evil of sin, if he be not convinced of the certainty of eternal judgment? And how shall he be convinced of eternal judgment, if you persuade him that when he is dead, he shall not at all rise? Especially seeing the *resurrection* of the dead and eternal *judgment* must unavoidably be one the forerunner of the other.

It was Paul's reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, that made Felix tremble. It is this also he calleth the argument of terror, wherewith he persuaded men. This was Christ's argument also, where He saith, "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Service.

TRUE service begins with Christ, Who is the Head, and where Christ is forgotten, then service is defective; it has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that *all* the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth. The body is of Christ, and He loves it as He loves Himself, and every one who would serve it, will best learn to do so, by knowing His heart and purposes towards it.

In a word, it is Christ serves, though it may be through us. We are but “joints and bands.” If we are not *derivative* and *communicative from Christ*, we are useless.

To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service; though if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances, will judge by the blossom, and not by the fruit; and, after all, the service is not for the sake of the church, but for the sake of Christ; and, if He be served in the church, though the church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it.

Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect, in our minds, Christ from our service; and this much more than any of us, perhaps, have fully discovered. Whether in reading, or praying, or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as towards Christ and Him alone! How often may sentimentality and natural feelings affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him! J.G.B.

Like Thee and with Thee.

WHEN earthly joys, and earthly woes,
 And earthly cares are past;
 When Thou art come, my Saviour Lord,
 And I am home at last,
 Ne'er shall this wandering heart of mine
 Wander from Thee again,
 Ne'er more my love grow cold and faint—
 I shall be like Thee then.

When Thou shalt come, my living Lord,
 And earth's sad lonely night
 Dissolves in heaven's glad radiant day,
 And faith gives place to sight;
 When Thou shalt take Thy throne and reign,
 No more despised of men;
 When all shall own Thee as their King,
 I shall be with Thee then.

Like Thee and with Thee, Lord, to be
 In Thy bright home above;
 To love Thee then unchangingly,
 And fully know Thy love;
 Gathered with all Thy saved ones there,
 Ne'er more to leave Thee, Lord;
 To praise the grace that saves and keeps,
 Ne'er more to grieve Thee, Lord.

Lord, till that day of glory dawns,
 And I Thy face behold,
 When all Thy wondrous beauties, Lord,
 To lightened eyes unfold;
 Grant me, a weak frail child of Thine,
 More like Thee here to be,
 Only to seek in this wild waste
 The path that leads to Thee.

H. T. M.

The Choice of Moses.

(Exodus ii. ; Hebrews xi.)

HOW blest the choice that Moses made,
When he, by faith, preferred
Affliction with a trampled race,
To Egypt's royal power and place,
With all that place conferred.

That race was God's own people still,
Though sunk in shame and need,
The heirs of promise, and that land
Which God had sworn, with His right hand,
To give to Abraham's seed.

And what to this was Egypt's crown,
Where idol gods were owned?
Pleasures of sin that could not last,
The hour of judgment hastening fast,
When all would be dethroned.

And blest are they, who, counting now
On Christ's exceeding worth,
Their lot with God's own people choose,
Although it cost them to refuse
A place and name on earth !

E. H. C.

On the Mount of Olives.

JERUSALEM lies 2,500 feet above the sea level, the Dead Sea 1,000 feet below. The Mount of Olives stretches up another 250 feet above Jerusalem. This mountain, referred to in the Old Testament and mentioned so many times in the Gospels, therefore overlooks the whole city eastward from the brook Kedron, and rises above the plains on all sides.

The Mount of Olives is a rocky mountain, terraced, and here and there shaded by an olive tree. Formerly, the whole mountain was overgrown with more than a thousand olive trees, but now the number is small. Everywhere in this part of Palestine there is little

sign of fruitfulness; rather does the landscape present an appearance of barrenness and desolation; for hours the traveller sees nothing but rocky hills without trees or plants, only here and there a dusty stump.

Above the brook Kedron lies—on the slope of the Mount of Olives—a garden, called Gethsemane. The meaning of this name is olive garden; or, according to some, olive-press, because there was an old mill there, where the ripe olives were crushed and trodden small by human feet, as is done with grapes also. Of the many trees, which used to be in this garden, only eight are left, and the spot is shown, where Christ, a stone's throw away from his three faithful disciples, bowed in the dust in anguish of soul beneath the olive trees.

The Mount of Olives was the place chosen by the Lord Jesus, where He loved to resort with His disciples. We can truly call this mountain *His* mountain.

What a privilege it is then to be there, actually or in the spirit — and to consider what our beloved Saviour suffered and did there!

In Luke xxii. 39, we read that the Lord Jesus, as He was wont, went to the Mount of Olives. It was His custom to go to the synagogue every Sabbath day. It was His custom, in the days of His ministry, to teach the multitude. It was also His custom to leave the turmoil of the town and to ascend to the Mount of Olives. How often He sought out this favourite spot, as if it were His inner chamber! There He lifted up His hands to heaven, expecting all from His God in dependent prayer.

No doubt the Saviour went to the Mount of Olives much oftener than the Gospels tell us. This conclusion is justified from the expression that He went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives. It is most touching to see how in the days of His rejection, of His approaching suffering and death, the Lord Jesus always sought out the loneliness of the Mount of Olives and spent nights there under the open heavens.

When they wished to take the Lord Jesus on one occasion (John vii. 44), He went to the Mount of Olives (John viii. 1), while every one went to his own house (John vii. 53).

When He desired to make His royal entry into Jerusalem, He sent from the Mount of Olives two of His disciples to fetch the colt on which He was to ride (Luke xix. 29). Leaving the Mount of Olives, He was hailed by the multitudes with the words: "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest" (Luke xix. 37 and 38). From the Mount of Olives He saw Jerusalem and wept over it, because He foresaw that forty years later, on account of the hardness of heart of its inhabitants, the beloved city would be destroyed. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Luke xix. 42-44).

When the days were drawing nigh for Him to go up to Jerusalem, we read, "And in the day time He was teaching in the temple and at night He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple for to hear Him" (Luke xxi. 37 and 38).

On the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Jesus questions about the future. And having sat down, surrounded by His own, He spoke of the end of the age and gave that wonderful prophetic review of things that must come to pass (Matt. xxiv. 3).

After the institution of the Lord's Supper, He went, after they had sung the psalm, out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxvi. 30). They directed their steps to Gethsemane, the place of the olive-press, across the

brook over which David once passed weeping. "And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet and wept as he went up and had his head covered and he went barefoot . . . and it came to pass that when David was come to the top of the mount, he worshipped God there" (2 Sam. xv. 30 and 32). Deeply grieved by the revolt of his son Absalom, the suffering king left Jerusalem for the Mount of Olives. But what was his grief compared with the prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears of Him Who was David's Son and Lord? (Heb. v. 7). In the dark night under the olive trees of Gethsemane, He poured out His holy soul. The cup, which He had to drink and which He -- praised be His name eternally! -- did drink on Golgotha, was there brought before Him. He saw all the terrors of the cross and all that was connected with it. He saw there that He, Who knew no sin, was to be made sin; that He, Who had done no sin, should Himself bear the sins of His own in His body on the tree (2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 22 and 24). There He prayed earnestly and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling on the ground (Luke xxi. 44). He knelt down and prayed about a stone's throw from His disciples, and an angel came and strengthened Him (Luke xxii. 41 and 43). There He was sore amazed and very heavy. There He cried out: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death!" There He besought, if it were possible, that that hour should pass from Him. "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee, nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt" (Mark xiv. 32-41). There He was like the olive bruised in the press. And when He saw the band approaching, led by Judas, He left the spot under the olive trees, where He lay, with the words: "Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth Me is at hand." And with His majestic "I am He," He threw His enemies to the ground, afterwards willingly stretching out His hands and giving Himself up to them—those hands with which He had done so much good, healed

the sick, and distributed blessing. Then He spoke the words, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way." Then He gave Himself up to complete the work of redemption, through which His own would enter at once into liberty. For from the Mount of Olives He went to Golgotha, where He was crucified, and completed the great work of redemption.

Oh, wonderful love! Can we not understand how General Gordon, a true believer, when he visited Jerusalem, spent a whole night on the Mount of Olives, in Gethsemane? Is it any wonder that he, who understood something of the battle fought out for our sakes in the olive-yard, knelt there in thankfulness and praise?

But once more we see the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Olives. The suffering is over. The grave is empty. As the Risen One He stands there on the Mount of Olives. To Him all power is given in heaven and on earth. He is about to go back to heaven, to return to the Father, to take at God's right hand the place as the glorified Son of man at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And He lifted up His hands in blessing His people. And while He blessed them, He was parted from them and taken up into heaven (Luke xxiv. 50-51). As the great High Priest He passed through the heavens to enter into the holy place not made with hands. And it was on the Mount of Olives that the angels said, "This same Jesus . . . shall so come . . . as ye have seen Him go into heaven." "Then returned they (the disciples) unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey" (Acts i. 9-12).

The prophet Ezekiel once saw the Mount of Olives in a vision. He had seen the glory of the Lord above the house of the Lord, then at the east gate, and finally he saw it on the Mount of Olives. The glory of the Lord slowly left the holy city. "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. xi. 23). This mountain is the Mount of

Olives. Therefore the glory of the Lord rose up from over the Mount of Olives! And the Lord of glory went up to heaven from the Mount of Olives!

On this same Mount of Olives will the greatest of all events take place in the future. Because He Who left this mountain to enter the glory will come to the Mount of Olives from the glory to earth to enter Jerusalem once more, but then honoured by all, receiving the throne of His father David and the kingdoms of this world. This will not happen at the end of all things. But after the Lord Jesus as Bridegroom has taken His bride to Himself, and after this earth has passed through terrible judgments, Zechariah has prophesied: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst therefore toward the east and toward the west . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. xiv. 1-5). There can be no doubt as to Who shall come on the Mount of Olives. Who is the Lord Who shall come with His saints? It is our Lord Jesus Christ. His feet shall again stand on the Mount of Olives. On the same spot whence He went into heaven, He shall come again. In the days of His flesh the tired feet of the Lord often climbed the Mount of Olives. But then the mighty feet of the great King shall tread the holy ground. The Man of sorrows crowned as King of glory!

What blessed memories the Mount of Olives recalls! And what a glorious vision of the future! When the Jews in the days of Nehemiah heard the law read and explained by Ezra in those days of Israel's revival, the people went to the Mount of Olives and fetched olive branches, branches of myrtle and palm branches and branches of other thick trees to make booths (Neh. viii. 15 and 16). So in that day shall we do also!

Then shall we pluck branches of peace and victory and rest in what has been accomplished for us.

And it is the Mount of Olives which reminds us of all this in such a distinct and striking manner! J.N.V.

Absent from the Body—Present with the Lord.

(2 Corinthians v. 8.)

CERTAINTY AND UNCERTAINTY.

TWO things go together for us as saints: the certainty of the Lord's coming, and the uncertainty whether or not we shall fall asleep before He come. Known to God only is it whether I shall have put off the tabernacle of the body, or be found in occupation of it when Christ returns in the cloud; but in presence of the certainty of His coming, the uncertainty whether I shall then be in the body, or out of the body, however it may interest, does not disturb, me. In either case a blessedness is assured to us richly surpassing our present blessing, and we can happily entrust to His sovereignty the disposal of our earthly house of tabernacle! It is good to be for Him here; it is "far better" to fall asleep and go to Him; but best of all to awake in His likeness if I have slept, or, if living when He comes, to see Him as He is! This, the superlative thing, and not the comparative, though that also be blessed, is what the Lord always puts before us as the object of our hope; nothing short of this is the "mark for the prize," or the desired consummation when He and we are glorified together! The fact that in scripture the Holy Ghost uniformly connects our hearts' aspirations with the return of Christ should suffice to satisfy every saint of God that the superlative thing, that which is the subject of "that blessed hope," is His coming, and that if we substitute anything else it only indicates that we are out of the mind and current of the Spirit of God. But while that be incontestable, and cannot be too emphatically maintained, the fact that so many saints have fallen asleep since the assembly of

God first acquired "that blessed hope," and that one after another around us is ever and anon retiring to rest, necessitates to our souls a very deep and ever renewed interest in the character of their blessing.

WITH CHRIST FAR BETTER.

The thief in whom grace wrought on the cross, blessed as was the new-born desire of his heart, got help on three points, each of exceeding interest. He asked (1) to be remembered by the Lord, (2) at His coming, (3) in His kingdom! The Lord both corrected and surpassed each feature of his request, for He promised (1) that he should be with Him, (2) that day, (3) in paradise! This affords the fullest scripture teaching as to the blessedness of those who put off this tabernacle, and connecting it with Paul's testimony, that "absent from the body," the saint is "present with the Lord"; that "to depart and to be with Christ is far better"; and that "to die is gain," clearly establishes that the emancipated spirit enjoys (1) the blessedness of being with Christ, which is far better than any blessing enjoyed below, (2) that such blessedness is immediate, and (3) it is the elysium of His own presence, a locality otherwise undefined.

NO MORE SIN, SORROW, OR SUFFERING.

But if this summarises the direct instruction which the Holy Ghost has given us in the word, yet may we safely and soberly predicate a variety of aspects of the blessedness involved in that momentous change of condition into which the spirit is introduced when the earthly house of its tabernacle is vacated. Disencumbered of the body, it is at once relieved from the drag or resistance which a sinful body, however adapted for the exercises of faith, and as an instrument for service to the Lord in a sinful world, must inevitably impose upon its freedom. With what new gladness shall we reflect that we can never grieve His blessed heart any more, nor ever again bring dishonour upon His peerless name; that sin and sorrow, toil and trouble, care and conflict, and all that tends to weaken our love and attachment to the Lord, or hinder its out-

flow, with every other thing that tells of the fall and the curse, are left behind for ever! Whether it be the needs and weakness of humanity as created, or its sick and suffering condition as fallen, or as the vehicle in which my will would work, that abode in which the flesh dwells—all this I am freed from on leaving the body: no more can I know want or weariness; no more pain and anguish; no more workings of a perverse will, of a carnal mind, of a heart at enmity with God! By vacating the body I have broken every link with the flesh and its activities, with the world and its elements; I have parted company, never to be resumed, with the first man and the Adamic creation, with man's world and the world's god. What a release from Satan's hostility and subtlety; what an escape from every snare of the fowler; from the world, too, Satan's usurped empire; no further exposure to its hydra-headed opposition to Christ and to those who are His; the wilderness past, with all its painful experiences of battlings and buffetings, and the haven reached where all evil is excluded, and all toil ceases in the eternal calm and sublimity of His presence!

RESURRECTION CERTAIN.

It is a happy and a refreshing thought that my body, being a member of Christ, is assured of resurrection, because of His Spirit Who dwelleth in me, and this secures the body for that day; while being "one spirit" with the Lord, one with Him in living, eternal union, whether in or out of the body, my spirit, in returning to God, finds that eternal haven in the presence of Christ which secures it for reunion with the body at His coming!

TO DIE IS GAIN.

Save the Lord Himself, no one was ever more superior to circumstances than Paul, he who could say, "I am initiated both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer privation. I have strength for all things in Him that gives me power"; yet he says, I have "a desire to depart." No one had a more important service to detain him below, and no one was

so singularly qualified, and more thoroughly devoted, as a servant. It is summed up — this remarkable identification of himself with Christ's interests on earth—in the words, "For me to live is Christ," and yet he adds, "to die is gain!"

There are three aspects in which the departed saint may be regarded; as to what he escapes or resigns, as to what he retains, and as to what he acquires. What he escapes has been already sufficiently touched upon.

WHAT THE CHRISTIAN RESIGNS AT DEATH.

What he resigns is equally apparent, though not, perhaps, sufficiently recognised, otherwise we should value and turn to account more than we do the present unique period of the soul's history! Each of us has doubtless looked back to the days of his youth, never to be recalled, and found occasion to mourn over days of evil that cannot now be corrected, and opportunities for good that can never return: as that spring-time of life has left its stamp on all after years, so surely will the soul's spring-time bear its impress for eternity, for I learn now, and I gather here, that which, missing the present opportunity, I shall never learn or gather at all; in fact, this is the time of the soul's pupilage in the place where it takes its degree! All this we resign when we leave the body; surely, were saints sufficiently alive to the fact, we should not find so many droning away the precious spring-time, unmindful of the word, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. v. 14). But, further, I forego, if I leave the body, the outward and visible fellowship of saints, the table of the Lord, with its rich and endearing associations, the endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, the exercises of brotherly love, of prayer, of sympathy, of generosity and hospitality, of practical separation from evil, what James calls "Pure religion and undefiled"—all these exercises, in fine, all that is demonstrative in its character, I have passed out of for the time being, while such principles

as faith, patience, dependence, and obedience, if in exercise, are in exercise under such new conditions as constitute, or at least imply, a generic change!

WHAT THE CHRISTIAN RETAINS AT DEATH.

In respect to the second point—that which we retain—I content myself with suggesting that I retain all that which divine grace has conferred upon me for eternity; I carry with me, and shall continue to enjoy, the eternal life, the new creation blessing, union with Christ, the peace which surpasseth understanding, the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and the relationships into which grace has introduced me, which can never be weakened or annulled!

ENTERING INTO REST.

Lastly, as to the “gain,” it is clear that I have finally entered into rest—a rest never to be disturbed, a full and deep repose, never to be broken! What a wonderful expansion will my spirit experience as it emerges from the density of an atmosphere so oppressive as this into that of His presence, and how sweet the conviction that steals over me, that I have passed into that blissful presence for ever; that I am at length in that new region of unruffled peace characterised by the presence of my Saviour and my Lord:

“There shall all clouds depart,
The wilderness shall cease,
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace.”

THOSE DEPARTED TO BE WITH CHRIST, STILL WAITING.

But though with Himself in the profound quietude of an eternal calm, and enjoying an unalloyed happiness with Him, I wait for His coming on that cloudless morning, when He shall bring forth from the grave, to the joy of His own heart, the bodies which, in all ages and in every clime, He had hushed to sleep! In the scene of His rejection I had once waited for Him, but sleep overtook my body, my heart was still wakeful, my spirit passed into His presence, and I waited on—my waiting became more like His, I kept vigil

with Him! It was not enough to be in His presence, I wanted to see Him as He is; it was not enough to be with Him, I wanted to be like Him, for this would give peculiar joy to His heart; for this I needed a glorified body, and I waited still! It was not enough that He should be crowned with glory and with honour upon the Father's throne, I longed for His manifested glories in heaven and on earth: I longed to see His brow bedecked with many crowns, and I longed to swell the harmony of the new song which should extol His worth; I longed to see Him in the Father's house, to be there at home with Himself; I longed to see Him express, as there He fully can, the fervour of His faithful love to His bride, to set forth in blessed array the untold joy and delight that will thrill His heart when He shall have things all His own way, and make everything around in the heaven of His own presence subserve the object of that heart from eternity!

All these blessed longings of spirit, which have Himself for their object, I can now unhinderedly and undistractedly indulge, and thus the superlative thing, the glory itself, is blissfully and powerfully anticipated. All that, if absent from the body, my heart will but more ardently long for and watch for in the patience of Christ, and as to which cannot be fully satisfied short of its consummation; all to which my heart aspires now, and would aspire then, whether in these circumstances or in those, only His coming in the cloud can possibly supply an answer to!

THE CHRISTIAN'S WORSHIP AND JOY IN HEAVEN.

Then shall we resume the functions of worship in the conditions alone compatible with it; then shall we sing as redeemed saints, and in the body, only are said to do! Then only will He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; then only will He present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; then only will He make us to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us; then only will He satisfy for us every desire which our knowledge of Himself has inspired in our hearts! Upon this, then, the

superlative thing, His own heart is set, as well as that of the Spirit and the bride, saying, "Come"; and He Who loves to be thus greeted, loves, too, to reply—"Surely I come quickly," adding His own "Amen"; and if we, like the beloved disciple, have pillowed our heads upon His bosom, though in another way, we shall love to respond, whether in the body or out of the body, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" R.

The Gathering Together of Believers.

(The substance of an address on Hebrews x. 19-30.)

I HAVE read this passage, not altogether to speak about the various subjects that are there mentioned, but chiefly to draw attention to verses 24 and 25. There is great emphasis placed by the Holy Spirit in this connection upon the assembling of ourselves together. And the context of a scripture is always of importance and usefulness in showing us the value of the particular truth contained in it. The assembling of ourselves together is put here in sequence to the apostle's declaration of the wonderful privileges that a Christian has as compared with the people of Israel in days of old.

The context speaks of our drawing near with boldness into the holiest of all. Under the law, a man who came with boldness into the holiest of all, and neglected the precise instructions received from Jehovah, died; though a son of Aaron, the fire of the Lord consumed him (Lev. x.). If he braved His holiness, he met the consequence of doing so.

But we, believers in Christ, are invited to come with boldness, for "perfect love casteth out fear." We may come with boldness — but not with the pride of the Pharisee, assuming ourselves to be more righteous than others. We may come because the way through the vail has been made for us by the blessed Son of God, Who was here in flesh and shed His blood to lay the foundation righteously for our approach.

Let us then come near with boldness, with the complete confidence that the word of God gives, the complete confidence that the sacrifice of Christ gives us, the confidence that the Spirit of God imparts within us.

JOINING HEARTS AND HANDS TO DRAW NEAR.

It is not that one is to come alone: let *us* draw near. It is the common privilege and right of believers in Christ Jesus to come in a company and to come near; not to stand far off but to come into the very presence of God Himself. Not only have we in so doing the guarantee of the word of God and the work of Christ, but we have the living presence of our Lord Jesus Christ there as the great High Priest over the house of God, to care for us in what otherwise would be a dangerous enterprise on our part, to come into the presence of God. Such holy decorum becomes us, such carefulness to be subservient to all the holy requirements of God, who of us could enter with boldness?

But we have a High Priest over the house of God, so let us come in full assurance of faith—not in the defilement which we may have gathered inadvertently as we go through the dusty ways of life, but with purified hearts, and bodies too. The groundwork of our acceptance as worshippers is divinely assured, but it is our own responsibility, as we come, to clear ourselves of anything that would be derogatory to that holy presence in which we worship and pray. Access into the holiest is a great and glorious charter of freedom that we have here, which is only exercised by us as we come together collectively before God.

Individually, a man may come to God wherever he may be, in town or country, on sea or land. In any place or in any condition, he can come as a man to his God, as a child to his Father. But we have here the collective privilege of a company of God's people, and the right rests upon an unassailable foundation. Nineteen centuries may have passed since the assuring words were written, since the atoning deed was done, but the foundations are unshaken to-day. On that

foundation the children of God are entitled to meet together in the holy presence of God with their praises and their prayers to God the Father and to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

ASSEMBLING OURSELVES TOGETHER.

In these instructive words the apostle leads up to the exhortation not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It was a well-needed exhortation to those Jewish confessors of Christ to whom the apostle was writing. The Jews, as we know, were about to see their temple demolished, and Jerusalem burned with fire, their earthly inheritance scattered to the four winds, their priests gone, everything destroyed that belonged externally to the worship instituted in the Old Testament.

Ah, the love of Mount Zion had brought many a pious soul from the hills of Galilee down to Jerusalem. The child of Abraham loved the gates of God's beloved city and faced many dangers to come up three times a year to present himself before Jehovah in acknowledgment of his deliverance from Egypt and of the blessings that followed, too, in the wilderness and in Canaan. But where could such come when ruined Jerusalem was in the hands of the enemies of God, when the temple of God was destroyed, the synagogues burned, and the priests gone?

"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," the apostle writes to those who believed on the Son of God. No Gentile armies can destroy that holy place where you worship. No worldly power can keep you away from the presence of your God. No bloodthirsty soldiers can overthrow your great High Priest; He is yours, ever active, ever faithful, ever perfect in His ministrations in the holiest on your account.

THE WARNING TO APOSTATES.

But there is not only the exhortation, but the warning, a most solemn warning. Many a person has read up to the verse where the warning begins, and shut his

Bible. But the Spirit of God does not finish with verse 25. In those that follow He is speaking of the great work of God's own Son, and He is speaking to those that neglect Him, after knowing the truth and the privilege He has given through His sacrifice for sins. Those are the ones who are liable to enter the ranks of His enemies and to do again what was done in Jerusalem, to tread underfoot the Son of God and crucify Him afresh, to put Him to shame, to say that His work is naught, and that His Person is to be abhorred and despised.

Oh, beloved friends, this is a solemn warning. "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth . . ."; this is not merely head-knowledge, something learned out of a book, as the elements of the law might be. Believers, children of God, to whom I am privileged to speak to-night, I appeal to you; you must have felt something of the deep satisfaction of being together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, of having your heart opened to the riches of heaven, to know the sweet converse of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of His own, by faith to see His face, to hear His words and to be with Him—that is the knowledge of the Lord according to Christian truth. And if you sin wilfully, having received that knowledge of the truth, having known it and felt it and having been under the external influence of the Spirit of God, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." You may not trifle with such truth as this with impunity.

These warning words are a shock to many, but they are not written in vain. "Our God is a consuming fire." We know it is the fashion of the world to-day and, alas, of the Christian world to undervalue the work of Christ, to speak blasphemously of His name, and to tear up God's holy word. They think they can do it with impunity, for who will care? God cares. The God Who sent His own Son cares. The God Who wrote His word and preserved it, so that to-day it is printed in a thousand tongues that men everywhere

may read it—God cares. In this land, this Christian land, this home of missionaries and Bible-spreading, that there should be this public departure from the word and truth of God and from all that God gave in the beginning, is this widespread apostasy in Christendom nothing to God on high?

For such there remaineth “no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment.” What else could you look for? If you do not look for it, it will come. There will be the judgment at the appointed time. God will deal righteously with this world and with those that have trifled with the truth and trampled underfoot Him Who is the Truth. Surely upon them will come His sorer judgment. More guilty is the Christendom of to-day than the ungodly Gentile and the unrighteous Jew of old.

THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER.

But it is the “gathering together” which is the core of this passage before us; the assembling together, coming together in companies before the Lord. It is very much in the air in our day to form companies and associations, not only in the world, but amongst Christians. There are associations and confederations for all manner of objects connected with the world’s affairs.

And the spirit of association gets amongst those that bear the name of the Lord Jesus. They must all make up their companies, each having some special object. There is this tendency to assemble, but not in the name and with the authority of God. This is just where the mischief begins. I appeal to you to think of your assembling from this standpoint. If you are in an association to-day, an association for some religious purpose, is it of God? Is it that which is spoken of here? Does its organisation agree with this holy Book?

THE ASSOCIATION FOR BUILDING BABEL.

In the beginning of man’s history after the flood, a most calamitous association was formed without God. After the flood men got together and united in one

purpose—to make themselves a name. They proposed to build a city which should have a tower that would rise conspicuously above all, and come to the very door of heaven. They were filled with pride as to what they would do, but God and His will were not in all their thoughts.

I do not think their project had anything to do with a means of escaping from another flood, or why should they build it in the plain of Shinar, when Noah's deluge reached above the tops of the highest mountains? No, it was the feeling that is in everyone naturally: let us get together and unite our powers to make a name, but do not, oh, do not bring God's name into it! Let it be *our* name, and to *our* credit and glory, so that everyone, as they come into the plain of Shinar, can see the beautiful tower that *we* have built.

The ambitious builders began their tower, but you know how quietly and quickly God dispelled their association of pride. Confusion of tongues came in. They could not convey their thoughts one to another, so what was the use of being together? They separated into clans and families and tongues. Their association formed without God was scattered by Him. God had told Noah and his sons to multiply and fill the face of the earth, but they said, "No, it is better for us to be together and make a worthy monument to our name." But God upset their scheme, diversity of tongues came in, and their union was no longer possible.

The city remained. Babel remained. We do not know what became of the tower, but Babel remained and will continue to the end, the home of confusion and of idolatry, and will be the centre of God's great judgment of human pride and apostasy.

DIVINE ASSEMBLY.

Historically, Babel was the beginning of purely human association, the uniting together, the assembling together without the name of God. You may trace it through scripture, and it is instructive so to do. But we remember to-night that the Lord Jesus Christ came

into this world to bring men together after a divine order. He was here to form the centre for men's gatherings. It is not good for man to be alone applies to other things beside marriage. It applies to Christian effort and Christian worship and Christian ways so far as they are acceptable in God's sight.

What, then, is God's way for men to be together? That way He has shown by the sending of His own Son into this world. There is through Him one way, and one way only, by which men upon this earth can be joined together with one mind, and one heart, and one mouth, and at the same time that mind, heart, and mouth be in unison with God above. Harmony, perfect harmony between heaven and earth! A company of men on earth united by the very Person and the very theme that will unite the heavenly hosts of the redeemed to the glory and praise and delight of God! Who is sufficient for this? There is but One—the One in the bosom of the Father, the only-begotten One, Who was the centre and joy of God from all eternity. He it was Who came into this world to be the uniting centre of men's hearts that they might meet together in the way spoken of in Hebrews x. to the praise and glory of God.

W.J.H.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Heaven's Regalia.

'T WAS night! A Christian lady slept,
 And dreamed a dream of heaven;
 She thought, within its pearly gates
 To her was entrance given.

She stood upon the sea of glass,
 Amid the white-robed throng,
 She walked the golden streets, and sang
 The everlasting song.

The conquering palm was in her hand,
 She tasted bliss untold,
 And on her radiant head she wore
 A crown of shining gold.

Oh! clime of glory! No regret
 May ever mar thy rest!
 Yet sighed the sleeper as she dreamt,
 She was not wholly blest.

She marked the flashing diadem
 O'er many a princely brow,
 Resplendent with the diamond's blaze
 And the rich ruby's glow!

O'er turquoise fair, and priceless pearl,
 The emerald glory streamed;
 But in her heavenly crown, alas!
 No radiant jewel beamed!

Oh! that to grace her coronet
 One gem she yet might win!
 Oh! could she but return to earth
 And save one soul from sin!

For well she knew what jewels gave
 Those crowns so rich a blaze;—
 They were the souls of sinners, shown
 The error of their ways.

She woke—and, lo! 'twas but a dream.
 But, in the book divine,
 She read who, in the courts of bliss,
 Shall first in glory shine.

That they, who unto righteousness
 Do many sinners turn,
 Like stars in heaven's firmament
 For evermore shall burn.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

Without Excuse.

By JOHN BUNYAN.

SINNERS at the judgment day shall be convinced that there was so much reality and downright willingness in God, in every offer of grace and mercy to the worst of men ; and also so much goodness, justness and reasonableness in every command of the gospel of grace, which they were so often entreated and beseeched to embrace, that they will be drowned in the conviction that they did refuse love, grace, reason, etc. : love, I say, for hatred, grace for sin, and things reasonable for things unreasonable and vain. Now they shall see they left glory for shame, God for the devil, heaven for hell, light for darkness. At that day they shall see that though they made themselves beasts, yet God made them reasonable creatures, and that He did with reason expect that they should have adhered to, and have delighted in, things that are good and according to God ; yea, now they shall see that though God did not determine to bring them to heaven against their hearts and wills, and the love that they had to their sins : yet then they shall be convinced that God was far from infusing anything into their souls, that should in the least hinder, weaken or obstruct them in seeking the welfare of their souls. In this life men will tattle and prattle at a mad rate about election and reprobation, and conclude that because all are not elected, therefore God is to blame that any are damned : but then they will see that they are not damned because they were not elected, but because they sinned, not because God put any weakness, but because they gave way, and that wilfully, knowingly and desperately, to Satan and his suggestions ; and so turned away from the holy commandment delivered unto them ; yea, then they will see that though God at times did fasten His cords about their heads, and heels, and hands, both by godly education and smarting convictions, yet they rushed away with violence from all, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

God will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He

judgeth, though thy proud ignorance thinks to have and multiply cavils against Him.

It will come by and by burning hot upon men's souls, how often they were forewarned of this day ; they shall see then that there was never any quarter-sessions, nor general gaol-delivery more publicly foretold of, than this day. You know that the judges, before they begin their assizes, do give the country in charge that they take heed to the laws and statutes of the king. Why, rebel, thou shalt be at this day convicted, that every sermon thou hast heard, and every serious debate thou hast been at about the things of God, and laws of eternity, they were to thee as the judge's charge before the assizes and judgment began. Every exhortation of every minister of God, it is as that which Paul gave to Timothy, and commanded him to give in charge to others : "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," saith he, "that thou observe these things." And again, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." These things give in charge, saith he, that they may be blameless. This, I say, hast thou heard and seen, and yet hast not held fast, but hast cast away the things that thou hast heard, and hast been warned of : alas ! God will multiply His witnesses against thee, "Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof ; I, also, will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me ; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord : they would none of My counsel ; they despised all My reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices." "For the turning away of the

simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto. Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." "The Lord . . . is longsuffering to usward, not willing that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to *repentance*." (2 Peter iii. 9.)

The Three Spheres of Christ's Glory.

IN 1 Corinthians x. 32 the apostle furnishes us with a classification of mankind which greatly helps not only to the understanding of prophecy but of the whole word of God. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." Here we have the three great spheres in which the glory of Christ is displayed. As it respects man's condition before God in reference to eternity, there are but two classes, the saved and the unsaved—those who have been really born again, and those who are still in nature's darkness and unbelief. But with regard to God's government of the world there are three classes—Jews, Gentiles and the church; and no one can rightly divide the word of God who overlooks this division. To trace through scripture God's purpose concerning these three classes is the surest way to ascertain the order of God's dispensations, and the harmony of all portions of the holy scripture with each other. At present we can only refer to a few passages of scripture by way of introducing the reader to this threefold purpose of God.

1. "The Jews." In Genesis xii. 2, 3, "The Lord said unto Abram . . . I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." We have a further development of this purpose in chapter xiii. 14, 15, "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and west-

ward : for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." In chapter xv. the boundaries of the land are defined. In Deuteronomy xxviii. we have the blessings promised them in case of obedience, and the curses denounced against them in case of disobedience. But, alas ! the highly favoured people proved themselves a disobedient and stiffnecked race. "God exercised great forbearance towards them ; but after they had rejected and stoned the prophets, His servants, whom He sent unto them, He sent His Son, the heir of all things. Him they crucified and slew, and thus filled up the measure of their iniquities, and sealed their doom. On this account wrath came upon them to the uttermost ; their city and temple were destroyed : their country pillaged, its population put to the sword, or else carried away captive ; for nearly two thousand years they have been monuments of God's displeasure against sin, suffering the aggravated and complicated woes denounced against sin." (W.T.)

2. "The Gentiles." From the time that Abraham was called to be the father of God's peculiar people, He did not deal directly with any nation upon the earth, save the Jews. Until Nebuchadnezzar's time God's throne and presence were in the midst of Israel. From the time the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon, "the sovereign power in the earth ceased to be immediately exercised by God, and was confided to man, among those who were not His people, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. This was a change of immense importance, in respect of both the government of the world, and God's judgment of His people. Both led the way to the great objects of prophecy developed at the close—the restoration, through tribulation, of a rebellious people, and the judgment of an unfaithful and apostate Gentile head of power." (W.T.)

We have an account of this great change in the prophet Daniel (chap. ii.), "Thou, O king, art a king of kings ; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the

heaven, hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." The times of the Gentiles begin here. The power which was thus bestowed on the Babylonish king, descended to the Medes and Persians ; from thence it passed into the hands of the Greeks, and then to the Romans, the last kingdom represented by the image. The Roman empire, though after a while it was broken up into a number of separate kingdoms, continued its name in these kingdoms, and will continue it till the coming of the Lord. It is by this power that the Jews have been so fearfully wasted and oppressed. At the end of their seventy years' captivity a portion of the Jews returned to Jerusalem, but they were mere tributaries of the Persian king, they never afterwards had any independent government of their own. They were under the Roman yoke when Christ appeared amongst them, and they could not put their Messiah to death without the consent of the Roman governor, and the assistance of the Roman soldiers. A second time their city and temple were destroyed by the Gentiles, and the Saviour Himself declared that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke xxi. 24).

But these times will not last for ever. God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew. He will fulfil in due time the covenant of grace that He made with Abraham their father. They will yet be a great nation, and the head of all other nations—the centre from which blessing shall flow out to all the nations of the earth.

3. "The Church of God." The church, it will be seen, is something altogether distinct from both Jews and Gentiles. Christ came to the Jews—His own people, but they received Him not. He was despised and rejected of men. Jews and Gentiles united in accomplishing His death. By this act of crowning wickedness the condemnation of both was sealed. But God overruled all in richest sovereign grace. The blessed Jesus, rejected by men, having accomplished the great work of redemption, was raised from the dead, and placed at the right hand of power where He now waits till His enemies be made His

footstool. So long as He is seated at God's right hand, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached through His name in all nations. Whosoever of all these nations receives this message—believes the gospel—is pardoned, saved, and becomes associated with the rejected One of earth and the glorified One in heaven. The moment the Jew receives this message of mercy, he ceases to be a Jew; and the moment the Gentile receives it, he ceases to be a Gentile. This is a point of immense importance in the dispensational ways and dealings of God. The Jew, when he believes in Christ, dies to all his liabilities or privileges as a Jew, and to all his fondly cherished hopes of an inheritance in the land. The Gentile dies to all the share in the earthly which, for a while, is lodged in Gentile hands. What then, it may be asked, are they? They form part of the true church, for which the world has no place. They are but strangers and pilgrims now in this world. Their home is on high. They are called to share their Lord's humiliation on earth during His absence; they will share His glory when He returns.

Another truth of great practical importance now appears very plain; namely, that the church of God, the body of Christ, had no existence in fact till after the death, resurrection, and glory of Christ in heaven. One of the popular doctrines of those who look down upon others as in serious error is that "the church of God consists of all saved persons from the beginning to the end of time." The saints who compose the church, we readily admit, have many things in common with the Old Testament saints; such as, being quickened by the same Holy Spirit, justified through the same precious blood, preserved by the same almighty grace, and destined in resurrection to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. But the wondrous distinction of being Christ's body, His bride, baptised by the Holy Ghost, and thus one with Him as the exalted Man in the glory, are blessings peculiar to the church. In place of the church consisting of all believers from the beginning to the end of time, it is limited in scripture to the assembly of true believers from the day of Pentecost—when it was formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven—to

the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, to receive it to Himself, and bring it into the Father's house of many mansions.

