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THE
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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 :—

- (1) rejoice in hope of the glory of God,
- (2) glory in tribulation,
- (3) joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point, it should be said to avoid misapprehension, 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 clearly to be seen that this element of stability must of necessity characterise the believer's hope, because of the intimate connection it is shewn 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 [1] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have [2] access into this grace wherein we stand; and [3] 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 unfaltering 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 no. 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 school-master 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 to 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.

THY ROD AND THY STAFF.

THE fidelity of Eastern shepherds to their flocks is proverbial. Not a few manage to obtain an old long-barrelled gun, or a pistol, especially in districts exposed to the Bedouins, as for instance to the south of Gaza; but most of them have, in addition, a strong oaken club or bludgeon, two feet or more in length, its round or oblong head stuck full of heavy iron nails, a terrible weapon in the hands of a strong brave man. A loop at the handle serves to hang it to the "leathern girdle" universally worn by peasants and the humbler classes, to bind together the unbleached cotton shirt which is their whole dress by day. When it is passed over the wrist, this loop is also a security that the weapon shall not be lost, even if knocked out of the hand in a struggle. . . .

In the mountains, cleft as they often are by narrow impassable ravines, a sheep may easily wander too near the edge, and be in danger of falling into the gloomy depths below. Dr. Duff noticed an interesting incident associated with such a scene. "When on a narrow bridle-path,"

says he, "cut out on the face of a precipitous ridge, I observed a native shepherd with his flock, which, as usual, followed him. He frequently stopped and looked back; and if he saw a sheep creeping up too far, or coming too near the edge, would go back, and, putting the crook round one of its hind legs, would gently pull it to him." This is the shepherd's staff; sometimes bent, thus, into a crook, but more commonly a long, straight oak stick, often cased at its lower end in iron, to beat off the thief or wild beast. This staff to help and the club to protect are the staff and the rod with which God comforts His people (Ps. xxiii. 4).

Extracted.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTERS i.—iii. 20.

HEREIN, on the proved failure of man, God's righteousness is revealed, faithwise unto faith, with its resulting deliverance (i.—viii.). Yet sovereign grace like this is conciliated with special mercy and unfailing promises to Israel (ix.—xi.). The practical consequences of God's mercies are urged in devotedness as a living sacrifice to Him, personally, as well in subjection to the world's authority as in grace one toward another (xii.—xvi.).

In chapter i. the inspired writer presents himself as bondman of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated unto God's gospel, which He promised before through His prophets in holy scriptures. It is now fulfilled; for it is concerning His Son, Who came of David's seed according to flesh, Who was marked out Son of God in power according

to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead—Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus He is heir of promise, and conqueror of death. It is not yet the day when to Him shall the obedience of the peoples be; but He is sending out witnesses of Himself, as here *He* was God's faithful Witness. Through Him Paul received grace and apostleship, not for law but for faith-obedience among all the nations, in behalf of His name, among whom were also they, called of Jesus Christ, all that were in Rome beloved of God: they saints, as he apostle, not by birth or merit but called respectively by divine grace. He wishes them grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, as he did to all saints. It was not only that he thanked his God for them, always at his prayers beseeching that he might be prospered in God's will to come to them, for joint comfort as he graciously said; but he was hindered hitherto. He was not ashamed of the glad tidings, for God's power it is (not promise merely) to everyone that believes, both to Jew first and also to Greek; for God's righteousness in it is revealed, and therefore by faith unto faith. Thus the gospel is about God's Son, and therein God's righteousness is revealed, in contrast with His law in vain claiming human righteousness. Hence as faith is the way or principle, it was open to every believer, Jew and Greek. Such is the introduction.

Then follows from chap. i. 18 to iii. 20 the overwhelming proof of man's dire need of the gospel. For God's wrath is revealed from heaven (in contrast with earthly judgments under law) upon all impiety and unrighteousness of men holding the truth in unrighteousness. As this embraces both Gentiles and Jews, he from verse 19 to the end of chapter i. shews the shameless departure of mankind from God: first, ignoring the testimony of

creation (19, 20); secondly, abandoning what they knew, especially by that public demonstration of moral government given in the deluge. Professing to be wise they were befooled, and changed the truth of God into falsehood; and as they gave up God for idolatrous images, God gave them up to vile lusts and a reprobate mind. Such were the heathen for ages before, and when the gospel went forth.

But has there not been philosophic moralists who judged those unspeakable enormities and religious follies (chap. ii.)? Yes; but they did the same things; and their fine words could not screen them from the judgment of God. For they despised His long-suffering goodness, which leads to repentance, and thus treasured up wrath in a day of wrath. Then God will render to each according to his works, Jew and Greek, for with Him is no favouritism, though He considers privilege or the lack of it in a day when He will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ.

From ii. 17 the Jew is weighed, and his rest on the law, and boast in God, and superiority in light to others; but how about his own ways? Was not the name of God blasphemed among the nations on their account, as it is written? Unrighteousness made circumcision uncircumcision, as righteous uncircumcision will be reckoned for circumcision. Shadows are gone with God, Who insists on reality; and he only has the praise of God who is a Jew in what is secret, and heart circumcision is in spirit, not in letter.

Are divine privileges nothing? Much every way, says the apostle in chapter iii. 1, 2; and in nothing so much as having the scriptures. Yet the unbelief of some cannot invalidate either the faith of God or His right to judge. Was not the Jew then better than the Greek? In no wise. Jews and Greeks

are alike under sin. This is shewn in Psalm liii., etc., Isaiah lix., etc. "Now we know that whatever things the law saith, it speaketh to those under (or, in the scope of) the law, that *every* mouth may be stopped and all the world be under judgment to God." The Jew, who would readily allow the Gentile hopelessly evil, is expressly condemned by the scriptures. All then were guilty beyond dispute. "Wherefore by deeds of law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through law is knowledge of sin" (ver. 20).

W.K.

CONTENTMENT.

If bitter sorrows pierce
My spirit through and through;
If sore in pain I lie,
With death itself in view;
When none can soothe my heart but Thee,
Help me, O Lord, content to be.