It was by the cross that the middle wall of partition was broken down, that Jews and Gentiles might be formed into one body. "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain (Jews and Gentiles) one new man (not a continuation of the old, nor an improvement of the old, but One New Man), so making peace." (Ephesians ii. 14, 15.)

A.M.

She Could Not But Be Hid.

(Eph. iii. 9.)

AT times the *silence* or *secrecy* of scripture is most beautiful. This has been observed as to the genealogy of Melchisedec. Indeed the Spirit Himself has so referred to it in Heb. vii. But the same thing occurred to me, a day or two ago, as to Zipporah in Exod. xviii. We know that the meeting of the Gentile family there with the Israel of God on the mount, is the type of the communion of the heavenly and earthly families in the coming days of the glory. But having accomplished this purpose *Zipporah is seen and heard no more*. She retires, she shrinks, as it were, instinctively into the shade, and from that moment disappears. This is surely, like everything, perfect in its place; because, though, in the old dispensation, the heavenly family might show itself for a moment, or flit across the scene, yet, they were not to be detained, or occupy the foreground for more than an instant. They might glow for the twinkling of an eye, but then they must "*vanish into Heaven*." And so with the Gentile wife of Moses, the type of the heavenly bride, she glitters before the eye, just as it were to awaken enquiry after the mysterious stranger, or to attract with a sudden brightness beyond the common measure, or out of the way, and then she retreats, she could not *but* be hid.

Asenath, Joseph's wife, in like manner appears for a

moment, to serve as a beam of *heavenly* light (Gen. xli.) and then vanishes; for she also was a type of the church.

The church, the heavenly bride, was still a mystery. I might say, the two appearances of Zipporah have this character. She appears for a moment when Israel had rejected Moses, but disappears as soon as Moses begins to act again for Israel (Ex. ii., iv.), and reappears only on Israel's redemption, and arrival at the mount of God. The *first* of these short visions of this Gentile bride presenting the church or heavenly family as *now* gathered during Israel's unbelief—the *second* presenting her as *by and by* glorified while Israel is saved and blessed. Is not her zeal against circumcision a pattern? See Ex. iv. 25; Gal. v. 4.

J.G.B.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.”—2 John, verse 9. (Auth. Version.)

“Whosoever transgresseth” does not express the sense; the law has nothing to do with it, therefore the word “transgress” is a bad one. It should be, “Everyone that goes onward,” or “beyond” the truth of Christ. It is a further blow at those enamoured of progress, as if revealed truth could be like a human science susceptible of development. On the contrary, he who is not content with the truth which God has given in Christ, who therefore goes beyond that truth, really abandons and loses the truth for phantoms of man's mind. “Everyone that goeth forward and abideth not in the doctrine of the Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine, *he* hath both the Father and the Son.” Whatever may be the pretensions to higher light or truth, whatever may be his confidence in these new-fangled notions, he who goes forward out of the inspired word into ideas of his own head or imaginations of others “hath not God.” He is out of all present relationship with God, even of the most distant sort. Whereas “he that abideth in the doctrine (of the Christ), *he* hath both the Father and the Son”—the highest, deepest, and most intimate revelation of the Godhead.

The deep and wondrous truth is that He Who was the Son of God from all eternity should so come (i.e., in flesh).

My brethren, we owe all through grace to the Son of God and the Father Who sent and gave Him. If there be anything to which we are called as Christians to be resolute and unbending at all cost, it is where the glory and the truth of Christ are undermined and overthrown.

W.K.

The Gathering Together of Believers.—2.

(The substance of an address on Hebrews x. 19-30.)

THE ATTRACTIONS OF CHRIST

THIS power in Christ of gathering is so grand, so manifestly beyond human conception, yet so simple that even a child can understand it. The very babe leaps gladly out of its mother's arms to go to the Lord Jesus Christ. We read that He took the little child in His arms. Who indeed could resist His loving call, His gracious look, His tender compassion? Men's hearts too were captivated. The burly fishermen, who had fought for their lives on the waves of the Sea of Galilee, they, like babes, came to the meek and lowly Nazarene. He won their hearts and affections, and they left all and followed Him.

John the Baptist, the greatest born of woman, was a man whose burning words entered into the hearts of Pharisees and scribes and soldiers and all classes, bringing them in dust and contrition before God, so that he, wearing his camel-hair garment, went to Jordan and baptised them confessing their sins. But two of his disciples, when they saw the Lamb of God, left John, and followed Jesus.

Oh, beloved friends, here was One Who captivated men's hearts, One Who united the rich and the poor, the small and the great, all classes and conditions in happy harmony around Himself. If men would only believe and look, they found in Him just the very One that met

every aspiration of their hearts and satisfied every desire of their souls.

LIFTED UP TO DRAW TOGETHER.

But we know that the gracious words of the Lord Jesus, those words of heavenly sweetness that came from His lips, and fell upon the ears of the weary and sad in Galilee and Judea, that brought multitudes to Him, they were not enough. That ever-readiness on His part to feed the hungry and heal the sick and cleanse the leper and raise the dead, that was not enough. There were sins, black, ugly sins, sins in the sight of God, of which man himself was not aware. There they were, and the Lord Jesus saw them, and He became the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief that He might die for sins.

As the Lord passed through this world it was an alien world to Him. Sin was there, sins upon men and sin in their hearts. His death was a necessity for gathering together. And this came from the lips of a hateful high priest, a man who ought to have been the leader of the people in the ways of God but who was in the power of the Romans, an unrighteous man whose lips would shortly accuse the Lord Jesus and sentence Him to death; from his lips, from that unclean tongue, came the words about the Lord Jesus that He should die for the nation and "should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 51, 52).

Moreover, the Lord Himself said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me"—out of Jews and Gentiles, out of all the nations of the earth. He had come that the Gentiles might be brought out from their obscurity into the light and love of God. The Lord Jesus Christ was the uniting Centre of all who received Him. Everything for this gathering depended upon His death.

THE COMPANY OF HIS OWN IN THE WORLD.

And the Lord signified by His own word while He was here and by His ways, that He loved His own to be together. When the disciples of John heard of their master's death, poor sorrowful men, men that loved John with all

their hearts and believed him to be a prophet from God, they came with their sorrows to Jesus, and told Him. The disciples of the Lord, flushed with their successes, came, too, at the same time, or thereabouts, and told Him what they had done in His name. And the Lord led them into the wilderness into a place apart, to rest awhile, to be with Him.

What was to be their rest? In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In listening to His words and beholding His works, there would be rest for their souls. It was not just one man here and another there, but the company of His own that came together at the Lord's own invitation to rest with Him. With Him was the main feature of their assembling together.

Do you understand this truth, my friends? In the associations of believers in the name of the Lord Jesus, when we come together (if we come after a right sort), we come at the invitation of the Lord Jesus to rest in His presence. It is not in the presence of this one or that one. The apostles did not come into the wilderness to listen to what Peter had to say, or John or James, but their salvation, their joy and their life were all centred in Him, and they found their satisfaction in Him.

THE LORD IN THE MIDST.

Many a meeting together of believers has been absolutely wrecked as to spiritual value by this one fact that those that were together forgot that they were in the presence of the Lord. He was there, but they were unaware of His presence. I do not say they were forgetful wilfully: I will not charge my brethren with wilfulness. There are many external things to distract, to divide the attention, to turn the heart away from the unseen presence of the Lord Jesus Christ when we are together. Whether the company is small or large, the danger is to forget the greatest of all, the One Who makes the holiest of all, the One Who is the great High Priest, to forget that He is in the midst of the assembly of His saints. Faith must be in constant exercise, the faith that pierces the invisible and lays hold upon the One that we cannot see, and hears what the world knows

nothing about. Have you that faith? Have you realised it when you are assembled together unto the name of the Lord.

Beloved friends, it is no use our being together on any other ground or for any other purpose, than to meet (if I may so put it) the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has guaranteed His presence in Matthew xviii. 20. This is His word, on which we may count.

I was about to say the Lord knows when He is there. Of course He does, that is a platitude; but does it not seem a sad thing when the Lord comes to a gathering where a dozen or two dozen, or a hundred or two hundred, are present; and there are no hearts that are thinking of Him?

He comes into such a place and is unknown. Is it not then with Him as it was when He was in this world? He was a stranger, a lonely stranger. So few understood that He was the Son of God from heaven. So few understood that He was the Christ, the Prophet and Priest and King, God's delight too. He often looked round for response; and there was none, no heart to yield to Him the love of allegiance.

Do we wonder at the delight of our Lord as He entered that home at Bethany? There were three hearts, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, who welcomed Him. They were the brightest days of their lives, when He came. Mary sat at His feet and heard His word. She could not listen to Him too long. The words of the Lord brought peace and joy to her soul.

There is nothing like the word of Jesus. And, tell me, has He altered? Can it be that my Lord, my Saviour, has altered in His love during these past years? No, He is the same. It is we who have changed. It is we who come together, but are so confounded by our own weakness and taken up with the sense of some brother missing, of someone absent this morning and of what a dull time it will be. We are thinking, not of the Lord, but of other things, and the Lord is there all the while, unknown by His own. This is what He expects in the world, but among His own, should it be so? Is it not a thousand shames if ever it should be so? No wonder people forsake

the assembling of themselves together, if the Lord is forgotten by them!

It is a small thing for us to meet in the company of one another. I honour my brethren and sisters, but the best are not like Him. All the brethren taken together are not like Him, not a substitute for Him. And He is faithful that promised. There would not be any forsaking of assembling together if there was the realisation that the Lord Himself is there.

ASSEMBLING TO THE RISEN AND GLORIFIED ONE.

We find the Lord establishing and approving the truth of assembly when He rose from the dead, on the first day of the week, the very day of His resurrection. We know He appeared to some singly, but it was when they were assembled together, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews (one wonders if the doors were shut because they had an expectation of the Lord's coming) that the Lord stood in the midst. So soon did He verify His promise to the two or three gathered together.

The Lord hastened, as it were, from the grave to enter among His own, to show them His hands and His side. He wanted them to know that He was alive again and that He was the same Jesus, unchanged and unchangeable. Death had come upon His body, but it was the same Jesus, the same loving heart, and He had the same tender regard and unbounded affection for those poor disciples. He was there in the midst; and not only once. One apostle was absent, and the next first day of the week, He came again when they all were assembled together, and Thomas with them.

It was worth while coming together a second time, for they saw the Lord again and heard His voice and His word to Thomas. The Lord's heart was towards him who was slow of heart to believe, and He gave him what he wanted and restored him to the knowledge of his Master, so that out of his lips came that exclamation, "My Lord and my God."

Further, you can go on to the historical book of the Acts, and there see over and over again that this fact was

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characteristic of the church of God—they met together habitually. The whole assembly came together in Acts iv. because they were confronted by the powers at Jerusalem and told to keep their mouths shut and say nothing about Jesus. Say nothing about Jesus, the One Whom God has set at His own right hand! Say nothing about Him! Why, we are here for this very purpose, to be His witnesses in Jerusalem! God tells us to witness, you tell us to be dumb and to conceal the grace and the glory of our Master. We must speak, but first of all we will pray.

Pray always before speaking, and not only when you are going to speak to a company. Sometimes a person may put a question to you which is calculated to awaken improper feelings within you; pray before you speak in reply.

In this case the disciples came together and prayed, and the Lord answered. He was on the throne of power, and the place where they were assembled was shaken, as it was on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. Then they were filled with the Spirit and spoke with boldness.

They were assembled together in prayer. If they had been hurrying through the streets of Jerusalem each on his own business, the same thing would not have happened to them. But they had come together to pray. Here was a crisis, and they said, "We will go together before the Lord and spread the matter before Him, speak to Him about this threatening power of the world which showed its malice against Him when He was here in the days of His flesh." They prayed, and the answer came, and they spake the word of God with all boldness.

ASSEMBLING OURSELVES FOR PRAYER.

Do you believe in the power that comes from God in answer to united prayer? I do not speak of a specially composed prayer which may be printed and harmoniously recited aloud by the voices of all together and be made unanimous in a mechanical way of that kind, but of a unity which the Holy Spirit produces in the minds and hearts of a hundred or more diverse persons gathered together. Old men and women, young men and women, gathered together, and the Holy Spirit is among them and

in them. They are united, their hearts and their godly ambitions and desires are welded into one petition, arising to the throne of grace in the name of the Lord and what happens? God honours the name of His Son and sends down His omnipotent power in answer to united prayer.

Take your diary for the past year and mark in red ink the times in which you personally were present at united prayer meetings. Ask yourself why you have lacked in being together. Have you forsaken the assembling of yourselves together? that is to say, have you deliberately avoided being present at the prayer meeting?

If so, you are trifling with a holy purpose. God gives you a mighty power, a tremendous lever to use in His service, and you neglect it. You might have been present, you might have united your heart with what was said. Or, if nothing was said audibly, your heart could yet have come in the power of the Spirit before the throne of grace, and I am bound to say there would have been an answer. God is able and willing to do for us what is good, and especially if we seek it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I need not multiply scriptural instances, but I want this exhortation which we have in Hebrews to be before our hearts as a practical truth for our Christian intercourse and associations. There is the definite mention of assembling together, but of course it is implied that it is in accordance with scripture. It is not assembling for a human purpose, but for what is sincerely the desire of our hearts, the glory of Christ. This is going to be done, and it is God's power that is going to do it. God can use anything for the glory of His Son, and He will use you, perhaps. But the point now is that united beseeching at the throne of grace, earnest prayer from saints assembling together for the purpose, brings down power from on high.

Prayer comes first, perhaps, because prayer puts us in our right place in the holiest. Whether we are on our knees or standing before God, or prostrate on the ground as our blessed Lord was in Gethsemane, whatever the bodily attitude is, the heart must be right. It is much more difficult to get the heart right before the throne of grace, than the body.

It is the heart God looks at. He hears what comes from thence, even that silent sob going out to Him for help and for an answer to urgent petitions. Heart-language He hears, and especially when it is linked with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ASSEMBLING OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP.

There is not only united prayer, but united praise. Praise to God should come spontaneously. It should spring up like the well. Sometimes you have to pump and pump to get a little water; but that which is delightful and refreshing is that which comes spontaneously from the heart.

When we are together we look at the blessed Lord Jesus Christ in His glory, His love, His suffering and His death; and how can we be silent! Why, if we were silent, as the Lord said, the very stones would cry out against us. We were stones once, only dead things, but now we are living stones, made alive to praise God. Let us not forget our privilege as priests to God to offer spiritual sacrifices, giving thanks to Him continually.

The spirit of praise in the assembly is sometimes too deep for words. There is the contemplation of something so beautiful and sublime in the excellencies of Christ that we are struck down in admiring wonder. No words can then express the worship of the assembly. Our Lord loves such silences of His saints, when their feelings and spiritual devotions are beyond audible expression. No one present in the assembly may be sufficiently full of the Spirit and taught of God to express what is on the hearts of all the saints. Yet these are seasons of worship and adoration enjoyed by being felt, not by being expressed. Nevertheless, God deserves our united praise, and the assembling of ourselves together should be for that definite purpose.

THE ASSEMBLING OF DEAD AND LIVING SAINTS.

Now, it is striking that the word used in this verse for "assembling together" is an uncommon word in the New Testament and it occurs in one other place only, to which I will ask you to turn now for a moment, not to discourse upon it but to invite your attention to its significance.

In 2 Thess. ii. 1, the apostle is speaking about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the second time the Thessalonians went wrong as to the expectation of the Lord's return, and the apostle writes to correct them.

He besought them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering (assembling) together unto Him." We know how the scripture describes the coming of our Lord. The Lord Himself shall come; there will also be the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. There will be the Lord's own call to His own. It will penetrate to the tombs and awaken the sleeping saints, and those that are alive and remain will be changed in a moment, and be fashioned like unto the Lord Himself with a body of glory. There will thus be a great gathering together, an assembling—the raising of the dead in Christ and the rising of the living ones from the earth. There will be a mighty company, who will respond to the trump of God, to the voice of the archangel, and to the voice of the Lord Himself, and the vast assembly of saints will ascend up to meet the Lord in the air.

This is the final earthly scene of the church, assembled once for all at the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many who associated together in circumstances of difficulty and self-denial, honouring the name of the Lord in obscure and out-of-the-way places of the earth, and were despised by others for so doing, will then be seen rising in the air, all conformed to the image of God's Son, all bent upon one object, all filled with one desire—to be for ever with the Lord. Thus the Lord will assemble His own in the heavens, taking away the salt of the earth, and leaving the unsavoury thing to go hastening to that awful corruption upon which His judgment will speedily fall.

As you go your mile or two to the assembly of the saints on earth, think of what it will be when the Lord speaks the word of command, and that mighty company—oh! that it were mightier still, and that all the world might answer to the Lord in that day!—that company of all those who have believed on Him and suffered for His name. They all will hear His voice, and will gladly respond in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

They will come up to the presence of His glory. They

will assemble from the earth and the sea, from the east and the west, from every continent and island, from town and city and countryside; they will all come to the one loving glorious Saviour, their Lord. They have long waited for the Lord, now they hear His voice, now they gather in His presence never more to disperse; they form an assembly that begins but never ends. They are for ever with the Lord, and He has His own in the courts of the Father's house, in the place He has prepared for them with His own loving hands.

The glory of that gathering will be great. We might well be confounded and dazzled, and so we should be, but the Lord will be there to make us at home in the courts of His Father's house.

Wherever He goes, we shall be with Him. When He comes to take His rightful place and reign righteously in this world, we shall be with Him. We shall never leave Him, and when the kingdom is over and the solid realities of an eternity begin, we shall still be with Him, with the Lord of all.

The assembly, that assembly in glory, the ideal assembly will begin but never end. But there are now assemblies of God on earth, and I put it to you as I put it to myself, there is the danger of my forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, of letting some trifling thing prevent my attendance, as if there was something of greater claim upon me than the Lord's Person and presence. One cannot answer for another, but the Lord has made the gathering of faith so real and true in His word that to neglect and despise it is a serious matter for us all.

Let us not take it for granted that we may *sometimes* forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but let us shut out for ever the unworthy thought, banish it from our hearts. Let us fill ourselves with the glory and beauty of the Lord Jesus, the One Who is there and with what He has done to make it possible for us to come into the presence of God and to worship Him. Let us be so taken up with the privileges of assembling together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it will never cross our thoughts to be absent from the place where the Lord is, where He comes to be in the midst of His own.

W.J.H.

Notes of an Address on Lev. xi.

IN the tenth chapter God commanded Aaron and his sons not to drink wine or strong drink, lest their senses should be obscured, so that they would not be able to discern between the clean and the unclean in God's sight.

Here we have the discerning what is unclean and clean ; and on referring to Peter's vision, in the tenth of Acts, we see that the Lord uses clean and unclean beasts as types of persons (in that case of Cornelius and the Gentiles) ; so that we may fairly take the clean and unclean in this eleventh chapter of Leviticus, to show God's estimate of the same in man.

Who are the *clean* ? Those having the cloven foot, and chewing the cud. The cloven hoof only treads on the ground with the very tip of the toe ; it walks as it were above the ground, above the ways of the world, on the rock, as in Habakkuk iii. 19, "Walking on high places." So having our eyes anointed with the true eyesalve, and not stupified with the strong drink of the folly of this world, we may discern with whom we should have fellowship—"with those that walk above the world." This is the outward sign.

Then there is an inward sign ; not merely eating in a moment, but turning the food over and over ; so the inward sign in the one who is to live as a true Christian is—one who meditates on the word continually, feeds upon it over and over again and loves it.

H.W.S.

Note on Psalm xlix. 5.

"Iniquity of heels."

A respected correspondent suggests that the true meaning of this somewhat difficult phrase is shown in The New Translation by J. N. Darby, where we read "the iniquity of my *supplanters* encompasseth me." The iniquity therefore is seen to be not his own but that of others who would trip him up.

Exceeding Joy.

(Jude 24; 1 Peter iv. 13; Heb. xii. 2; Luke vi. 23.)

WHEN I have safely reached the further shore—
All joy and gladness live unfading there,
Sorrows have fled, and sighs for evermore,
No evil tidings shock the tranquil air—
Oft shall I turn amid Heaven's high employ,
Wondering to watch my Lord's exceeding joy.

From those long days without beginning, spent
In joy and gladness by the Father's side,
Drawn by that joy before Him set, He went,
Endured the cross, despised the shame, and died.
Ah! noblest scorn! Ah! patience all divine!
Glad in His sorrows, if but joy be mine!

Through fire and tempest brought all safe to land,
Behold the Almighty's sons and daughters ranged
Faultless before His presence; see them stand
In Him accepted, by His Spirit changed!
Which joy exceeds? Our bliss of endless years,
Or His high rapture won through cries and tears?

Rejoice then now, and leap for joy, to know
Glory in shame, and calm when scoffers call;
The furnace fires burn low—cool breezes blow,
Or shadows from the soaring cloudland fall;
Even death is life for Him Whose pierced hands
Unseal joy's brimming fountains for all lands.

Ah! who will show us any good like this?
Joy, for the Lord of joy, to bring and share?
When from the gay world's promises of bliss
Sprang ever flowers of happiness so fair?
Here then on earth be this our high employ,
To tell the world of this exceeding joy.

A.E.M.

The Pearl of Great Price.

FROM high the Lord beheld, ere worlds began ;
As though it was the residence of man,
This teeming earth, by sin and hate defiled,
Estranged from God, perverted, lawless, wild.

But underneath the mass of sin and vice
He saw a pearl of untold, matchless price,
On it He set His yearning heart, and then
Gave all He had and bought the priceless gem.

Of it possess'd, His gracious purpose is
To make it shine in everlasting bliss ;
To polish it is now His constant care,
His image on its beauteous face to bear.

A. M.

Cities of Refuge.

(Read Numbers xxxv.)

IN the scripture before us we have the unfolding of God's wonderful provision of grace for any who had unwittingly killed another. What a blessed thing to be under the direct governmental rule of such a God as this, Who would have absolute justice in every way, and that in love and mercy in all its details !

The children of Israel, God's chosen people, are just about to enter into the land of promise. Forty years have passed since God had delivered them from the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt ; they might have entered into the land at once, had it not been for their disobedience and unbelief, but now the time has come to a close, and they are to enter into possession of their own land, and God graciously makes provision for the needs that may arise. Who but God would have thought of such a gracious provision? Six cities are provided, situated in such a way that the slayer,

wherever he might be, would have ready access to one or the other. The cities were named—were publicly known—everything was as plain, as simple and as easy as possible. Worthy in every way of such a God as ours.

It was also clearly defined who it was that could find safety in these cities. If a murderer sought shelter he had to be given up to justice; there was to be no compromise for that; his blood must be shed by the avenger. God's word was emphatic, as we have seen in vv. 16-21, 30-34.

But there was no safety for the slayer outside those cities, and he was responsible to put forth all his energy to reach the place of safety so graciously provided.

Is it likely that anyone would be so blind as to fold his arms in cool indifference, and say, "If I am to escape I shall escape; my efforts are not needed"? "If I am not fated to escape I cannot escape; all *my* efforts would be of no avail!" No, we cannot fancy a manslayer using such silly language as this. He well knew that if the avenger could but lay hands upon him such notions would be of no account whatever.

There was but one thing to be done, and that was to escape for his life! He was in danger and it was for him to flee from impending judgment to find safety within the gates of the City of Refuge. Once there he could breathe freely—no evil could overtake him. *The moment he crossed the threshold* of the gate he was as safe as God's provision could make him. If a hair of his head could be touched within the bounds of the city it would be a dishonour and a reproach upon the ordinance of God. Within he was perfectly safe—if without he was in danger.

But you no doubt noticed that he was an exile from his home, away from all that was dear to him, and he had to wait for the death of the High Priest which was to set him free, perfectly free, and restore him once more to his inheritance and his people.

Now I have no doubt that this beautiful picture has special reference to Israel (the Jew). They have killed

the Prince of Life, but the question is, in which way are they viewed by God—as the murderer or as the slayer? No murderer could be sheltered within the City of Refuge. I think we find the law as to Israel's case stated very clearly in the chapter we have read.

Now to make this clear we will turn to a verse in John xviii., verse 35. This proves Israel to be the murderer, and Peter brings it home to them with no uncertain sound in Acts v. 30-31. This proves without a doubt that Israel as a nation delivered up and murdered the Son of God! But now I want to show you the grace of God in such an extremity as this, so just turn with me to Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Can you understand such marvellous, such matchless grace of God to Israel as this? He is to be treated as the man-slayer and not as the murderer! Such is the God, beloved friends, with Whom we have to do. Can you comprehend such love, such grace?

You ask, Was that prayer heard? Was it answered? Did it reach His Father's ear, and did He respond to such a request? Yes, indeed, for after the Day of Pentecost the apostle Peter gave utterance to wonderful words by the Holy Ghost, recorded in Acts iii. 17, "And now, brethren (the Jewish nation), I wot that through ignorance ye did it!"

It still holds good, and Israel is still an exile from their land and home of their fathers, but the time is rapidly approaching when they will be restored. But not by the death of the High Priest, blessed be His Name, He can never die! But He will leave His present position and come forth as the Royal Priest to sit upon His own throne, and all Israel will be gathered to Him.

But we must not forget that though it *was* the Jew that delivered up the Son of God, *it was the Gentile* who dared to stretch forth his hand to do the terrible deed. But, wonder of wonders, God has turned, in His matchless grace, even this to the richest account, *for by it He has provided a seventh City of Refuge!*

Under the law there were only six provided, and we read in Heb. vii. 19, these words : "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God." Christ, a perfect Refuge, is provided ! Blessed news !

Beloved friend, let me warn you that outside of Christ you are exposed to danger, you are exposed to the wrath of God ! If it would have been wild folly on the part of the slayer to linger or hesitate for a moment till he found himself safely lodged in the City of Refuge, it is surely still wilder folly, yea, the height of madness, on the part of the sinner to linger or hesitate in coming to Christ. There is no possibility of escape, however near you may be, if still outside. It is possible that the slayer might evade the diligent eye of the avenger of blood. But see what God has to say about us in Heb. ii. 1-3, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Be warned in time, every moment is precious ; tarry not ; flee for thy life ; delay is madness. You know not the hour you may be cut down ; the sword of judgment hangs over you. If cut down in your sins you will go to that place where not one ray of hope can ever reach you ; the place of eternal night, eternal woe, eternal torment ; where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. But how blessed are those who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us (see closing verses of Heb. vi.).

Standing and Peace of the Soul.

AS regards the standing and peace of the soul, it is deeply important to see that while what we are always struggling for is to get something in which we can come before God, it is God Who comes to us in the gospel, with His, as our only righteousness. In its aspect it is unto all, but in its application it is upon those who believe. Another thing connected with peace of soul has to be observed. Someone may say : "I don't deny His divine righteousness ; I believe it ;

but how am I to know that it is applied to me? I want it applied to my soul." Well, God has applied it to you, if you believe. If in the consciousness of your sinfulness you have believed the record that God has given of His Son, then you have had it applied to your soul, for it is upon all who believe. If you go on tampering with sin or the world, God must work this out of you, and the same is the case if there be the pride of self-righteousness; but what is believed is, Who His Son is and what He has done. If there is tampering with sin or the world in our souls, it prevents our laying hold of the truth; and even if we have found divine righteousness, we cannot have the joy of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, for God must be real to us. What we have to rest on is Christ's dying for our sins and the acceptableness of His person.

Many Christians, instead of resting there, look for something better in themselves. This is not submitting to God's righteousness; not resting in what Christ is. They have not learnt the value of the cross nor its meaning. They tremble for fear, but they would not do so if they knew that their sins were put away. How could they be looking for good in themselves if they knew that the cross was the final condemnation of all flesh? You say you have no other confidence than the cross. It may be so as to your conviction of the truth, and you may feel your need of it, so as to know you cannot do without it. I suppose you do or you would not look to it, but you have not yet learnt the value of the cross, which purges the conscience by the absolute putting away of sin. And the secret of it is that you are still looking for something besides sin in yourself. You are still hankering after your own goodness; you do not think yourself as thoroughly bad as the cross proves you to be. In the cross God has condemned sin in the flesh, and that is all you are in yourself. You have yet to learn that it is the ungodly whom God justifies: you will have more than that, but you must come to that first. It is "being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

It is not mere justification from sins but actual deliverance—entire redemption. Thus, in the figure of Israel, it was one thing for them to be screened from the destroying angel by the blood sprinkled on the doorposts in Egypt, and another and very different thing for them to be brought clean out of Egypt by the passage of the Red Sea; this was being entirely delivered from the power of Pharaoh. And more than this, Christ has broken and destroyed all the power of death by which Satan held us, and has made us who were his captives the vessels of God's power and testimony against Satan.

J.N.D.

“Salted with Fire” and “Salted with Salt.”

“For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another.”—

Mark ix. 49-50.

IN this passage the Lord declares that everyone should be salted with fire—the good as well as the bad. Where there was life, the fire would only consume the flesh; for when we are judged we are chastened by the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world. If the judgment reaches the wicked (and it assuredly will), it is condemnation—a fire that is not quenched. But for the good there was also something else: they should be salted with salt. Those who were consecrated to God, whose life was an offering to Him, should not lack the power of holy grace which binds the soul to God and preserves it inwardly from evil. Salt is not the gentleness that pleases (although grace produces that without doubt), but it is that inward energy which connects everything in us with God and dedicates the heart to Him, binding it to Him in the sense of desire and of obligation—obligation that flows from grace and acts all the more powerfully on that account. It is the energy of holiness

which separates us from all evil and sets us apart for God. "Salt is good": here the effect produced in the soul (the condition of the soul) is so-called, as well as the grace that produces it. Thus those who offered themselves to God were set apart for Him; they were the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith can it be salted? Salt is used for seasoning other things, but if it lose its own quality there is nothing that can season them. So would it be with christians. If those who belonged to Christ did not render the testimony entrusted to them, where could anything else be found to render the testimony and produce its effect? Now this sense of obligation to God which separates the soul from evil, this judgment of all evil in the heart, must be in oneself. It is not a question of judging others, but of placing oneself thus before God. With regard to others one must seek peace; and it is only by real separation from all evil that we are enabled to walk in peace together.

In a word, christians were to keep themselves separate from evil and near to God; and thus to walk with God in peace one with another.

No instruction could be plainer, more important, or more valuable. It judges, it directs, the whole christian life in a few words.

J.N.D.

The Occupation of the Heart with Good.

(Acts iv. 8-12.)

OUR boldness for Christ before the world, and the calmness of our spirit in the presence of opposition will always hang on the measure in which our *hearts* are occupied with the good we have found in Christ. In truth, the proper occupation of the heart of a saint is with good, and nothing but good. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, what-

soever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8).

The mind *habitually* thinking on that which is good, will, in result, find "*the God of peace*" will be with it; as the heart that is careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known its requests to God, will be kept by "*the peace of God* which passeth all understanding." This is beautifully exemplified in the apostles' walk, generally, and especially in the scene before us.

The rulers are against the preaching of Christ; but the mind of the apostles, dwelling on the blessedness of Christ and possessed and filled with the things they had seen and heard, have peace *within*, and power *without*, so that their enemies are obliged to ascribe the effect, not to a natural source, but to companionship with Christ. "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" (ver. 13). This power resulted from their hearts being occupied with *good*. They did not occupy their minds in alleging the evil, much less with the wrong done to themselves; they simply said, "We know Jesus Whom ye have crucified." Having known the value of Jesus, and being possessed with a deep sense of the power of the good, they discern at once what was the great sin of those before whom they are arraigned—"Whom ye crucified." The apostle was occupied with the love of souls, and hence he did not for a moment trouble himself with the chief priest; but speaking of the good, he condemned the evil. If he says, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders," it is because his heart was possessed with the truth, "Neither is there salvation in any other."

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is of the last importance, therefore, to attend to the injunction, "If there be any virtue, if there be any PRAISE, think on these things." We cannot feed our own souls nor the souls of the saints when speaking of evil. It is only when speaking of *good* that we get *refreshed* and God gets any *praise*. We

are to be "simple concerning evil, and *wise* concerning *good*.

When the soul delights in the good it is because it is regenerate and has tasted the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Tell such an one that he was regenerated by baptism or any other figment, and he will know better. The soul having tasted the good becomes master of the evil. A deep sense of the knowledge of the *good* will keep even the weakest saint from the *deception of the evil*. It is the knowledge of the good that gives the power. But this is not obtained by elaborate teaching, but the teaching of the Holy Ghost in what is good. If a man tell me I must not talk of the salvation which is in Jesus—must not speak to souls—all he could say would never prevent me. My answer would be as the apostle's—"I cannot but speak that which I have seen and heard."

No praise can arise out of a soul dwelling on evil. The blessedness of being *possessed* with *good* is seen in Malachi ii. 6, 7 : "The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth ; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." The character of a soul filled with the spirit of Jesus is that it must ever *crave* the *good*. All we want for every possible *exigency* is to be found in Jesus. If I want *power*, I look to *Christ risen* and *get it*, in what *He is there*, "far above all principality and power" (Eph. i. 21). If I want love and sympathy, I get it in *Jesus down here*. I see God (in Jesus) on earth ; I find divine glory developed in the lowest place on earth ; for when Jesus was brought lowest, then we see God most ; and in some circumstances nothing but God in Jesus could do what Jesus did when on earth. If I want the comfort of love, I must carry my heart there, and get my spirit imbued with what Jesus was on earth. For I get holy sympathy in Jesus down here—*power* in what Christ is at God's right hand.

Extracted.

The Lord's Answers to Disciples' Questions.

(John xiv. 1-10.)

THREE questions are asked in this chapter, and the answers provide us with much instruction.

The question I wish to call attention to is the one put by Philip in verse 8. But I will first notice what the Lord says in verse 2 concerning His Father's house. He says: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

His disciples might have thought that while there was no doubt a place for Him in the Father's house, there was no place for them there. So the Lord anticipates any thought of that kind by telling them that there were many abodes in the Father's house and that He was going to prepare a place for them. Not only so. He would come again and receive them unto Himself that where He was they might be also. Then He says: "And whither I go ye know and the way ye know." Thomas says: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus answers this by saying: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." This calls forth Philip's question. We first hear of Philip in chapter i. of this Gospel. We there read that the Lord finds Philip and says to him, "Follow Me." Philip does so; he obeys; reminding us of Samuel's words: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Well, Philip says here: "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Notice the words "Shew us." Philip thinks of others besides himself: the blessing is not for himself alone. Then the Lord's answer: "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak

unto you I speak not of Myself; but (rather, and) the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.”

This is indeed a revelation of immense importance. The Lord's words were the Father's words and the Lord's works were the Father's works. He had come from the Father and He was going back to Him. He had been sent by the Father to make Him known and He could say, as already noticed, “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” This reminds us of His words in the 11th of Matthew: “Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”

This, I repeat, is a wonderful revelation. To know the Father's heart of love toward us; to know that we are to have a place with the Son in the Father's house; and to have it revealed to us by the One Who was sent by the Father, Who spoke the Father's words and did His works, should indeed satisfy our hearts and make them overflow in thanksgiving and worship.

E. R.

God's Judgment About His People.

(Numbers xxiii. and xxiv.)

BALAM'S four utterances give four pictures of blessing. First, the people of God called out (xxiii. 9); second, their justification and entire safety (vv. 20, 21, 23); third, the present proper blessing of God's people (xxiv. 5-6); fourth, the Lord's coming (vv. 17-24); the latter in Jewish connection, not that of the church.

Consider the circumstances in which this prophecy was given. Not when Israel sang in the first joy of redemption, but after they had gone through all the difficulties of the wilderness, after they had known failure. The question now to be settled was whether Satan had a title to shut the door of the kingdom against them, because of failure after redemption.

This is met by learning the abiding power and value

of God's work. His all-controlling power will bring them in, in spite of everything. It is not through what we have wrought that we are brought in at the end, any more than at the beginning, but through what God has wrought. And in the value of that He sees them, not only without iniquity and perverseness, but as trees of lign aloes which the Lord has planted, at the very time they were murmuring against Him, despising the manna, etc., etc.

When He is settling the question with Israel it is very different. He then passes over nothing, but here it is His judgment *about* Israel. He knew what they were when He brought them out and separated them from the nations; and God is not a man that He should repent. What can change His purpose? Hath He said, and shall He not make it good? And remember what He has said of believers. Balaam would gladly have found means to bring a curse on God's people; but he is obliged to say, "He hath blessed and I *cannot* reverse it." If God be for us, who *can* be against us?

When it is a question of justification He beholds no iniquity in His people. Experience of the wilderness makes us need something more than Ex. xii., even that which this chapter teaches us. It is said of Israel, all the way through, what hath God wrought? It is not "what a heart there is in me," so desperately wicked even after conversion, but what a heart there is in God for me!

"Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob": Balaam in vain attempts it; his efforts only bring out each time a fresh declaration, a further aspect of blessing. Note, Balaam never said, "Let me live the life of the righteous," he had no heart for that, but "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It is *God* Who brings us in through *His* work. *His* worth, *His* word are mine, to rest my heart upon. God must fail before a believer can be lost.

ANON.

The Armour of God.

(Ephesians vi. 10-18.)

IN Scripture the Christian is looked at in three ways : (1) as in Egypt under the shelter of the blood; (2) as in the wilderness with the flesh within him; and (3) as in Canaan fighting against outside enemies. In Canaan the children of Israel entered into the possessions given them by God, as He said to Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (Josh. i. 3). Further on, in verse 13, we read, "The Lord your God hath given you rest and hath given you this land"; and if the people had been faithful, what happened at Jericho would have happened all over the land, that is, the walls of the cities would have fallen down at the blast of the rams' horns.