If Thou in wisdom's ways,
Shouldst bid me to resign
My wealth, my lands, my home,
Yea, all I've said is mine;
Though nought remain, O Lord, but Thee,
May I with Thee contented be.

Oh, may I murmur not,
Nor o'er my lot repine;
In this may I rejoice—
Thou art for ever mine.
Should earthly joys all from me flee,
Thou wilt, O Lord, the sweeter be.

Thy loving, tender heart
 My every sorrow bears ;
 The shoulders of Thy love
 Receive my daily cares ;
 Nought dost Thou leave, O Lord, to me,
 But with Thyself content to be.

Thou Shepherd, good and great,
 Whose grace has made me Thine,
 I glory in Thy love
 Through which I call Thee mine :
 If such Thou art on earth to me,
 What will it be Thy face to see !



THE DIVINE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MAN by all his searching cannot find out God ; but what God has revealed in His word concerning Himself is for our adoring contemplation and study. But we do well to engage in such studies with reverence and godly fear. If there be a right attitude of soul toward God, and due subjection of spirit, our souls will be nourished, and our worship deepened ; but if the mind be allowed to stray in any measure, or if we go in any wise beyond what is written, we are in jeopardy, as many have proved to their sorrow.

Scripture is most plain, whatever unbelief may say, that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, equal in power, majesty, and glory, each taking His own part in all that is done, whether in creation or redemption, yet ever acting in perfect unity and communion.

It is interesting to observe that the Trinity was first clearly revealed at the baptism of the Lord

Jesus. When, coming up from Jordan, after having fulfilled all righteousness the Father opened the heavens to Him, and expressed the delight of His heart in Him, and the Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him (Matt. iii. 16—17). What can be clearer to a simple mind than this? The Father speaks, the Son receives His testimony, and the Holy Spirit descends to seal and anoint Him. Three persons, yet but one God.

It is proposed to deal somewhat,* if the Lord will, with the person and work of the Holy Spirit, particularly with His gracious operations during this period of privilege, while the Lord Jesus is hidden in heaven at God's right hand. The *personality* of the Holy Spirit has been called in question by not a few, some speaking of Him as though He were a mere influence; others alas! sinking in their ideas lower still. Many also who truly love the Lord Jesus, and desire to have right thoughts, are often very vague as to the person and work of the Spirit of God.

On this occasion, I shall do little more than bring together some of the scriptures which distinctly assert His personality and deity. We will let scripture speak for itself to our souls. Could the following be said of ought but a person? "I will send him unto you." "When he is come." (John xvi. 7, 8). "He shall testify of me" (John xv. 26). "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). He is represented too, as striving with man (Gen. vi 3), revealing things to the saints (1 Cor. ii. 10; Luke ii. 26), and He it was Who sent forth Barnabas and Saul from Antioch to evangelise the Gentile world (Acts xiii. 2). Can any of these things be said of a mere influence? Moreover He can be resisted

* In the series of which this paper is the first.

(Acts vii. 51), vexed (Isa. lxiii. 10), grieved (Eph. iv. 30), lied to (Acts v. 3), and, solemn to say, blasphemed (Matt. xii. 31).

Further; scripture declares He has taken a part in the birth, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). The Spirit of God was thus the antitype of the oil which formed one of the ingredients of the meal-offering, as it is said, "mingled with oil" (Lev. ii. 4). As to the cross we read that Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14). Then, after having been "put to death in the flesh," on the third day He was "quickened by the Spirit," "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead" (1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. i. 4). The last passage, I may say in passing, includes doubtless the resurrection of others as well as the Lord Jesus, as Lazarus, etc.

But all these scriptures speak to us of a person, beyond all dispute; and a divine person too, as I shall now proceed to shew. The word of God declares His creatorship, His omnipresence, His sovereignty, and His equality with Father and Son.

(1) His creatorship. He had a part with the Father and the Son in all that was done; else what is the force of the passage, "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens"? (Job xxvi. 13). As to the inferior creation we read, "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created" (Ps. civ. 30). And to go back to the earliest record, the very first mention of divine activity in the six days' work is, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2). What can be plainer?

(2) His omnipresence. David said, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7). He felt that wherever he went, below or above, whether in darkness or light, the Spirit of God knew all his movements, and discerned the thoughts and intents of the heart. And in the present period of grace, does not one Spirit dwell and act in all the saints of God the world over?

(3) His sovereignty. 1 Corinthians xii. speaks of His manifestations in the saints for their mutual profit and the Lord's glory, and there we read, "dividing to every man severally as he will." This is a plain assertion of His sovereign action, and they are the losers who fail to understand and act upon it in faith.

(4) His equality. Though a distinct person, in no sense is the Holy Spirit inferior to the Father and the Son. All are co-equal and co-eternal. In concluding his second epistle to the Corinthians the apostle links the Holy Spirit with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, in his salutation. And the departing Lord, in giving instructions to His disciples, bade them "teach all nations, baptizing them in [unto] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

Are not these divinely formed links? Who would venture to join with the Father and the Son one who was not divine? Faith may therefore rest assured that the Holy Spirit, whereof we speak, is a person, and properly and essentially divine.

W.W.F.

FOOLISH PREACHING.—Those who preach as if they were buffoons or merry-andrews ought to bear in mind that they have no support from 1 Cor. i. 21.

FENNEBORG'S REBUKE.

WHILE Gossner was living with Fenneborg, a poor traveller asked the latter to lend him three dollars to reach home. Fenneborg at the time possessed but three dollars; but as the poor man asked in the name of the Lord Jesus, he lent him all he had, even the last penny.

Some time after, when in extreme want, he recollected this fact while in prayer, and with child-like faith and simplicity he said, "O Lord, I lent Thee three dollars, and Thou hast not given them back to me. Thou knowest how urgently I need them. I pray Thee to return them to me."

A letter arrived that day which Gossner delivered to the old man with these words, "Here, sir, you receive what you advanced." It contained two hundred dollars, sent by a rich man at the solicitation of the poor traveller, to whom he had lent his all.