It is in Canaan, when wrestling against spiritual wickedness in high (or heavenly) places, that the armour of God is needed. It is not needed, indeed it is of no use, in the wilderness, because there the enemy is within. In the wilderness the enemy is the flesh, and this, if not kept under, will lead one back into Egypt, that is, into the world.

A close attention to the words used in this 6th chapter of Ephesians shews that it is a question of standing firm, standing against the wiles of the devil. The christian is looked at as a target against whom the devil will direct his arrows. Notice the word "Stand." It occurs in verse 11 and again in verses 13 and 14, and then comes a description of the state in which the christian should be. Loins girt about with truth; having on the breastplate of righteousness, that is, righteousness that can be seen; and shod with peace for the purpose of going over rough places. The prodigal son, on returning to his father, was shod (Luke xv. 22), denoting that he was no stranger, but a son. In the East, a stranger on entering a house removes his shoes, but one belonging to the house

keeps them on. The shoes on the feet denote that all is peace. Then, being in the right state, the christian can take the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Finally, he must be clothed with humility; he must be in an attitude of prayer, shewing complete dependence on God: "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

P.C.H.

The Refiner of Silver.

A FEW ladies, who regularly met together in Dublin to read the Scriptures, and make them the subject of conversation, were reading the third chapter of Malachi.

One of the ladies gave it as her opinion that the fuller's soap and the refiner of silver were images designed to teach the same view of the sanctifying influence of the grace of Christ; while another observed: "There is something remarkable in the expression of the third verse, 'He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver'." They agreed that possibly it might be so, and one of the ladies promised to call on a silversmith and report to them what he said on the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling the object of her errand, asked him as to the process of refining silver, which he fully described to her.

"But, sir," said she, "do you sit while the work of purifying is going on?" "Oh, yes, madam," replied the silversmith, "I must sit, with my eye steadily fixed on the furnace, for, if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be injured."

At once she saw the beauty, and the comfort, too, of the expression, "He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver." Our Father sees it needful to put His children into the furnace, but Christ is seated by the side of it. His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for them. Their trials do not come

at random; the very hairs of their heads are all numbered.

As the lady was leaving the shop, the silversmith called her back and said he had still further to mention that he only knew when the process of purifying was complete by seeing his face reflected in the silver. Beautiful figure! When God sees Christ's image in His children His work of purifying is accomplished.

ANON.

(Supposed to have been written about 1830.)

“The Things Which Cannot Be Shaken.”

“ONCE more I shake not the earth only, but the heavens. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

These words bear the stamp of God's greatness and majesty. No man spake them, but God. We find similar words in Haggai ii. 6 and 7, but even more powerful: “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.”

This word was spoken to the Jewish exiles, on their return to their own country, to comfort them concerning their ravaged temple and Jerusalem, which lay in ruins. The old men wept when they thought of the glory of former days and God comforted them by the mouth of His prophet Haggai. A time will come when all earthly greatness shall lie in ruin. Then God's greatness shall be revealed and He shall become the desire of all nations. The Hebrews, to whom these

words were addressed, also lived in the midst of terrible times. Palestine, the land of the Jews, was governed by the Romans. The explanations of the Scriptures of the Rabbis were overthrown by the light that shone from Golgotha. The rule of the temple was set at nought by the christians, who taught that Christ Himself was the true temple. The Sabbath rest was disturbed, since the christians kept the first day of the week as the Lord's Day. And the greatest disturbance was caused by the preaching of grace by the apostles throughout the whole world. "Take courage," says the apostle, as it were, to the young believers, "pay attention to the word which God has spoken: I shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. But nothing that is of eternal value shall be destroyed." The visible and temporal, that is, "the things which can be shaken" shall disappear, and the "things which cannot be shaken," the eternal things, shall take their place.

We also live in a time of great disturbances. Human creations are crumbling, nations and peoples are tottering, and disasters in nature cause anxiety. But God's eternal truth comes out more distinctly in contrast. Mankind is full of questions. Theories are subjected to the fiery test, but no jot or tittle of the truth of the gospel can be lost, the truth which is in Christ Jesus.

God's word does not change or falter. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away," says Christ. "All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass . . . but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 25). Therefore ye who have accepted His word, be not afraid. The adversaries shall perish as the chaff, which the wind driveth away.

Let this be the resting-place for our souls: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. He who rests in Him absolutely is sure of "the things that cannot be moved."
(From the German.)

The Testimony of God.

THE witnesses of God on the earth are three—the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three agree in one: “for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.”

The heart is constantly looking for God to give it a testimony about itself; but God is giving a testimony about His Son, and not about us. If God were to give testimony about us, it must be concerning our sin and unbelief of heart. But no; and it is of great importance in this day of infidelity to see that if God gives a testimony it is about His Son and what He is to the sinner. If you believe that you will get peace.

If I am going about to get a standing before God on the ground of my holiness, that would be self-righteousness, and of course I shall not get a witness from God as to that. But if my soul takes its stand with God on the testimony which He has given to His Son, then I get the witness in myself. When I have got this faith, I have got the thing in my own soul. For instance, look at Paul before Agrippa: he says, “I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” He was so thoroughly conscious that the Christ in his soul was the Christ in heaven, and he was so happy in this consciousness that he wished the whole company were like himself (except the bonds), having Christ as a well of water springing up within. That which makes heaven to be a heaven to the saint is just this—he finds the same Christ in heaven that he has in his own soul; and all the subtleties of infidelity cannot touch the soul that possesses Christ thus within. No reasoning of an infidel can shake my confidence if I am happy in Christ; for if a man came and told me there was no Christ, when my soul was happy in Him, I should not listen to him. There may be no intellectual or logical proof

on my part, but there is a moral testimony in the happiness of my soul, the warmth of my affections being centred in Christ. I have often found how much it tells with men of all conditions to assure them that I am perfectly happy in Christ and quite sure of going to heaven. "Are you so?" they say; "I only wish I could say it." There is a craving in man's heart that will never be met until he gets Christ there; for man is never happy without Christ, whatever he may say.

J.N.D.

Aphorisms.

WE must not put the Holy Spirit in the place of scripture; but we must remember that it is the Spirit, through the scripture, that gives us the knowledge of God's mind.

It is God's faithfulness that gives His mind where two or three are gathered together; or if it be the individual, it is, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." "If any man will do His will, he shall know the doctrine."

It matters not in what form I get the mind of the Lord; I am not to ask as to the form: "we have the mind of Christ." But there is need of a lowly state of soul.

I do not admit the principle that there is commandment in anything, as merely ordained, in the New Testament. Every thing is binding upon me that is there; but then it is on the principle that the Holy Ghost bows my will to the mind of God.

I do not look at the Lord's table as a matter of command; it is a blessed privilege thus to remember Christ, and love makes me obedient to do His will. I do not pray because I am commanded, though there may be a command. If people pray only because they are commanded, it is a poor work.

It is an important thing to remember that when God's glory is concerned, one must act without a command. Moses did so when he took the tabernacle outside the camp, because Israel had set up the calf within. But one may have gathered the mind of God from His word. *Extracted.*

The Border of His Sanctuary.

(Isaiah xxxiii. 17.)

GLORIOUS and solemn hour,
 Thus at last to stand,
 All behind us the great desert,
 All before the Land!

Past the shadows of the valley,
 Past the weary plain,
 Past the rugged mountain pathway
 Ne'er to be again.

But before us ever stretching
 In its golden sheen,
 Lies the fair, the blessed country
 Where our hearts have been,

Where our hearts have been whilst wandering
 Through the desert bare,
 For the soul's adored beloved One,
 He abideth there.

Clad in love and glory stands He
 On that glowing shore,
 There to speak the blessed welcome,
 All our journey o'er;

Now at last our eyes behold Him,
 At His feet we fall;
 "Two or three" have we adored Him,
 Now are gathered all.

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All His saints from all the ages,
 Every clime and tongue,
 All together now we worship
 In a faultless song ;

In the song no discord troubles
 And no weakness mars,
 Sound we loud His Name beloved,
 Far beyond the stars.

Glorious and solemn hour,
 On the verge to stand,
 Of that endless day of worship,
 Of that blessed land !

Not our sorrow we remember,
 All is lost in bliss,
 But our shame gives deeper sweetness
 To the Father's kiss.

Shame—that all that desert journey
 Nothing more could prove
 Than the marvels of His patience,
 How divine His love.

Solemn hour—thus on the margin
 Of that wondrous day
 When the former things have vanished,
 Old things passed away ;

Nothing but HIMSELF before us,
 Every shadow past . . .
 Sound we loud our word of witness,
 For it is the last. ANON.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”—I John v. 11-12.

Our Standing and State.

IT is most precious to the Christian to remember that, whatever else may change, his **STANDING IN CHRIST**, through the exceeding riches of the grace of God, remains always the same. Founded as it is on the everlasting efficacy of the work of the cross, and effected by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, nothing can possibly shake his nearness and acceptance in Him. The believer's experience may be pleasant or painful; his circumstances may be prosperous or adverse; he may be at one time in the sweetest, happiest enjoyment of fellowship with the Lord, and at another time distressed and humbled under the buffetings of a messenger of Satan; but all through, his standing in Christ is unmoved—he is unchangeably accepted in the Beloved. With all believers he is entitled to say, "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians i. 7).

Such is the unalterable character of the **STANDING** of the believer; he is a new creation **IN** Christ Jesus. But his **STATE OF SOUL** is another thing, and it is well to distinguish between them.

A Christian servant-girl once said to the writer, "I am sorry to say, sir, that my **STATE** does not correspond with my **STANDING**." In this remark she was only expressing the minds of many more.

In one sense, if our **STATE** were as perfect as our **STANDING**, we should be practically perfect; but, in another aspect of the subject, we judge it cannot but be very displeasing to the Lord when our state of soul is very contrary to the mind of Him Who is our life and righteousness—the Holy and the True—in Whom we are always seen by God as He is.

To hold high truth, and to go on contentedly with a low walk, cannot but grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. And yet it cannot be controverted that this is a striking feature among Christians in our day. Now what is to be done? We cannot certainly give up the most blessed

truth of our standing, and oh, the endearing relationships with the Father and the Son, into which divine grace has brought us, and made known to us by the Holy Ghost; but should we not consider how far these relationships and our present **STANDING** are so apprehended by us as to produce that **STATE** of soul which such marvellous grace must necessarily effect in us? How true it is that we love Him because He first loved us!

H. H. S.

Then and Now.

ONCE I stood in condemnation,
 Waiting thus the sinner's doom,
 Christ in death has wrought salvation,
 God has raised Him from the tomb.

Once I was to God a stranger,
 Filled with enmity and fear;
 He has rescued me from danger,
 Love revealed and brought me near.

Now I see in Christ's acceptance
 But the measure of my own;
 He Who lay beneath my sentence
 Seated high upon the throne.

Quickened, raised and in Him seated,
 I a full deliverance know;
 Every foe has been defeated,
 Every enemy laid low.

Now I have a life in union
 With the risen Lord above;
 Now I drink in sweet communion
 Some rich foretaste of His love.

Soon, O Lord! in brightest glory,
 All its vastness I'll explore;
 Soon I'll cast my crown before Thee,
 Whilst I worship and adore.

ANON.

Notes of an Address given in 1856.

(1 Samuel xxx.)

THIS chapter is the inauguration, as it were, of David in the kingdom; it was the discipline God was putting David through, to make him ready for the kingdom. If we were to look into the mind of God, we should see that He has no other thought but to exalt us, but He will have us to trust in Him—"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. v. 6).

Moses was forty years in the wilderness before he was fit to lead the people. And the very thing before Paul has his wonderful revelation, is that he is let down in a basket from the wall.

David got into Ziklag from unbelief. He said, "I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul"—and that just after a victory. It is just so with us, we generally fall after victory because we get elated.

David was here driven entirely to do with God, and that was what fitted him for the kingdom; he never was in a worse pass than at this time (verse 6); he was in a wrong place, he had no business there, and the people spake of stoning him, and he must have felt he deserved it; there was no one left for him but God, all else was gone—wives, children, everything; he is brought back to the same position he was in, in the wilderness when the lion and bear came upon him. And he encourages himself in his God.

This is a most blessed state for the soul—to be driven to trust only in God; God will teach us that we cannot expect anything from anyone but Him, and that we must place entire confidence in Him.

He values confidence much more than devotion—the soul of the Lord Jesus was satisfied when the thief had confidence in Him.

To have real confidence in anyone, there are two requisites—first, I must *esteem* the person, and I must know him to be wise; secondly, I must be conscious that he loves me. God is such a friend to us; so we should have full confidence in Him; we know He is all

wise, and we know also that His love is so deep that He has given His only Son for us, and told us He will do all things for our good.

The next thing David does is to enquire of God, and then he pursues—God will give him back all He took away; God does not want to deprive us of anything, and He wants us to trust wholly and solely in Him. He never takes anything away from anyone but what He gives it back to them in some way or other, therefore we should not murmur, or resist God's dealings. If Hezekiah had died he would have died when all was beautiful around him, but he would live, so he lived only to see everything die to him; it is far better for us to die to everything than that everything should die to us—we alone left standing amidst the ruin of all things.

We should "continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. iv. 2). This verse is often interpreted as merely watching for an answer, but it is much more—it is to watch what God is doing—to keep wide awake, and see what God is about.

Though Elijah had full conviction the rain would come, yet he sent his servant seven times to see what was going on; so ought we to watch and be vigilant.

If we are walking in the counsel of God, everything around, however opposed to us, in our carnal judgment, will be exactly suited to us; it was so with the Lord Jesus, everything seemed just made for Him—when He came hungry to the barren fig tree; that suited him; it was the very thing Christ wanted to illustrate the condition of Israel—God coming to find fruit and finding none. When we come to the bitter well, we may look right and left for something better, but we shall not get it; we ought rather to be content, and try to find our God's meaning in giving it, and ask Him to shew us.

David here was walking with God, so the Egyptian is just the one for him; many would have passed over such a miserable object, and in their own distress overlooked everyone else, but not so with David; he gave him of the best food, though he could ill spare it,

and he was well rewarded, for this very Egyptian was the one to lead him out of his distress.

This should be a lesson to us—however distressed we may be, we should not overlook the distress of another, for if we love not our brother whom we have seen how can we love God Whom we have not seen? (1 John iv. 20).

The Lord had another purpose beside all this in His trial of David. Saul lost the kingdom because he would not destroy the Amalekites, and now God was bringing David into such a position as that he must destroy them, and thus prove himself worthy of the kingdom; and though there was no real merit in David's going against them, yet God imputed it to him. In the same way Israel could never boast of coming out of Egypt, though it was such a blessing to them.

Just so, none of us can ever boast of having left the world, there is always something, which, through God's grace, has driven us out; some are disgusted with it, some in one way and some in another, but anyway they are *out*, and that is enough—let us thank God for it.

How little are we prepared for God's method of exalting us; all this dreadful trial of David's was but the path to the throne.

We have our Ziklags and our only way is to encourage ourselves in God and then we shall *enquire*. Though David had no merit in going against the Amalekites, yet God in His grace took care that he should do it.

The Lord knows all our weakness and there is no temptation which afflicts us, "but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

The way to escape is often just alongside the temptation if we could but see it—and we ought not to get out of our difficulties in any human way but take the matter to God.

Extracted.

A Quaint but Striking Epitaph.

Here lie
the earthly remains of
JOHN BERRIDGE,
late Vicar of Everton,
and an itinerant servant of Jesus Christ,
who loved his Master and his work,
and after running on His errands many years
was called up to wait on Him above.

READER,

art thou born again?
No salvation without a new birth !
I was born in sin, February, 1716.
Remained ignorant of my fallen state till 1730.
Lived proudly on faith and works for salvation till 1754.
Was admitted to Everton Vicarage, 1751.
Fled to Jesus alone for refuge, 1756.
Fell asleep in Christ, January 22, 1793.

The above epitaph was composed by John Berridge himself, and at the time of his death required nothing but the date of that event being inserted to complete it.

Of him one has written, "He was a man of *deep humility*. No man could be more sensible of his infirmities than he was, and no one could speak of himself more disparagingly than he did. He says, in 1773: 'Ten years ago, I hoped to be something long before this time, and seemed in a promising way; but a nearer view of the spiritual wickedness in my heart, and of the spiritual demands of God's laws, has forced me to cry, "O wretched man that I am! God be merciful to me a sinner!" I am now sinking from a poor something into a vile nothing; and wish to be nothing, that Christ may be all. I am creeping down the ladder from self-complacence to self-abhorrence; and the more I abhor myself, the more I must hate

sin, which is the cause of that abhorrence.’—“As the heart is more washed, we grow more sensible of its remaining defilement; just as we are more displeased with a single spot on a new coat than with a hundred stains on an old one. The more wicked men grow, the less ashamed they are of themselves; and the more holy men grow, the more they learn to abhor themselves.”

Again, the same shrewd writer remarks, “Berridge was a man who *gloried in our Lord Jesus Christ*, and in all his preaching, speaking and writing, delighted to make much of Him. He says, in one of his letters: ‘Once I was sensible of my lameness, but did not know that Christ was to be my whole strength as well as righteousness. I saw His blood could purge away the guilt of sin; but I thought I had some natural might against the power of sin. Accordingly, I laboured to cut away my own corruptions, and pray away my own will, but laboured in the fire. At length, God has shown me that John Berridge can do nothing; but Jesus Christ, blessed be His Name, must do all. I now see that faith alone can purify the heart as well as purify the conscience, and that Christ is worthy to be my all in everything, in wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.’ ”

Cities of Refuge—2.

(Read Joshua xx.)

WE will look a little at the believer's place and portion in Christ as illustrated in the cities of refuge provided for the children of Israel. It was as we noticed a most wonderful provision of grace on God's part to Israel in the circumstances they were then brought into. We also noticed that in it God had given a picture of His dealings with and provision for the Jewish nation right away from the rejection and crucifying the Lord of life and King of glory until the time of their restoration and introduction into their land, the land of promise. We found, too, how the

Gentile powers and nation were implicated in that terrible deed that marks the central point of two eternities.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

So that all the world is become guilty before God. But thank God while this is so (for there is no difference between Jew and Gentile) the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon Him. "For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

Ah! that prayer of Jesus when upon the cross has made all the difference. (Luke xxiii. 34.)

Not thinking of Himself, not thinking of His disciples, but of His enemies!

Of Himself when that cry was wrung from His soul, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But without that prayer of Luke xxiii. 34, we must have been eternally lost, there could have been no place of refuge for us.

How unspeakably blessed for those who can say in very truth

"Rock of Ages, cleft for sin,
Grace has hid me safe within."

The thunders of judgment may roar without, but the storm has burst in all its fury on Him. He has borne it all for me! And it is about the safety—the place, and the portion in Christ, of the believer I purpose speaking, as shown to us in the names of the cities of refuge provided in those days.

I believe all the names of places and people in the Old Testament, and in the New as well, have some significant meaning, some not so easy to trace perhaps, others clearly defined.

Now in these six cities we have a wonderful story unfolded. How full the word of God is and what a delight it should be for the believer to search into the depths of these mines of wealth, always fresh—truly it is a living word.

Now let us turn to these names; we shall find them in verses 7-9.

Kadesh	means	Holy.	The	Believer's	Calling.
Shechem	,,	Shoulder	,,	Security	
Hebron	,,	Fellowship	,,	Privilege	
Bezer	,,	Stronghold	,,	Portion	
Ramoth	,,	Exalted	,,	Place	
Golan	,,	Happy	,,	Condition	

It is indeed a wonderful thing to be a believer in the true sense of the word and it involves much. For not only has he a blessed portion and many privileges in Christ, but there are responsibilities as well.

The very name *Kadesh* gives us a grand start. I think God specially named this city first and we shall find it has a most important place.

Let us turn to 1 Peter i. 13-17. The Spirit of God speaking through Peter to those who have believed on the Lord Jesus unto salvation—to those who have obeyed the gospel message—alas, how few! and we are often constrained to exclaim with the prophet Isaiah, “Who hath believed our report?”

God commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Why? Acts xvii. 30, 31. To obey the gospel is the first act of obedience and now we are to be obedient children, we can't be children till we are born. But mark, obedience is not holiness. Holiness is the possession of the soul by God. But holiness leads to obedience always.

We are called to be holy, even as God is holy, in all our conversation—conduct. How often, alas, do we allow unholy thoughts to take possession of our mind!

Beware how you indulge in such. Note a wholesome warning in Pro. iii. 5, 6. Keep a watch over your own hearts, trust not in your own understanding. Let your prayer be, “Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe.” It has been said:

You sow a Thought—you reap an Action.

You sow an Action—you reap a Habit.

You sow a Habit—you reap a Destiny.

I believe there is much truth in it. Beloved friends, our hearts are treacherous.

Paul writes these words to Timothy, "Who hath saved us and called us with an *holy calling*, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

But we pass on to the next city, Shechem: it means shoulder, the place of strength, therefore it shows the believer's security. We have a beautiful illustration of this in Luke xv,

Which would you rather be, one of the ninety-nine who need no repentance, or the poor lost sheep? He was in a woeful condition, perhaps splashed with mire, torn by the brambles, footsore and weary and ready to die. But the Good Shepherd is seeking it. It is lost, its pitiful bleat has been heard by the Shepherd true. Think of the weary way He travelled, from heaven's highest glory to Calvary's depth of woe; the way was dark and rough. But He came to seek and to save the lost. Did He scold it when He found it? Ah, no, He lifted it up! Notice where He placed it. What a place of safety, not merely on His shoulder but on His shoulders, absolute security. Shechem is indeed a safe refuge. The shoulder is the place of strength and in that place of security the believer is carried right home!

But what about Hebron? Here we have a very high and blessed privilege. In 1 Cor. i. 9, we read, "God is faithful, by Whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Hebron means "fellowship," and this is what the believer is called unto. What a privilege, "the fellowship of His Son Christ Jesus our Lord." There is more about this in 1 John i. But there must be holiness of life and known security before we can enjoy this fellowship or communion. Truly if we are in the enjoyment of this, our joy will be full and our cup will run over.

Let us take the next, "Bezer." It signifies stronghold. Turn to 2 Tim. i. 8-12. What a Bezer! Paul had found a stronghold indeed. Talk about "The

National Safe Deposit." This is better than all the iron bars, steel doors, reinforced concrete, dynamite-proof locks and bolts, for there will come a shaking time and these things will crumble away and be of no avail then, for God has said, "Yea, once more I shake not the earth only, but the heavens, and this word, once more, signifieth the removal of those things that are shaken, as things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Paul knew the city of Bezer! Christ is the believer's stronghold and there alone is security. And where is Christ now? The next city will unfold this to us, its name is "Ramoth" and means "Exalted." Where is Christ Jesus? "*Him hath God exalted to His own right hand and made Him a Prince and a Saviour.*" Where is the believer's place now? We shall find it in Eph. ii. 6. Well might the apostle break out in praise (Rom. viii.) "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If you have entered into all this, well may you take up your residence in "Golan" for how can you be anything but happy? "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice!"

All these six cities speak to us of the seventh, the perfect city of refuge, Christ Himself. In Him we have all. He is the perfect refuge for time and for eternity.

Why, oh, why, remain outside in the place of danger when you can have all these blessings and joys without money and without price?

Shall it be said of Christ so far as you are concerned, "I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded, ye have set at nought all My counsels."

Oh, respond to His loving entreaty; come to the refuge, He wants to make you happy.

(Concluded.)

T.R.D.

Lazarus.

LAZARUS was the least person in the blessed family in Bethany. There is but little said of him, but enough to occupy us usefully for a few moments. The simple details, which have been recorded of him, will appear, upon due reflection, extremely important and comforting. The Lord's voice speaks to us in the history of Lazarus, as His silence is sometimes significant too. Lazarus is the example of a large crowd of disciples of the Lord.

There are many believers whose names are little known. Even in the town or in the village where they are living there are only a few people who know them. In quiet simplicity they go their way. They don't perform great things. They neither give Bible lectures nor do they preach the gospel, for the simple reason that they are not able to do so. Even in the assembly their voice is seldom heard. Other persons lying on a sick-bed for months and years, or staying between the narrow walls of their living-house for years and years, while apparently they have nothing else to do than to suffer. Many a sister is occupied from early in the morning till late in the evening; many a house-mother has her time taken up with her household and with the education of her numerous children. Are such believers more significant than others? Oh, no, they have taken the place the Lord has shown them. There are different parts of the body, some honourable and some we think to be less honourable. There are not only apostles, and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the church, but also servants and helps. If you have received five talents and you don't use them you will be judged; if you have one talent and you use it wisely, you will receive wages. Therefore do not be indolent if the Lord has given you many gifts. Use them diligently and faithfully. If you have received few talents, be content with what you have. Don't think that you are useless upon the earth. The pound which the Lord gave you is quite sufficient for you; the situations, wherein you have

been set, are for you the most convenient and blessed ones. Perhaps you cannot do much. However, bear in mind that what you are doing is as needful and important as that with which others are occupied. What you are doing seems to be insignificant to *you*. However, the Lord judges quite differently. The apparently insignificant part of a body is necessary just as the most important parts are. The smallest link of a chain cannot be omitted or the whole chain would fall apart. You may be unknown but you are not forgotten by the Lord. All this we may learn from the history of Lazarus. The busy world knew nothing of him. In only one Gospel is his name mentioned. The first time that we learn of the family in Bethany, not a word is said about Lazarus. If we had only the information given in Luke x. we should not know that Martha and Mary had a brother. The evangelists Matthew and Mark tell us nothing about Lazarus. But what we learn of him, confirms what is said above. We learn that he was ill and died, that Jesus raised him from the dead and that he was one of those who sat at meat with Jesus. That is all! How insignificant many a one will say. Yes, *we* think so. However, the Lord does not think so. After having occupied ourselves for a moment with the history in John xi. and xii. you will perhaps speak quite otherwise. The insignificant life will become of a greater, more glorious meaning and you will give thanks to the Lord, that, besides the presentation of Martha and Mary, He also gave that of Lazarus.

“Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus, of Bethany the town of Mary and her sister Martha. . . . His sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” That is the first communication we have concerning Lazarus. The second reads: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus”; yea, not only Martha, cumbered with much serving and Mary who sat at His feet, but also Lazarus. Now the love of Jesus to Lazarus is obvious since the sisters could send the message: “Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” Is not that a thing of impressive

beauty? There was apparently something in the character and the qualities of Lazarus which awakened the love of the Lord in a particular way. The divine love includes all the saints. To have love towards all the saints is a state of the soul which has been highly praised by the apostle Paul (Col. i. 4). Nevertheless there is a difference in the revelation of this love. We read: "Jesus loved him," and, "the disciple whom Jesus," etc. (Compare also Proverbs viii. 17; John xiv. 23.)

But here we find more than that. Jesus loved Lazarus so much that He said to His disciples: "Lazarus, *our friend*, is fallen asleep." Let us bear in mind how the Lord identifies Himself with His disciples. He does not say: "My friend," but "our friend." It is as if they form *one* family with Him. What condescending goodness! Yea, believers are connected with Jesus in the most intimate way.

"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you. (John xv. 15.) So Jesus spoke before His death; and after His resurrection He called His disciples "brethren." "Go unto My brethren and say unto them: 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father and to My God and your God.'" "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.)

But we revert to Lazarus. Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. The unknown, silent Lazarus, who was not a patch upon Martha and Mary, out of whose mouth we do not hear a single word, is a friend of Jesus. You, who, apparently, are living forgotten in your attic, you are a friend of Jesus too. You, who cannot leave the circle of your children to devote your life to the education and care of others, you are a friend of Jesus! You, who are lying on a sick-bed and seldom see a believer, you are a friend of Jesus! Does it not replace everything? Think much about it. There is not a more faithful friend than the Lord. He

loves His friends so tenderly. He knows all your wants, your needs and cares, and in His time and in His manner He will provide for them. He knows your name, your address, the number of your house, the room where you are living. When you are known by none, He knows you. However poor and unesteemed you may be, you are not too poor, not too unesteemed for Him. Lazarus was not only the friend of Jesus but also the friend of the disciples. Have you a friend too? Not only among the gifted or high-placed persons, but among the silent ones in the country? A friend, perhaps a female friend, high in an attic; a sick person who is visited by no one? A tried saint who is abandoned by all? A widow or an orphan who is quite alone in the world? Oh, act like Jesus! Look for your friends among such persons.

But the history of Lazarus is not yet finished. No, the most important thing is coming! The silent, apparently insignificant, man, becomes an important one. The whole town of Bethany is in commotion. The Son of God is about to be glorified by Lazarus' death. He abides two days in the place where He was. Lazarus dies and is buried. Then Jesus comes and Lazarus is raised from the dead. Though he had been four days in the tomb he comes forth from the dead. As a glorious example of divine power Jesus stands before us. The greatest miracle that ever had been performed by Jesus upon the earth, has been done to him. There, where death already had shown its destructive power, the Lord triumphs over it and its terrible consequences and restores Lazarus to life. How great an honour for Lazarus! What happened to him was for the glory of God. How Lazarus himself must have rejoiced! Jesus loved him. He called him His friend. Lazarus had experienced this love, had enjoyed this friendship, and now he was allowed to be a memorial of the Lord's glory. Yet, still more! We read that many of the Jews which came to Mary and beheld what He did believed on Him. What the Lord had done to Lazarus became the means of the

conversion of many sinners. His resurrection had made such an impression that a large crowd of the Jews, when they learned that Jesus was in Bethany, came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead.

These facts, are they not very instructive, dear reader? Moreover, we read still two things more of Lazarus. After his rising from the dead, he was reclining at meat with Jesus in the house of Simon the leper. It is evident from the story in John xii. that Lazarus had become an important person. In the first and second verses we read: Jesus, therefore, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was whom Jesus raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there: and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with Him. What a joy must it have been to be at meat with Jesus after the Lord had rendered him such a favour and had revealed to him so gloriously His almighty power. He had learnt to know Jesus better; he had found in the Lord such a Friend as there was not another upon earth. Truly, Lazarus must have enjoyed blessed moments in the presence of the Lord. Finally he was esteemed worthy to suffer dishonour for Christ. The Jews had resolved to kill Jesus and now took counsel to put Lazarus to death also. He was a living witness of the Lord's divine power. All who came to Bethany could hear the story of Lazarus' rising, yea, they could see him for themselves. Many hundreds went there. But this only filled the hearts of the Jews with bitter feelings towards Jesus and His loved disciple Lazarus. To be allowed to suffer for Jesus' sake is a great honour, a glorious privilege. Therefore, the apostle writes to the Philippians: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil. i. 29.) And Peter says: "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake happy are ye. (1 Pet. iii. 14.) To suffer for Jesus is, therefore, a gift of grace. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." We read

nothing similar either of Martha or of Mary. This joy, this privilege, this great honour fell to the lot of the silent, forgotten and insignificant Lazarus.

J. MOL, JR.

An Interesting Letter.

July, 1925.

BELOVED BROTHER,
Referring to the expression "the Kingdom of the Son of His love" in Col. i. 13, and the article on "the Kingdom of the Father" in Notes and Comments, vol. ii., I have read the latter through again and do not think that Mr. Darby takes the two expressions to be identical, though much of the elements characterising the one is true of the other. This is still more evident from his remarks in vol. ii. of his Collected Writings, pp. 86, 87, on "The Dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven." In case you have not the book I will quote his words (premising only that the underlining is mine):

We must endeavour to bring in "the new things" of the Kingdom to understand fully the ground on which the Kingdom of Heaven now stands. We have here (i.e., Matt. xiii.) two other Kingdoms—"the Kingdom of their Father," i.e., of the righteous; and "the Kingdom of the Son of man." *In neither of these, properly speaking, are we now.* The Son of man shall do so and so, and *then* shall the righteous shine, etc. These kingdoms are the full development of that which *now* rests in an anomalous and ambiguous state (glorious and blessed, indeed, but still ambiguous as regards its manifested results), to wit, "the Kingdom of God's dear Son," the Kingdom of the Son of God as sitting upon the Father's throne. This is *not* the Kingdom of the Son of man; it is *not* the Kingdom of the Father, but the Kingdom of the Son of God sitting on the Father's throne. Thus far, J.N.D.

J.N.D. points out in Notes and Comments that the

expression "Kingdom of My (or their) Father occurs only in Matthew; to which I would add another remark: in the only place where they are used something yet future is spoken of. Thus in Matt. xiii. 43, *then* shall the righteous shine forth; in Matt. xxvi. 29, *until that day* when I drink it new. To which I would add Matt. vi. 10 (for it is a petition to the Father): *Thy Kingdom come*. Col. i. 13, on the other hand, speaks of the Kingdom of His dear Son as a present existing sphere in which the Son of God as the Son of His love is supreme: not in outward manifestation except it be in the walk of the saints (worthy of the Lord), but nevertheless the present subject of faith to the faithful ones. He *hath* translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. The Kingdom of "their" Father will be a display of their glory as His children: "they shall shine as the sun," which is said also of Him in ch. xvii. 2. So Rom. viii. 16, 17, shows that as children of God they are joint heirs with Christ, "also glorified together." The Kingdom of "My" Father is connected with joys, new joys which we shall share with Him; or rather, He with us: I drink it new with you. The Kingdom of the Son of His love is characterised by love, love which rests supremely on Him Whom that love has put in the supreme position—with My Father on His throne; but also on all who have been translated into that Kingdom: Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me. Yea, whether it be glory or joy or love, in every way we have become the companions and joint heirs with Christ. But as I remarked before, the glories and the joys of the Kingdom are future; the love is our present portion.

And it is the love which has found its full satisfaction and delight in putting Him in the supreme place: this characterises the Kingdom of the Son of His love. He holds that place of supremacy not only in right and title of the Son Who is the Creator, and the Son of the Father from all eternity, but as the Son Who in manhood and from birth was the object of the Father's love and care; cast upon Thee from the womb; My God, from my mother's belly; and Who, looking

forward to the close of His path, so full of life and light and love, could say: My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. In love to His Father and to the glory of His Father He laid down His life; in love, yea, and in righteousness, the Father by His glory has raised Him and placed Him "where love has found its rest," and placed Him there supreme.

It is thus—as Man—that He is called in a special manner the Son of His love; and He is supreme there, He is "Lord." And we who have been translated into His Kingdom are called on to walk worthy of the Lord, and thus be all pleasing to Him Who has made Him Lord; yet withal knowing Him as Son of His love and (what goes inseparably with it) God as His Father. And in that sphere of bliss and joy He makes good His word: I have declared (i.e., when on earth) Thy name—Father—and will declare (i.e., now) that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them; and He also gives us to know that we are loved as He is loved.

I need scarcely add that Kingdom of the Son of man and Kingdom of Son of His love are two entirely different things, even though the Son of man *is* the Son of His love. Out of the former all things that offend and them that do iniquity shall be gathered; in the latter no such things exist.

Affectionately yours in Christ,

O. H.

The Father and the Son.

(Genesis xxii.)

OH! what a voice was that which once the patriarch Abraham heard,
 Take now thy son, thine only son, thine Isaac, so endeared,
 And unto far Moriah's land at once arise and go,
 Offer him, a burnt offering, there, on a mount that I shall show.

That voice he knew, and lingered not — his inmost
soul obeyed,

Counting that God could raise him up, though even
from the dead.

He took his son, the fire, the knife, with two at his
command;

Three days they journeyed on, and then he saw the
appointed land.

Thence they trod the way alone, their converse none
might share,

The father laid the wood he clave upon the son to
bear,

The fire, the knife, were Abraham's part, by faith
obedient still,

Assured that God Who gave the word, would all
His word fulfil.

They reached the spot—his son he bound, and on
the altar laid,

He took the knife to slay his son, when lo! the hand
was stayed,

A voice from heaven arrests the stroke — another
victim bled,

And Abraham received his son as risen from the
dead.

Fair picture of a mightier love that gave the Son to
die!

An holier Sacrifice, Whose place none other could
supply.

The two who "both together" went until that work
was done,

Which glorifies for evermore the Eternal Three-in-
One.

E.H.C.

Hearts in Tune.

(Notes on Deut. viii.)

THE Christian cannot be in a difficulty that Christ is not sufficient for, nor on a long dark road where he cannot find Him enough.

God's rest is where He can find perfect rest.

Do you think God could find rest in *this* world?

Have *you* ever found rest in it?

Though He was perfect love above all the evil, yet He could not rest.

When the Jews charged Him with breaking the Sabbath He says that sweet and lovely word, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Could love rest in the midst of woe?

When all the saints are perfectly conformed to Christ in glory, then, as is expressed in Zephaniah (and we may apply it to ourselves), God will rest in His love. He will see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. There will be nothing that hinders the enjoyment of the love and glory of God.

O! the blessed future that is before us!

The full result of redemption will be accomplished, and God will rest because His love has no more to do to satisfy Himself.

God wants as a present thing our hearts to be in tune with His, in our every-day life.

He wants that, therefore we find here, "Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart."

Now God says, "Your heart and Mine want to have a little talk together. I am going to show you what is in your heart, and to show you that *I know it.*" He has brought us to Himself, and do you think that if all that is in your heart is not brought out to Him it will be all right between you?

Do you think a father likes to have his heart all different to his child's heart? He likes that the whole spirit, soul and mind of his child be suited to his mind.

God passes us through the wilderness that we may learn this.

You often see a true Christian not knowing where he is at his death-bed, because he has not had everything out with God day by day. "Herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." The exercise was whether his heart was in everything attuned to God's heart. Now Christ's heart was. He could always say, "I do always those things which please Him."

Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony that he pleased God. He was walking in God's presence, and the effect of it was he pleased God. You could not walk with God without having everything out with Him. If you have something on your conscience you will not be happy. Every step we take we see Him better, the light gets clearer, and we find things to judge that we had not known must be judged before, according to that which we know of the glory of God. Are your hearts up to it? and supposing they are not, what is the effect of God's presence? Why, it has to set my conscience to work in order to bring me into communion.