Fenneborg, quite overcome with surprise, said in his simple way, "O dear Lord, one cannot say a simple word to Thee without being put to shame.

Extracted.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

CHAPTER i. 1—11.

¹THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; **²even** as it is written in **Isaiah the prophet**, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, **who** shall prepare thy way (*before thee*). **³The** voice of one crying in the wilderness, **Make ye ready** the way of the LORD, make his paths straight.

⁴There came John baptizing in the wilderness and **preaching** the baptism of repentance for (*the*)

remission of sins. ⁵And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and **all** they of Jerusalem; and **they** were (*all*) baptized **by** him in the river (*of*) Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶And John was clothed **in** camel's hair, and [**had**] a **leathern** girdle about his loins, and (*he*) did eat locusts and wild honey. ⁷And **he** preached, saying, There cometh **after me he that is mightier than I**, the latchet of whose **sandals** I am not **sufficient** to stoop down and unloose. ⁸I (*indeed*) **baptized** you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

⁹And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized **by** John in **the** Jordan. ¹⁰And **immediately** coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens **rent asunder**, and the Spirit, **as** a dove, descending upon him. ¹¹And **a voice came out of the heavens** (*saying*), Thou art my beloved Son; in **thee** I **found my delight**.*

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS.

Mark's Gospel presents the Lord Jesus in such a way as to make it manifest that He was spoken of in the prophets as Jehovah's Servant (Isa. xlii. 1). Israel had failed in this particular (Isa. xliii. 10; xlv. 1, 21); but with the service of Christ Jehovah was well pleased (Matt. xii. 17—21). Compare Luke i. 54.

The words "immediately," "straightway," and other translations of the same word frequently occur in this Gospel, as might be expected in a chronicle of the activity and diligence of the perfect Servant. It is used some forty-five times, or about

* The above translation is made by W. KELLY from the best critical text. The variations from the Authorised Version are shewn, additions and alterations being in heavy type, and omissions in italics. The Editor is responsible for the Notes and Suggestions that follow. It is hoped they will be of service to those who work among the young.

as often as in the whole of the other books of the N.T.

The one employed by the Holy Spirit to write this Gospel of divine service was John Mark, a servant himself, faint-hearted at first (Acts xiii. 5—13), though afterwards more profitable (2 Tim. iv. 11).

Verse 1.—The beginning, etc. Verses 1 to 8 introduce John the Baptist and his work as being the commencement of the gospel of Jesus Christ. "The law and the prophets were until John" (Luke xvi. 16); but at his coming a new era began to run its course, for John was the immediate forerunner of Christ, as the citations from the O.T. declare.

Verse 1, therefore, does not allude to the beginning of the Gospel according to St. Mark, as Hosea speaks in his prophecy (Hos. i. 2), but it states that the gospel of Jesus Christ began from the date of John's preaching.

Son of God. This Gospel treating of the glory of Jesus Christ as the Servant is not without reference to Him as the Son of God (see chaps. iii. 11; v. 7; xv. 39), even as the Gospel which brings out His glory as the Son of God is not without allusion to His lowly and obedient service (John v. 19—30; viii. 28; ix. 4; x. 18; xii. 49).

Verse 2.—In Isaiah the prophet. This is undoubtedly the true reading and not "in the prophets." The change arose from the apparent difficulty caused by the first part of the quotation being from Malachi iii. 1 and only the second part, "The voice of one, etc.," from Isaiah xl. 3.

But the difficulty is only apparent, as those who have consulted the writings of Jewish Rabbis have found it was not unusual for Jews to quote from the O.T. in this manner. We have another instance in Matthew xxvii. 9; where a prophecy from Zechariah is referred to Jeremiah. These prophets

stood at the beginning of sections of the Hebrew Bible; and therefore were used for the purpose of reference (as in the text) even though the passage quoted was by another writer.

Verses 2 and 3.—In contrast to the abundant references of Matthew, these are the only passages from the O.T. quoted by Mark himself (xv. 28 should be omitted); though there are quotations given in the words of others reported by Mark.

Verse 4.—*In the wilderness.* This was a “bleak mountainous region” lying along the western shores of the Dead Sea. It is significant of the sad departure of the people from God that the preaching of the gospel of Christ began in the deserts and not in Jerusalem, the favoured city.

Verse 5.—Note it is not really said as in the A.V. that they were “all baptized.” The second “all” refers to “they of Jerusalem” who went out to John.

Verse 6.—*Camel's hair.* Not worn to deceive (Zech. xiii. 4), but in character with his solemn mission. Soft raiment was for kings' houses (Matt. xi. 8).

Girdle of a skin. Like Elijah (2 Kings i. 8) in whose spirit and power he came (Luke i. 17).

Honey. Compare Deuteronomy xxxii. 13; 1 Samuel xiv. 25—29; Psalm lxxxi. 16.

Verse 7.—*Unloosing the sandal-latchet.* This was performed by the lower grades of slaves. It was a vigorous figure to express John's sense of his own inferiority compared with Christ. He humbles himself but the Lord exalts him (Matt. xi. 11).

Verse 8.—*Baptize with the Holy Ghost.* This was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts i. 5; ii.). Observe that He Who was to shed forth the Holy Spirit, receives Him at His baptism by John (ver. 10) as the unction (Acts x. 38) and the seal (John vi. 27).

Verse 9.—*Jesus came.* So the Lord is introduced. As in John's Gospel, there is no genealogy or

history of birth, thus in contrast with those of Matthew and Luke. Here we have the Servant of Jehovah; in John, the Son of God.

Verse 10.—He saw. Here Jesus saw, as did John also, and by that appointed sign recognised Him as Son of God (John i. 32, 33). It is unlikely that others saw or heard (John v. 37).

Like a dove. The symbol of meekness and grace. Jehovah had promised to put His Spirit upon His chosen Servant; and He should not strive or cry, nor His voice be heard in the streets (Is. xlii. 1—3). Compare for the believer 2 Timothy ii. 24.

Verse 11.—Voice from heaven. John's was the testifying voice in the wilderness; this was testimony from heaven, even the Father's (John v. 37). Here is the first distinct revelation of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit.

My beloved Son. In grace, the Lord by the act of baptism joins Himself with the company of baptized, who had received the testimony of John and were waiting for His coming. There was no need in His case as with all others; and it is striking that at this moment the Father owns Him as Son.

Found my delight. Jehovah owns Him as His Servant in Whom His soul delighted (Isaiah xlii. 1). Enoch pleased God (Heb. xi. 5); but only in Christ was found His delight.

LIVING ON CHRIST.

NEW power is the portion of the inner man day by day. Oh! so to live on Christ as to prove this; not on abstract doctrines, wonderful and blessed though they be, but on the precious person of Christ in all His inexhaustible sufficiency to make our joy full. "He brings a

poor vile sinner into His house of wine," and His intercession for us is still, as in John xvii., that we may have His joy fulfilled in us. . . .

Hitherto the Lord hath helped me, but oh! the little one can tell of Him Who is God's only begotten and His well beloved. The bride in Canticles, with all her short-comings, puts one to shame in her answer to the question of the daughters of Jerusalem. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" As I read chapter v. 10—16, I feel the power of a word of dear G.V.W., "*I would rather be a poor, dark uneducated one, living on Christ, than have all the blaze of truth without Him.*"

X.

CONCERNING THE COLLECTION.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I hope you do not suppose that the collections do not concern *you*. Those of you who have not yet learned the privilege, not to say obligation, that lies upon you to devote a portion of your substance to the Lord, ought, without any loss of time, to give the subject your careful consideration.

In turning to the word of God for this purpose, you can hardly do better perhaps than refer to Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. Towards the close of that letter the apostle reminded the saints of the collection that had been set on foot among the Gentiles for the benefit of the poor saints in Jerusalem. And in the course of his brief reference to their duty in this respect, he laid down two principles which are as useful for your guidance to-day as they were to the saints he was addressing. Indeed, you will find that this epistle was directed

not only to the saints in Corinth, but also to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2).

The words that the apostle uses are, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). From this passage the least that is clear is that their contributions were to be made (1) *regularly*—upon the first of the week, and (2) *conscientiously*—as they had been prospered.

These two principles—regularity and conscientiousness—are very simple and easy to be understood; but they are not on that account less likely to be overlooked. You will therefore do well to lay it seriously to heart that whatever sum you set aside week by week, whether it be a penny or a pound, it ought to be the outcome (1) of the regular habit you have acquired of so doing, and (2) of a real effort to make that sum a just and generous proportion of your income.

It will be observed that the day named is the first of the week, the Lord's Day. This was the day on which the early disciples assembled to break bread (Acts xx. 7). On that day they were called to remember in an especial manner how the Lord gave Himself up on the cross for them. The day, therefore, was particularly full of hallowed associations and memories of the Lord Jesus, which were calculated to awaken feelings of love and benevolence as nothing else were.

But I do not wish, on this occasion, to dwell so much on the motives that should animate you in giving, as on the necessity for regularity in this practice. The Lord has associated it with the first of the week. There is therefore invariably a weekly call to dedicate a portion of your goods to Him.

It ought not to be necessary that the collection box should be thrust before you to remind you of your duty. The amount of your weekly offering should be ready beforehand; and it would be better for you to omit to take your Bible and hymn-book than to overlook your gift to the Lord.

I fear that the saints often forget that in the collection they are giving *to the Lord*, else the box would not be so easily forgotten. It is true that as a matter of pounds, shillings and pence, it is better to contribute a shilling a week regularly than a half-sovereign three or four times a year promiscuously. But if you think the Lord Himself, and not your fellow-saints, is passing round the basket, you would not be thoughtless and careless in the matter and make no response because you forgot to bring any money.

However, while the occasion of laying by in store comes round regularly once a week, it is not expected that the same fixed sum should always be reserved. The amount is to be regulated by your prosperity. It is well to see that the Lord has not laid down the proportion to be set by. He has not asked you to give half of your goods to the poor as Zacchæus was in the habit of doing, nor a tenth as in the case of Israel. But it appears to me from the word—"every one of you"—that each saint, however poor, *is bound to give something*. How much that is you must each settle for yourselves before the Lord. Only be sure to be before the Lord about it. Say plainly, "Here is my sixpence, Lord; it is all I can spare Thee this week;" and then wait to see if conscience cries, "Shame" at you or no.

Of course it should be borne in mind that if you purpose to give a shilling there is nothing to hinder you increasing your donation to two, if you feel moved to do so. But it is a serious thing to reduce

it without adequate reason. You must remember there is such a thing as robbing God (Mal. iii.), of which you must beware.

I can fancy that some of you may possibly be thinking that because you are not in receipt of a regular income these remarks have no reference to you. But surely you have a few pence weekly which you are free to use at your own discretion. That amount therefore is *yours*, and the Lord should have such a part as you are ready to yield Him. Whatever the amount of your contribution, let it be *your own*; young people sometimes make a *point* of asking their elders to give them something for the collection.

A servant of Christ relates a circumstance which illustrates how true faith and love acceptably serve the Lord in a humble way, and it may perhaps set some of you thinking. A woman who was known to be very poor came to a missionary meeting and offered to subscribe a penny a week. "Surely," said one, "you are too poor to afford this." She replied, "I spin so many hanks of yarn a week for my living, and I'll *spin one hank more*, and that will be a penny a week for the missionaries."

Self-denial for the sake of Christ is of great value in His eyes. And it is a small thing to give Him only what you do not miss, or what cost you little. It was not said of a *true* Christian, that he was "ready to act the good Samaritan, without the oil and the two pence."

Before closing, I would like to add that there are other calls upon the pocket besides on the first of the week. There should therefore be, as our verse implies, a store for special need. It must not be supposed that when you have placed your coin in the collection box, you are to resist every further demand. Your heart and your purse should ever be open for the help of the needy. Of course, I

mean as far as you are able. I am sure many of you are far from being backward in this grace; but we ought to remember that

“We all can do better than yet we have done,
And not be a whit the worse;
It never was loving that emptied the heart,
Nor giving that emptied the purse.”