"My son, give *Me* thy heart."

Now come, are your hearts given to God out and out?

"He humbleth thee." He brings us to our bearings.

He causes us to live by faith. "Fed thee with manna."

Don't our souls sometimes loathe the light food? Is it not true sometimes that Christ does not satisfy this heart? Of course, if your hearts are cleaving to something else, Christ will not satisfy you. "Man doth not live by bread alone."

Christ quoted this to the devil in the wilderness.

He had no order from God for the stones to be made bread, and He had taken on Himself the form of a servant. His will was inert until it had God's will to make it act.

"The word of the Lord abides for ever": that is the dependence of faith.

Mark another thing — that while He kept them in dependence on the word of God to guide them, He did not allow the nap of their coats to wear out. He thought of everything for them. He withdraws not His eyes from the righteous—not a moment He does not think of them.

Then comes another character of it.

“As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord chasteneth thee.” First of all God passes us through circumstances which exercise us (feeding us and taking care of us all the time), and then there is the positive discipline, the breaking of the will. Every day one sees God doing it, and people don’t know where they are, and get questioning the love that did it. Look at Rom. v. God loves us as He loves Christ, and we are rejoicing in the hope of the glory where Christ is, *and not only so* — when He has gone through the whole thing, that is not all. I am not only rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, but I am rejoicing in tribulations, because God is not withdrawing His eyes from me in them; the hope is so much brighter, for oh, I say, my rest is not here—that’s a clear thing, and the hope makes me not ashamed because I have the key to it all in the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

It is God’s way to make us know ourselves, and it is His work too. There can be no question of the love, because He has given us the key to it all. How has He proved it? Why, it goes on to state that in the next verse: “Christ died for the ungodly.” Then He says again, “Not only so.” What? *But we joy in God.* I have got to know myself—all my forgetfulness of God—but in this way of self-judgment I have learnt to joy in God.

It is to bring the heart into this tune with God that He has to break it down and humble it; but this being in tune with God is never reached—that settled consciousness of association with God—until these ways and words of God have got to the bottom of self. It is not that we shall not always have to contend with

it, but its back is broken, and I have no trust in myself after.

The natural man says, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" But at the end of Psalm cxxxix. he says, "Search me, O God, and try the ground of my heart."

Up to the knowledge you have of divine things, is your heart in tune with them? Could you say "*Search me*"? It is a painful process sometimes. "Lead me in the way everlasting."

Beloved friends, there is a way everlasting, and it is in that way everlasting that God comes and searches the heart.

Are you content to have every motive searched out?

It must be so, if our communion with God and joy in Him is to be full and uninterrupted.

We get these three things — the proving of our hearts, the chastening and the conflict with Satan — verse 16.

"To do thee good at thy latter end."

Beloved, if your souls would walk in peace and fellowship with God, you must learn there is no good in you, but you learn to know Him in the perfectness of His love. It is present joy and fellowship with God, and if we go on with it, when death comes then it is "absent from the body, present with the Lord," and it is the brightest moment in the life.

All these exercises of heart are *self-knowledge*. Beloved friends, if you want to walk and glorify God in fellowship with the Father and the Son, then you must go through this having the conscience exercised to be void of offence, and as to the affections of the heart, there may be Christ at the bottom and a walk which no one can blame at the top, but between them are *all the thoughts and intents of the heart*. You must have the soul practically exercised before God.

You must learn the ways of God with you that you may be in tune with Him.

The Lord give us to know more of a walk with Him, that we may have the kind of peace Christ had in His walk down here, that peace of heart that the soul knows in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The Lord give you to know what it is to have everything in your heart *open before God*.

Be not to me, my God,
As one that turned aside
To tarry for a night, and trod
His onward path. Abide

With me, as light divine,
That brings into my heart
Those gladdening scenes, e'en now, as mine;
Soon my eternal rest.

O love, supreme and bright,
Good to the feeblest heart!
That gives me now, as heavenly light,
What soon shall be my part!

J.N.D.

Paul and Timothy.

ANYTHING more instructive and inspiring than the affection that existed between the apostle Paul and Timothy, his son in the faith, it would be difficult to find even in the pages of Holy Writ.

Our minds might perhaps turn back to the history of David and Jonathan, and some marked instances of devotion between man and man in the Old Testament; but apart from the truth entwined with the personal references of the apostle, a brief survey of the expressions intermixed with his admonitions will surely repay us. Especially so when we consider that the circumstances of Timothy's birth and parentage would be

more likely to keep them apart than to draw out expressions of such fervent attachment and confidence from a bigoted Jew.

Paul was not without followers and devoted admirers, for does he not speak of some who were at one time ready to pluck out their eyes for him in the intensity of their admiration of his gifts and grace? He had probably brought Christ to them, or led them to Him by his ministry in Ephesus and elsewhere, and all this only makes it more remarkable that this young disciple should hold such a place in his affections.

That Timothy was worthy of the apostle's love and confidence is clear, for in writing to the Philippians does he not say, "I have no man likeminded that will naturally care for your state"? A remarkable commendation for so young a man to receive! Then in commencing his first letter to Timothy Paul addresses him as "my own son in the faith," and requests him to abide still in Ephesus, and young though he was, exhorts him by charge after charge to keep the saints in remembrance of their portion in Christ. This is accompanied by exhortations about his personal walk and ways in the fourteenth and sixteenth verses of the fourth chapter, and then in the fifth and last portion of the epistle, the apostle concludes these charges by that striking admonition to "keep the charge," or more correctly "that deposit" which was committed to him.

It is a pity that our excellent version does not give us in verse 20 of the last chapter the full strength of this admonition, for there is no doubt that it should read, "O Timothy, keep that deposit which is committed to thy trust"; to which Paul again refers in the fourteenth verse of chapter one of the second epistle in the words, "that deposit committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

But to dwell more fully on this incident in the epistle will lead us away from the intention of this paper, which is personal rather than doctrinal, and we must leave the subject with this brief reference to it as

another striking evidence of the confidence of Paul in his young brother's pre-eminent gifts and grace.

The whole of the first chapter of the second Epistle may be summed up as the heartfelt expression of one who felt the defection of "All they which were in Asia, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes": and who, like his divine Lord and Master, might say he had been "wounded in the house of his friends." But with the deepest regard and fatherly affection he confides in the heart of his young disciple. The soldier, the athlete and the husbandman, are all made to serve as patterns of what is required in the servant of Christ; and Timothy is exhorted to show himself as "a workman approved of God" (chapter i. 15); while the heart of his father in Christ yearns over his son in the faith troubled by bodily infirmity, and the many weaknesses of those whom he is endeavouring to serve for Christ's sake.

It is not only in the two letters to Timothy himself that we find these Christ-like traces of care and admonition, but what Paul writes in the first of his two Epistles to the Corinthians is a further example of this deep affection and confidence. In the sixteenth chapter of the first Epistle Paul says to the Corinthians, "If Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do; let no man therefore despise him," etc. Then again, what can be more excellent as illustrating the deep affection of one servant of the Lord for another, than the confidence expressed in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians (verses 2 to 6), where Paul includes Timotheus as well as Silvanus in the greeting and authorship—using the plural "we" all through; and then in chapter three sends to them "Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith."

If we might add anything to such a galaxy of grace and faith we point to the beautiful sample of divine

grace working in the souls of God's servants described in chapter two of the Epistle to the Philippians. Here Paul says, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state." We are more or less familiar with homely phrases that speak of "like" things such as "second nature," but how rare indeed is it to find amongst our fellow Christians that love and devotedness that can be classed as natural care for our spiritual state! How often we find the temporal state absorbing all our care for one another and the spiritual state almost neglected!

We can well understand the Apostle Paul's fervent desire to his son in the faith, "Do thy diligence to come unto me shortly." (2 Timothy iv. 9.) May his example quicken our desire for more of that love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and *never faileth*" (1 Cor. xiii. 7 and 8) amongst the children of God.

T. R.

The Evil of "Sensitiveness."

A GREAT evil, which affects us all more or less, is "sensitiveness." It is a sign that love and selflessness are deficient and has its root in selfishness. Sensitive people see everything in a false light; they are hurt by every little thing; they scent a bad object in everything that is done; they impute wrongly to their fellowmen wrong motives and thereby injure themselves and others. With sensitive people, everything moves around their important "I." They do not receive enough appreciation, notice or recognition. They are to be pitied who thus make it more difficult for their brethren and for those who labour willingly and selflessly in the meeting. They are not a blessing but are just the opposite.

"Love seeketh not her own . . . imputeth no evil."

Gleaned.

Notes of Reading on 1 John ii.

Query: "It has been stated that when we sin, the efficacy of the sacrifice is applied to us, is that correct?"

Mr. D.: Never in scripture, "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins."

Query: "But the ashes of the red heifer were connected with the sacrifice?"

Mr. D.: Yes.

Query: "Can you touch pitch and not be defiled?"

Yes; it says, "Keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not"; and James says, "To keep himself unspotted from the world." Then there is "Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Mr. McAdam: Dealing with sin in discipline would not give the same sense of guilt on the conscience?

Mr. D.: Yes; but it's not the joy of communion, it's a holy nature grieved.

Query: "What is communion?"

Mr. D.: Oh, fellowship with God, common thoughts and feelings.

Mr. McAdam: When a creeping thing fell into a little water, it was unclean; when it fell into a large quantity of water it was not unclean; is that the power of the spirit in communion?

Mr. D.: Yes.

Query: "Priesthood is not connected with sins?"

Mr. D.: No; it is in two passages, at the end of Heb. ii. "To make reconciliation for the sins of the people," and on the cross, "Father, forgive them."

"Not for ours only"—"not for that nation only." The cross is the centre of all the divine history of everything eternally. If we had kept the law like an angel, it would not have been God's righteousness; it would have been righteousness, and God would bless us.

Query: "What is God's righteousness?"

Mr. D.: God's righteousness is God's righteousness; a man's righteousness is a man's. It's manifested in that the Father has put Christ at His right hand.

Query: "What is the meaning of 'That we should be made the righteousness of God in Him'?"

Mr. D.: If He didn't have us in the glory, if He didn't have the fruit of the travail of His soul, righteousness wouldn't have been there. The attribute is made good in receiving me on the same ground as Christ. My righteousness is always what Christ is before God. He has identified us with Christ, just as we were identified with the first Adam. We have really two things, the life and the righteousness.

Oh, it's a wonderful thing to think that One in the form of God, Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, came down into death for us!

"Commandments"—you get the authority expressed; "word," the mind revealed. It belongs to our relationship with Him; we're sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ. You'll find all through the epistle, first the privilege, and then the test. You must have a new life to be happy with God. Christ is "the Truth"; He is the expression of what God is, and so shows out what everything else is. I can't say "God is truth"; "God is true" I can say. He gives a nature that delights in what He is, and there is communion, fellowship. John first states the privilege, and then he says, "Hereby we know." He tests the thing whether it is real. He's very fond of the word "Truth." There is no truth but the revelation of God; in the world, "Every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain." What I get in Christ is eternal. It's a great thing to get the soul there, to have no thought but the will of God. A great thing to act on it, it's what faith does; it's what God says that will last for ever.

Query: "What does it mean, 'But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected'?"

Mr. D.: If I walk in the love of God, there's nothing at all that grieves the Spirit and hinders my enjoyment of divine love and favour.

There's a thing interesting to see in John's Epistles, we get God and Christ so identified you can't separate

them. It brings us very far up into communion. Still it is a different thing to say that I am in Christ, accepted in the Beloved, and to be dwelling in God, in living communion. What a testimony that is, "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked"! It is never said we ought to be what Christ is; we are not to walk according to the flesh, but to walk as He walked. It sounds paradoxical, that of Christ in glory it says, "As He is, so are we in this world," but down here, we are to walk as He walked. Oh, it's blessed! that's the bread come down from heaven that we eat and don't die. We're poor things that don't know ourselves, but still it's joy of heart to follow Him. In John vi. it is the aorist, "he has eaten"—he has believed (v. 51). "He that eateth" (v. 54) is the present, what we do every day in fact. Oh, it's wonderful, that He puts it here in a poor earthen vessel, a wonderful thing! "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him"; that's Old Testament, but still it's a principle. I think all feeding on Christ as He was down here is memory; feeding on Him up there, is our present enjoyment.

Query: "What is knowing Christ after the flesh?" (2 Cor. v. 16.)

Mr. D.: As connected with Jewish promises, as the Messiah. I can't feed on Christ as incarnate without seeing His death, and feeding on death. When I've fed on Him as a dying Saviour, then I can set about and follow Him as a living Saviour down here. I get what God's thoughts and feelings coming down here were.

Query: "What is 'the old corn'?" (Joshua v.)

Mr. D.: A glorified Christ as belonging to heaven, what He is, a divine Person, but still a glorified man. Christ in His grace suits Himself to us down here, sympathises with me, it's Christ suited to this world; then I get another thing, a heavenly Christ. Then you can't take Christ as the Object, feeding on Him, till you've settled that you've done with the world, and have nothing but Christ in it.

What a privilege it is to be called upon to walk like Christ! One of the first things that struck me as a young man beginning to read scripture was, you never saw Christ do anything for Himself: "As Christ loved us," that's the measure and pattern of it. In following Christ, if we are feeding on Him, it's like Moses; all the people saw his face shine, but he didn't see it himself. It gives intimacy, getting His secrets from Him, like John lying on the Lord's breast. Peter, who was full of energy, beckons to him to ask, "Who is it?" He was not there for asking, he was there for the pleasure of being here. You can't get like Christ practically without thorough confidence in Him as He is, confidence in His affections, I mean. It keeps you humble.

It isn't the law demanding righteousness from man, but God revealing the effect of His Presence in man, and then saying, "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children." (Eph. v. 1, 2.) We are never said to be love. Love is sovereign as a divine thing; I can't be sovereign. Light is His nature; it is not sovereign over everybody. If God loves, He is sovereign to love freely. Light must shine and be itself and nothing else. Light is what He is absolutely, whereas when He loves, He loves somebody. He is love, it is true. When we get Christ as the pattern of it, we're called to walk in that way.

MR. DARBY, Islington.

Feb. 6th, 1880.

Are "Lies of Necessity" Really Needed or Permissible?

MANY have heard the story of the believing pastor Moberlin who took into his house, at the time of the French Revolution, a young girl whose family had been destroyed by the revolutionaries. The persecutors learned that his home had become a place of refuge and

one morning two soldiers appeared unexpectedly in Oberlin's house searching for the girl. What was the godly man to do? Should he say that the girl was not in his house? His conscience would not allow him to say so. With beating heart he led the armed men himself into every room and finally into the room of the girl herself. He was all the while lifting his heart to God. The quarry was nowhere to be seen so that the soldiers with many apologies took their leave. What had happened?

As Oberlin opened the door of the room, the girl had leapt behind it because she was not fully clothed. In this way God had preserved her. The conscience of the faithful man remained clear and God had glorified Himself.

Will He not always do so? God will and is able to lead us with clear conscience through every trial and we only need to trust Him and go on in the way of Truth.

Translated.

Earth and Heaven.

(Psalm lxxiii.)

WHAT a difference there is between being on earth and in heaven! In Luke xv. we get it for a sinner; it is the far country or the Father's house. Here we get it for the saint.

In the beginning of the Psalm, all his judgments are astray, for his heart has got on the poor things of the earth, "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked . . . They are not in trouble, as other men; neither are they plagued like other men."

And herein is seen the deceitfulness of riches—they detain the thoughts and affections on earth. What are they in heaven? What is the estimate there of everything in which man, as man, can boast? God writes death on him and on them. (See Ps. xlix.) Being in heaven enables us to put the true estimate on earth and

everything in it. The only true use of riches is to use them for God. Every other use will make man carnal, but this will lead the affections heavenward, whilst being to God's glory. (Matt. vi. 19-21.) "Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also."

See how the light bursts in upon him when he gets into the sanctuary? Instead of judging God and His way (as in verse 13) he now judges himself; and he abhors himself in His presence. "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was like a beast before Thee." But immediately he adds, "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee." In the joy of restoration he blesses the grace that was deeper than all his failure. Here we have no long process, as some prescribe, but the heart finds God in all the fulness of His grace, when it turns to Him in truth—when the will is broken, the soul finds rest. "A little faith goes further than a great many tears." But in truth, restoration is God's work. "He restoreth my soul." When his foot was slipping, it was His mercy that held him up.

Now God gets His place, and there is light upon everything. The joy of relationship with Him liberates the soul, and everything else fades in His presence. "There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." His flesh and his heart fail, but God is the strength of his heart, and his one and eternal portion.

From "Girdle of Truth," 1858.

To Him that Overcometh.

(Revelation ii.)

THE failure of man, of the church even, does not touch the source of divine grace—the goodness of God. From Adam downwards everything placed in the hands of man has failed; but this very failure and evil of man has been made the opportunity of God of showing out more and richer grace.

He judges the failure, and then presents an object of hope. When Adam sinned, "the seed of the woman" was promised. When the law was broken and Israel

failed, prophetic testimony came in and all the promises of the Messiah. *Promise* is that on which faith can rest when everything else fails.

Times of declension and of unfaithfulness in the body give occasion for brighter manifestations of grace in individuals who, under such circumstances, are brought into the enjoyment of close and blessed communion with God. See Elijah, Moses, etc. Moses had to leave the camp (Ex. xxxiii.) because the golden calf was there, and to go outside; but in so doing he got into a place of greater nearness to God than he had ever known before—"And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

At the beginning of the gospel dispensation the energy of the Holy Ghost was so plainly manifested in the church, that man was nothing, God everything. This is, of course, true to faith all through the dispensation. But then, even after these epistles to the churches were given, things had become sadly changed. The Lord, in this and the following chapter, turns His eye to that which should have been "the place of righteousness," and behold "iniquity is there"; therefore it is necessary that judgment begin at the house of God, as it is said, "the Lord shall judge His people." At first this is in the way of testimony against the evil; for the Lord ever warns before He executes judgment, and in judgment He remembers mercy.

The Lord takes notice of every circumstance, every shade of difference, in these churches, as also in individuals in them; thus showing that He is not indifferent as to the state of His people by the way—their daily steps, because He has secured blessing to them at the end. His love is not a careless love. We have all, more or less, lost sight of the judgment exercised by the Lord in "His own house," and it is too frequently supposed that, because the salvation of the saint is a sure thing, God is indifferent about character here. But to love this is impossible. A child would be sure eventually to inherit his father's property, but then

what parent would be satisfied (if he loved his child) with knowing that? Would he not anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties, and ordering all things in his education, so as best to fit him for his future destination? How much more is this the way of the Lord's love with His children!

This is for our comfort and blessing — there is wonderful comfort in seeing it to be the spring of all God's dealings with us; but at the same time it is intended to act strongly on our conscience in the way of warning.

We have to remember that the church, and indeed every individual saint, is set in the place of direct conflict with Satan, the more so because of the high standing and privilege given us in Christ. Now it may be in triumphant victory, as it is said, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." To effect the purpose of God's glory, coming in as it will by-and-by when He shall establish His kingdom, we know that Satan must be really fully dethroned; but in order, even now (ere that time comes), that we realise our blessings in heavenly places (Eph. i. 3), it is needful he should be practically dethroned from the heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. Although it is quite certain that he shall be bruised under our feet "shortly" (there is no doubt, of course, about the power of the Lord Jesus to do it), yet the certainty of Christ's final victory with the church should not lessen our sense of the power of the enemy in the meantime. This is so great as to make constant watchfulness necessary, for without it we shall be giving him a direct handle against ourselves. The flesh, by which Satan works, is still present, and it needs to be "mortified."

Perhaps we have often been surprised at grievous falls in ourselves or others; but if we fail to watch against the flesh, it is not really at all surprising such should be the result. Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling.

The promise at the close of each of these messages to the churches is addressed to "him that overcometh." As stated above, it has ever been in times of general failure that the promises of God have been most graciously brought out, and that His faithful ones have had increased communion, being thrown thereby more entirely upon Himself. If, through any measure of faithfulness, we find ourselves in trial and exercise of soul because of corporate general declension, that is just the very time we should look for more intimate revelation of the grace of God and of His love to our hearts. And this will be not only in giving us clear and firm apprehension of the promises of God, but also in a fuller knowledge of all that in Christ which is suited to be drawn upon by our need. He that is faithful may ever count on this. The principle is clearly seen in these epistles, both in the promises, and also in the different character in which the Lord Jesus presents Himself according to the circumstances of each "church."

It is very sad to see man (whether it be in Israel, the church, or any other place) always failing; but still the faithful ones in the midst of failure find a fuller, deeper revelation of the grace of God, even through it, than when all is going on well. This is most blessed!

From the message to "the church of Ephesus" (verses 1-7), we see that there had already been failure there—failure in its "first love." And, therefore, instead of being spoken to (as in Paul's Epistle to the same church of the high and holy things connected with the church) at large, or of being addressed as occupying the place of witness and testimony to others, the eye has to be turned inward to its own state, a clear proof how far it had declined.

When a church or an individual Christian is walking in the light, and not grieving the Spirit, there can then be entrance into the privileges belonging to the whole church of God; but when the Spirit is grieved,

there can no longer be this revelation : each is shut up in its own particular state and judged.

The message is from Him "that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (verse 1), the Lord taking the place of examination and judgment.

The overcoming spoken of (verse 7), and indeed throughout the chapter, is not so much the overcoming of the world and that which was without, as of all the evil discovered to be within. There had been a leaving of the "first love"; and when there is a diminution of this in the smallest degree, the Lord says, "I have somewhat against thee." (Verse 4.) He takes notice of the least failure. Whenever it has begun He speaks of excision, and inflicts it too unless there be repentance. We always find that in judging God goes back to the original sin. When Stephen charges the Jews (Acts vii.), although they had crucified the Lord Jesus, that which he goes back to is their first sin, of making the golden calf.

And thus with an individual Christian. There is often failure when the first glow of zeal is gone off. At such a time, we have not only to see where the failure is manifested, but when it was we first went away from the Lord, and we shall very generally find it to have been in getting out of communion, this leaving of the "first love." Well, this should not be and is not necessary; but even when it is the case, the grace of the Lord will still be found greater than all the evil that is discovered to be within.

We see peculiarity of blessing. (Verse 7.) It is to the eye and ear of faith that the Lord brings out the promise of "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." He sees the church failing in fellowship with God, and, therefore, sets before it "the tree of life," and the "paradise of God." It is God's paradise: blessed security! there can be no declension there. It was man's paradise first; failure came in, and lest he should take of the fruit of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever, "God drove out

the man": but now the promise to "him that overcometh" is to eat of the tree of life freely, and in security in "the paradise of God."

Whilst we feed on the fruit of it, "the leaves of the tree" will be "for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii. 2.) When the church is in glory, it will not lose the character of grace. God gives us now to feed on the bread of life; our first delight must be in God, but then, secondarily, we have the joy of love in being made ministers of blessing unto others. Well, so also in glory our portion will be grace, but we shall be able likewise to minister in grace to others.

(To be continued, D.V.)

J.N.D.

Fragments

THERE is danger in putting the girdle off. While it is on, we are braced for service and happy; but when some service is over, there is often a feeling of weariness, it may be of the body; but the danger is in letting the mind too slip down into nature for rest. It is a great thing in *resting* to have Christ with us. The "rest" of the disciples after their mission was to be with Him and one another. "Come and rest awhile." If I seek rest in reading the word, or prayer, or singing, or visiting the poor, or fellowship in person or by letter with the saints, it will but strengthen for God; but if in self-indulgence, it will open the door for Satan and the world. "Being let go, they went to their own company."

* * * *

It is a great thing to minister what the soul is fed with by God. It may be but one thought, but then it is the channel between Christ and the soul. The Christ Who feeds one can feed a thousand. Moreover it is in *breaking the bread* that it is multiplied, not before it is broken. It is not many thoughts that make a good meal for the soul, but Christ ministered; and a little in the spirit goes a great way—joy is ministered and strength.

“With Christ : which is far better.”

FALLEN asleep in Jesus, how precious is that
word!

Enjoying now for evermore the presence of the Lord.
This is not death! 'tis only sleep :
The Lord doth now thy loved one keep.

The earthen vessel's broken, the treasure now has
flown,
The Lord has taken back again, what is by right
His own,
But when He takes what most we store,
It is that He may give us more.

Thou wouldst have gladly kept her a little longer
here—
To soothe and nurse and cherish, and make her want
thy care.
But He Who doeth what is best
Hath called her to Himself to rest.

As members of one body in sympathy we weep,
And yet rejoice, because we know, in Jesus she doth
sleep ;
For all her pain and suffering's o'er
And joy's her portion evermore.

'Tis not “goodbye,” beloved, 'tis only just
“farewell”
“A little while”—“A moment”—we, too, with Christ
shall dwell.
And so we dry the falling tear,
Because we know the Lord is near.

O, may the God of comfort, His richest grace impart,
Himself fill up the aching void, bind up the broken
heart,
And give thee now to look above,
And rest in His unchanging love.

ANON.

To Him that Overcometh—2.

IN the case of “the church in Smyrna” (vers. 8-11), they had begun the downward course; but the Lord had come in most graciously, and arrested the decay by tribulation. I say most graciously, for one goes wonderfully quickly down hill unless a strong hand stops us.

The souls were in tribulation, poverty, and persecution, and how does the Lord reveal Himself? As the One Whom nothing can touch, not all the clouds and storms, the difficulties and trials affect (like the sun, bright before the storm and bright after it) “the First and the Last” (ver. 8).

“Yes,” it may be said, “this is true of Him; but then the storm rolls over us, and threatens to overwhelm: we have no power against it.” But He reveals Himself not only as “the First and the Last”—the One therefore on Whom we may lean for eternal strength—but also as “He which was dead, and is alive.” He says, as it were, I have gone through it all, I have entered into the weakness of man, and undergone all the power that could come against it, all the trials, even unto death—I have entered into everything, for I have died and yet I am alive.

There is nothing that the Lord has not gone through: death is the last effort of Satan’s power; it ends there for the sinner, as well as for the saint. The unconverted even are out of Satan’s power when they die; if they die in their sins, of course they come under the judgment of God, but Satan has no power in hell. He may have pre-eminence in misery, but no power there (his reigning there is some poet’s dream, it is here he reigns, and that by means of the pride and vanity, the evil passions and idleness, of men); he is “the ruler of the darkness of this world,” not of the next.

But whatever may be the extent of power which he seeks now to exercise against the children of God, the Lord says, I have been under it—I have been dead. Therefore, it is impossible for us to be in any circumstance of trial or of difficulty through which Jesus has

not been. He has met the power of Satan there; and yet He is alive. And now He "is alive for evermore," not only to sustain us while passing through the storm, but to feel for, to sympathise, as having experienced more than all the heaviness of the circumstances in which we are, He can pity with the utmost tenderness, for He came into the very centre of our misery. But the weakness of God is stronger than man, and though Christ was dead, yet He is alive.

"I know thy works" (ver. 9). The Lord recognises all that He can in us. We may say our works are not what we could desire them to be: and it is very true they are not, but then the Lord knows them. Though it is a right and useful thing for us to judge ourselves in order to detect the evil and correct it, yet it is very bad and unhealthy to be always occupied in considering whether our works will be approved of by God. The answer to all our thoughts and estimate about ourselves is, "I know your works": your business is to know Me. He presents Himself as our object, not our own works.

"And thy poverty." Certainly riches never entered into the church of God without producing more trial and difficulty. You may see rich men giving their riches to relieve the poverty of others, and this is very blessed; but wherever the character of riches continues it enfeebles the energies of the church of God.

There are all sorts of opposition to the faithful in this church, but what does the Lord say to them? "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer" (ver. 10). It is the constant effort of Satan to produce in us fear and discouragement when passing through trial; but the Lord says, "Fear none of those things." In like manner the Philippians are told to be "in nothing terrified by their adversaries"; again in Peter we read, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." Our wisdom is ever to rest confidently in Him Who is "the First and the Last," Who rises up in as great power at the end as at the beginning. The Lord does not say to this church, "I will save you from suffering," for suffering was needful in order to prevent it from tumbling head-

long into decay; just as Israel was obliged in consequence of its sin to go a long way round the desert, and yet the Lord says, as it were, to some amongst them who were faithful, "Do not be the least uneasy." So here His word is, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

In the beginning of the failure in "the churches," the promise to the "overcomer" in the midst of the decay was, that he should eat, in security and peace, of the "tree of life"; so again here, in a time of special suffering and trial, there is held out, as a stimulus (to the new man, of course), a recompense of reward. If they lost everything, they should gain everything. The Lord's own voice encourages—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." He may be hurt of the first death, but not of the second—the only real exclusion from the presence of God.

(To be continued, D.V.)

J.N.D.

The Lord's Prayer.

AF 262

SOME deeds and words of the Lord Jesus are recorded twice, so that we should understand their great importance. The Lord Jesus twice, quite differently and in different circumstances, cleansed the temple. Twice He fed the multitudes. Twice He made a miraculous catch of fish possible. On two occasions He allowed His feet to be washed and honoured, once by the tears of a sinner, and another time by ointment from one of His disciples, a woman. Twice He called Peter, once as a fisher of men, and again to the service of a shepherd.

The same is true of the Sermon on the Mount. On two different occasions the Lord gave what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. And on two different occasions He told His disciples how they ought to pray.

The Lord's Prayer is found in Matthew vi. 9-13, in

the middle of His Sermon on the Mount, but also in Luke xi. 2-4, when He was praying in a certain place, and this caused one of His disciples to say to Him: "Lord, teach us to pray!"

We can see from this that the Lord's Prayer is considered by our Saviour Himself to be of great importance. And this is obvious, because this prayer is the expression of dependence. In the Lord Jesus Himself, as Son of man on this earth, we find Him in all important circumstances in dependent prayer before God's face; indeed, the Psalmist says He was *always* in prayer.

What a privilege it is that God has given us the blessing of prayer! But it must really be a *prayer* that we pray! Not asking, that we may be praised by man, not the use of a repetition of words, thinking we shall be heard for our much speaking, but a child-like making known of our wants and desires to the Lord. God, our Father, knows what we have need of before we ask him. But He encourages us to tell Him, to make our requests known by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to Him. It is true that we also do well to say with Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth!" We speak sometimes too much and listen too little. But on the other hand it is also true that we may say to the Lord, "Hear, Lord, what Thy servant saith!" Our prayer should be a child-like talking, telling Him everything that occupies us.

This prayer may certainly bear a personal character, because we each have our own needs and difficulties, and so we are told to be alone in our chamber. But we must also in our prayer give expression to the general feeling. Therefore, the Lord told His disciples that their prayer should begin, "Our Father."

It is remarkable that the Lord Jesus first speaks to the disciples: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are . . . When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret." Everything is in the singular. When the Lord uses the plural in the seventh verse: "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the

heathen do . . . After this manner, therefore, pray ye," He refers to an individual prayer in the closet, although the one who prays does it in the feeling of communion with others.

In considering the Lord's Prayer, we first have to ask the question: To whom was this prayer given to pray?; in the second place, whether the Lord Jesus intended that we should repeat the prayer or that it should be a model?

As to the first point: Both in Matthew and in Luke, the disciples were addressed. In Matthew v. 1, we read that the disciples of Jesus came to Him and that He opened His mouth and taught them. In Luke xi. 1, we are told that one of His disciples came to Him and said: "Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." From this we see that the Lord's Prayer is not for the world, but for the disciples. But when the question is asked whether these disciples are members of God's assembly, the answer must be in the negative. Of course, this does not mean that this prayer does not contain important lessons for the assembly of God; there is hardly any portion of scripture which says so much in a small compass to every member of the body of Christ. But, as we shall see, this prayer bears the characteristics of children of the kingdom, which is natural, because it was given to the disciples at a time when the Holy Ghost had not been poured out and the birthday of the assembly had still to come. This is why, in Luke v. 13, it is said of the Father, that He would give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him. Those who belong to the assembly *have* the Holy Ghost and therefore do not pray thus; they do ask to be led by the Spirit or filled by the Spirit. Later, when the Lord Jesus was rejected by the Jews, He said, referring to the time after His resurrection: "In that day (the day when He should be glorified and should send the Holy Ghost), in that day ye shall ask the Father *in My name*; hitherto, ye have asked nothing in My name" (John xvi. 23 and 24).

As to the second point: The Lord's Prayer is not

given as a formula, but as a model prayer. That is seen from the beginning: "After this manner, pray ye," or "When ye pray, say." It is also clear from the fact that the prayer in Matthew is different from that in Luke, which would not be the case if we were to pray in those words. In the Authorised Version the prayer is the same in both Gospels, except that the ascription of praise at the end only occurs in Matthew. But the more recently discovered manuscripts, which have been found, from which the newer translations have been made, have given indisputable proof that in Luke, in order to make the prayer similar to that in Matthew, a few words and petitions have been interpolated, while the end of the prayer in Matthew vi., the so-called doxology does not occur in the old manuscripts.

In Matthew therefore we have *seven* petitions and in Luke *five*. The petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," does not occur in the original in Luke, neither do the words "Deliver us from evil." And because in Luke it was the prayer of the dependent disciple, we find *five* petitions.

It says in Matthew: "Our Father, which art in heaven"; in Luke only "Father." In Matthew: "Forgive us our trespasses, *as* we forgive; in Luke: "*Because* we forgive."

We now give the Lord's Prayer as it appears in Matthew: "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

We shall now consider to whom this prayer was given as a model prayer. It occurs in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, in which the Lord addresses His Jewish disciples. We read, therefore, that they should not pray "like the heathen." The Sermon on the Mount is the fundamental law of the kingdom of heaven. And the disciples were to bear the marks of children of that kingdom. Therefore they pray:

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

They are disciples of the Lord, who expected a kingdom here on earth with earthly blessings. But they have yet to learn of the Father and to begin to look for the Father's kingdom when the righteous shall shine as the stars in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. xiii. 43).

The assembly of God is a heavenly people; seated in the heavenly places in Christ; therefore, we do not read in any of the epistles the expression, "Father in heaven," but "the God and Father," or, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And the Spirit witnesseth with the spirit of the believers who form the assembly, that they are children of God, and leads them to cry, "Abba, Father."

The fact that the Lord Jesus, just before He said, "After this manner, pray ye," exhorted His disciples to enter into their closet, makes it clear that this prayer is not an expression of assembly worship. The Lamb is the centre of worship in the assembly; and naturally there can be no reference to Him or to perfect redemption in Christ Jesus in this prayer.

We must, however, not forget that the name "Father" is used, although the prayer is given to the believing Jews in the days of the Lord Jesus and to believing Jews in a future age. It stands on a higher plane than the Old Testament blessing. We see here a period of transition. The Lord Jesus had come to declare the Father, and although He only declared the name of the Father to His brethren after the work was done, He had already taught them the beauty of the Father's name, gradually revealing it more and more, thus preparing His disciples for living communion with Him. So He speaks to them of the glories of their Father which is in heaven, of being sons of their Father in heaven, of being perfect like their heavenly Father. It is this which gives such intimacy to the Lord's Prayer.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

This is the first petition which ascends. God would, as the prophets had said, be glorified in His people

before the eyes of men. And especially when they thought of the *Father*-name of God, they were conscious that this must be separate from all evil throughout the whole world. Therefore, that is their prayer in view of the coming kingdom. A prayer which must be at the bottom of the heart of every member of the church (assembly) of Christ, in view of the glorifying of the name of the Father in this time of grace. "Honour God" takes the first place among believers of all times.

THY KINGDOM COME.

The kingdom of heaven was at hand. The believing Israelite desired with great desire that the Messiah should enter into His kingdom. But ere that could be they are taught to pray for the Father's kingdom to be established as the Lord Jesus speaks of the fruit of the vine, which He would drink new with His disciples in the kingdom of His Father. Therefore: . . . "Father! . . . Thy kingdom come."

The Christian desires also the earthly kingdom. Because his Saviour will then be glorified on this earth which once rejected Him. But the coming of the Lord in the air will precede this. And the believer in Christ prays for this first and foremost. "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" We long, as the church, not only for the King, but for our Bridegroom, although we shall reign as kings with Him, the King.

THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH.

The knowledge of the Lord shall one day cover the earth. Just as God's angels in heaven now do His will, shall God's will be done on earth. The disciple of the kingdom longs for that moment. And the church also looks for it with longing.

But the church which here is as a stranger will then be like Jesus and see Him as He is!

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

It may also read "Give us each day sufficient bread," or "our daily bread." Some give the following reading: "The bread for or until to-morrow."

In the same Sermon on the Mount in which this prayer occurs, the disciples were warned not to be anxious about what they should eat or drink or wherewithal they should be clothed. "All these things do the nations seek," said the Lord Jesus, "but your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things (Matt. vi. 32).

The Master would teach them to pray for their bodily welfare. But they must not ask for more than bread, and not for bread for weeks and months, but for what they needed for "this day." They must therefore live by the day. Had not the Israelites in the wilderness to gather the bread for each new morning?

How important this is in bad times! The disciples experienced it when the Master was with them. How dependent they were every day! And in the future the believing Jews, in the time of the great tribulation, are fed for one thousand two hundred and sixty days (Rev. xii. 6, 14). This central petition of the Lord's Prayer is undoubtedly a prayer for all time.

In our day we experience, even more than formerly, how very dependent we are each day for subsistence for us and ours. But it has always been true and will always remain true, that God must care each day for His own and that the dependent prayer is suitable: "Give us this day our daily bread."

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

There are needs not only for the body, but for the soul. There is first of all the debt to God. Only God can forgive this. A sinner must therefore apply to God for forgiveness and salvation. He must pray the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But this is something different. Believers are here praying for forgiveness. These believers did not yet belong to the assembly, and had not the consciousness of the full forgiveness of their sins. But that they are born again is clearly explained by the word spoken to them. Well, then, they must be willing to forgive those that are

debtors to them. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14, 15). "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father, which is in heaven, may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, which is in heaven, forgive you your trespasses (Mark xi. 25, 26).

How glorious it will be in the future when the unrighteousness in Jerusalem shall be atoned for and the believing Jews shall no longer hate the heathen, but shall show them grace.

For the assembly also, the same principle of a forgiving spirit applies. If we are hard and unforgiving, our Father cannot forgive our trespasses. A serious truth, to which we pay too little attention.

On the other hand, we Christians have a much higher motive for forgiving one another. "As God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32). God *has* forgiven us, and *therefore* (in the same manner) we forgive. And when we ask God for forgiveness, we have the certainty that He is faithful and true to forgive the sins we confess and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9).

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

James has said: "Let no man say I am tempted of God" (Jas. i. 13). How then can the disciples pray that God should not lead them into temptation? It is clear that what is meant here is not the temptation into which we come by our own lust or the action of the devil, but that it means testing. We read "God *tempted* Abraham," namely, to put His faith to proof. The disciples had great difficulties. And what will it be in the time when all kinds of oppression and persecution shall be the portion of those who hold fast to God! Is it any wonder that they should pray that they should not be led into temptation? In view of the difficult times and their weak faith, they pray that they may not be sifted. And shall that not be especially the case in "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the earth"?

It was said to believers in Christ, "Count it all joy when ye fall into temptation." Paul says: "We glory in tribulation," because the trial of our faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. That is the high position in which Christians are set through grace.

Sometimes they stand much lower, in practice. And then the same prayer is suitable as is here uttered by the disciples of the kingdom. For if they forget to pray in dependence not to be led into temptation, the devil will make use of it to take away their soul's happiness and perhaps to make them fall.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

Now come the attacks of the devil or of evil. (We can read: From the evil *one*, or from evil.) Both are terrible. And the disciple cannot save himself from them. The Lord must be his helper, his strength.

Especially when the Antichrist comes, this prayer will be necessary. But it is also necessary for us. In John xvii. the Lord Jesus says to the Father: "I pray . . . that Thou wouldest keep them from the evil." The Lord Jesus knows how great is the power of Satan. Happy is it if believers also know the wiles of the enemy; flee from him and from all evil. "The Lord is our keeper." "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil." And the Psalmist is thinking there of the evil that comes to us from outside. Let us then not forget to turn to our Father to be delivered from that which would harm our soul.

Having gone over and applied the whole prayer, we see how divinely beautiful and perfect it is. Everything is said in a few words.

Three petitions (two in Luke) having relation to God.

One petition relating to our earthly life.

Three (in Luke two) connected with our spiritual welfare.

It is important to note that the Father's honour, the Father's kingdom, the Father's will, should take the first place in our thoughts and prayers. Our daily bread is

generally uppermost in our thoughts. Here it occurs in both Gospels in the middle, because it is of great importance, but still the requirements of the Lord come first.

It is important to see the great need for forgiveness and keeping.

But we will not forget that *we* have learned the place of prayer in Jesus' name to the Father, praying in the Holy Ghost:

"Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who 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" (that) "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He may give it you," "Praying in the Holy Ghost."

The Holy Ghost teaches us how to pray, and if we do not know what to pray for, the Holy Ghost prays with unutterable groanings for the saints.

Let us then thank God for the beautiful, glorious prayer, which we call the Lord's Prayer. Its exalted language and rich contents fill us with admiration.

The thought that God the Father in heaven is our Father; that we have free access to Him through Christ, is precious to us, encouraging and comforting. Our child-like faith is strengthened by it.

And although we do not pray the Lord's Prayer as we find it written in God's word for those believers who stood in a different relationship to God, we may learn from it and use it as a model for our dependent prayer. We may learn from it first to seek God's honour, and then with few and simple words to tell our needs to our God and Father, through Jesus Christ, in connection with all that concerns us and all we need. At the same time we must be gentle to those who, not understanding the precious privileges given us in Christ, continue to pray the Lord's Prayer (not as a form, but from the heart), convinced that our God and Father sees the heart.

From the Dutch (abridged).

Scripture Gems from the Old and New Testaments Compared

Old Testament.

Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them.—Psa. lxxxix. 9.

And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord . . . I rejoice in Thy salvation.—1 Sam. ii. 1.

And of Asher he said . . . As thy days, so shall thy strength be. — Deut. xxxiii. 24 and 25.

I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.—Psa. cxxxii. 15.

False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things I knew not. Psa. xxxv. 11.

New Testament.

Then He (Jesus) arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.—Matt. viii. 26.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.—Luke i. 46 and 47.

And there was one Anna . . . of the tribe of Aser. She was of a great age . . . she spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.—Luke ii. 36 and 38.

Then He (Jesus) took the five loaves and the two fishes and looking up to heaven, He blessed them and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude, and they did eat, and were all filled.—Luke ix. 16 and 17.

Now the chief priests, and the elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none: yea though false witnesses came, yet found they none.—Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.

Old Testament.

My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.—Psa. v. 3.

So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. — Job xlii. 12.

Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him.—2 Sam. ix. 3.

We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light some mischief will come upon us.—2 Kings vii. 9.

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. — Gen. xxii. 8.

And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai they did work wilily. — Josh. ix. 3, 4.

New Testament.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place and there prayed.—Mark i. 35.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.—Jas. v. 11.

The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.—Tit. iii. 4.

Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.—1 Cor. ix. 16.

John seeth Jesus coming unto him and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John i. 29.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. — Ephes. vi. 11.

T.W.

Distrust and Faith.

ONE morning during the winter of 1927-28 I was coming downstairs after having slept but little. The many tasks that lay before me seemed an impossible burden to my tired mind.

I had not come half-way downstairs when my youngest child ran to meet me saying: "Oh, father, father, the water-pipe has burst during the night, and they have just discovered it. You could sail a boat anywhere in the cellar; the water is more than eighteen inches deep. Potatoes, vegetables, wood, bottles, baskets and butter are all swimming about!" And so it was, but what was a great amusement to the child did not help me in my irritated condition. How much more I would now have to do—workmen and others would be required to get everything put right. Much damage was done.

Scarcely had I sat down at my desk when a snivelling beggar disturbed me and his hypocritical and lying talk annoyed me, and then while he was talking one of the children was brought in who had fallen on the frozen ground and dislocated his ankle. "Good morning," said the postman, and handed me more letters than I wanted, among them two which had not enough stamps and one which contained worrying news. It was enough to fill my cup of bitterness to overflowing.

But now came a man, whom at first I did not want to see. "Mr. ——," said he, "you were speaking about faith last Sunday." This made me draw up. He wanted me to write out a verse I had quoted:—

I pray, Thou Giver of all good,
For steadfast faith to stand, as brave
As rock within the sea has stood,
When beaten by the mightiest wave.

I wrote down the verse, and as I did so I said to myself: "A splendid rock within the sea am I!"

When the good man had gone, having unwittingly done me a great service, I closed the door of my room and did not open it for some time. When I did open

the door again, there was sunshine in my room although it was snowing outside. I could now look lightly on the small occurrences which had previously seemed so great, but which really were ridiculously small in comparison to eternity, which I now desired to think about. Had I not gone into the presence of God, who knows what might have happened that day?; for an irritated person is a dangerous person; I cannot say just how dangerous.

There is nothing we forget so easily as the presence of the Lord. We should be found there at all times and should not fly there only when need comes and irritation threatens to overcome us. It is there that we are safe; we enjoy the Father's love; we know the wisdom of His ways and are kept in peace and quietness, even when a snow-storm is raging. ANON.

Calling on the Lord out of a *pure* Heart.

(2 Tim. ii. 22, 2 Kings ii.)

CALLING upon the Lord out of a *pure* heart. A heart *subject* in all things to Christ and to His word . . . "My words *abide* in you" (John xv.).

It was the simple fact of Elijah's presence that discovered the real state of things at Bethel and Jericho (Bethel-man's *religion*; Jericho-man's *will*). There was *profession* at both places, but *none* but Elisha *followed* Elijah. The fact of following revealed the state of the heart. Had Elijah not been there, nothing would have tested and revealed the hollowness of the profession of those sons of the prophets. There was intelligence, but no *heart* to follow and the "strong men" of Jericho had no faith even in their own word of prophecy. How daring, too, to go and dwell *there* so soon after the rebuilding of the cursed city and in spite of the curse of God still resting on the land and on the waters. But there was grace in power from the man of resurrection for those who freely confessed the truth of their miserable condition. But judgment began at Bethel, "the house of God" (1 Peter v.).

Those who are minded to “go on unto perfection” like Elisha learn the mind of Christ. “I will not leave thee.” There is the source and the nature of all his power; his heart was won and knew its *only*, its all-constraining object. He began at Gilgal and he went on; but the character of his after-walk was *shaped* when he was alone there with Elijah. Later trials had no effect in altering his course.

But on the other hand those who at Jericho could stand and *look without following*; go afterwards and seek for Elijah, where he is not to be found and return in confusion. And so it will be in the day of judicial blindness and darkness which will shroud man’s will on the eve of God’s judgment day.

For the one that follows—

Life is known at Gilgal. Col. ii.

Light all along that wonderful journey.

Love in all its fulness on the resurrection side of Jordan. There the chariots of salvation are seen, as afterwards at Dothan.

None of those who could stay on the road as at Bethel or at Jericho, had a “*pure heart*.” Their affections were divided.

W.J.L. (1873).

Burdens.

IN Arabia a heavy stone is put on the leafy top of the young palm tree to keep back the growth of the tree, which does not then shoot up to such a great height as it would otherwise do. The trunk becomes stronger, the wood harder and the fruit more plentiful.

Nothing is more suited to the well-being of our inward man than a load given to us of the Lord. It makes us more patient, more able to resist outside influences and drives us to prayer. Great men of God have often become strong under such a load.

We groan often under this or that burden which is laid upon us and keeps us down. We ask then: “Why is it, Lord?” Often we cannot reconcile it with the love and faithfulness of God and finally begin to murmur and to doubt.

In Africa, when the natives have to go through a swiftly-flowing stream, they carry a heavy stone on the head. The weight makes their feet more sure and maintains their balance in the water. Does the Lord not do this with us? He lays a burden on us which makes our going heavy and hinders our progress. It does not crush us, but makes us steady and firm in the stream of time. Can one, who knows this, groan under the load laid upon him? Is it not better to go on courageously and trust to Him Who will bring us, if we persevere, through every storm and wave safely into glory?

Burdens and difficulties drive us into being dependent on God and one learns most in the presence of God; it is the best school. Let us not seek to get rid at once of every burden, need or difficulty, but seek strength from the Lord to bear it with patience. *Translated.*

Fragments.

ATONEMENT signifies life given and accepted as sacrifice for life forfeited; remission is the deliverance of those who appeal from the sentence of death, and thence it is the forgiveness of the sins that caused their condemnation.

* * * *

PRIESTHOOD supposes accomplished redemption; not to bring us in, but what we get when brought in. Priesthood is Christ undertaking the cause of His people, through the wilderness, maintaining us in the presence of God. Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. The sinner wants the Apostle, the message from God about acceptance. The saint wants the High Priest. The death of Christ is never the act of Priesthood.

* * * *

The washing of regeneration is not priestly washing; but after that I come inside as a priest, and get the full place of a priest, then follows priestly washing of hands and feet—a washing for those who are *within*.

The water is the word in its own purity from God; but the *place* in which I get it is the point. The sinner must have the new nature in order to come in; but then when in, he says, "I must be with God every day"—this wants washing of hands and feet. Until the priest was consecrated, he could not go to the altar or laver at all. Now, what is the water of the first washing in Exodus xxix.? That washing is the washing of water by the word—born of water and of the Spirit—and this is never repeated; whereas every time they served, they washed their hands and feet.

* * * *

It is only by priesthood that I, a weak failing one, can be brought through the wilderness. Well, this I have in Jesus—not only access through the blood—liberty into the very holiest — but One there to represent us before God—Whose very *presence* is the memorial of sins having been put away, and Whose work there is to intercede for us down here in our weakness and failing. He can sympathise, and He can and He does restore our souls; and on Him does God wish us individually to depend. Ah! how sweet to do so, when His personal love to us is known. *He loves us*; we are the objects of His tenderest affections. Our names make Him glad when He hears them, for He purchased us at a great price, that we might be for Him and not for another. Do we give its true force to this fact that Jesus *LOVES* us? If it were an earthly friend who loved us, how real a thing it would be! How confident we should be of their thoughts ever being upon us, and how we should expect them to rejoice greatly at seeing us! Why do we not thus live in, and on, the love of Christ? His delight is in us. Do we believe it? Alas, no! Why? Because our delight is so little all in Him. But ere we had being, "His delights were with the sons of men." When on the earth, He said of the saints, "*all My delight* is in them." And in the Song of Songs, "How fair and pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!" And how sweet to find the Bride resting in this, His love—"I am my beloved's, and His desire is towards me."

The Book of God.

THERE is in the world a single Book
On which everyone is bound to look;
Though the world is full of books indeed,
There is but this one we are bound to read.

For God Himself has deigned to bestow
A heavenly book upon man below;
He pitied us far from Him, and thus
In His infinite love He speaks to us.

It reveals to man his real case,
And it tells of God's unbounded grace,
Of Paradise lost—of the cause of pain—
And of God's own Paradise opened to men.

It lifts the veil from things to come,
And it solemnly tells of the scorner's doom;
Of all that poor sinners need to know,
Of eternal life, and eternal woe.

But more than all, it tells of One,
Of Jesus, God's beloved Son,
And the weary sinner, taught by grace,
Sees God revealed in a Saviour's face!

And learns with a deep delight to know
In Him, Who once passed through this world of woe,
So lowly, suffering, meek and kind,
The very God against Whom he sinned!

But as blinded eyes can no light discern,
Though the brightest lamp may before them burn,
So the mind of man can never reach
The wisdom and truth which its pages teach.

For He Who wrote it alone can explain
The deep, deep truths which it doth contain;
But when God the Spirit unfolds the word,
In the soul of the youngest child 'tis heard.

And man may mock, or in pride deny,
And others may lightly pass it by,
But the truth of each word that is written there,
Eternity's ages shall declare.

E.H.C.

Christian Fortitude

IT was in the days when slavery was not yet abolished in all British possessions, but at a time when by law slaves were free every Sunday to cease work and enjoy a brief spell of freedom, that a slave in the West Indies, whom we will call Sambo, wandering many miles away from his master's estate, chanced to hear the gospel, and was laid hold of by divine power and grace. His master soon discovered the change that had come over his slave. And being a great enemy of God and of His Christ he subjected poor Sambo to incessant and harassing ill-treatment. Yet the poor slave bore it patiently, and like Stephen, looked off unto Jesus, Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross and despised the shame.

His master had strictly forbidden him to go to any more religious meetings. But Sambo thought that this was a case in which he ought to obey God rather than man. And the Sunday being, besides, his free day, he accordingly went to listen again to the gospel, walking by night many miles to the place of the meeting, to be back before day-break. However, Sambo's absence was discovered, and on his open avowal of where he had been, his pitiless master had him tied to the triangle, and beaten, until the blood streamed from the lacerated body of Christ's faithful bondman. The barbarous slaveholder, and slave of Satan, then stepped to the bleeding sufferer, and asked him: "What can Jesus Christ do for you now?" "He helps me to bear it patiently, Massa!" replied Sambo. Enraged at his calmness, the slaveholder ordered him to be flogged afresh, until the body of the poor slave was one mass of wounds. Again the taunting challenge of Satan's slave was flung at the fainting freeman of Christ: "What can Jesus Christ do for you now?" "He make me very happy, Massa!" was Sambo's answer. Again his inhuman tormentor had the terrible whip applied to him, when, seeing that his victim was drawing near his end, for the third time the sneering question was put to him: "What can Jesus Christ do for you now?" "He teach me to pray

for you, Massa!" whispered the dying negro, and fell asleep, to enter into his Master's joy and rest.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me."

"Master! we would no longer be,
Loved by the world that hated Thee,
But patient in Thy footsteps go,
Thy sorrow as Thy joy to know;
We would—and oh, confirm the power!—
With meekness meet the darkest hour,
By shame, contempt, however tried,
For Thou wast scorned and crucified."

"We welcome still Thy faithful word—
The cross shall meet its sure reward,
For soon must pass the little while,
Then joy shall crown Thy servants' toil,
And we shall hear Thee, Saviour, say:
'Arise, my love, and come away;
Look up, for thou shalt weep no more,
But rest on heaven's eternal shore.'"

J. A. VON POSECK.

What is Faith?

A YOUNG couple were travelling in a mountain district. Near a deep chasm, the young wife slipped. As she slid towards the edge of the chasm, she succeeded in catching firm hold of a small bush. Her husband could not follow, but he was able to lean over a rock above from which he could stretch down his hands very near to his wife.

He bent down as far as possible, stretched his arms, but all in vain, his arms would need to be six inches longer. He cries: "Lift one hand straight up above you and I can catch hold of it!" She answers: "I can't let go, or I'll go over." Again he cries: "Listen, do as I tell you; lift your right hand straight up above you or else nothing can save you."

Yes, she sees it is a matter of life or death and so she raises her right hand above her, without being able to see her rescuer. She feels how she is losing hold, and at the same moment her hand is seized by the unseen but powerful hand of her husband; the woman is safe.

That is faith: To let go every natural hold in face of greatest danger; to let go in the confidence that God will keep hold unto eternal life. Dear soul, trust God without seeing or feeling. He is faithful, He keeps hold and always performs what He has promised.

(From the German).

“Oh, blessed house! where Thou art named,
Which as Thy dwelling is prepared;
Where as a noble guest far-famed,
Thou art delighted in, adored!”

Divine Love.

(Luke xv. and xix. John iv., etc.)

DIVINE love differs from human love in this; that there can be no exercise of it without a proportionate action upon the conscience. It is love in (the) *truth*, and its manifestation is absolute righteousness. (1 John iii. 7, 10.)

Mark the exquisite tenderness with which the Lord puts Zacchæus in his place (Luke xix. 9, 10): He had won his heart in more than answering his desire by coming into his house; and then when Zacchæus, uneasy in his conscience, begins to talk of his self-righteousness, the Lord says that salvation is come into this house; for the Son of man is come to *seek and to save* that which is lost. And Zacchæus had nothing more to say. He learnt he was saved when he learnt he was lost.

So in Luke xv. The sheep never knew where it had wandered to until it found itself in the Shepherd's arms. There it learnt that the Shepherd could not trust *it*, He

could not allow it the use of its own legs any more. It had only used them to wander.

Where He made known His love to me there I found He had no confidence in me, and I learned from Him to have no confidence in myself. But His own act, that taught me the lesson, set me on His own shoulders; He undertakes the charge of me even to His own house where He calls the friends and neighbours together, and His interpretation of the parable shows that the house is heaven—*“To-day, with Me, in Paradise.”* (Eph. i. 3 and ii. 6.)

The “babes” (Matt. xi. 25) tells the same blessed story. He reveals the Father’s name to those who have no wisdom and takes care of those who have no strength to take care of themselves. For that He had to suffer and to die.

I never loved righteousness until I learnt grace.

W.J.L.

To Him that Overcometh—3

IN the message to “the church in Pergamos” (vers. 12-17) the Lord is seen exercising a special form of judicial power, as “He which hath the sharp sword with two edges” (ver. 12). We read (Heb. iv.) “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:” and the Lord is here presented as having this thoroughly piercing power, which judges and discerns the secret workings of the heart and conscience.

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is” (ver. 13). That is where the church now found itself, “where Satan’s throne is”—(for he is the prince of it)—in the world. And the faithful may find themselves there too, if the church be there (Caleb and Joshua had to go the whole round of the wilderness with the rest, though not sharers in their unbelief); we have to separate ourselves

from the evil around, though we may not be separate from its results. We may find ourselves to be in feebleness and weakness, as the faithful in this church did ; but our comfort like theirs is that the Lord says, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest."

God in His grace takes full knowledge of all that concerns us ; not only of our conduct, our ways and condition, but also of the circumstances in which we are, saying as it were, I know that you are where Satan's seat is, and this, even when He may still have "somewhat against us." There is great comfort in knowing this. We might be placed, by means over which we had no control, in a very trying position, but in one which it might not be at all the mind of the Lord that we should quit, where christian conduct would be very difficult ; as, for instance, a converted child in an ungodly worldly family, where there is nothing of the spirit of Christ. The Lord would not merely in such a case judge His child's conduct, as to those things in which she might have failed. He would do that indeed, but He would also take the most thorough knowledge and notice of the circumstances where she was, yes, of every little circumstance that rendered it trying. He just as well knew the power of Pharaoh, and the detail of his tyranny, as He did the crying and groans of the Israelites. "I know," He says, "that he will not let you go." There is indeed great comfort in thus seeing the Lord's perfect knowledge as to where we dwell, because it may not always be His will to take us out of the place, nor yet to change the circumstances in which we are. He may choose to have us glorify Him there, and learn through them what, perhaps, we could not learn elsewhere.

We are too apt to think we must do great works in the Lord's name, in order to glorify Him ; there may not always be opportunity for this (there does not appear to have been opportunity for great works in service without to this church). He takes notice if we do but hold fast His name amidst circumstances which make even that measure of faithfulness difficult—"Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, etc." (ver. 13).

The Lord gives His people all this encouragement, and yet says, "I have a few things against thee" (vers. 14, 15). In the first place, they were slipping back into the world, some of them having already fallen into the habits of it, "eating and drinking with the drunken." And secondarily, they were beginning to allow of evil in the church, through pretence of liberty. He therefore warns—"Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (ver. 16). Worldliness characterised the danger of this church, and it required the sword with two edges to cut between their evil and the circumstances in which they were; if this were not effected it is "I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

But at the same time that He thus warns, there is plenty of encouragement given—promises suited to counteract their temptations (ver. 17). Were they tempted "to eat of things sacrificed unto idols" with the world? the promise to "him that overcometh" is, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." If they had grace to separate themselves from the open evil, He would reward them with the unseen blessing of the heavenly places, there should be this feeding on "the hidden manna." Again: were they tempted to deny the name and faith of Christ? the promise given is "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it:" to keep them from slipping back into the world, to strengthen them in incurring, as must needs be, in separation, the disapprobation of so many, He promises them inward blessings to cheer their hearts.

The "white stone" seems to mark the individual approbation of Christ; the "new name," peculiar intercourse between Christ and the individual, different from that which all shall share alike, different from the public joy. There is a public joy. All saints will together enjoy the comforts of Christ's love, will enter into the "joy of their Lord," and with one heart and with one voice will sound His praise. There will also be joy in seeing the fruit of our labours, as it is said, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of

our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming ?” And again there will be another joy in seeing the company of the redeemed, all according to Christ’s heart in holiness and glory. But besides this public joy, there will be Christ’s peculiar private individual recognition and approval—the “white stone,” and the “new name which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.”

Christ speaks elsewhere of His own new name as Head of the new creation. There are old names belonging to the Lord Jesus, but His new name is connected with that into which His Father brings Him, when all things which have failed in the hands of man will be established and developed in Him ; and having thus Himself a new name He gives us also a promise of a new name. We are not only to know Jesus and be known of Him according to present circumstances, but to have a special knowledge of Him in glory according to the glory.

Our souls must value this personal approval of Christ, as well as think of the public approval. The latter will be great blessedness ; but there is no peculiar affection in it, nothing that stamps peculiar love on the individual. Glory will be common to all, but glory is not affection. This “new name” is a different thing ; it is the proof of Christ’s value for a person who had been faithful in difficult and trying circumstances, for one who has acted on the knowledge of His mind and overcome through communion with Him. This will be met by special individual approbation. There is the public joy and approval in various ways, and the manifestation of our being loved by the Father as Jesus is loved. But this is not all that is given for our encouragement in individual conduct through trial, failure, and difficulty ; there is also this special private joy of love.

When the common course of the church is not straight, not in the full energy of the Holy Ghost, though there may be a great deal of faithfulness, yet there is danger of disorder. We find that the Lord then applies Himself more to the walk of individual saints, and suits His promises to the peculiar state in which they are. There is a peculiar value in this. It takes out of all fancied walking (the especial danger which belongs to such a state of things)—each

according to his own will, chalking out a path for himself because of the unfaithfulness and disobedient walk of the professing body. What faith has to do in such circumstances is to lay hold intelligently, soberly and solemnly on the Lord's mind, and to walk according to it, strengthened by the promises which He has attached to such a path as He can own.

This at once refers the heart and conscience to Jesus, whilst full of encouragement to the feeblest saint. And it is very precious to have thus the guidance of the Lord, and the promise of His own peculiar approbation, so peculiar, that it is known only to him who receives it, when the course of the church is such that one is thrown greatly on individual responsibility of conduct. But then, whilst it gives us strength for walk, it puts the soul in direct responsibility to the Lord and breaks down human will. When the professing church has become mingled with the world, "eating and drinking with the drunken," those who seek to be faithful must often have to walk alone, incurring the charge of folly and self-will (and that too even from their brethren), because they refuse to follow the beaten path. And indeed it is quite a real danger, a natural consequence that, when the common course is broken up, individual will should work. The natural tendency would ever be towards self-will. Our only safety is in having the soul brought under the sense of direct responsibility to the Lord by such warnings and promises as these, which both guide and supply strength to stand free from all around, whilst the consciousness that Christ marks and owns our ways will sanctify as well as encourage our hearts. For it must be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus, to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love, to find that He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or, at least, that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good

is done, that nobody should know anything about us?—even in the church to be thought nothing of?—that Christ alone should give us the “white stone” of His approval, and the “new name which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it?” Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ’s special favour but seeks honour (as we do) one of another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer—the Lord’s public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond—the latter. Both will be ours, if faithful, but we shall value this most, and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

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

J.N.D.

Himself.

I HAVE been greatly delighted of late in contemplating the blessedness of being engrossed with Jesus; and one effect that the many questions which beset one on every side have had, is to drive me closer to *Himself*. I desire to recall the minds of saints from everything else, and to present before them an object that is worthy—oh, how worthy!—of their entire, constant, continued attention, adoration and praise. The Lord help me to write what He has taught me “*concerning Himself!*”

It is exceedingly blessed to observe the prominence which that one word “HIMSELF” has all through the word of God. If the Holy Ghost would direct the thoughts to the cross, that great judgment of sin, the scene of that complete payment of *all* our debt, Calvary, the place of our life, though the place of a skull, it is by presenting “HIMSELF,” and hence it is 1 Pet. ii. 24, “Who HIS OWN SELF bore our sins in HIS OWN BODY on the tree . . . by WHOSE STRIPES ye were healed.” Beloved, the centre of it all is Jesus—

it is "*His own self*"—it is "*His own body*"—it is "*His stripes!*" Oh, blessed particularity and speciality! How sweet to the heart it is! The same thing is to be observed in Isaiah liii., where it is all "*Him,*" "*He,*" "*His*"—the Holy Ghost would fix the undivided, undistracted gaze of my soul on "Jesus Himself" as my perfect sacrifice!

Again: He has finished the work, He has endured the cross, and sin—that mighty barrier standing in the road of the sinner's return to God, is taken out of the way; the mountains of my guilt, yea, "the tops of the highest mountains" of mine iniquities, having been "covered by THE BLOOD OF JESUS," the Saviour rises from the dead. The grave could not detain Him. He rises, He bursts the bonds of death, for it was "not possible that He should be holden of it." He presents Himself to His disciples, who, with blighted hopes and scattered prospects, are terrified and affrighted. All their hopes had been laid in the grave of Jesus, never again, as they thought, to rise.

Consequently, when He appears, He causes fear and affright among them. And how does He reassure their hearts? What is the plan He adopts to restore their confidence and peace? He presents HIMSELF, saying (Luke xxiv. 49), "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I MYSELF." Then (ver. 40), "He showed unto them HIS hands and HIS feet;" mark, beloved, "HIS hands, HIS feet." Still it is "Himself:" it is not even a clear announcement of the proofs of what He was; it is not a recalling to their minds that He has taught them these things. No, beloved, precious as this would have been from His lips, there was something yet more touching, more melting, more convincing, and that was—presenting HIMSELF—"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I MYSELF." How blessed is all this!

But there is a step even further in this blessedness, for we find the Gospel by John ends, leaving the disciples and Jesus *together*, leaving them with HIMSELF. In the 21st of John, Peter is restored, and then, when fully restored and reinstated in office, the blessed Master says (ver. 19), "Follow ME." John, we are told, was seen by Peter "following". Well, when Peter enquires of the Lord about

John, the reply was, "What is that to thee ? follow *thou* ME." Here we see again the blessed Lord would have the mind engrossed with HIMSELF.

And now that He has come and gone away, and that we, His poor weak ones, are left in a world that disowns and rejects Him, what has He left us to *cheer* our hearts, to *occupy* our souls, to feed our hopes ? "HIMSELF." "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto *Myself* : that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3) ; and so in kindred words of comfort does the Holy Ghost console the Thessalonian saints in their sorrow : "For the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." . . . If our *past* be HIMSELF, if our *present* be HIMSELF, our future is also HIMSELF, and "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Oh, the exceeding preciousness of all this ! It is truly "Jesus only ;" and well may we sing :—

"The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face.
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace ;
Not on the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand.
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

Beloved, may the Lord deliver us from every object that would seek to intrude itself into the place HE HIMSELF ought to have in our heart ! The devil is not wanting in skill and stratagem to draw the minds and affections of the saints to various points which are indeed connected with Jesus, but which are not "HIMSELF," and to make these (right and proper in their place), the *all-absorbing* subjects for the mind ; and when he succeeds, what is the result ? A manifest chill among the dear saints of God, a coldness which must ever be the consequence of having *any* object but JESUS next the heart. . May our LORD JESUS HIMSELF

give us all the grace to abide in that happy place, of which we sometimes sing :—

“Oh, that I may, like favour'd John,
Recline my wearied head upon
The blest Redeemer's breast :
From care, and sin, and sorrow free,
Give me, O Lord, to find in THEE
My everlasting rest.”

W.T.T.

Candour.

A SALUTARY word to the believer as to his conduct towards all men and as to his general deportment towards fellow believers.

* * *

Whilst being admirers of candour, we should beware of counterfeits. True candour is a Christian grace, and will grow in no soil but a believing heart. It is an eminent and amiable property of that love which beareth, believeth, hopeth and endureth all things. It forms the most favourable judgment of persons and characters, and puts the kindest construction upon the conduct of others it possibly can, consistent with the love of truth. It makes due allowances for the infirmities of human nature, will not listen with pleasure to what is said to the disadvantage of any, nor repeat it without a justifiable cause. It will not be confined within the walls of a party, nor restrain the actings of benevolence to those whom it fully approves ; but prompts the mind to an imitation of Him Who is kind to the evil and the unthankful, and has taught us to consider every person we see as our neighbour.

Such is the candour which we should wish to derive from the gospel : and it is certain, they who have imbibed most of this spirit, will acknowledge that they are still defective in it. There is an unhappy propensity, even in good men, to a selfish, narrow, censorious turn of mind ; and the best are more under the power of prejudice than they are aware. A want of candour among the professors of the same gospel is too visible in the present day. A truly

candid person will acknowledge what is right and excellent in those from whom he may be obliged to differ ; he will not charge the faults or extravagances of a few upon a whole party. If he thinks it his duty to point out or refute the errors of any persons, he will not impute to them such consequences of their tenets as they expressly disavow ; he will not wilfully misrepresent or aggravate their mistakes, or make them offenders for a word : he will keep in view the distinction between those things which are fundamental and essential to the Christian life, and those concerning which a difference of sentiment, may, and often has, obtained among true believers. Were there more candour among those who profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, the emotions of anger or scorn would not be so often felt or excited by hearing the names mentioned of those who do not walk with them. Let us, friends, be candid ; let us remember how totally ignorant we ourselves once were, how often we have changed our sentiments in one particular or other, since we first engaged in the search of truth ; how often we have been imposed upon by appearances ; -and to how many persons and occurrences we have been indebted, under God, for the knowledge which we have already attained. Let us likewise consider what treatment we like to meet with from others ; and do unto them as we would they should do unto us. These considerations will make the exercise of candour habitual and easy.

But there is a candour, falsely so called, which springs from an indifference to the truth, and is governed by the fear of men and the love of praise. This pretended candour depreciates the most important doctrines of the gospel, and treats them as points of speculation and opinion. It is a temporising expedient to stand fair with the world, and to avoid that odium which is the unavoidable consequence of a steadfast, open, and hearty adherence to the truth as it is in Jesus. It aims to establish our intercommunity between light and darkness, Christ and Belial ; and under a pretence of avoiding harsh and uncharitable judgments, it introduces a mutual connivance in principles and practices, which are already expressly condemned

by clear decisions of Scripture. Let us not listen to the advocates for a candour of this sort ; such a lukewarm temper in those, who would be thought the friends of the gospel, is treason against God and treachery to the souls of men. It is observable that they who boast most of this candour, and pretend to the most enlarged and liberal way of thinking, are generally agreed to exclude from their comprehension all whom they call bigots ; that is, in other words, those who, having been led by divine grace to build their hopes upon the foundation which God has laid, are free to declare their faith in Christ ; and who, having seen that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, dare no longer conform to its leading maxims or customs, nor express a favourable judgment of the state of conduct of those who do. Candour itself knows not how to be candid to these : their singularity and importunity are offensive ; and it is thought no way inconsistent with the specious boast of benevolence and moderation to oppose, hate and revile them. A sufficient proof that the candour which many plead for is only a softer name for that spirit of the world which opposes itself to the truth and obedience of the gospel.

If a person be an avowed Unitarian, or deist, I am still to treat him with candour ; he has a right from me, so far as he comes in my way, to all the kind offices of humanity. I am not to hate, reproach, or affront him, or to detract from what may be valuable in his character, considered as a member of society. I may avail myself of his talents and abilities in points where I am not in danger of being misled by him. He may be a good lawyer, or historian, or physician ; and I am not to lessen him in these respects because I cannot commend him as a Christian. I am bound to pity his errors, and to pray if peradventure God will give him repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth ; and, if I have a call to converse with him, I should speak with all gentleness and meekness, remembering that grace alone has made me to differ. But I am not to compliment him, to insinuate, or even to admit, that there can be any safety in his principles. Far be that candour from us, which represents the scriptures as a nose of wax, so that a person

may reject or elude the testimonies there given to the deity and atonement of Christ, and the all-powerful agency of the Holy Spirit, with impunity.

On the other hand, they who hold the Head, who have received the record which God hath given of His Son ; who have scriptural views of sin and grace, and fix their hopes for time and eternity upon the Saviour ; in a word, all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ; these, if they cannot receive, acknowledge and love each other, as He has received, owned and loved them, are justly chargeable with a want of candour. Shall I be cold to those whom Jesus loves ? Shall I refuse them whom He has accepted ? Since our hearts are fixed upon the same Lord Jesus, we shall be perfectly of one mind ere long : why should we not encourage and strengthen one another now ? Oh, that the arm of the Lord might be revealed, to revive that candour which the apostle so strongly enforces both by precept and example ! Then the strong would bear the infirmities of the weak, and believers would receive each other without doubtful disputation.

Once more, however sound and orthodox (as the phrase is) professors may be in their principles, though true candour will make tender allowances for the frailty of nature and the power of temptation, yet neither candour nor charity will require us to accept them as real believers, unless the general strain and tenor of their deportment be as becometh the gospel of Christ. It is to be lamented that too many judge rather by the notions which people express than by the fruits which they produce, and, as they judge of others, so they often judge of themselves. We cannot have opportunity to say all we could wish, and to all to whom we would wish to say it, upon this subject in private life ; therefore it is the wisdom and duty of those who minister the word, and of those who print, to drop a word of caution in the way of their hearers and readers, that they may not mistake notion for life, nor a form of godliness for the power. The grace of God is an operative principle, and where it really has place in the heart, the effects will be seen (Acts xi. 23) ; effects so uniform and extensive that the apostle James makes one single branch of conduct, and that

such a one as is not usually thought the most important, a sufficient test of our state before God, for he affirms universally, that if any man seem to be religious, and "bridleth not his tongue, his religion is vain;" and again he assures us, that "whoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God:" and to the same purpose, Paul expresses himself on the subject of love (that love which he describes so accurately that none can mistake it unless they willingly deceive themselves): he declares that, without this love, the brightest knowledge, the warmest zeal, and the most splendid gifts, are nothing worth. It is to be feared these decisions will bear hard upon many who have a name to live among the assemblies of Christ. They are hearers and approvers of the gospel, and express a regard for those who preach it: they will stickle and fight for the doctrines, and know not how to bear those who fall a hair's breadth short of their standard, and yet there is so much levity or pride, censoriousness or worldliness, discoverable in their general behaviour, that their characters appear very dubious; and, though we are bound to wish them well, candour will not oblige or warrant us to judge favourably of such conduct, for the unerring word of God is the standard to which our judgments are to be referred and conformed.

In the sense, and under the limitations expressed above, we ought to cultivate a candid spirit, and learn from the experience of our own weakness to be gentle and tender to others, avoiding, at the same time, that indifference and cowardice which, under the name of candour, countenances error, extenuates sin, and derogates from the authority of the Lord in His word.

JOHN NEWTON (*slightly abridged*).

One Spirit with the Lord.

THE number of those who understand the mystery of the church is very small, but far smaller is the number of persons who know what resurrection life is.

People continually say: I know I am not what a Christian ought to be. I answer: If you are not dead and Christ your life, and if you are not walking in the power of it, how *can* you be what you ought to be?

The life of the Son of God is my life, and it is a life of resurrection. It may be up and down again—nothing but ups and downs continually—all my ruin as a creature coming out; but from the time when God revealed His Son to me, He took possession of my heart's affections, and I know that I have been in Him and He in me from that time.

I know Christ, and you do also, but did you ever get a full taste of Him and say: I know nothing, O Lord; help Thou mine unbelief? I have. Such a sense of fulness in Him and of an eternity of blessedness *with Him!*

I see my reflection in His blessed eye. No one ever looked on Him without seeing all the Father's glory in Him. The infinite fulness of the Godhead is in Him bodily. Oh, how little we know of that fulness in Him! What will it be to see that Christ Himself with faculties given by God to enable us to take in the glories of His Person!