I am,

Yours faithfully,

“YOD.”



CORRESPONDENCE.

A. B.—Is one sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment he believes, or is there an interval?

Sealing is the act of marking off, or distinguishing by some sign. Thus Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised” (Rom. iv. 11). So 144,000 Israelites are to be sealed in the forehead (Rev. vii.), and by that sign they will be separated off from the remainder of the twelve tribes. It is also written of the Son of man that He was sealed by God the Father (John vi. 27). Now the seal bestowed upon the believer in Christ is the Holy Ghost Who is also the unction as well as the earnest of the inheritance to come (2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Eph. i. 13, 14; 1 John ii. 20, 27). The indwelling Spirit is the token or mark which God sets upon the saints to indicate they belong to Him. From Ephesians i. 13, 14, it is clear enough that the act of sealing follows hearing and believing the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. “In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13). When Aaron’s sons were consecrated to the office of the priesthood, they were first sprinkled with blood and then anointed with oil, typical of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Lev. viii. 24, 30). It is important not to confuse the *work* of the Holy Ghost in the new birth (John iii. 5) with the *gift* of the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 44—47; xi. 14—17), which is a subsequent act. The apostle writes, “*Because* ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 4). As to an interval, it would depend on the nature of the case. There would

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appear to have been such with Saul of Tarsus. From the dust to which he was smitten he owned Jesus as Lord (Acts ix. 5, 6); but there was an interval of three days, in which the penitent man neither ate nor drank. Then through the words of Ananias, the scales fell from his blinded eyes, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts ix. 17). **Is not a believer a Christian the moment he believes on Christ?** The name "Christian" occurs only three times in the New Testament (Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16), and was first used by the Gentiles at Antioch as a nickname for the disciples. Now it is used of any person professing faith in Christ. Perhaps we do not understand the point of A. B.'s question.

D.R.—Who is the true yokefellow (Phil. iv. 3)? The reference is generally supposed to be to Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25; iv. 18) who was the bearer of this epistle from Rome to Philippi; but it is not clear who is meant. **What is meant by "their worm" (Mark ix. 48)?** It is a figurative reference to the undying anguish of spirit that the lost must endure eternally. We do not see any difficulty in the use of "their" instead of "thy" or "your." The Lord was warning those who were alive against the terrors awaiting the unrepentant beyond the grave. "Their worm" seems to point to the particular compunction of each, as "the fire" to the general punishment which is the doom of all. **When did Christ enter the holy place by His own blood (Heb. ix. 12)?** At His ascension. It being expressly stated that He entered "*once*" (Heb. ix. 12) into the holy place precludes the vain notion that it was in the disembodied state, or during the forty days.

M.G.—Does "all Israel" mean the Jews (Rom. xi. 26)? "Israel" refers to the whole twelve tribes, while the Jews are those of the kingdom of Judah, especially the "generation" that rejected Christ (Matt. xxiv. 34).

M.E.—Ascending into heaven (John iii. 13; 2 Kings ii. 11; Acts ii. 34). The context must be considered. In John iii. the Lord speaks of Himself as a witness. He testified what He had seen—as truly of heavenly things as of earthly things. But no one had ascended to heaven to behold these things of which He would speak, and to declare them on earth,—not even Elijah (2 Kings ii. 11), much less David (Acts ii. 34). **Was the faith of Old Testament saints the gift of God (Eph. ii. 8)?** We know of no reason for thinking it was not.

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**THE POWERLESS CRIPPLE AND
THE PENNILESS APOSTLES.**

SEVEN weeks is a considerable time during which to retain a vivid remembrance of what one has an earnest desire to forget. And it is more than probable that when the eve of Pentecost came the crucifixion of Jesus which took place on the eve of the Passover had altogether faded from the memories of the people of Jerusalem.

The gossips had busied themselves for a while with the reported disappearance of the body of Jesus from the sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 11—15). But nothing seemed to come of it, and it was easy to find more exciting themes.

During seven whole weeks there had been no miracle; while, for three years or so previously, nearly every day associated the name of Jesus with some mighty wonder. Now week after week went by, but no impotent man was healed at the pool of Bethesda; no blind man received his sight at the pool of Siloam; no voice speaking as man never spake was teaching in the temple-courts, or sternly rebuking the sacrilegious merchants who obtruded themselves and their traffic into the Father's house itself.

As soon therefore as the first apprehensions had worn off, the guilty people began to assure themselves that all was well. At the close of seven weeks Golgotha was forgotten; Jesus was gone; His disciples were scattered and had disappeared too, as far as they knew or cared; and Jerusalem prepared itself to keep the feast of Pentecost with its usual religious punctiliousness.

But at daybreak as the disciples were together in an upper room praying, the Holy Ghost descended and anointed them with power, according to the promise of the Lord (Acts ii.). They at once began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The streets of Jerusalem, which were now rapidly filling with throngs of worshippers, going up to the temple for morning sacrifice, echoed and re-echoed with the name of the crucified Nazarene.

How the multitude started at the sound of that Name! Most of them had hoped that it had been buried for ever in Joseph of Arimathea's grave. Now they were amazed and confounded at its reappearance. They were tormented with doubts and fears. They gazed upon one another in the blankest astonishment. What did it mean?

But the witnesses of Christ did not cease to declare that Name. It rang out on the morning air in every language under heaven; so that every man heard in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. Nor was this testimony without effect. By the energetic words of Peter three thousand souls were brought to repentance and to believe in the glorified Christ.

But yet further testimony was to be rendered to the name of Jesus in that reprobate city. Following the mighty effects of the word preached, as related in Acts ii., came the healing of the cripple (Acts iii.), as a confirmatory sign to the apostolic witness to

the risen Lord Jesus (Mark xvi. 20; Heb. ii. 4).

The Lord similarly gave testimony in a twofold form. He Himself referred both to the words He spoke and to the works He performed (John xiv. 10, 11). The Jews rejected both the one and the other (John viii. 45—47; ix. 34). So was it here. As they would not hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the words of the apostles, neither did they heed the miracles and signs wrought before their eyes in the name of Jesus.

The miracle recorded in Acts iii. was a noteworthy instance of the exercise of the power bestowed upon the apostles. As the first voucher given to accredit the words of the Lord's servants, it is marked by exceptional publicity.

Peter and John were going up to the temple about the ninth hour, which was the time of public evening prayers. At one of the temple gates, distinguished from the others as the "Beautiful" gate, a beggar, lame from birth, was laid to solicit alms from the passers-by. The situation was no doubt a favourable one for that purpose. Here many a Pharisee with broad phylacteries and long-fringed garments, after duly informing the adjacent neighbourhood by sound of trumpet of his pious intentions (Matt. vi. 2), would ostentatiously bestow upon the lame man a small portion of the money he had wrung with many a blood-thirsty threat from some poor defenceless widow (Matt. xxiii. 14).

The cripple did not omit to beseech Peter and John for alms—not that he expected any more from them than from others. He was not unaccustomed for people to pass by "on the other side" in supercilious contempt; indeed it was no infrequent occurrence for some good men to be so absorbed in devout meditation as to go by without so much as observing him.

The words of Peter, who stood still, with John,

and fastened his eyes upon the poor fellow—"Look on us"—roused in the cripple an eager expectation of receiving some charitable dole. The apostles, however, were poor men. As the disciples of Christ they were even as their Master. It was not for the benefit of the twelve that rich brethren had recently disposed of their goods and shared them among the needy (Acts ii. 45).

But though the apostles lacked money, they did not lack power. It may be that in most things among men, money is power, but it is undeniable that there are matters beyond the power of money to effect. And while money might relieve the cripple's want for a season, all the riches of Solomon could not strengthen his powerless limbs.

"Silver and gold have I none," said Peter, dashing the hopes of the lame man to the ground at a blow. "But," he goes on to say, "such as I have, give I thee." He had the gift of God which could not be purchased with money. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

Seizing the cripple's right hand, the muscular fisherman lifted him up. At the same moment new power entered his feet and ankle bones, so that he leaped up like a hart (Isa. xxxv. 6). He stood upright, and then kept walking about, going on with the apostles into the temple courts with strength in his limbs, and joy in his heart.

The courts of the temple were filled with worshippers, and the news of the strange event spread rapidly. The man was well-known to them all. He was above forty years old (Acts iv. 22), and had been lame from birth. He had long sat at the "Beautiful" gate of the temple begging. Now he was to be seen mingling with the crowds, as sprightly as any, and more so than most.

The people were confronted with an undeniable proof, that a mighty work had just been accom-

plished. They were filled with wonder and amazement. But when they ran together in Solomon's porch, Peter pressed upon them what a forcible testimony this miracle which was performed in the name, rendered to Jesus of Nazareth, Whom they had both denied and killed.

The effect upon the auditors however was small. For the veil was, and is, upon Israel's heart. And not till it is taken away will they turn to the Lord.

THE ONE DESIRE.

“**O**NE 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” (Ps. xxvii. 4). Here is a soul happy in the presence of God and in the enjoyment of grace. It can be happy nowhere else. The one desire and object of life is to be where God is. His presence is attractive; for there are to be found all the elements of safety, protection, and blessing.

Man departed from God in self-will and seeks happiness outside of His presence; but grace restores the soul to the knowledge and enjoyment of God. The barriers which our lost and ruined state presented have been removed by the sacrifice of Christ. And now the desires and sentiments of the delivered soul find their fit and suitable expression in the presence of God. For I know that *He at least understands* me and will receive the praise and worship which His own love awakens in my heart toward Himself.

It is interesting, too, to observe the fruits of life and grace in all ages. David, dancing before the ark of the Lord with all his might, clothed with a linen ephod (2 Sam. vi. 14), is indeed a different

figure from Paul bowed in worship before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. i. 3). Both however have their origin in the grace of God and correspond exactly to the revelation made in each case. Both are before God, but each in the manner suitable to the place assigned to him.

G.S.B.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTERS iii. 21—v. 11.

FROM verse 21 God's mouth is open to declare His grace, and how it can be righteously, now that every mouth of man is stopped. It is God's righteousness manifested apart from law, witnessed by the law and the prophets; God's righteousness by faith in (lit. of) Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all that believe: its universal direction, and its actual effect (confounded in the R. V., because of trusting the blunder of some old MSS., but right in the A. V.). For there is no distinction. All in fact sinned, and come short of the glory of God; for this becomes the standard, when Adam's paradise was lost. Hence there is "no way" but being justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth a propitiatory through faith in His blood, for shewing His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins that were foregone in the forbearance of God; for shewing His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just and justify him that is of faith in (lit. of) Jesus. What can be plainer or more precise? Behold, boasting excluded. If law can be said, it is faith-law, apart

from works of law ; and God is of Gentiles as well as of Jews—one God justifying Jews only on faith, and Gentiles through faith if they have it (and hence only in this case the article is used). Thus is law established, not annulled, through the faith of Jesus Who paid the penalty to the utmost.

Did the Jew plead the case of Abraham for favour to his seed? The apostle answers in chapter iv. 1—5 that he *believed* God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. David's case (6—8) equally and quite as evidently proves that all depends on God's grace through faith. For how else is a transgressor to have blessedness?

Again, circumcision contributed nothing, for Abraham was reckoned righteous by faith when uncircumcised (9—12). Faith secures the promised heirship of the world in the face of all natural disabilities ; not law, which works wrath through man's transgression (13—19). Faith on the contrary gives God glory, and reaps its fruit (20—22). And the Christian has more even than Abraham, fully persuaded as he was that what God had promised He was able also to do ; whereas we believe on Him Who actually raised from among the dead Jesus our Lord Who was given up for our offences and was raised for our justification (23—25). Thus as the latter part of chapter iii. brought in propitiation through Christ's blood, chapter iv. adds the intervention of God in justifying us by His raising Him from the dead.