How blessed is the truth that we are one with Him, His body; able to say to Him: Ah, Lord, Thou knowest Who and What Thou art, and I, the least of Thy members, am one with Thee. Oh, teach me, Lord, to know and to realise the wondrous mystery of the truth that I am in Thee and Thou in me, the truth of this unity of the body. It is that one's heart feeds and muses on. Oh, look to it that your hearts be occupied with and feeding upon that blessed truth, that we are one spirit with the Lord.

G.V.W.

Why Am I Left Here?

THIS was the question a Christian often asked of himself. He thought that the Lord should take him away from this vale of tears and take him home, but it was only because he had but little known his high calling and his solemn duty in this world.

One night he dreamt that he was, to his great joy, being lifted up towards heaven. Through an open window the earth below was shown to him. He looked down and saw a very great crowd of men who were striving, blindfold, to reach the edge of a fearful abyss, and an angel asked him: "Would you rather stay here, or will you go and warn these blindfolded men to turn from their evil way which leads to destruction?" He woke up. Nowadays he preaches: "Be ye reconciled to God."

Extract from a Letter.

I FEEL that I should, once again, as often before, discourage the spirit of change and looking to other fields as better than the one God has placed you in. The next field always looks more attractive than the one we are in; but when we get there, it does not always answer to our expectations, and possibly our pride will not allow us to own it to others, or to retrace our steps. Then the flesh likes what suits it best, and to be free from irksome restrictions. A large and generous spirit feels it difficult not to go along with others even if we do not see with them. "Why magnify trifles," "Why be disagreeable," etc., etc., are very plausible to our poor hearts. But directly we bring in Christ and His claims, how different it looks. Father, mother, etc., even one's own life seems of little consequence to God's great purpose of exalting the humble and obedient Man. Severity and harshness in some must not let us fail in our allegiance to Him and the path of sorrow and rejection He took. As you remarked, there are those who never wish to share the burdens and respon-

sibilities attaching to fellowship, but who wish to enjoy all its privileges (and these latter are not few nor of little value). We still have the liberty of the Spirit, if we do not allow it to the flesh. Alas, the flesh can be at one time so amiable, and at another so bitter. I shall never forget the scorn and bitter resentment I experienced at —, when, after a pleasant evening with some Christians there, they asked me where I was going on Lord's Day. And when I said "Brethren" and they enquired if "open" and I said I thought not, they completely changed their whole attitude. But principles are better than experience to go by, and *they* are plain enough to those willing to be led thereby.

Well, I do not want to discourage you in a right path, far from it. The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. We shall not be sorry at the end that we bore His reproach. He bore with those squabbling disciples and made them noble men. Let us seek the good of our brethren in spite of all their awkwardness, the fewness and poverty of our numbers, all short of deliberate connivance with evil in doctrine or practice. Ignorance and prosiness are trying; mournfulness too. (Yet there is cause to mourn.) But let our faith in Him burn the brighter, and our love to Him increase; and our brethren may catch some of its brightness and steadfastness."

Press On.

"**B**RETHREN, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Press on! press on! believer,
 To know more of the Lord—
 Your Object, and your Saviour,
 Now on the throne of God.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
Forgetting things behind,
Reach forth unto your treasure
In Him your joy to find.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
With patience run the race :
Run—looking unto Jesus,
For He will give you grace.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
The way is upward still :
Though all may seek to hinder,
Press on and do His will.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
The Lord is on your side,
The Holy Ghost your power,
The word of God your guide.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
To Him Who 's e'er the same ;
Let Christ—not self—be ever
Your object and your aim.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
If you would Him reflect ;
And tell the weary sinner
His mercy to accept.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
He knows your every care :
Loved by Him and His Father—
Oh ! what a love to share.

Press on ! press on ! believer,
Your work will soon be done.
Then with the blessed Saviour,
You'll rest in His bright home.

W.J.W.

Letter from an Old Disciple to a Young Sister in the Lord.

(Reprinted.)

IDULY received your kind and loving note. It was very welcome and very acceptable. And now I am proving my willingness, at least, to respond to your wish, though I am nothing of a letter-writer. But I have asked the Lord to give me a word for you, and He never fails. Still, so poor and weak am I, that though He may graciously give me a word, and present a sweet and profitable line of truth for me to pursue, I may spoil it in the detail.

The flesh ever seeks to intrude itself, and if allowed to get in and show what it can say and do, the fair work of the Spirit will be marred. Hence the need, my dear young sister, of constant watchfulness and prayer.

The blessed Jesus is our perfect example in this—watching and praying, when the deep, and dark shadow of Calvary was gathering thick around Him. He separated Himself from His disciples, that He might “offer up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.”

By watching He saw and anticipated all that was coming. By prayer He passed through it all before it came, in spirit with His Father. So when the deep trial actually came, He was perfectly prepared for it, having gone through it all beforehand in deep and blessed communion with His Father.

Hence the beautiful tranquillity of soul which He manifests in the presence of His enemies. With what sublime dignity He meets Judas, officers, men, chief priests, multitude, etc. In the calm fortitude of One Who could truthfully say, “Not My will, but Thine be done,” and Who sought only the Father’s glory, He could say, “Whom seek ye?” “I am He.” Oh! what majesty and holy courage combined with simple child-like dependence on His Father in heaven.

The deeper the trial, the thicker the darkness, the heavier the sufferings, He is just the more profoundly subject to His Father's will, and the more entirely cast on Him. The Father's glory, the children's salvation, He kept full in view; which led Him to look beyond the hour and power of darkness "to the cloudless morning" when the "countless multitude" of ransomed hearts will cluster around His blessed Person, beating with perfect love and endless joy to His ever-blessed name, in the bright and eternal effulgence of the Father's glory. "Praise the Lord, Who died to save us; Praise His name for ever dear."

This, my dear child in the gospel, is your only safe and perfect example, looking to Jesus whether joy or sorrow lies before you. Before it actually comes, seek to go through it all in secret with the Lord, so that you may not be taken by surprise and thrown off your guard when called to enter upon the scene. If you have in spirit gone through the trial with the Lord in private, He will be with you and carry you through it in public to His glory; and that's all you have got to care about it.

Read first the scene in the garden as described by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then add John. When Christ was watching and praying, the disciples were sleeping. Ah! what a lesson! Sleepiness and self-confidence characterised the bold and loving Peter; perfect subjection to God, and simple dependence on Him, characterised the dependent "Son of man." But when the hour of conflict arrived, who stood in the fight alone? Those who had neither watched nor prayed were unprepared; therefore they forsook Him and fled. Of the people there was none with Him. Ah! what a practical lesson we get here.

And now, my one-year-old, let me ask you, Have you learned (when you know, feel, or fear any trial or difficulty coming upon you) to go away by yourself and lay it all out before the Lord, and in true, sweet, and blessed fellowship with Him go over it all, round it all, through it all, thus honouring the Lord by watching and prayer, knowing that He will honour you, His dependent one,

when the difficulty comes, or prevent it from coming altogether? Oh! how different would be our walk and testimony, our practical exhibition of Christ, were we thus to watch and pray. The blessed Lord Himself, my dear young Christian, effectually teach you by His own blessed Spirit; for I, in measure, feel ashamed to speak about things which I have realised so little. But the Lord is very patient, He has borne long with me. I know, and it is a great deal to know, that His precious blood cleanseth from all sin.

Two things make me very happy:—

1. I am washed in the blood of Christ.
2. I am made in Christ the righteousness of God.

Therefore I am fit to be in the holy presence of God without a veil, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

I state this for you to try yourself on the same ground. Of course you are on precisely the same ground: so is every believer; but all don't know it, because of looking to themselves.

May you be kept, my dear child in the faith, living, walking, and acting in the holy presence of our God and Father, with a single eye and an undivided heart for the glory of His Son, your living Saviour, by the divine power of the Holy Ghost.

With very much love in Christ, I am faithfully yours in the immortal bonds of the ever blessed gospel.

London, 1st June, 1855.

A. MILLER.

To Him That Overcometh—4.

IN the address to the following church, “the church in Thyatira” (vers. 18-29), it is more the external glory which is brought before us, as the portion of “him that overcometh” (vers. 26-28). It is a public testimony of His approval, and so far it must be precious to us; but, after all, the great blessing and joy of the promise is that it identifies us with Christ—“even as I have received of My Father.” Poor, wretched, and feeble

as we are now, the Lord will put us in the very same glory with Himself. We never shall have right thoughts about our privileges and blessings until we see our union with the Lord Jesus in everything. The way to judge of ourselves is to look directly at Him. It is not only seeing that we have been cleansed by His blood from our sins, and thus have peace with God: the thing that gives the true character to our hopes is living union (not a mystical union, though there is truth in this, for we have been crucified with Christ, etc.) with the Lord Jesus.

We thus come in hope and practice into identity of circumstances with Him. Being united to Him, everything that belongs to Him belongs to us, as it is said, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." All our conduct should flow from this. Whatever glorifies the Lord Jesus becomes us, we have to do with. This is the proper measure of our conduct, whatever does not savour of it is wrong conduct in a Christian. We are united to One Who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," and we therefore are so, too. Most sublime truth! Yet how simple and practical! When realised it must tell in every way and detail of life. How could one made higher than the heavens be seeking earthly things? How could he, for instance, desire riches here? As another has said, If an angel were to come down here, he would be just as willing to sweep the streets as to be a king; much more, then, one who has this personal, intimate consciousness of union with Christ. Nay, the more of a servant, the happier he will be. Love necessarily made Jesus a servant when here below.

But in acting thus we must remember there is much of difficulty. We have Satan always to resist us. We have to overcome him in a variety of circumstances and trials; not only to contend with but to overcome; and this, too, with a flesh that, if not mortified, will always be ready to lend a hand to him. So that it is not all joy, although we are set in so blessed a place.

This keeping the flesh mortified is the great thing,

the secret of all strength in practical difficulties; and nothing will do it but living in communion and fellowship with the Lord. We must watch against its first strivings and desires, or, before we are aware, it will be giving a handle to the temptations of Satan. If we are holding fast (as the faithful ones in Thyatira were commanded) that which we have in the Lord, we shall gain the victory over Satan, he will lose his power, and then all is joy; even suffering (for we shall suffer in consequence of our union with Christ, for His name's sake), all will be joy. But if there is not the every-day common-place diligence to break the power of the every-day difficulties and keep down every-day evil, we shall have to contend with the flesh instead of Satan (with whom our conflict ought to be), while it will give him power to come in when we are not ready to meet him; we shall have to get the armour in order, at the time the fight should begin.

I pray you to take heed to what I say, beloved friends, for if we fail in this daily judging and keeping down the flesh, we lose the power of victory over Satan; in conflict he will gain the advantage over us, or at least we shall only stand our ground, instead of gaining ground on him, and triumphing in victory over him. If it be so we are unfaithful to Christ; we owe it to Him to gain ground upon the world where Satan reigns—to stand in such a position as to be able to go forward and deliver individual souls from his power in every shape. There is not the looking to His grace, and the holding fast His name, if it is not so.

I ask you, in the name of the Lord's love to you, and because of the privileges that are yours, to judge yourselves, and see whether you are ready for the battle, or whether Satan would not find that in you, the flesh—so alive—which would serve as a handle he might use. But whilst thus judging yourselves remember that your souls, in the midst of whatever failure and humiliation, are to rest on the joy of Christ's perfect righteousness, though to have overcome will add to our joy in the day of His appearing, and bring more glory to Him now.

The Lord enable us so to walk in the Spirit that we may discover and know more and more the grace and suitability which is in Him for our every necessity, and understand in our own souls the fitness and power of His promises.

J.N.D.

What is the End of Life ?

THE *end* of life is not to do good, although so many of us think so. It is not to win souls—although I once thought so. The *end* of life is—to do the will of God. That *may* be in the line of doing good or winning souls, or it may not. For the individual, the answer to the question, “What is the *end* of my life?” is “To do the will of God, whatever that may be.”

Spurgeon replied to an invitation to preach to an exceptionally large audience, “I have no ambition to preach to 10,000 people, but to do the will of God”—and he declined.

If we could have no ambition past the will of God, our lives would be successful. If we could say, “I have no ambition to go to the heathen, I have no ambition to win souls; my ambition is to do the will of God, whatever that may be”; that makes all lives equally great, or equally small, because the only great thing in a life is what of God’s will there is in it. The maximum achievement of any man’s life, after it is all over, is to have done the will of God.

No man or woman can have done any more with a life—no Luther, no Spurgeon, no Wesley, no Melancthon can have done any more with their lives; and a dairy-maid or a scavenger can do as much.

Therefore, the supreme principle upon which we have to run our lives is to adhere, through good report and ill, through temptation, and prosperity, and adversity, to the will of God, wherever that may lead us. It may take you to China, or you who are going to Africa may have to stay where you are; you who are going to be an evangelist may have to go into business, and you who are going into business may have to become an

evangelist. But there is no happiness or success in any life till that principle is taken possession of.

How can you build up a life on that principle? Let me give you an outline of a little Bible reading:—

The definition of an ideal life:

“A man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will.”

The object of life:

“I come to do Thy will, O God.”

The first thing you need after life is food:

“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.”

The next thing you need after food is society:

“Whosoever shall do the will of My Father in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.”

You want education:

“Teach me to do Thy will, O my God.”

You want pleasure:

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God.”

A whole life can be built up on that vertebral column, and then, when all is over,

“He that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.”

ANON.

The Blessedness of Obedience.

(John xv.)

(The R.V. is sometimes quoted.)

THE last words of the fourteenth chapter—“Arise, let us go hence”—mark an important division in these precious communications of the Lord to “His own.” He had set them in the most exalted position as sons of God, had revealed to them the Father, and provided every safeguard to keep them in the conscious enjoyment of that position until He should come again to receive them to Himself, to dwell with Him in His Father’s house. All that chapter is devoted to the unfolding to them of absolute and unmingled grace. He would now touch upon the question of their

responsibility, while on earth, as having this exalted position and hope. "I am the true Vine and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it that it may bring forth more fruit." These solemn words follow immediately on, "Arise, let us go hence" — giving this command a symbolic as well as a literal meaning. They must break entirely with the earthly system. It had rejected Jesus, and must be rejected. The Lord Himself must be, for them, the sole Director, and the only source of power in all they did, for it is a question of *doing* now. "Without Me ye can do nothing." Israel had been proved to be "an empty vine bringing forth fruit to himself" (Hosea x. 1) and such would be all who clung to it. As the responsible vine which Jehovah of hosts had planted—"a noble vine," it had brought forth only wild grapes. "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression, for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Isa. v. 1-7). No fruit to God would result from their maintaining their connection with Israel, or even with the law. They must be joined to another, even to Him Who was raised from the dead, that they might bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii.).

A study of the character of the fruit the disciple of Christ should bear (see vv. 9-17) will prove how gracious, how heavenly it is. Such truth calls for devout meditation, rather than exposition, though exposition may, by God's grace, lead to meditation. Our hearts for the most part are weak in getting hold of Divine love, the love which ought to be flowing through us. "This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Very few of us have learned yet how the Lord loves us, and when we turn back and see how we have loved one another, we may well be humbled at finding how little we have entered into the meaning of such a simple command as this. The doctrines of Scripture may interest us, and we may delight in preaching and teaching them, but no ability to speak of the truth of God discloses the soul's practical

condition. Such a verse as this will make it manifest. But there is more than this. The Lord saith, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love." If it be a difficulty to estimate the love of Christ for us, how shall we understand the love of the Father for Him? Yet He would have us consider it, that we may put a right value on obedience. The blessed ideal of the church (although church truth is not John's subject, but the principle is the same) is that she is subject to Christ; this was the manifestation of her *first* love. So here, "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." Would we behold the abundant, constant fruitfulness of the True Vine? we see it here — *always obedient*, always as One walking down here, in the infinite delight of His Father's love. Observe too, even in thus pointing out the blessedness of obedience, the Lord introduces no thought of future rewards, nothing of crowns of glory and of righteousness and of life. The reward is *His love*, that holy, perfect, devoted love, consciously enjoyed now, while doing His will. This glance at the middle of the chapter will help us to value the instruction regarding our position on earth as attached to Christ as *branches of the True Vine*; not, be it carefully observed, as members of His body. To remove a limb from a human body would be to render it incomplete. Not so to take away a branch from a vine. In chapter xiv. those addressed are sons of God; in the fifteenth they are viewed as disciples of the Lord. No one can be a son but by faith in Christ Jesus. He must receive Christ, and be "born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is the first truth as to them in this Gospel (John i. 13). But one may attach himself to the Lord as a disciple without necessarily being a believer. This is set forth with great plainness in chapter vi., where we read that many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (v. 66). In v. 64 we have this explanation—"Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who

should betray Him." Judas was thus a conspicuous example of a fruitless branch, externally and in name attached to Christ, and put in an exalted position as an apostle. He could preach and cast out devils with the rest, yet there was no change in his heart. In Heb. vi. we have the same sad fact. Some Hebrews for a time left Judaism for Christianity and then fell away, (this is the right rendering of v. 6, see R.V.): and this is the case with all stony ground hearers, "who hear the word and anon with joy receive it, but, not having root in themselves, endure but for a while"; yet are they responsible for the profession which they make.

Many, however, that are not such hearers, but true believers, become greatly troubled when they read "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He (My Father) taketh away," so ready are they to look at themselves to find evidences of their salvation. But if they seek to get a standing before God on the ground of what they are, of their fruitfulness, they will never do it. It would be self-righteousness though they little think it. The witnesses that God gives them that they have life, are not their works or doings at all, but, the Spirit quickens, the water cleanses, and the blood expiates, and these are the fruits of Christ's work, not of theirs (1 John v.). The testimony is that "God *hath given to them* eternal life, and this life is in His Son." The question of having life must surely be settled before there can be any reference to the practice of life; thus the fourteenth chapter precedes the fifteenth, and is marked off from it by the words "Arise, let us go hence." The legal state of many Christians (ignorant of the truth in 1 John iv. 9), puts them on working for life, and not from the possession of it. When the enemy throws a fiery dart at them, they have not the shield of faith to quench it.

The eye turns in on self. What God has done to save is forgotten, as well as the state we were in when He did it (Rom. v. 8-11). It is what *they* are—"Perhaps after all I am a fruitless branch," they say, "I was at one time very happy, walking in peace, and joy and love,

but it is not so now. The world has got hold on me, religiously perhaps, but I feel it is not Christ. Shall I be taken away? Shall I be cast forth as a branch and become withered?" These exercises serve to break a man down, to humble him, but should teach him not to look to experiences, instead of Christ, to know his standing before God. If his walk has grieved the Holy Spirit he has lost the power to enjoy his standing and relationship in Christ, but he has not lost *them*. It is really wrong, as well as sad, that all the precious truths of the fourteenth chapter should be sacrificed to a single line in the fifteenth, misapplied, because not understood. Fruit-bearing for the glory of the Father is of supreme importance, but no soul is *saved* by fruit-bearing. Our state was one of death and condemnation, and nothing but the love of God in sending His own Son that we might live, and our sins be atoned for, through Him, could meet it. And it is met, *thoroughly met*, and we live and are justified apart from all works of ours. The perfect love of God casts out fear, because fear hath torment (1 John iv.).

In verse three the Lord saith—"Already ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you." By "the word," all that they were by nature was judged, their secret thoughts as well as their overt acts, and they received a new life; they were born of God, begotten by the word of truth (Jas. i. 18). This is true as to every one that heareth His word and believeth Him that sent Him—he hath everlasting life, and he shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life (John v. 24). Let us allow no doubt as to this, it would be to doubt our Lord. And observe what assurance as to this He gives us at every turn. The subject before us in chapter thirteen differs from this in fifteen; yet in both the Lord says—"Ye are clean." In xiii. He adds "*but not all*," for Judas had not then gone out. When he had left them, there was no exception. All were clean. In chapter xiv. the Lord gave them peace, His own peace, and would now add to peace, joy, His own joy (xv. 11). From first to last Jesus carried out

His Father's mind. This was His. Is it ours? Impossible if Christ be not in us; (the flesh is never obedient) and equally impossible if we do not abide in Him. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." We seek His strength by abiding in Him. He ministers it to us, the strength that is in Himself, by being in us. It is wonderful that we should have the *peace* of Christ, yet more that we should know *His joy*; the joy of Him whose *path* was one of unspeakable sorrow. Yet much affliction and great joy are to be found together. And let us not lose sight of the fact that these words—"Arise, let us go hence"—follow on this announcement by the Lord—"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." He is not here called "the devil," or "Satan," or "the wicked one," but "the prince of this world": the ruler of this skilfully ordered scene by which he acts on men of every shade of character and disposition to keep them at a distance from God. If such be the ruler of the world, what must the world be that he rules? Morally, the whole course of it is according to him. It must be, and to be of the world is to be subject to his authority. Solemn thought! None perhaps more solemn, when we think, not only of the numbers, but of the fair show of many, that do submit to it. This prince who had overcome all others, found nothing in Jesus. His obedience to death, as His obedience in life, bore witness to the world that He loved the Father, and as the Father gave Him commandment so He did. Perfect love, perfect obedience, when tried to the utmost. This is the True Vine.

But all this gives great seriousness to a true disciple. The world is the world still, and we whom Christ loves, must expect the world's hatred. The Lord hath said it, and said it most solemnly (read from xv. 18 to xvi. 4), and the disciple is only a branch. Nothing more fruitful if abiding in Christ. Nothing more worthless if not (Ezek. xv.). And if thus abiding in Christ and His words abiding in us, to a man of the world subject to and energized by its prince, no contrast can be greater, can be more apparent, or more distasteful. And we

have all to meet the world. Some in their homes, very many in business, the poor in the factories and workshops, the rich in even more exposed positions. The Lord keep us from thinking we can maintain our ground by our own power. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, accept ye abide in Me."

There is another beautiful feature in this chapter. The Lord is teaching the ceaseless care His Father bestows on all who not only profess Christ, but seek also to live Christ in the world. "My Father is the Husbandman." Hence every true believer is assured at all times of the Father's perfect wisdom and love in all His dealings with him. In the True Vine—the Lord Jesus—there was always perfect obedience. "I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." So the Christian is to keep the *commandments* of Christ, and he shall abide in His love. Whatever the energy of Divine life, whatever the desire to be up and doing, "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." What is that? The mind of *perfect obedience*, come what might. When it came to this, that His body was to be mangled by the Roman scourge, and then nailed to the cross, He was not rebellious neither turned away back. Now, beloved brethren, do you honestly believe that there is a single Christian here, or in the whole world, who has no rebelliousness of spirit, no need of the government of the Father as taught in Heb. xii. 5-11 and 1 Peter i. 17, and involved in this word—"My Father is the Husbandman?" Is there one whose fruit is so abundant that he has no need of cleansing by the Father's care, that he may bring forth more fruit? You know there is not, and you know that it is a great mercy to have your rebellious spirit dealt with and overcome. We are no losers by the Father's discipline, for its object is increased blessing. There is a good deal of will-service as well as will-worship. Beware of both. It is wonderful to see a Christian serving, yet having no will as to the service.

“In every good work doing *His will.*” And it is wonderful to see a saint suffering according to the will of God, and his own will not at work at all. There is one dear man—I do not want to speak of these things if not for profit—who has been for years suffering from cancer, and more than cancer. I have visited him four or more times since I have been in these parts, and yet I have never heard him once refer to his distressing maladies, unless asked about them. He is glorying in his portion in Christ. Shut out from communion with his brethren, he is enjoying yet more, the deeper, richer fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Oh! let us lay it to heart; subjection precedes communion, and communion joy. And let us also lay it to heart, that the Husbandman is the sole Judge of the fruit.

Look at John viii. The Lord said, “I speak to the world those things which I have heard of My Father.” “As My Father hath taught Me I speak these things” (vv. 26-28). Ministers, are you prepared to take this place, to speak only what the Father hath taught you through Christ? What else can be fruit? But the world will not stand it. They kept not your Master’s saying. How will they keep yours? But learn a lesson from the woman of Samaria, how she began her service. The moment she got the truth from the Lord she hastened to publish it. The long expected Messiah was come. Jesus, the Man Who told her all that ever she did, was the Christ, and *she left her water-pitcher*. The Spirit takes notice of it. Have we? Christ was all, the one sole object of her heart and life, and there was no effort, no reserve for herself. Dear friends, let there be no thought of discouraging service, but watch against self which can cling even to a water-pitcher, and spoil the fruit. Oh, in service to be beyond self; to leave it—name, reputation, position, everything—especially in a day when in ministry so much is apt to be made of the water-pitcher (John iv. 28, 29).

Well, beloved brethren, I would here close by asking you to observe the order of the truth as *to us* unfolded

in this chapter. First we are treated as *disciples*, then as *friends*, then as *witnesses* of our Lord (vv. 8-15-27). Confidence is thus reposed in us, and service entrusted to us, if true disciples. But a friend of Christ and a friend of the world, in the very nature of things, are opposed. We may have therefore a very solemn part to play yet under the eye of the leaders, religious and irreligious, of the world. But let us remember, "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples." Let this be our desire, this our care, and leave results with God.

WILLIAM BURBIDGE.

"We Should."

THIS a saying that I cannot put up with. Harmless as it may sound, it is, nevertheless, one of those ways of talking from which nothing ever comes; a fig-leaf to cover some nakedness; a blind shot which makes a noise, but hits nothing.

When there is a good work in which we ought to be lending a hand, "we should," says one, but does not lift a finger. A child has misbehaved and deserves to be chastised. "Yes, "we should"—but it stops there. We should see to ourselves, we should read the word of God more diligently. It is true, "we should" confesses someone and continues in the same way as ever he did. Scolding and blaming are certainly evil things and not seemly for a Christian. "We should not," says one, and is as bad as ever the next time. A book or an address stirs us up and the conscience is uneasy. "We should" and then one goes home and lets things go on as of old. Oh, that we may change this "we should" into an earnest "I shall now" as we look upwards!

We should not say "we should."

(From the German).

Scripture Gems from the Old and New Testaments compared—2.

Old Testament.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre.—Psa. xlv. 6.

The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. — Deut. xxxii. 9.

Yea He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words.—Deut. xxxiii. 3.

Now therefore if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me . . . and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.—Ex. xix. 5 and 6.

He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. — Numb. xxiii. 21.

New Testament.

But unto the Son, He saith Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.—Heb. i. 8.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints —Ephes. i. 18.

Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.—Luke x. 39.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.—1 Pet. ii. 9.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.—Rom. viii. 33.

Old Testament.

Delight thyself also in the Lord and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.—Psa. xxxvii. 4.

I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth.—Psalm xxxiv. 1.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter: and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so He openeth not His mouth.—Isa. liii. 7.

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.—Ezra vii. 10.

And God said Let there be light: and there was light.—Genesis i. 3.

David ran and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him.—1 Sam. xvii. 51.

New Testament.

If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.—John xv. 7.

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God. — Acts xvi. 25.

Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.—Acts. viii. 35.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.—Philippians iv. 9.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. — 2 Corinthians iv. 6.

Through death He (Jesus) might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.—Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Old Testament.

And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.—Exodus xxxii. 28.

And He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying Take away the filthy garments from him.—Zech. iii. 4.

And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark . . . and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat.—Ex. xxv. 21, 22.

New Testament.

Then they that received His word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.—Acts. ii. 41.

But the father said to his servants bring forth the best robe and put it on him.—Luke xv. 22.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. — Heb. iv. 16.

T.W.

The Lord's Coming.

(Notes of a Lecture on 1 Thessalonians, by Mr. J. N. Darby at Rochdale in the year 1877.)

I DO not seek to *prove* the coming of the Lord; it is part of the faith of the church of God, and that part upon which the state of the church of God depends. It is connected with every part of a christian life practically: if you take it out of the doctrine of Christianity, you take away that which gives it its peculiar characteristic: they were converted to wait for His Son from heaven: it is nothing to do with knowledge.

It is God's purpose to have us with Himself in glory. In Deut. xxxii. 8, we read, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel"—God's purpose about the world is here spoken of, but nothing

about this hope. In chapter ii. it is connected with *joy*, verse 19. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" In chapter iii. 13, with *holiness*, "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints," and holiness *there*, not here. In chapters iv. and v. it is connected with death. The christian state was in everything characterised by it. Matt. xxv., Their calling was to meet Christ. Luke xii., Blessing rests on those who wait for Christ. It is a great comfort to me that *all* the virgins were awakened before the Lord came. So it will be. There is special blessing connected with waiting and watching.

The coming of the Lord is wrought into the whole texture of Christianity. Rev. xxii. 16, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star"; "the morning star"; this is what they get who watch.

"Ordained before the world unto our glory," holiness is connected with conformity to Christ in glory. "The hour of His judgment is come" (Matt. xxv.).

Fragment.

"**Y**OU will never make Christ your object while you are an object to yourself. The One Who has made me so thoroughly His object has liberated me so that I may make Him my object, like Mary in John xii. She knew what it was to have Him meeting her, in the moment when everything in this scene was gone to her (John xi.); at a time when none other could have met her. He comes, and walks with her, sustains her, and fills her heart; and, in chapter xii., she is in sympathy with Him. 'I remember how You walked with me in my sorrow; I am made free to walk with You in Your sorrow.' 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.'"

J.G.B.

Like Thee and With Thee.

WHEN earthly joys and earthly woes,
 And earthly cares are past;
 When Thou art come, my Saviour, Lord,
 And I am home at last;
 Ne'er shall this errant heart of mine
 Wander from Thee again,
 Ne'er more my love grow cold and faint—
 I shall be like Thee then.

When Thou shalt come, my living Lord,
 And earth's sad, lonely night
 Dissolves in heaven's glad radiant day,
 And faith gives place to sight;
 When Thou shalt take Thy place and reign,
 No more despised of men;
 When all shall own Thee as their King—
 I shall be with Thee then.

Lord, till that day of glory dawns,
 When I Thy face behold,
 And all Thy wondrous beauties then
 To lightened eyes unfold:
 Grant me, a weak, frail child of Thine,
 More like Thee here to be;
 Only to seek in this wild waste,
 The path that leads to Thee.

H.T.M.

“And when Jesus had called the people unto Him, with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. . . . Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”—Mark viii. 34, 35, 38.

Notes of an Address on Acts vii.

ALTHOUGH the death of Christ was the real turning point in the condition of the world for good or evil, yet the circumstances of this chapter above all others brought out the strong contrast between man as he is in himself and the grace of God. The death of Stephen rivetted this rejection of Christ which the cross proved. They would stone anyone who proclaimed Christ. This chapter brings out the contrast between resisting the Holy Ghost and being full of the Holy Ghost. Compare verses 51 and 55 ; men resisting the Holy Ghost, the testimony of God in every way, and the redeemed one full of the Holy Ghost as dwelling in him and walking in him. The contrast is immense, the whole winds up the history of man, one history, morally speaking.

One thing we may remark is the perfect quiet and calmness of Stephen in the presence of his bitter enemies. Fully knowing what was coming, he yet with all calmness gives a long history which they could say nothing against, enters into all the details, has their attention fixed on their own history, quietly points out the privileges and advantages they had slighted and resisted, and then when they stone him quietly kneels down. There is not a more wonderful victory over all circumstances than this presents ; the expression of Christ in the midst of circumstances, and not *governed* by them. The world is governed by circumstances, the Christian not at all. Christ Himself was the expression of the divine life in all circumstances, but not governed by them, and as far as Christian life is manifested that is it. Wonderfully was it exhibited in Stephen, in the power of the Holy Ghost, himself under all circumstances acting *in* them, but *above* them.

Having their ears attentive, he shows them the result of their privileges and advantages. Their first great deliverer Joseph they sold as they did the Lord Jesus ; another, Moses, they rejected, as with Christ. Another point in their history he quietly told them : they trusted in their temple (vv. 46-51). God declared He would not own it. Throughout, whenever an eminent man appeared,

they rejected him. And this was just the moral of the tale, prophets, the Just One Himself, the law, throughout the entire history, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," filling up the measure of their iniquity by rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which He was then giving. In whatever way God had dealt with them, the result was rejection.

And this is just God's controversy with man now. God is constantly dealing with men's hearts, with *your* hearts at all times. You have heard the gospel of remission of sins, of the cross of Christ, of repentance. Appeals are being constantly made to you, deaths in your families, judgments of all kinds awakening your attention and attesting to the Saviour ; and what is the result ? Are you full of the Holy Ghost ? Is it a settled thing, your relationship with God ? Is your peace with Him settled ?

The testimony of God is that men are sinners, but has God done nothing since men became sinners ? Has He not from the beginning, from Adam downwards, been dealing with sinners ? The promise in the garden of the Second Man, on which the first Adam laid hold, what did this testify ? That man was ruined, but that another was coming, the Seed of the woman Who should bruise the serpent's head. Enoch, Noah, Moses, Samuel were constantly bearing witness that men were sinners, and bearing God's testimony to these sinners, and therefore God says, "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man ? when I called, was there none to answer ?" Grace had been rejected, as well as sins committed. Man left to go on his own way, wickedness became so great that the flood had to be brought in. The next thing—the law—they made the golden calf before Moses came down from the mount. Then the prophets calling them to come back—they they killed and stoned, so that God exclaims, "What more *could* I do to My vineyard ? I have yet one Son, Him will I send" ; and Him they cast out. The world has rejected grace quite as much as sinned against God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Christ Himself

said, "I am not come to judge, but to *save*." But the world will not have God on any terms. This has been proved throughout its history ; throughout *one history*, the heart sees no beauty in Him to desire Him, and if He comes, as to the Gadarenes, we beg Him quickly to depart.

When I look at Christ coming (sorrowful as it is that the natural heart sees no beauty in Him), I see there One passing through this world like no one else, the power of Whose love never fails, holiness so perfect that there was no danger of contracting evil. We have to avoid evil, to flee temptation, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," we have to keep out of the way, but Christ never had to do this. We see the expression of what God is in Him. Look at Him with the leper. No power of contamination, His very presence drives the evil away. His perfectly holy nature, in the power of His love, can go wherever that love calls Him.

A Man of sorrows, where was His joy ? "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," and what was this ? Conversation with a poor woman who had had five husbands, and he whom she had then not her husband, not because He had pleasure in the *sin*, but His heart was touched. The woman was a sinner, and it was His happiness to reveal Himself to her, to draw her back from her sin, to bring her to God. There's where God is happy. Look at the parables in Luke xv. Who was happy when the sheep was found ? The sheep no doubt, but the Shepherd especially. Who rejoiced when the piece of money was found ? Not the money, but the woman. It is *God's* happiness to get people back to Himself. Who rejoiced when the prodigal returned ? The father says, "It was meet *we* should make merry and be glad." The expression of this amidst sin and sinners was just God showing in the world what *He* was in Christ. Look at John viii. ; see the expression of grace. When people pretended to be righteous, He brings the eye of God upon their conscience, and then what did they do ? They got out of the way of grace to save their *character*. What is the character before God if the conscience is not good ? He looks at the heart.

If contented to remain, as convicted sinners, *then* grace works as with the woman. The perfect expression of One Being above the sin of man. One sinner, so vile she dared not go to anyone, yet went to Christ . . . publicans and sinners went to Him. He was reproached with it, and what was His reply? That He went to those who needed Him, the whole needed not a physician, but the sick. "Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is *forgiven*," there is no truth in the heart but by forgiveness.

Christ in all these instances brought out the dreadfulness of the natural heart, but inspired confidence in the vilest. And what became of it all? How is it that Christ is out of the world now? The world would not have Him on any terms. They crucified Him, and so not only have we sinned, but we have rejected God. The cross of Christ is the testimony that nothing *can* win the heart of man (yet that does not frustrate the ways of God in grace). We have no wish naturally to go to heaven. Ask the man of the world "if he wishes to go to heaven to-day?" No. "Will he go to-morrow or next day?" No, he would never wish to go if he could help it, except perhaps rather than go to hell, he would rather be happy than be in a bad place. Speak of Christ to people, they have no time for such a subject, once a week in church or chapel is all very well, but not to speak of Him in connection with their pleasures or their joys. That is the dreadful condition of the heart, rejecting Christ, and the cross is the grand expression of man's rejection of God, the turning point where good and evil settle.

But now see the actings of God in salvation. He says, "In that very place where you show thoroughly what you are, there will I show what I am, the proof of your hatred to Me shall be the witness that My love is greater than your sin." This is where God meets men, where man must come, all self-righteousness broken down. When I think of the cross, what part had I in it? To crucify Christ. In total condemnation of all I am as a child of Adam. I accept the sentence and say, "I have given up all thought of doing anything for God in the flesh. The cross is the proof of my sin."

But the moment my soul is really there, then I have another part in it, what God has done there. I see Him there putting away sin entirely. He, Christ, hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. When the light of God's holiness shines on my heart, and I give up all thought of getting fit for God, I see what God has done for lost people. I find that I am redeemed. He has not merely shown grace, He has *come to seek* and to *save* those that were lost. To *save*? Yes, not merely to *help* the old man, but to *die* for him. Then if Christ died for my sins, before God there is an end of them for ever and ever. Did He die for my sins and leave me to answer for them? No, He died that I might be entirely quit of them. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. If so, they are gone . . . in order to bring me in, in weakness, into the presence of God, yet with the consciousness that Christ has borne my sins, and the more I look, the more I see the way. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Am I to believe that? Is it not presumptuous to believe that now, must I not wait till I get to heaven to believe it? In heaven we shall *believe* nothing, because we shall *see* everything. I am to believe it *now*, now to believe that there is no spot on me before God. If Christ has washed me, then am I clean before God, and God has set Him at His right hand, because He has finished His work of glorifying Him about my sins.