Chapter v. 1—11 draws the blessed consequences : peace with God in view of the past, His grace for the present, and His glory in the future. Not only do we boast thus, but also in tribulations, as the allotted experience of Christians now, knowing the invaluable result to which God turns them, in breaking the will and severing from the world and lifting above things seen, so that

faith, love, and hope are all strengthened by better learning God's love.

Not only are we so, but "boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom now we received the reconciliation." Beyond this "boasting in God," it is impossible to rise. One may learn the glories of Christ in God's purpose and our own union with Him in them; but to boast in God Himself is of unequalled depth and joy, and we are called to it now.

W.K.

HOLD THOU MY HAND.

Blest Lord of love ! Through all my earth-bound days,
 Hold Thou my hand !
 In wilful moods, in thoughtless moments too,
 Hold Thou my hand !
 Thy mighty hand enfolds the heavens, the earth, the sea;
 In mightier grace Thy hand was pierced for me.

When trials crowd to press my spirit down,
 Hold Thou my hand !
 When hellish hosts my onward way oppose,
 Hold Thou my hand !
 No foe I fear, nor sorrows keen and deep,
 If Thou art near, my trembling soul to keep.

When days be bright, and sunshine cheers me on,
 Hold Thou my hand !
 Though warfare cease, and Satan seem to sleep,
 Still hold my hand !
 My treacherous heart would lead me far from Thee,
 Forgetful soon of all Thy love to me.

Blest Lord of grace ! So patient, gentle, Thou !
 Hold Thou my hand !
 So changeful I ! So apt from Thee to turn !
 Hold fast my hand !
 Let Thy strong arm still hold me evermore,
 Till home at last, my pilgrim journey o'er.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WE have seen that the Spirit of God is a Person, and that He is divine in the fullest sense of the term ; we will now look at His gracious operations with regard to the scriptures. It is an unspeakable mercy, in such a scene as this, with the Babel of human opinions on every hand, that our God has given us a perfect revelation of His mind and will in His own precious word. Where else could we turn for divine certainty? Where besides is there a solid rock for our feet? And whither, if not to scripture, could we turn for a sure and settled resting place? Possessing the word of God we are thoroughly furnished ; we have food for our souls, and light for our path.

Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit. He it was Who guided each writer, whether in the Old Testament or the New, filling and taking possession of the vessel, holding in check all that would be of man, that we might have the mind of God in its perfection and purity, without adulteration or alloy. Let us hold this firmly. Lack of decision is serious in such a matter. This is a day of loose thoughts as to Inspiration. Never was Satan more determined to wrest the scriptures from souls than at the present time. Ritualism on the one hand places a priest between the word of God and the soul ; Rationalism on the other, throws doubt on all that is revealed. Both systems, though in different ways, would rob us of the priceless treasure God has given.

I Corinthians ii. 10—14 furnishes valuable instruction concerning the connected subjects of Revelation and Inspiration. The apostle reminds

us of the word of Isaiah that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" adding, "but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Here he asserts Divine revelation as the source of the vital truths he taught. The apostle was the administrator of blessings not made known by God until his day. Such a truth as the union of the saints with the glorified Head in one body were hid in God until the Lord Jesus went on high, and the Holy Ghost came down. Paul was the honoured vessel—he had "visions and revelations of the Lord." It was his to fill up the word of God, *i.e.*, to complete the subjects of which it treats (Col. i. 25, 26). Now no one can reveal the things of God but the Spirit of God. The apostle asks, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God." As no one knows my things (thoughts) but my own spirit, until I utter them or reveal them, so no one knows God's things but God's Spirit. Nothing can be more degrading than the notion that God *cannot* reveal His mind to man. This is to lower God painfully. If the creature can communicate his thoughts to another, is it to be supposed that the Creator cannot do so? Some men speak much of reason in connection with the word of God, but where is their reason to suppose such a thing of our God? The truth is that the Spirit *has revealed* the mind of God, and we have it in the scriptures. Thus the apostolic writings are the standard whereby truth and error may be tested. As John says, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 6).

But, as is often remarked, revelation does not

go beyond the person receiving it; to pass the truth on, in its perfection, to others, requires divine inspiration. Such is man, that even the favoured recipients of divine revelations could not be trusted to communicate them to others without marring them. Here, therefore, the Spirit of God comes in again. Hence Paul tells us, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means" (1 Cor. ii. 13. Compare J. N. Darby's translation.) This is inspiration. Here, too, we may see how far inspiration extends; concerning which many have vague thoughts. Some have taught that the doctrines of scripture are inspired of God, but that the writers were allowed to express them in their own language; others, as Burnet, that the reasoning so often found, particularly in the epistles, was left to the writer; and yet others, as Paley, think them to have used their own illustrations, and to have selected O.T. scriptures to confirm their words.

All such thoughts are below the truth, and scripture is injured thus by those who sincerely desire to be its friends. The fact is, nothing was left to the vessel—*the words*, not merely the truths or doctrines, were given by the Holy Ghost. Were it otherwise, we could have no divine certainty. Where should we draw the line between the human and divine? And is it likely that all would agree as to the line to be drawn? Not that a human element is altogether denied. Paul has his style, and Peter his; for the Spirit took up the men as He found them; nevertheless, every word thus written was from Himself.

No one would be so foolish as to contend for the inspiration of a translation, unless it were the Trent fathers. In such efforts there may be, (and are) blemishes, for God does not work perpetual

miracles ; and here the study of languages comes in as an important and valuable work. All that is asserted is, that the original writings, as sent forth by Matthew, etc., were inspired every word by the Spirit of God.

Just a few scripture proofs. As to the *Old Testament*, Peter says, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Also, he tells us that the Spirit of Christ was in them, testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow (2 Pet. i. 21 ; 1 Pet. i. 11). Joel is quoted in Acts ii. 17, as follows, "And it shall come to pass in that day, *saith God.*" In Acts iii. 18, we are told that *God shewed* by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer. As to the *Psalms*, we find, "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said." (Acts iv. 25). And the Psalmist said of himself, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). The Books of Moses are declared to be divinely inspired in such passages as Matthew xv. 4, "For God commanded, saying, etc."