"If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv.), but if Christ is risen, ye are not in your sins, Christ's work is accepted; *He* has made peace, and this is the word to be preached. Could I tell you to make your own peace? I don't know how you would set about it. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." But are your sins forgiven? If not, you have not what Christ came to give you. The thing is *done*, the value of the work is perfect. God desires that you should walk with Him, but you cannot if you have not peace with Him. He has made peace, and the fact is revealed by Christ being at God's right hand.

And mark the fruit. If I have found peace with God,

through the blood of Christ, cleansed and sprinkled, now the Holy Ghost can come and *dwell* within me (Eph. i.) as a *seal* of my forgiveness and cleansing, dwell in me and walk in me (and this is where I get Stephen in this chapter) a man thoroughly broken down, feeling himself a lost sinner in all the horribleness of sin, then sees how all sin is put away by Christ, for if *not*, when *will* it be put away? If not made *now*, when will it be made? *He* made peace, and now the Holy Ghost can come and seal that peace. He was sealed with the Holy Ghost because He was personally holy, we are sealed because cleansed by the blood of Christ. First quickened, then sealed, and now we get heaven opened, the veil rent by the work of Christ, and I have "boldness to enter into the *holiest*," boldness also in the day of judgment, but "boldness to enter into the *holiest*," the witness before God of the value of the work of His own Son, I a poor sinner there by virtue of His own blood.

The word "heaven opened" is remarkable, and used only four times in the New Testament. To testify of Christ in Matt. iii.; to show the Father's delight in His Beloved Son, when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him, John i. 51; in Rev. xix. for judgment. Here, Acts vii., we see heaven opened to a man, to Stephen. Christ having carried righteousness into heaven is found standing at the right hand of God, the Comforter comes down, and heaven is opened to me. The One Who bore my sins has opened heaven to me and *for* me. The very thing that opened heaven put away my sins, and that is the place in which believers are set by virtue of the work of Christ.

The believer looks into heaven, and sees Christ there as his Forerunner. He is gone to prepare there a place for me, that where He is, there I may be also. And now beholding this glory does not alarm me. I say, "Let me look at that Person Who bore my sins, and put them all away, let me look there at the blessed proof that they are all gone, at Him Who has made my way to heaven open through the rent veil." The Holy Ghost coming down unites me to Christ, and this we see in Stephen too.

Heaven is opened to me, I am in the presence of God in Christ, and there is no condemnation to me. It is all over, He is out of it, and that is where I am. I look into the glory, and there see the proof that no sin is left. Instead of putting me away, He put my sins away. J.N.D.

The Wars of the Lord.

“**A**ND Jehovah said unto Joshua, ‘Be not afraid because of them : for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel : thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.’ So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly ; and they fell upon them. And Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward ; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining. And Joshua did unto them as Jehovah bade him : he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.”

It is well known that not a few have found a difficulty in these extreme measures of Joshua, as expressing Jehovah’s will. The exterminating severity with which the work was pursued in the land of Canaan shocks them. But they forget, or do not know, that these Canaanites were the most daring enemies against God, the most openly depraved and shameless on the face of the earth ; not only morally the grossest, but this bound up most of all with idolatry of the most corrupt kind. They were the chief originators and patrons of unnatural crimes, which were as common as possible in their midst. If then God meant that the seed of Abraham should be His people in the land, how possibly could those who must be in evils moral and idolatrous the most infectious to Israel be tolerated there ? They might have fled elsewhere if they did not repent of their iniquities. It had been long revealed that God meant to bring His people to Canaan. It was therefore their rebellious unbelief if they did not look for it ; for God had long ago said it plainly. But then, as we are told in the book of Genesis, the cup of the Amorites was not yet full.

If God was waiting for His people to go through the necessary discipline in bondage and sorrow, all that time Satan was working up the Amorites to their abominable excesses of evil. The cup of their iniquity was full when the divine dealings with Israel were sufficiently ripe for bringing His people in.

Again, it is evident that God has been pleased at various times to judge the world, as notably and on the largest scale at the time of the flood. If it was consistent with God Himself to deal with a corrupt earth, then surely He was equally free to employ the Israelites later as His instruments for the land He gave them.

Besides, it was accustoming Israel to feel, by that flagrant example, what iniquity, corruption, idolatry, were against God. Their having to do it was of moral importance for their souls and ways: sharp discipline; but what of the cause? If God so judged the Canaanites, would He spare Israel? There was the reflection it was intended to produce on their consciences. And God, as we know, was far more unhesitating in dealing with His own people when they yielded to any of these enormities. In point of fact their own ruin was largely due to the fact that the children of Israel failed to carry out the will of Jehovah as to the Canaanites, perhaps yielding to sloth and cowardice, to amiability in some cases, though, I have no doubt, far more frequently because they were not really up to His mind in the matter. Thus they spared themselves far more than they spared the Amorites, and God was forgotten by them.

The moment you know the will of the Lord, leave all appearances with Him, Who will take care of you. Do not you be afraid to do His will. You may be charged with harshness; you may be accounted as having no love. Do not you trouble about that; go on with what you know to be the will of God. He will vindicate your doing His will, though it may not be all at once. Faith has to be tested, and patience must have its perfect work.

Thus we find the Lord strengthening Joshua at this time to do His will to a very considerable extent. The

chief cities were dealt with, and every creature that breathed was destroyed. "As Jehovah commanded Moses His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that Jehovah commanded Moses. So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them. Joshua made war a long time with all those kings."

They may plot and fight awhile, but cannot hinder; for they have to do with Jehovah, and not with Joshua only. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle. Not that Jehovah made them that they should be wicked, but it was of Jehovah that they, being wicked and indifferent to His will and warnings, should not now believe their danger—that they should be blindly daring at last to their own destruction. God never makes a person a sinner; but when men are wicked, and are following their own lusts or passions, He may close and seal their eyes to the folly of what they are doing and the danger they are incurring, and till their extermination becomes a moral necessity. But these races deserved to be an example before the Israelites arrived; it was no hardship, boldly as they disputed God's will, if they suffered in this new way. They deserved to suffer before they were led in this path in which they were devoted to death.

Justly, therefore, "It was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all

the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Jehovah said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war." So it will be in the day that is coming: there will be war and resistance then, but war in order to rest—the rest that remaineth to the people of God. W.K.

The Love of God.

(1 John iv. 9.)

WE find that God is dealing with men according to everything that He is in Himself—dealing with their hearts and consciences by presenting to them all that He is; and we know that He is holy, righteous, and love, so that we may look at these things as being brought ourselves truly to God. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." This shows the necessity of separation from evil. "In Him is no darkness at all."

Again, there must not only be the separation from evil, but righteousness as regards guilt. For there has not only been opposition to God, but we have failed in duty and are the subjects of defilement and guilt. He did not merely say, when they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, judgment must follow. And this proves the perfect love of God. It is not said, He is holiness: indeed mere holiness would but repel the sinner: He is holy. He is just, and therefore there must be judgment; but He is love, and love draws me. This is the spring of all His dealings until He is forced to action—not naturally forced—but forced by reason of evil; for He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and therefore is forced to turn away the eye—in that sense forced to have done with evil. He may be active, calling to repentance, and He is—but no remedy. He does not execute judgment now; but the day will come when He will set aside the power of evil, and not only prove that He is the God of judgment, but

that He makes those He blesses eternally happy in holiness, for He is holy love. He is light ; and if I am there in the light, it shows me all that is not light, and all is judged. We delight in holiness therefore, because He is holy, but love is His nature ; that is what He is. Judgment would condemn ; but “now is the accepted time,” in the which He exercises grace in receiving sinners to the full blessedness of fellowship with Himself. Whatever our state may be, God is perfect in His love, and He would make us enjoy and walk in it now. It is not in heaven we shall learn it. We shall be there everlastingly in His presence ; but to enjoy it, I must learn it here, or I could not have the enjoyment of it there. Our nature, selfishness, and unbelief hinder down here : still they, after all, only magnify the grace that exercises love in spite of all. He will bring us to the knowledge of perfect love. “Perfect love casteth out fear, for fear hath torment,” etc. It may be very reasonable that it should be so, but still it is torment.

Do any of you fear when thinking of God ? You have torment, for “fear hath torment,” when it is connected with the conscience, however man may seek to bury his conscience (and he does succeed in hardening it). Now Satan may even use truth to alarm and make one despair and think there is no love and forgiveness. But where God awakens the conscience, it is always to teach something about His goodness. As in the prodigal son, etc., whatever may be the character of the alarm, the reason for it is in God Himself ; and God would have us to know it. If I could get my pardon from any other source than God, I do not learn His love. For instance, if I seek peace in ordinances, it is not love but fear. The effect of true ministry is to put the soul in direct contact with God. False ministry is the bringing in of something between the soul and God. There having been a revelation of God to the soul, it can never get rest until received from God, and until then there is no rest. And you will discern what is of God from what is not of God by this test, that it turns to God. He blesses by the revelation of His love. This delivers from the corruption of the truth—secures the soul

from error until there is perfect peace. If I have that, I know Him. What else do I want? The soul, however quickened and secured, must have the blessed consciousness of perfect peace with God. I must, of course, seek to do His will and seek fellowship with Him, and prayer, etc.; but neither as satisfying God, nor quieting myself, or it ceases to be prayer. What God does for our souls is, He is bringing us into the joy of His perfect love in His presence; and oh! what a spring of joy does this bring into the soul. "Who shall separate us?" "More than conquerors."

Now in this epistle and in this chapter, remarkably, it is what the divine nature is. God is love. Whatever might occur in the church of God, He is unchangeable, and if only one soul were to remain true, and all the rest were gone astray, and the whole nominal church to go another way (if they say God is not love, is not truth), Christ is the image of the invisible God. He has been here—light and love, and that is what God was, manifest in the flesh, and you will find these in the children. It is the family character of the children of God, light and love; God's nature, both in Christ and in all the children. All through this epistle it is the essential nature of Christ that is dwelt on—what is essentially divine. That makes it more remarkable how when He has brought the soul to peace, He makes it rest not in anything in self, but in Christ's work. We must have the divine nature, but how do I get this nature? I find a perfect manifestation of His love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us."

I must have the new nature first to know this, and the soul is brought into the perfect light and joy of it without a cloud, daily and hourly finding the joy in which we can go on in the grace He has towards us. Where is this found? In Jesus Christ Himself. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son." He found us "dead in trespasses and sins." What was God to us when thus "we were by nature"? The effect and consequence of our condition was "wrath"; "but God Who is rich in mercy," etc. Here is no mention of anything required of us, but the simple fact of what we were—"dead in tres-

passes and sins," and it at once turns to what God is: "but God Who is rich in mercy for the great love," etc., bringing out the contrast of what we were and what God is. We were dead in sins. God brought out the means of our approaching to Himself, though a God of judgment, through Christ's sacrifice. From Abel downwards God was showing mercy; so Abel's faith testified how man was to approach to God. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent," etc. (John iii.). That changed all God's dealings. God was to be approached before, but when Christ comes, it is another thing. Man is clearly proved to be a child of wrath. If man is dealt with as man, he refuses to come to God—"none righteous." When Christ comes, it is altogether another thing. God now approaches man, which is grace; not man the means for man to come to God; but God coming to man. He visited men in their sins, "that they might live through Him." All was darkness, degradation, and idolatry. God takes them out of that condition that they might live through Christ. "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," and thus we are brought into His presence. The life I have as a saint is the fruit of the love of God—life communicated by grace; not creation putting me in a position and sustaining me, but when I have failed, His grace has abounded over it, and given me this life in Christ, when I was dead and enmity against Him; and the very truth that I have life is the proof of His love. We live through His only-begotten Son. He is bringing us into His presence, and putting before us His beloved Son, in Whom all His delight was from eternity. And is this the God for Whom I wrought? And the soul adores the wondrousness of His love, for it is no longer the thought of how I must get to God. God has come to me in His grace. If I take the righteousness of God without this, there would be the appearance that God is harsh. Now if I get this life—love known and holiness known—my conscience becomes not only as a natural conscience, judging sin, but I learn to judge it according to God, because I am brought into the light. "If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth."

“Herein is love, not that we loved God.” The first thing, legal commandment, disappears; though to love God, it is true, as the commandment demands. “Not that we loved God.” It is the fruit but never the ground of my fellowship with Him, because I learn God has loved me in my sins; and I learn, though excellent, it is a thing not required of a sinner. If it is required, I am lost! I now am showing another thing—that the sinner is loved when he does not love God. It is the sinner’s need that draws out His love. We may say, I do not find I live through Him. In one sense it is right it should be felt; but when it is only that, the effect is to turn our eyes in on ourselves, and so to dishearten. Grace is working and can be seen by others, though not visible to the one who feels it. But I say, I do not find I love. You mistake the whole matter. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.” Well, I admit it, but I do not see I have a share in it, for I do not feel its effects. But we see, He sent His Son to be a propitiation for sins, and that is the proof of His love. It is the eternal enjoyment of it to know eternal life in the Son; but down here we often question it, because we do not see this love in us. He is “a propitiation for our sins.”

Ah! now I can see, when I believe that. In Him, in His death, is the ground of my rest. Therein I learn what love is towards such a sinner as I am. I turn to look at it, not in myself, but in Him; and I rest in God. What my soul rests in is what He is, and what He has done. “He has sent His Son as a propitiation.” God has loved me not only when I wanted it, but according to His sense of my want. He has not mistaken my case; the propitiation is made for my sins—Christ on the cross—and we can say, “Herein is love,” etc. I have found God. My soul rests there. The cloud is taken away for ever. God has given His Son. If you say, but there is such and such a sin, etc., I answer, that it is for sins you had or have that Christ died; for He died for your sins. You ought to hate them. He has the man and his sins before Him. He does not put away the man but his sins. Indeed He cannot bear

sin, and therefore He must put the sinner in his sins away, because He cannot bear the sins, if they are not put away. The love of God has wrought a work to bring the sinner without his sins into His presence. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever," etc.

First, there is Christ meeting the need of all who come unto God; and then we learn why it is—for "God so loved the world." It is important we should know not only our need of Christ in approaching God, but that God in His love gave His Son that we might approach Him. "And we have known and believed the love." Faith is always certain, and so I set to my seal that God is true. "He that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love." My soul rests in His love. And now I have communion—seeing the work He has done to cleanse my sin, as I learn it in Christ, and am perfectly happy. Why should such an one murmur or be cross? "We have known and believed the love." "God is love, and he that dwells in love, dwells in God and God in him." He connects it with Christ. God does not expect fruit from man, but His grace produces fruit. Man had no life from which God could expect anything, and so He gives a new nature in Christ, that He may produce it. When the divine nature is communicated, we look for it then in ourselves, and that always works in a soul quickened of God.

Do I find many sins in myself? He is the propitiation for our sins. I believe this, and I enter into communion. Why do you find fear and torment when you find sin in yourself? Cannot you trust that love? Have you not believed the love God has towards you? Have you not had the Father on your neck in your rags? You must know the love God has to you, and then you know God.

"Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." It is Christ all through that is spoken of as He and Him, without reference to His name, the apostle's mind being so full of Christ as not to deem it needful to mention it. God's love was manifested to us in His sending His Son, that we might have life and

atonement ; now it is perfected that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. I am in Him Who is judging. He is my righteousness : why should I not be bold ? “As He is, so are we in this world.”

The effect of grace is the cause that we should feel sin, and know it blotted out, as well as live through Him. “The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them, that the world may know that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.” “There is no fear in love.” It is a matter of communion. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” We are called to learn God’s love by the communication of what Christ is for us ; and then we are in Him before God as Christ is. If so, I find rest to the heart : it rests in God—knows God is perfect—knows He has met all its need and all its sin put away, and that He is perfect love. Thus we “joy in God.” “We love Him because He first loved us” ; and we pass through this sorrowful wilderness, leaning on Him Who is bringing us through it. Do your souls rest in the love of God ? Granted that He ought to be loved ; but you are not honouring God, if you do not trust what His love has been in the work of Christ on the cross. The whole is perfected. He Himself has done it, that you might trust Him, giving His Son to die as well as life in Him, which also the believer has.

And you who would come to Him must come just as you are, and then you will know God, and He will enable you to trust in the perfectness of the work which put away sin—the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. J.N.D.

Italy and the New Testament.

NOT long ago a circular was sent by Mussolini to all educational establishments in Italy, recommending the New Testament. It is called a Divine book ; all professors and teachers are to read it and explain it to the young, endeavouring to have the most beautiful passages learned by heart. It is to be included in every school library.

The reason given is that it will ensure the greatness of the Fatherland. The national government, praising the

Bible as the greatest and most necessary of all books, a book which is new throughout all ages, is convinced that the New Testament will make a conquest of youth and in youth the soul of the whole Italian people, which will be for the salvation of the Fatherland.

It is a happy thing that the New Testament has thus been given an honourable place in Italy. But what should draw our attention quite as much is that Italy herself has such an important place in the New Testament. Italy has had a great part in the world's history, unconsciously fulfilling the counsels of God.

Take Bethlehem and Golgotha.

Bethlehem.—Because the enrolment of the whole world ordered by the Emperor Augustus in Rome, but only carried out under the Syrian governor Cyrenius or Quirinus, caused the inhabitants of Palestine to go up, every one to his own city, so that Joseph and Mary went to the city of David, where the Saviour of the world was born.

Golgotha.—Because the unjust sentence pronounced by Pontius Pilate caused the King of kings to be lifted up on a cross of wood. Delivered up by a Roman Governor, the Saviour of the world died at Golgotha, the place of a skull.

But both at Bethlehem and Golgotha God's counsels were fulfilled.

Rome fulfilling the counsels of God!

Claudius, one of the Roman emperors had, as Luke tells us in the Acts of the Apostles, ch. xviii. 2, given commandment that all Jews should depart from Rome. Luke does not say much about this command. He does not use this historical peculiarity to discuss the Jewish question; he does not speak about racial hatred or the oneness of all believers of different races—no, he just mentions the command in passing, because it explains the presence of a Jewish couple at Corinth. This couple—Aquila and Priscilla—had great influence on the work of the apostle Paul. These simple people followed Paul from Corinth to Ephesus, where they again became the instructors of the eloquent Apollos, also a Jew.

“When it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul . . . and the centurion, Julius, of Augustus’ band, found a ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy; and he put us therein,” writes the same Luke (Acts xxvii. 1, 6).

So the great apostle of the Gentiles was brought to Rome. Rome had the honour of sheltering this man of God within her walls. “So we went toward Rome.” “When we came to Rome.” (Acts xxviii. 14, 16.)

Italy thus received the full blessing of the gospel. And yet—the same Italy persecuted the messengers of the gospel. Secular history tells us that Rome drank the blood of the two greatest apostles and of many other martyrs of Jesus.

We look a little further into the Divine book recommended by Mussolini and we find almost at the end: “I saw the woman, drunken with the blood of the saints”—no not heathen, but saints (Rev. xvii. 6).

Who is this woman?

She is a remarkable apparition; she sits on a scarlet beast full of names of blasphemy (Rev. xvii. 3). On her head a name is written: “Mystery, the great Babylon” (Rev. xvii. 5, 6). The sight of the woman awakens great wonder in the onlooker, who is none less than the apostle, the exile on Patmos.

But an angel explains.

He distinguishes between the woman and the beast on which she sits. (Rev. xvii. 7-18.)

The beast hates the woman. He makes her desolate and naked, and burns her with fire. And the angel says that this is a judgment of God, because God’s word must be fulfilled. God has put it into the heart of the beast to act in this way—the beast and the ten kings, who with him receive authority for one hour. They have the same mind. The ten kings give all their power to the beast, who uses the power to fight against God! But in this war the Lamb will overcome, the Lamb, Who is King of kings and Lord of lords!

Babylon speaks to us of Rome. It is the symbolical

name of the religious power, which has its seat in Rome, the city with seven hills.

We see a revived Roman kingdom rising from the abyss.

That kingdom makes those that dwell on the earth wonder, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. xvii. 8).

Rome, as capital of the Roman kingdom, will be the centre of a world at enmity with God, just as Jerusalem will be the centre of all that seek God, in that day.

The religious system, after the removal of the church, found on earth as an empty form, is compared to a woman, clothed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, splendour such as has perhaps never been seen before. This religious power rules the political power.

But when the religious power has brought the government to the greatest power, the government wishes to rule the mighty church and cast it off ; love will turn to hate and the end shall be desolation.

The woman, described as the great whore, is the unfaithful one, who thinks herself rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing, because she reigns over the kingdoms of the earth. Yet she is a stranger to the heavenly Bridegroom, and her judgment is inevitable !

He, Who shall unite the true bride with Himself in glory (Rev. xix. 7) will spue the unfaithful one out of His mouth (Rev. iii. 16).

From the Dutch.

Give an Account of Thy Stewardship.

THAT word stewardship haunts me. I am not sure that I have ever fully comprehended its true import. I know that there is a wide distinction between a steward and an owner. I know that a steward may have a great deal trusted to his own judgment and discretion, as to the manner in which he will employ his time and manage the property committed to his care ; but can any length of time, any distance of the proprietor, any increase of the funds, transmute stewardship into ownership ? I hear everybody around me, Christians among the rest, talk of their

possessions as if they were owners. And they use their money and their time as though it were personally theirs, by an absolute right. Now, if this be true, what does "stewardship" mean? I confess it perplexes and troubles me. If I am to give account, I must try to understand this subject better.

Stewardship! There must be something in my possession which does not belong to me, and which consequently I have no right to hold and use as my own. What is it? Why, in the very first place *I* am not my own. My Bible tells me, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." I have consented—more, it is my hope and joy—to be held by that purchase. ANON.

Cain and Abel.

(Gen. iv. Heb. xi.)

WHEN righteous Abel offered
 His sacrifice by faith,
 The firstling lamb that suffered
 Showed Jesus in His death.
 His offering God respected,
 And called him righteous too,
 Cain's gifts He quite rejected,
 For God is just and true.

In pride and self-complacence,
 Cain dared to go to God,
 To approach His holy presence
 Without atoning blood ;
 He owned no need of pardon,
 Nor sense of guilt he felt,
 As though in Eden's garden,
 Still innocent he dwelt.

And souls there are in blindness,
 Who go the way of Cain ;
 While God's long-suffering kindness
 Points to the Lamb once slain.
 The sinner, humbly owning
 His guilt and shame and need,
 Trusts to Christ's blood atoning—
 God's righteousness indeed

E.H.C.

The Joy of the Justified.

THAT the path of the Christian lies through a valley of dark and chilly gloom where the sunbeams of joy can never come is a slanderous lie originated by the devil and believed by those whose eyes he has blinded. The very reverse is the truth. The believer's pathway is ever flooded with the unclouded sunlight of heaven's noontide.

It cannot be denied that there are trials, many and great; but the glory of Christian joy is that persecution cannot quench it, nor can sorrow dim it. It is this quality of permanence that renders it so unlike the joy of the worldling which is fitly compared to the "crackling of thorns under a pot"—boisterous enough for a moment, but soon over and gone.

The scriptures guarantee to every believer a full measure of this secret joy of which the united powers of the world can never rob him. Many a time have the evil forces of man assembled in vain for this purpose. The world found that it could inflict pain but not grief. It could cause believers to lose all rest of body, but not their joy of soul. It could even burn its victims at the stake; but the smoke of the martyr fires was mingled with songs of triumph, not with groans of anguish.

How is this extraordinary fact to be accounted for? Certainly not by the operation of natural laws, either physical or mental. Such joys as we now speak of are not at all natural but supernatural, not human but divine. They rest upon the immutable basis of an accomplished redemption which secures them to every believer as an inalienable right. So much as this is declared in Romans v. 1-11. It is there stated, without any qualification, of Christians generally that we:—

- (i) rejoice in hope of the glory of God,
- (ii) glory in tribulation,
- (iii) joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point, it should be said to avoid misapprehen-

sion, though the fact is known to most, that the words, "rejoice," "glory," "joy," are, as a matter of fact, translations of the same Greek word, which has the sense of overflowing delight. The word is sometimes rendered "boast," and certainly implies far more than a mere pleasurable feeling. This joy is exuberant and irrepressible, filling us with ecstatic feelings of holy triumph and exultation.

Rejoicing in hope (Rom. v. 2; xii. 12; xv. 13) is the first variety of Christian joy mentioned in the chapter referred to. It consists in those unspeakable emotions of joy which are awakened by a survey of the blissful future lying before the believer. The hope, however, is in no sense a short-lived creation of the fancy, or an illusory mirage of the desert way, such as the hopes of men most often are. Certainly it is that to which we have not yet attained, as it is also that which we have not yet seen; but from the scriptural sense of the word every element of uncertainty is absolutely excluded. It is hope solely in the sense that it is yet to come.

From the context it is to be seen clearly that this element of stability must of necessity characterise the believer's hope, because of the intimate connection it is shown to have with the atoning work of the Lord Jesus.

He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. On that account we have been justified by faith. Then the apostle enumerates three facts with regard to every justified person of which the "hope of the glory of God" is the last. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have (i) peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by Whom we have (ii) access into this grace wherein we stand; and (iii) rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Thus it is manifest that this exultation in the coming glory stands upon the same substantial foundation as peace with God and standing in grace. Each of these blessings is the inevitable consequence of Christ's work and is the present possession of the justified; and all are testified to with equal clearness and emphasis. The same word that assures us we have peace as to the *past*

and God's favour for the *present* makes the unequivocal announcement that our *future* portion is the glory of God.

Now the contemplation of such a prospect as the glory of God (Rev. xxi. 11) is a source of unfailing joy to which the believer ever has ready access, and of which none can dispossess him, for the blood of Christ has made it secure and the word of God has made it sure.

But the second phase is *rejoicing in tribulation also*. This is not of a purely contemplative character like the kind just mentioned. But it comes into play amid the stern sorrows and the crushing disasters that so often descend upon the Christian. It is comparatively easy to rejoice over bright visions of heavenly bliss; but the dark hour of tribulation is a test indeed.

It tests the heart as to whether Christ is the object of faith's vision or not. Is tribulation permitted that it may interpose itself between our souls and Him? Shall tribulation separate us from the love of Christ? Nay, it is but a schoolmaster who has undertaken our Christian education.

"Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 3-5). The believer therefore sees in tribulation not an enemy, but a friend, and knows that the effect of its presence will be good and not evil. It purges away the dross and brings the fine gold into view.

This joy therefore springs from the confidence in God that the justified person has, who stands before Him in peace and acceptance. It does not arise from any real or assumed insensibility to pain and grief. Its source is divine, and so it continues to exist, in spite of sorrow and trial.

The third species of joy named in this chapter is of a sublime nature indeed; "not only so, but we *rejoice in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 11). Here

the soaring aspirations of the justified soul reach their loftiest attainment. God Himself, revealed in the person of His Son, becomes the theme of our unbounded joy.

Once we dreaded Him as well we might, having so sinned against Him. We avoided every thought of Him lest we should awaken the reproaches of a guilty conscience. But now love has cast out fear. Our sins were borne by Jesus. He being raised from the dead, we have received a standing in righteousness before our God. While everything that arises is turned by His loving hand to our profit and blessing.

We exult therefore in God Who is the sole author of this great change through our Lord Jesus Christ by Whom we have even now received the reconciliation.

Beloved child of God, this joy in each of its phases is yours. Do you believe it? If so, is it the wonted exercise and experience of your heart day by day? God has given it to us; let it be yours and mine to lay hold of it by faith.

W.J.H.

The Presence and Mission of the Holy Spirit.

(John xvi. 1-15.)

WE cannot but be impressed, while studying these chapters of John (xiii. to xvi.), with the way in which the Lord sought up to the latest moment to express His love for His disciples. There were but a few hours now before He would be delivered into the hands of men to be crucified, and with desire He had desired to spend those few hours with them and for them. At once they are assured of the continuance of His love. Having loved them while with them, He would, when gone to His Father, love them still, love them to the end. This for them would be experimental. They would have to yield themselves to His care. All that is of the world, if adhered to, would separate them morally from Him when in heaven with the Father,

and weaken their hope of being with Him and of His coming again. He therefore would detach them by *His word*, applied to their consciences, from all worldly defilement. This is the meaning of the symbolic act of feet-washing. The power of the world is broken for him who receives the truth of chapter xiii. Jesus glorified, Son of the Father, is nearer to him than the world; is concerned about him individually, as about Peter; and all his walk and ways are under His eye, not only as the Omniscient God, but willingly exposed to Him as to a gracious Saviour. The water needed is not as in a bath, for he is bathed (born again), but as in a basin (see ver. 10 R.V.), and the towel follows the action of the water. How few the words of Jesus! How simple the action that can restore the soul, and how all is forgotten that is forgiven (2 Cor. vii. 8-11 and John xxi. 17).

We may observe in chapter xiv. that being *children of God*, and this is declared at the beginning of the Gospel (John i. 12), and repeated with emphasis in the Epistle (1 John iii. 1-2), nothing but the joys of the Father's house will be suited joys. Not the kingdom, not the glory, not even in a vague way "the rest," wonderful as such truth is, but the place where *love* would be satisfied. Jesus did not call it heaven, as men do, but "My Father's house." The English equivalent is "*Home*," and when there the supreme joy is, that "we shall be *like Him*, for we shall *see Him as He is*." This is love indeed.

In this chapter, as in the preceding, there is everything to detach us from this world, nothing to bring our thoughts back to it. This cannot be too earnestly insisted on. I remember a celebrated Nonconformist proposing the question:—"Is it possible to make the best of both worlds?" Now, to the Christian, this world is crucified by the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was Paul's deliberate judgment. If the world could thus treat the Son of God, there was no hope for the world, and to be *delivered* from it, not to make anything of it, was his glory. As for "making the best" of the

Father's house, to speak of it is profanity, for there Christ Himself is supremely "the best," and He receives us to *Himself*.

The fact that dying Christians delight in this chapter carries a lesson to the living. The Spirit of God at such a time draws out their affections to the Person of Christ, while their consciences rest on His work. Though it be by death, they will soon reach His very presence, be face to face with Him (Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 8). So the simplest, yet the most powerful truth as to the coming of the Lord, is this—"Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them (the raised dead) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17); or, as here—"I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Be assured that no clearness of knowledge about the coming of the Lord, as a doctrine, will so act upon the affections, as the knowledge of His Person, and happy occupation with Himself by the Holy Spirit, while waiting for Him, will do.

This leads us now to consider briefly the great truth of the mission of the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, sent, in the first place, to maintain the believer in the new relationship to the Father and to the Son, into which redemption has brought him; and in the second place, to be a Witness for Christ during His absence, and to sustain the believer in his testimony before a hostile world. These two subjects, of such deep practical importance, are clearly distinguished, the first being considered in chap. xiv. 16-20, and 26; the second in chap. xvi. 7-15.

Every Christian that feels the present condition of the professing church, the confusion, the strife, the departure from the faith, the evident power of Satan over men's minds, and looks for *present* help, will rejoice in the truth (unfolded in the 14th chap.) of the Holy Spirit, as *the other Comforter*, or Maintainer of his soul in the very circumstances in which he finds himself. While the Lord was here, He directed His disciples'

path, met their difficulties, answered their questions, instructed, reproved, encouraged them at all times, and kept them in His Father's name. Now the Holy Spirit has taken His place, not as accomplishing redemption, but after its accomplishment, to be the Comforter, the Maintainer, in His stead and on His behalf. Without the care of the Lord they would have been in constant danger of being corrupted by the leaven of the Pharisees, or of the Sadducees, or of Herod; or they would have gone back as those did who did not believe in Him. So without faith in the Holy Ghost what do we see? Superstition, reason, worldliness exerting the most baleful influences in the church, and many going back.

The Holy Spirit is now the SENT ONE, as truly as Jesus was the Sent One; and sent by the Father in answer to the request of Jesus, and because of His acceptance of His work; and He is sent to abide with us for ever. That is, not only with us on earth, during the absence of the Lord, but for ever—throughout eternity. While with us here He may be grieved with our ways, and hindered in His operations by our unbelief. Still, He is the power of all we do enjoy of Christ, and of our relationships with Him and with the Father. What then will it be when we shall grieve Him no more, and when, unhindered by anything in us, He will be the power of full and ceaseless communion for ever? Men talk and write of the *influences* of the Spirit, but such a way of talking and writing dims the truth of Himself, a Person, God the Spirit, now on earth in a way He has never been before, and for an end and purpose that cannot be again. Indeed, no tongue can adequately tell how much depends for Christians on the fact which they appear to be so slow to recognise—the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit; that He has come and not gone, and that now He is not only with, but *in* every true believer, his body thus becoming His temple (1 Cor. vi. 19). With this the world has no part. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, because “it seeth Him not, neither knoweth

Him." What daylight this lets in on the folly of attempting to mingle the world and true Christians! The world cannot adapt itself to Him Whom it neither sees nor knows. It can use the things of the world in a religious way, music, architecture, and the like, and that in a lavish manner, but the Holy Ghost has come down to associate all that are truly Christ's, not with the things of the world, but with *Him in heaven*. Hence the Lord said, "The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me." The difference is immense! Heaven itself would be as much a blank to a Christian as it is to a man of the world, if, by the Holy Spirit, the eye of his soul did not see Jesus there. So here, if walking in obedience to His commands, the Lord promised to *manifest* Himself to them. How is it that many professing Christians know nothing about it, while others, very simple-hearted people, too, never find Him absent? It is just this sight of Jesus that deepens affection to Him. Nothing can take His place in the heart then, and all that the world offers in its religion, in lieu of Him, only gives pain. Be perfectly sure that there is a heavenly choir as well as a worldly one. Those who are filled with the Spirit, sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord (Eph. v. 18, 19).

Freshness of affection to Christ being thus maintained by the power of the Spirit, we are not to think of Him apart from ourselves, nor ourselves apart from Him. Is He risen from among the dead, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself? Is He alive, victorious over death? "Because I live," He saith, "ye shall live also." Is He "in the Father," glorified? "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and *ye in Me*, and *I in you*." What perfect rest in the presence of God is ours if, by the Spirit, we are thus occupied with Christ; if He Himself is our object, our eyes resting on Him, knowing that we are *in* Him, by His own faithful word.

Our adorable Lord would not be satisfied with anything less for "His own" than this rest, this peace, and therefore, with nothing less than their receiving the Holy Spirit that they might have it. If we have once

seized the truth that we *have received* the Spirit from the Father, at the request of Christ, and by grace will not let it go, we shall be preserved from one of the greatest dangers of these times — ignorance, if not denial, of the fact that the Holy Spirit has come, that He is not only with us who believe, but *in* us, that our bodies are His temple; that He is to us another Comforter, maintaining our souls in all the truth of Christ, bringing all things to our remembrance, whatsoever He has said to us during His life down here, and teaching us all things as to Himself in the presence and the place where He now is with His Father. This (however imperfectly set forth now) is the subject in chapter xiv.

Chapter xvi. deals with the remarkable fact that zeal for God leads many to persecute those who honour His Son. Saul of Tarsus was once one of these. He was, as touching the righteousness of the law, a blameless man, and was zealous towards God, thinking to do Him service by pursuing Christians unto death—binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. The more religious he was, the better servant of the prince of this world he became. That which he did to others was afterwards done to him when he became a witness for Christ, so that he would rather stand at Cæsar's judgment seat than be tried at Jerusalem, rather be at the mercy of Nero than of the Jews.

It is in the presence of this hostility that the Lord, in chapter xvi., sends forth His disciples to be His witnesses, and therefore here the Holy Spirit is before us, as also sent of Him from the Father to be His witness (chap. xv. 26). If in any feeble way *we* take this place, the all-important thing for us is, that our testimony, so far as we do testify, should be in perfect harmony with that of the Holy Spirit. We have therefore the clearest statement of what the Spirit's witness is,—“And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me. Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and ye see Me no more. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

“Of sin”—The world, both Jew and Gentile— sat in the judgment seat, and Jesus was brought up before them in judgment. The verdict was—“He ought to die”; and the sentence—“Take ye Him and crucify Him.” *They believed not on Him.* The state of a man might be inferred from many things, but CHRIST is the perfect test now. Unbelief was the root, the fruit of which is seen at Calvary, and for this sin the wrath of God abides on all guilty of it. Oh! to be true as to this. One has seen the best of men according to the world’s standard, living to an advanced age and doing acts of kindness to the last, yet, sad to say, sternly refusing to believe that Jesus was the Christ. What did the religious world say? “He was saved.” What said our Lord? “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” What is the testimony of the Holy Spirit? “Of sin, because they *believe not on Me.*”

“Of righteousness”—There is another tribunal. God, the Judge of all, had yet to be heard; and in righteousness He raised Him from the dead, Whom the world crucified, exalted Him to His throne, and committed all judgment to Him. The Spirit witnesseth to this righteousness of God, beseeching men to be reconciled to Him, to come into His favour through faith in Jesus, or warning them as to the sure result of despising Him (2 Cor. v. 20-21, Acts xiii. 41).

“Of judgment”—Christ has gone. Satan remains for awhile in his usurped authority over the world. His judgment is pronounced, but time is given for any to flee for refuge from his rule to Christ, “and him that cometh to Me,” He saith, “I will in no wise cast out.”

Such then is the Spirit’s testimony as regards the world. To those who are Christ’s in it, how different is His attitude and way! He is, as a present Comforter, always with them and in them, their “guide into all truth.” Let them beware of another guide, as they would honour Him. “He will show them things to come.” As witnesses for Christ in the world they will need prophetic truth, lest they should be drawn into plans and schemes for improving the world, regardless

of its sin. "And," the Lord adds, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." By the Holy Spirit we learn all that Christ is and has—Himself and the whole circle of His glories, not for our own enjoyment only, but that we may minister those truths, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to others.

WILLIAM BURBIDGE.

The Name of Jesus.

THERE'S a Name, the Name of Jesus,
 Far above all other names ;
 All in heaven delight to hear it,
 All delight to own its claims.

Ruined sinners learn its meaning,
 And rejoice with those above,
 Find it more than all things precious,
 Taught of God that Name to love.

Many name the Name of Jesus,
 Strangers to its power still ;
 Who they are that love Him truly,
 He Who reads the heart can tell.

Soon at that same Name of Jesus,
 All in heaven and earth shall bow,
 Every tongue at last confess Him,
 Happy they who own Him now.

E.H.C.

Musings.

He who fears God as a servant, fears His coming;
 He who fears God as a child, fears that He will go away.

* * *

Many, like Naomi, have gone out to seek bread and water among strangers and have lost thereby many holy things.

* * *

The devil has no rights that we must respect.

The Gospel.

**THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM. THE GOSPEL OF GRACE.
THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.**

THE gospel, God's joyful news, has not been proclaimed at all times, in the same full way and to the same class of people. In the old days, we could speak of a gospel for the redeemed of God. During the Lord's sojourn on earth it could be preached, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," because the King, the Messiah, was walking in their midst. But the gospel of a dead and risen Christ, glorified at God's right hand, could not be preached until the wonderful day of grace, which through the Lord's longsuffering has already lasted for over nineteen centuries.

The New Testament clearly distinguishes different gospels. This in no way contradicts what the apostle says in Gal. i. 6-10. Because that relates to "another," that is, a "different kind of" gospel; a mixture of law and grace, circumcision and gospel, by which some led the believers astray and robbed them of their peace and joy.

Let us now examine what the Holy Ghost teaches us about the gospel for different times and of different tenor.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

In Matthew iv. 23, we read: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." In Matthew ix. 35, we find almost the same words, only Galilee is not mentioned; it says there He went about all the cities and villages. Beginning in Galilee, the Lord Jesus went on and on, to preach the gospel of the kingdom in all the cities and villages of the land of Israel. The third time this term occurs is in Matthew xxiv. 14, where we read: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." In this part of Matthew xxiv. the Lord Jesus is not speaking of the dispensation in which we live, but of the time of the end.

The gospel of the kingdom was preached in the past for three and a half years, by John the Baptist, by the Lord Himself, by the twelve and by the seventy. And in the future, after the rapture of the church, it will again be preached for several years by believing Jews, not only in the land of Israel, but over the whole earth and to all people. This will occur with great rapidity and power and in the most difficult circumstances (oppression and persecution).

The tenor of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom was in the main: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So spake John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2). So spake the Saviour (Matt. iv. 17). So spake the disciples, who received the commission to preach: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. x. 7). We also find the tenor of this preaching distinctly stated in Mark i. 14, 15: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying: The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."

There is an expression which occurs three times and so is characteristic of the gospel of the kingdom: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. x. 22; xxiv. 13; Mark xiii. 13). And another expression which occurs only in Luke: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke xxi. 19).

Although these words are of great seriousness and of great importance in all times and therefore for us, it is clear from the connection in which they appear, that they refer directly to those who shall hear and believe the gospel of the kingdom in the great tribulation.

In the past this preaching was exclusively addressed to the Jews.

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6). But the house of Israel did not accept this gospel, although the preaching was accompanied with signs and wonders, so that the eyes of the blind were opened, the deaf heard, the dumb rejoiced and the lame leaped as a hart

(Is. xxxv. 5, 6). The preaching was not believed. The King was rejected. And the powers revealed in their midst were ascribed to the devil. Now Israel is set aside, but not for ever. Once again, shall the God of Jacob, Who never changes, in His great mercy make known His gospel, His salvation, but not alone to the Jews, but "for a witness to all nations" (Matt. xxiv. 14).

In Revelation vii. we see what rich fruit the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom will produce in the short space of a few years. Out of Israel one hundred and forty-four thousand (a symbolic number) and from all nations, especially the heathen (not from so-called Christendom), a great multitude, which no man can number.

We can also join in with the praise in Rev. vii. 12: "Amen: blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE.

We find the commission to preach this gospel in Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16; and Luke xxiv. 47.

The Lord risen from the dead stands before us. The work, the great work, the work of redemption and salvation is completed. Before He leaves the earth, He has one more commission for His own. It sounds in our ears: "Go hence!" Yes, the Lord's servants must go forth, others must help them, all must have fellowship in it, none of those who know and love Jesus must be idle; all must abound in the work of the Lord, because the work is great. Not only a few, but all nations must hear it. "Go ye into all the world." This applies to all creatures, Jews, Samaritans, heathen, "all nations," "the whole world," "all creatures," "every creature which is under heaven" (Col. i. 6, 23), white and brown and yellow and black. The gospel of the grace of God comes to all: whosoever believes in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. In His name repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

In Acts xx. 24, the great apostle Paul calls the gospel "The gospel of the grace of God." There are, as we shall see, many other beautiful names for this gospel. But this name tells us simply and clearly what this gospel really is: good news from God, who wishes to show grace to the most guilty sinners. The man, who calls himself the chief of sinners, speaks of it in this way, because he has himself experienced grace.

He also preached the kingdom of God (Acts xxiv. 25 and xxviii. 31). But not the gospel of the kingdom; that time was past. There is still a kingdom of God on earth, but the King is rejected and absent and the kingdom is under oppression (Rev. i. 9). We are therefore not occupied with the character of the kingdom during the absence of the King,—our subject now is the gospel of the grace of God.

In Romans i. 1-4 the apostle calls it: "The gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord." It comes therefore from God and finds its source in the heart of God. "According to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," we read in 2 Timothy i. 9. But it is also through Jesus Christ our Lord. Only through Him salvation becomes our portion. Therefore, it is called in Romans i. 9: "The gospel of His Son." The Son of God brought this gospel, because He loves sinners and will save them (Rom. i. 15, 16). "The gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth." "The gospel of God" (Rom. xv. 16). In view of all that is told us about this gospel, we cannot possibly enter into it all, but we feel something of the riches and glory of it, shining out from these references to it.

In the second Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle speaks of the "gospel of Christ," the "gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 14; iv. 4). Paul on the way to Damascus saw Christ in glory; a light above the brightness of the sun shone on him and those that were with him. This glorified Christ sends the light of the gospel of His glory to bring poor sinners out of dark-

ness into light and He will let His light shine in their hearts.

Reference is also made to the "gospel of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision," not as if there were a difference between them, but because the gospel concerns all. The gospel is addressed to Jews and heathen; God's wonderful grace comes to all.

Further, we read of the "gospel of your salvation" (Eph. i. 13) and of the "gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15), because Christ is our peace; He, Who made peace and preached peace (Eph. ii. 14, 16, 17).

The most glorious and exalted name seems to us to be that of the gospel in 1 Tim. i. 11, N.Tr.: "The gospel of the glory of the blessed God."

Wonderful glorious gospel, through which a lost sinner is not only freed from everlasting destruction, but obtains a part in the glory and the eternal blessedness, which unites him with Christ in glory, soon to be for ever with Him.

Because this gospel was especially committed to the apostle Paul, he can speak of "our" and of "my" gospel (Rom. ii. 16; xvi. 25; 2 Cor. iv. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8, and elsewhere). "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, now and for ever, Amen." (1 Tim. i. 15, 17).

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

Only once is the gospel thus referred to in Holy Scripture, in Rev. xiv. 6, 7. "And I saw another angel, fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice. Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters."

We have already remarked that soon after the rapture of the church, the gospel of the kingdom will

be preached and that many will be brought to repentance and faith. The mass of mankind will, however, persist in unbelief and rebellion, wherefore it is written: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). And in the Book of the Revelation we read, "They repented not" (Rev. ix. 20, 21). Judgment can therefore be no longer delayed. "The hour of His judgment is come," cries the angel. A second angel pronounces the judgment against Babylon, professing Christendom (v. 8). A third angel pronounces the terrible judgment on all who worship the beast and his image and have his mark on the forehead and right hand (vv. 9-12). Indeed, so terrible becomes the general condition on earth that it is better for the believers remaining on earth to die than to live (v. 13). We are here just at the moment when the Son of man shall send a sharp sickle and the winepress of the wrath of God shall be trodden outside the city, so that the blood shall come up to the bridles of the horses, for one thousand six hundred furlongs (vv. 14-20). Now, just before all these terrible events God sends out another gospel. What a God! He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. The gospel of grace has been preached for ages, once again the gospel of the kingdom is preached, men as a whole have neither accepted the one nor the other; difficulties, disasters and dangers; wars, famine, and pestilence; earthquakes and terrible things have not brought man to repentance; therefore, there can be no longer delay. But God first sends an angel to preach the gospel. Wonderful, "an angel!" In this time of grace God does not use angels, but redeemed sinners to preach the gospel. But then God sends an angel. The angel preaches the everlasting gospel. We hear nothing in this preaching of the forgiveness of sins. It is a question of God as Creator of all things. That is the tenor of this preaching. And angels can speak of that. The angel preaches the everlasting gospel. This is not a gospel for a certain time; it is a gospel for all time; from the creation to the new creation!

“Fear God and give glory to Him.” So is it proclaimed “with a loud voice.” “Worship Him, Who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” The angel preaches the everlasting gospel to those who live on the earth; these are they who belong to the prophetic earth, to the Roman dominion, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

The word, here rendered “preach,” means literally: evangelise, bring the gospel. The object is that men shall reject the Antichrist, not bowing down to him, but to the God of heaven, to save themselves from the terrible judgments which are still to come. And those who are spared shall later stand before the throne of glory of the Son of man (Matt. xxv. 31-46). The sheep shall then inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

After what we have considered, we can indeed exclaim with the apostle: “Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” . . . “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory. Amen” (Rom. xi. 33, 36).
J.N.V.

The Divine Centre.

It is a very real thing to have to do with Christ; when you receive Christ, you meet all the moral glory of God in the face of that Christ; not merely His glory shining there, but all the tender affections of the Father’s heart of love displayed in Him Who took our form and dwelt among us as Man.

Why was He to leave heaven and come down here—this perfect, matchless, peerless God-man? What was this world to Him? people might say. Ah! God had all His plans centred in that One. From the foundation of the world it was ordained that He should take up the question of sin; and whatsoever the ruin and misery brought in by it, Christ was perfectly equal to turning all the ruin to His own glory.
G.V.W.

An Interesting Answer.

SOME years before the death of the late Mr. William Kelly, a young man, desirous of experiencing the emancipating power of the truth, asked him: "Which do you consider your best work?"

Mr. Kelly's answer was rather unexpectedly comprehensive: "It depends on the point of view," said he.

"If you mean my most useful work, I should say my 'Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew.' I believe that this has been the most useful of all my works.

"But if you mean from a controversial standpoint, I should give you my work on the 'New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.' This has caused more controversy than any other through the simplest truths being discredited.

"Then my most learned work is my little book entitled 'In the Beginning.' This required more painstaking and earnest research in study and intimate knowledge of Hebrew and its kindred tongues than any other.

"Fourthly, from a philological point of view, my 'Exposition of the Revelation,' because it required a specially careful study of the original Greek manuscripts from a critical standpoint for the elimination of textual as well as translation errors."

Mr. Kelly was a recognised authority on the text of the Revelation, and from his knowledge of the history of the English translation could say that the appointed translators were being urged to complete their almost finished task as soon as possible, and consequently did not give as much pains to the last book as to the others.

Mr. Kelly did not approve of the Revised Version, and used to say: "Stick to the Authorised Version rather than accept the new." He declared from his critical knowledge that one cannot go far wrong with the old version.

G.S.P.

The Gospel Call.

O GOD, what deep perfections dwell
 In Thy beloved Son,
 Who came from glory—from Thy heart,
 And all Thy will hath done!

Forth from Eternal Light He came,
 Thy boundless grace to show,
 The wonders of Thy matchless love
 To rebels here below.

Nor stooped in vain that Holy One
 From yon celestial throne;
 To put away our scarlet sins,
 His life's blood did atone.

For nought but this in heaven or earth
 Could meet God's righteous claims;
 And nought but this, yea, only this,
 Could cleanse our guilty stains.

Praise God, 'tis done, and once for all;
 "Tis finished," Jesus cried;
 For lo! that healing stream of life
 Poured from His riven side.

Yes; Jesus suffered, bled, and died,
 But now is on the throne;
 And all who trust His blood shall know
 Their sins for ever gone.

Poor sinner, 'twas for thee He died,
 For thee He rose again;
 Believe! and life and peace are yours
 Through faith in Jesus' name.

Then come at once, for mercy's day
 Will soon be past and gone;
 Repentance will be all too late
 Before the judgment throne.

S.T.

Five Men of Character.

INSTRUCTION by means of illustrations is the most useful method. The Lord Jesus, the great Teacher, has left us an example worthy of imitation. He pointed to the flowers of the field, the fowls of the air, natural phenomena and seasons and many other things. Once, when the disciples were disputing which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He called a little child unto Him, put him in the midst of them and said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

In the Bible, according to the same principle, we get not only teaching, which makes the will of God clear to us and encourages us to do it, but examples, which strike us, example in men of like passions with ourselves, with different characters, and yet all animated with one desire, to live to God.

It is our present purpose to consider the five characters described in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. This chapter is one of the most beautiful in the Bible, because it shows us so many of the glories of the Son of God. But it is also one of the most remarkable, because at the end it describes the characters of five disciples, for each of whom the Lord Jesus became the great point of attraction and for whom, as a whole, He was found to be the great centre of all desire and all worship. Five, like ten, is the number of responsibility. And it is as if God's Spirit would make us feel in this portion of God's word what a responsibility we all have, whatever our temperament or character, to trust ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and willingly to enter His service.

Our old nature is entirely contrary to the will of God, and often we find in it inducements to go our own way according to our own will. Moreover, we so readily

put the responsibility on our temperament or character, and as we have received these from God, we are in reality putting the responsibility on Him. But that is quite wrong. Each of us is called according to his own disposition to serve and glorify God; our temperament or character must never dominate us; we must, on the contrary, by the power of the Spirit of God, govern our temperament or character. The hasty Moses, because he walked with God, became the meekest man in all the earth. The fiery persecutor of the church, Saul, became the humblest and most faithful servant of the church because he asked what the Head of the church would have him do. How is it possible to govern ourselves? By the renewing of our mind. In this way, whatever our temperament or character, we can prove in the doing of it, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. When we have put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man, our gaze must be directed to Him Who has renewed us, so that we ourselves may become changed, renewed from day to day, according to His image (Rom. xii. 1; Col. iii. 10).

Let us then consider for a few moments the five persons, whom we find gathered around the glorious Person, Whom John describes to us in the beginning of his Gospel, as the Son of God. Each of them is presented to us as with a different temperament, a different character. And to each of them we see the power and wisdom of God revealed. But in each one we see how different the manner in which the Holy Spirit works what is pleasing to God, so that each of them learns in his own way to follow and to obey.

The Lord Jesus is the great Seeker. The first thing we read in the first chapter of John in connection with the disciples, is: "Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them: What seek ye?" Then we are told that the Lord Jesus found Philip. Afterwards, that He saw Nathanael under the fig-tree. The seeking does not begin with us, but with Him. He has strivings of love with us before we know Him, before we have a heart which goes out to Him.

The first to experience this were two disciples of John the Baptist. Their master had pointed with such fervour of spirit to Jesus, Who was walking there, crying out: "Behold the Lamb of God!" that John and Andrew, who heard their master speak in this way, left him and followed Jesus.

John describes his first meeting with Jesus Himself. But he does not mention his own name. Indeed, he never does that in his Gospel. He humbly steps into the background by speaking of the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Humility characterises him here also. That he spent indescribably happy hours that day appears from his remarks, "They abode with Him that day"; "It was about the tenth hour." Half a century later, when he wrote his Gospel, he lived that wonderful day and that unforgettable hour as it were over again. And the thing which, no doubt, made the greatest impression upon him was that when he, the man with the humble character, followed Jesus with Andrew, the Saviour turned and saw them and asked them a friendly question. It was true that they were seeking something. But John was too humble to say so. Therefore, he answers, giving Andrew's name, with the counter question, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" But when Jesus says, "Come and see," he takes courage, no doubt supported by the brave Andrew, and they both came and saw. Oh, it was good to be with Jesus! They could not leave Him that day; they stayed with Him from the tenth hour of the morning. Yes, more than that; they were to stay with Him and rest on His heart throughout their lives. "John" means: gift of the Lord. And so he considered himself. Jesus loved him. His own love, fervent as it was, was weak beside the Divine love of the Master.

Let everyone who is humble by nature, timid or bashful, be encouraged by the look and word of Jesus, and rejoice in His love! He knows you and knows what is in your heart for Him. Although you think your love is so small, although others do not understand you and perhaps crowd you out, Jesus sees you, knows the con-

dition and the need of your soul, turns to you and makes it easy for you to pour out your heart before Him. Give Him, therefore, your childlike confidence, follow Him and abide with Him. Then you shall, like John, rest on the Lord's bosom, feel the beating of His heart and understand His precious lessons better than others.

Andrew had a different character. His name means "courageous." He had a character of iron. We see that here directly. He was found by Jesus, and now he will follow that example whatever it costs. He thinks immediately of his brother Simon. He was a much greater personality than himself. That appears from the later history. He was a man to lead, not to follow. Nevertheless, Andrew went to seek Simon. We read first of Andrew that he was the brother of Simon Peter. John, the author, tells us this in explanation. But then it says that Andrew first findeth his *own* brother, *Simon*. Such was the nature of Andrew. Later he was to seek others. We read of him in John vi. that he found a lad and brought him to Jesus, and that so many were refreshed. In John xii. we are told of him that when some Greeks wanted to see Jesus, he went and told Jesus. And church history informs us that he witnessed to his Saviour far beyond the borders of Palestine, and, finally, went bravely to a martyr's death with the name of Jesus on his lips. But *first* he thought of his *own* brother. And at that time *he* was still only *Simon*.

It requires courage to witness for Jesus and especially in one's own family circle. And not only to speak about Jesus, but to take by the hand, as Andrew did, and to *lead* to Jesus! Let every one who is courageous by nature not only come to Jesus and abide with Him, but also go and seek, in order that those one finds may be brought into contact with Him Who sought and found us. First we can bring members of our family, our friends; then we can reach out to others, perhaps to the heathen! And let us have something over, something to offer up as it is needed; being ready to lay down even our own lives. There is need of Andrews,

courageous men who stand fast, are unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labour (their heavy toil) is not in vain in the Lord.

And now we get into contact with Simon Peter. Here he is called: son of Jonas. Why is this not stated in the case of Andrew? This is not accidental. *All* is significant in Scripture. In the case of Simon, the character of his father must be indicated. Jonas means flight, and although Simon had something impulsive in his character, yet he was quickly put to flight, when something opposed him. We know such characters, they can do all and dare all, they are always the first and foremost. But when their work is, in their opinion, not sufficiently recognised, or turns out differently from what they expected, they are depressed and discouraged. Jonah fled and Simon fled. But the Lord can make such characters pillars, even if the pillars sometimes totter, as we see from Simon's later history. Simon means the listener. And Simon's disposition was indeed such that he wished to listen, but often listening badly, because he gave full rein to his temperament; vehemently standing up for what he considered right. Jesus beheld Simon, the son of Jonas. He saw in him what He would make of him: a stone. Cephas=stone; his name should be Peter=stone, Matt. xvi. 18. In two languages was it expressed by the Master, that he should be a man of strong courage who should stand firm before thousands, a man to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven should be entrusted.

How often gifted young men are like Simon! They are strong, they know the word of God and have it abiding in them, they are overcomers of evil. And yet--how the love of the world is sometimes too strong for them, how are they sometimes downcast and fearful when God's way for them (for their profit), seems to be different from what they desired and expected.

The danger for such characters is to act in their own strength. But then they are not to be taught to serve less or to give it up altogether, but to serve more humbly.

Then the greatest dependence is learned, the ear opened every morning to listen for the Father's instruction. Enthusiasm is good, but it is always accompanied by vacillation and instability. We have, therefore, to be sanctified in the school of the Master. Not that we shall never make any more mistakes. We see that in Peter and also even in Moses. But we shall be able, dependent servants, meet for the Master's use. Because in the hands of Jesus, everything becomes good.

The name Philip means: lover of horses. We do not read that he sought Jesus or that one of the others sought him out. It is said of him: "Jesus findeth Philip and saith to him, 'Follow Me!'" Philip was of the same place as the two brothers Andrew and Peter. No doubt Philip belonged, like Andrew and Peter, to those who were looking for the Messiah, the Christ. He had, at any rate, a friend, whose views and actions he knew well and who in his place of prayer under the fig-tree, was occupied with the hope of the consolation of Israel. The Lord knew him and sought him Himself to make him happy and then to use him for others. Philip liked to lean upon someone. In the Psalms we are warned against trusting to the strength of the horse. Perhaps Philip's name indicted a character which seeks support from others. When the Greeks came to Philip, he does not bring them to Jesus, but to Andrew. When the Lord speaks of the Father, he says: "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." And Jesus answers: "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" He wanted visible support and forgot the support just beside him. Therefore, no disciple was used to find him, Jesus seeks him Himself and says to him, "Follow Me."

How many dependent seekers there are! They must always lean on others, be helped and and convinced by others. They like ~~human props~~. They must learn that they have to do with the Saviour and that they simply have to follow Him! Sometimes the Lord takes away our props, to teach us not to be dependent on others, but to fear Him, and act for Him, unaided.

Finally, an out and out upright character is brought to our notice in Nathanael. This name means: gift of God. Philip knew that Nathanael was a godly man. And joyful at his meeting with Jesus, he goes to find him and says, "We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael is no sentimentalist, but a sober thinker. He therefore answers, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But when his brother replies with conviction, "Come and see!" he is honourable and upright enough to go to Jesus to see for himself whether what has been told him with such assurance can be true. And then the Master meets him with, "Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Nathanael does not answer, "Oh, Lord, I am not so upright." Many apparently humble ones among us may speak in that way, but Nathanael knows that he is an honourable and upright man. That he cannot and will not consider or weaken. But how did Jesus of Nazareth know this? Then he must be the Prophet, the King of Israel! And when his question, "Whence knowest Thou me?" is answered by: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou was under the fig-tree, I saw thee," he comes to the conclusion. this Jesus is the Son of God. Oh, now he had learned to know Jesus, he should see greater things than these, he must still believe. But in the meantime he had Jesus Himself, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent One. This was everything to him, his treasure. And from now onwards he would follow and serve Him in uprightness of heart. There are not many truly upright people. Neither among Jews or heathen, nor among Christians. They are exceptions. And such characters have a difficult time. They do not honestly accept everything. They must be honestly convinced, see things clearly. But the history of Nathanael shows us that even such men, when they come into the presence of the Lord, are attracted and brought to worship. But no hypocritical goodness or mock humility can stand before God. And those in whom there is no guile must learn that the Lord knows them and sees them pray.

Just as He knew how to find an upright man like Saul of Tarsus in the house of Judas in the street called Straight, and tells Ananias, "Behold, he prayeth!"

Translated.

"That We Henceforth Be No More Children."

IN the New Testament the word "child" is used to translate seven different Greek words, each having its own shade of meaning. The word used in Ephesians iv. 16—"that we henceforth be no more children"—is translated "babe" in 1 Corinthians iii. 1 and Hebrews v. 13. It also occurs in 1 Corinthians xiii. 11 and Galatians iv. 1. Consideration of these passages will help to stimulate the growing up of the believer as a child of God.

Is it not a characteristic of the present day that large numbers of believers in the Lord Jesus are content with the knowledge of salvation, and show little desire to grow in the knowledge of the truths of which the Epistles are full? When the scriptures are read and expounded, it is often with the object of reiterating and illustrating the *way of salvation*. Often, too, the practical application of scripture to the daily circumstances of life is taken up, and the *moral teaching* of the Bible in regard to truth, justice, uprightness, and love is pressed. Less often *the glories—past, present, future, eternal—of the Lord Jesus* are brought out from the scriptures. Still less frequently *the collective privileges and responsibilities of the church of God*, in which the glory of Christ is so deeply involved, are taught. With these four *different aspects of the scriptures* the word "child," in the sense of the passages already cited, is concerned.

Babes need milk, they need to be taught the "first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. v. 12). When people are first converted—first trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour—the foundation has to be consolidated, and they have to learn the meaning "of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God, the doctrine of

baptisms" (i.e., "washings" as in Mark vii. 4 and 8, a different word from that usually translated baptism, having special application to the traditional washings of the converted Jews to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews is primarily addressed), "and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." But the Holy Spirit, through the writer of the Epistle, expresses the desire to go on to full growth (or "perfection"). *What are the particular truths brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews with the object of reaching full growth?* The supremacy of the Lord Jesus in comparison with angels, Adam, Moses, Joshua and Aaron: the Melchisedec character of His priesthood; the transcendent efficacy of His sacrifice and of His blood. These truths lead to boldness to enter into the holiest, to the hope of the Lord's return, and in the meantime to living by faith, looking unto Jesus and considering Him. The Epistle cannot be summarised in a few words as above, the whole of it is needed in order that there may be growth from babyhood to manhood in the aspect taken up by this Epistle. The Epistle to the Galatians takes up another point of view. It is not a question of growth, but of position. A child is under tutors and governors. He is subject to rules and bondage. The believer in Christ Jesus is, however, a *son of God*. Being sons, believers are not under the law, but in liberty. Having been justified by (on the principle of) the faith of Jesus Christ, not on the principle of works, they can gain nothing by putting themselves under law. In doing so they will only lose their liberty. Having begun in the Spirit they cannot be made perfect in the flesh. They are to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and not to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage. They are not, however, to use this liberty for an occasion to the flesh. They are to walk in the Spirit, and they shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. *The passing of childhood in this Epistle is associated with freedom from law on the one hand, and, on the other, being led by the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, so that the believer may be able to say with*

the apostle "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." Alas, how many believers in the Lord Jesus in the present day have imitated the Galatians in putting themselves under law, voluntarily assuming this position of babyhood quite improperly, and so dishonouring the Son of God, Who loved them and gave Himself for them! To take a lower place than He has given us is dishonouring to Him.

In Hebrews and Galatians babyhood and manhood are dealt with as regards the believer's state as an individual, but in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians growth is dealt with from the point of view of the believer's position in the church of God and the body of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians iii. the apostle says he had to speak to the Corinthians as if they were babies in Christ. This was a very crushing thing to say, for the Corinthians thought they were a very wise people. In the tenth chapter, however, he says, "I speak as to wise men." *What has transformed the babes into wise men?* Is it not the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle, if that teaching has been received as spoken "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (chap. ii. 13)? In this Epistle, addressed to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (chap. i. 2), human wisdom is set aside. It is foolishness with God. So all human organisations and systems connected with the "church" are to be refused as not being taught by the Scriptures. Those guilty of moral evil, though they be called brothers, are to be put away from amongst the believers (chap. v.). Every man wherein he is called is to abide therein with God (chap. vii.). While an idol (i.e. a conception of God having its origin in man's imagination) is nothing in the world (chap. viii.), yet devils are behind the idols. "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils" (chap. x.). "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Such are a few of the many points on which the Holy Spirit gives instruction which, when learnt in

the heart, transform a babe into a wise man. The purpose in view is surely that eating the Lord's supper may be done in a worthy manner; that the members of the body of Christ may carry out their appropriate duties; that love may have its full activity; that when the church comes together, the speaking, the prayer, the praise, the thanksgiving, may all be done unto edifying, in the decency and order which is according to the revealed mind of God, not after man's imagination. Chapters xi. to xiv. give full instruction as to the order to be observed "when ye come together in assembly," which will be done more and more intelligently as the truths taught in chapters iii. to x. convert babes in Christ into wise men. Would that all believers had the zeal which would result in due time in their being able to say, with the apostle, "When I was a babe, I spake as a babe, I understood as a babe, I thought as a babe: but when I became a man, I put away babyish things"!

In the Epistle to the Ephesians babyhood is associated with being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Full growth is "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." *What wonderful truths are presented in this Epistle with the object of producing this transformation!* The good pleasure of God's will, the mystery of His will, the counsel of His own will; the riches of His grace, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; the exceeding greatness of His power, the greatness of His love: these are some of the truths we learn about Him. The church is Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. "Ye are . . . of the household of God," "All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The fellowship of the mystery is revealed "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by [means of] the church the manifold wisdom of God." The

apostle's prayers at the end of chapters i. and iii., and his entreaty at the beginning of chapter iv., which are inspired by the Holy Spirit, in fact the whole matter of the Epistle, all tend to the same end—"that ye henceforth be no more babies."

It is obviously impossible, in a single article, even to summarize the truths in these four Epistles which mark the differences between babyhood and full growth. It is for the glory of the Father, and of Christ, as well as for the blessing of the individual believer and of the whole church of God, that there should be progress to full growth. This will not be attained by treating the Bible as a mere book of texts. It is necessary to read the word of God as a whole again and again. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to apply the word. Growth in the sense of the foregoing remarks will not produce pride or self-complacency, which indeed would be evidence of lack of growth.

May the Lord grant that these remarks may stimulate the desire in some readers to be no longer babies in Christ, but to grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, for His glory.

J.C.K.

The Cities of Refuge.

THE man-slayer made two entries into the city of refuge; the first immediately on his committing the deed, the second, after the congregation had decided that he had not shed the blood in enmity. Now these, his two residences in the same city, must have been with different feelings. During the first he may have had strong hope, from what he knew himself of the facts and of the witnesses he could produce, that the congregation would surely acquit him; but during the second all such thoughts, having more or less uneasiness in them, would have been totally dismissed; for he could read his title *clear* (the congregation having delivered in their verdict) to feel unqualified security. All he had to do then was to abide only in prospect,

and not at all in retrospect, to be awaiting the death of the high priest, in order that he might go to his own city, and not to be calculating on the circumstances of his own conduct, and the chances, however great, that he had of full acquittal. According to all this have been the dispensations of God. There have been two entries into the city of refuge. The first under the first dispensation, before the great question of sin was settled, and the conscience fully satisfied; the second under the present dispensation, since the blood of Jesus has fully discharged the sinner; and a corresponding state was found under the two. There was the spirit of bondage and of fear during the first; there is the spirit of liberty now. Under the law the sinner might have had a good hope of what the end might be; he knew of many witnesses on his behalf—the day of atonement, the ashes of the heifer, and many ordinances would be forecasts of his security: but still the great question was not altogether over. But now the congregation has given in its judgment, all has been accomplished, the whole question is ended, and we are in our city in full peace as to the past, and have only to look out in the hope of the future—the spirit of liberty has been brought in instead of that of bondage and fear. The resurrection of Jesus has decided all for the sinner. There is both the prisoner of faith and the prisoner of hope (Galatians iii.). In the old dispensation the elect were the prisoners of faith; they were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which was afterwards to be revealed. Faith, or the *object* of faith, that is *Christ*, was not so revealed as to give entire liberty; but their faith kept them still in a spirit of bondage: they were rather faith's bondsmen than freemen. But now the elect are no longer under a schoolmaster; Christ is revealed and our faith brings us into liberty; we are no longer kept in fear through our faith, but are delivered by it, so as to be *faith's* freemen; but then we are *hope's* prisoners. The grace of Christ has opened the former prison, the glory of Christ will open the latter: nothing else can. This is shadowed in the ordinance of the cities of refuge

(Num. xxxv. 32.). No money whatever could release the prisoner from that place; he must await the death of the high priest, as now it is not in the power of any present advantage to ante-date the church's portion, and deliver the saint from being an expectant; even joy in the Holy Ghost cannot do this; Jesus must come Himself, and bring His reward with Him; but till then the prison-house which hope keeps remains closed; the priest must die, the present age of Jesus being in the heavens must end, and He return out of it to meet the saints in the air, ere they will cease to be expectant.

I may just observe that verse 31 gives us another striking article in this ordinance; for we may refer it to the Lord. He was made sin *for us*: we had been guilty of blood. Abel's blood was staining our earth; we had wilfully shed it, and blood must go for blood. The Son of God took the sinner's place; therefore "refuge failed Him," no city opened her gates for Him. Who witnessed for Him? Who declared His generation? Every voice was against Him: the enemy laid to His charge undenied facts; His own forsook, and fled, and disowned Him; God forsook Him, and the heavens for three hours testified against Him. The congregation thus gave judgment against Him, and blood went for blood; no satisfaction could be taken for His life; for He was as the murderer, the wilful shedder of man's blood. But His blood having thus gone for Abel's blood—that is, His atonement having fully met our guilt—the city of refuge stands always open, and the revenger cannot enter.

Faith enters unpursued. The blood of Abel is the witness for man; for Cain represents the world (1 John iii.), and of the world we are all part and parcel by nature (Eph. ii.), so that the sin of Cain lies against us. In other words, the blood of Jesus, the true Abel, lies at our door. Cain was conscious that no city of refuge was open to him; for he was a murderer, a wilful shedder of blood; he thought everyone that found him would slay him; but the Lord took his sin into His own hand, and secured him from the revenger of blood,

in due season providing other blood to go for Abel's. Of course, I do not speak of Cain *personally*, but mystically as representing the sinner; and to represent this grace of God more, I may say, we have only to look to the blood of Jesus; for in one aspect of it that blood was the blood of Abel; in another, it was the blood of God's lamb that went for Abel's. As shed by man's wicked hand, it was Abel's blood, and thus was the sin of the world; as shed by God's redeeming grace, it was the Lamb's blood, and thus was the propitiation for the world; thus, in the same blood of Jesus, we read the whole mystery, our sin and our salvation: our act in the shedding of it was our sin—God's purpose in the shedding of it was our salvation. Wondrous plan of grace, and of wisdom! thus in the same object to tell out such a tale, humbling to us, while it blesses us, and glorifies God. It was in reference to Deut. xxi. 1-9 that Pilate, who knew something of Jewish ordinances, washed his hands (Matt. xxvii.). And after Pilate had so delivered himself, as he could, from the blood of Jesus, the nation deliberately took it on themselves, and thus have they been without a city of refuge until this day; for that blood was shed *wilfully*. Accordingly, like Cain, they are vagabonds this day; they have no city of refuge. But grace preserves them aliens, as it did Cain: in order that as Cain's family revived, as it were, in Lamech this grace, so in the latter day Israel may trust in Jesus, and thus "blood go for blood"—the blood of Jesus *pleaded* answer for the blood of Jesus *shed*, and their land be thus cleansed from its present stain (Joel iii.).

The generation of faith, in separating the soul to communion with God, is seen also in this ordinance of the cities of refuge; for there the Nazarite was in solitude—home and kindred were in distant cities, and he was in the place of strangers, in communion with Him Whose love and grace had provided that asylum for him against the hand of the avenger. There was he to dwell for a season and his company to be thoughts of Him Who had so screened him.

Thoughts of His love—the root of every grace
Which finds in this poor heart a dwelling-place;
The sunshine of my soul, than day more bright,
And my calm pillow of repose by night.

Thoughts of His glory—on the cross I gaze,
And there behold its sad, yet healing rays;
Beacon of hope, which, lifted up on high,
Illumes with heavenly light the tear-dimmed eye.

Thoughts of His coming—for that joyful day
In patient hope I watch, and wait, and pray;
The day draws nigh, the midnight shadows flee—
Oh, what a sun-rise will that advent be!

Author unknown.

Scripture Gems from the Old and New Testaments Compared—3.

Old Testament.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.—Jer. x. 23.

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.—Deut. xxxii. 10.

If a man find his enemy will he let him go well away?—1 Sam. xxiv. 19.

New Testament.

Now God Himself and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. — 1 Thess. iii. 11.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.—Rom. xv. 4.

When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.—Rom. v. 10.

Old Testament.

When Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation and mocked the Jews. — Neh. iv. 1.

When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. —Psa. lxxiii. 16-17.

A burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.—Lev. i. 9.

He was marvellously helped till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.—2 Chron. xxvi. 15, 16.

For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. —Psa. cxix. 89.

Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.—Ex. xii. 46.

New Testament.

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.—1 Cor. xvi. 9.

What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?—1 Pet. iv. 17.

Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. — Ephes. v. 2.

And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. When I am weak then am I strong. — 2 Cor. xii. 9 and 10.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.—Matt. xxiv. 35.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken.—John xix. 33 and 36.

Old Testament.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. —Gen. xxxvii. 3.

And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.—Gen. xxiv. 36.

Forty years didst Thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing.—Neh. ix. 21

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.—Gen. i. 16.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field . . . and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said.—Gen. iii. 1.

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.—Gen. iii. 21.

New Testament.

The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand. — John iii. 35.

All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine and show it unto you. — John xvi. 15.

And He (Jesus) said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.—Luke xxii. 35.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof.—Rev. xxi. 23.

I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ. —2 Cor. xi. 3.

The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. — Rom. iii. 22.

Old Testament.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.—Psa. lv. 22.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple.—Psa. xxvii. 4.

God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him. — Psa. lxxxix. 7.

New Testament.

Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.—I Pet. v. 7.

One thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—Luke x. 42.

And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.—Acts. v. 11.

“The Man Whom the King Delighteth to Honour.”

(Esther vi. 7-11; Ps. xlv; 1. Tim. vi. 14-16; 2 Pet. 1. 17;
Rev. xix. 11-16.)

BRING forth the royal vestments,
The King doth use to wear,
For Him His soul delights to own,
Of heaven and earth the Heir;
And fairer than the comeliest
Of all the sons of men,
For meekness and for righteousness,
He'll ride in triumph then.

The King of kings and Lord of lords
Proclaims His glorious worth,
Sending Him forth in victory,
To rule His ransomed earth;
A name He hath of hidden depth,
That none can know but He,
A token of the Father's love,
That name of secrecy.

Hear ye the proclamation,
That rings upon the air?
"The King of kings and Lord of lords,"
It blazons everywhere;
For thus shall it be done to Him
The King delights to own
With glory and with majesty,
Crowned with His royal crown.

The glory of the risen Man
The universe doth fill,
For He alone, the Lord from heaven,
Has done the Father's will;
Anointed high above the rest,
With gladness and with joy,
The praises of ten thousand tongues
His beauty shall employ.

Pale not, ye kingdom glories!
Until the blissful day,
When all into subjection brought,
Beneath Messiah's sway,
The glories of the subject Son
The bride of Christ shall tell,
And God with man upon the earth
For evermore shall dwell.

A.T.C.