The *New Testament*, as well as the Old, is vouched for in the general statement of 2 Timothy iii. 16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." The word "scripture" I admit, merely means "writing," but it is the technical term for the sacred books, and understood as such. We are quite understood when we say "the Bible," which, after all, simply means "the Book." Consequently whatever comes under the heading of "scripture" is inspired of God. Thus Paul's writings are vouched for, including, and I suppose specially referring to, the epistle to the Hebrews, in 2 Peter iii. 16. Paul calls his epistles "scripture" himself in Romans xvi. 25, 26, where read "by prophetic

scriptures," not "by the scriptures of the prophets." And in 1 Timothy v. 18, he quotes from Luke x., and says, "The scripture saith."

The book of Revelation is a singular one among the New Testament writings, but its character is clearly indicated in chapter i. 2: John "bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ—all things that he saw." Omitting the "and" before "all things," we learn that the visions vouchsafed to John were the word of God, etc. Let none therefore despise the book, because of its symbolism.

These are but a small part of the proofs. Let the diligent soul search it out, and the more deeply the subject is investigated, the deeper will be the soul's confidence in God that He has given us by His blessed Spirit His unerring word in all its fullness and beauty.

In conclusion, one more thought remains to be noted in 1 Corinthians ii. We have seen that the chapter asserts revelation and inspiration; it also lays down that the help of the Holy Ghost is needful in order to receive and understand the things that have been given. Man's wit fails here. His learning is at fault, his powers are unavailing, apart from the Holy Ghost. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The soul must be born of God, and the Spirit must be the teacher; then all is simple and plain. He has come down from above to guide the saints into all the truth, and He never disappoints or fails the humble waiting soul.

W.W.F.

WE cannot expect two summers in one year, nor heaven now and by-and-by as well.

OLD BETTY'S OBEDIENCE.

OLD Betty was converted late in life, and though very poor, was very active. She visited the sick; out of her own poverty she gave to those who were still poorer; she collected a little money from others when she could give none of her own, and told many a one of the love of the Saviour.

At last she caught cold and rheumatism, and lay in bed month after month, pain-worn and helpless.

A servant of the Lord went to see her, and asked, if after her active habits she did not find the change very hard to bear. "No sir, not at all. When I was well, I used to hear the Lord say day by day, 'Betty, go here; Betty, go there; Betty, do this; Betty, do that'; and I used to do it as well as I could. Now I hear Him say every day, 'Betty, lie still and cough.'"

Extracted.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

CHAPTER i. 12—20.

¹² **A**ND immediately the Spirit driveth him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was (*there*) in the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him.

¹⁴ And after (*that*) John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of (*the kingdom of*) God, ¹⁵ and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is drawn nigh: repent (*ye*) and believe in the gospel. ¹⁶ Now passing by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting round a

net in the sea ; for they were fishers. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, Come (*ye*) after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. ¹⁸ And **immediately** they left the trawl-nets, and followed him. ¹⁹ And **having** gone (*thence*?) a little farther, he saw James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, **themselves** too in the boat mending the trawl-nets. ²⁰ And **immediately** he called them ; and **having** left their father. Zebedee in the boat with the hirelings, they went **away** after him.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS.

Verse 12.—Driven into the wilderness. Contrast Genesis iii. 23. Jehovah's Servant was driven into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, but to overcome. Adam was driven from the paradise of God into a world of thorns and thistles, because he had been tempted, but was overcome.

Verse 13.—Tempted in the wilderness. When tempted, the first man failed, but the Second prevailed. Adam's temptation was in the garden of Eden, Christ's in the desert. Adam was surrounded by God's gifts in their pristine beauty and profusion, Christ by the woeful results of sin.

Wild. Beasts were not wild in Eden (Gen. ii. 20).

Angels ministered. This was especially at the close of the period of temptation (Matt. iv. 11). Satan based one of his attacks upon the ministry of the angels (Matt. iv. 6 ; Ps. xci. 11). The Lord by means of the word of truth unveiled the tempter's snare. It is good to remember that error lies in the *misuse* of truth.

Verse 14.—Imprisonment of John. This marks the beginning of the Lord's public ministry (Matt. iv. 12). As soon as the Messiah presented Himself, the work of His forerunner is concluded of necessity. Luke iv. 14—31 shews how the Lord introduced Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth. The events

in the early chapters of John were previous (John iii. 24).

Delivered up. This perhaps implies that John was betrayed, the enmity of Herodias making it more probable (Mark vi. 19).

Preaching. John preached what was coming (verse 7); Jesus what was come—"The time is fulfilled" (verse 15).

Verse 15.—Repent. The guilty nation needed repentance and faith; law and law-works could not avail them. By repentance they were to confess their sins; by faith to receive Jesus as the One promised in the scripture.

Verse 16.—Simon and Andrew. The Great Servant here associates others with Himself as servants. This call to service was subsequent to the interviews in John i. 37—42. Andrew was the first to go to the Lord, and he brought his brother Simon who afterwards became so distinguished in the apostolic band.

Verse 17.—Come. This was a call to be His followers. They had already responded to the first invitation (John i. 40—43).

The Lord called men, saying, Come

1. unto Me (Matt. xi. 28),
2. after Me (Mark i. 17),
3. apart (Mark vi. 31),
4. and dine (John xxi. 12).

There was (1) faith; (2) discipleship; (3) communion; and (4) enjoyment of His bounty.

Fishers of men. What a catch on the day of Pentecost!

Verse 18.—Forsook their nets. It always costs something to follow Christ. It is one thing to believe on Him; but it is more difficult to take up the cross and go after Him. Simon and Andrew left all to become His disciples (Mark x. 28). It

proved how they loved Him. Yet what a lamentable contrast, when these very men who at the beginning of His ministry forsook all for Christ, at the close of it, all forsook Him and fled (Mark xiv. 50).

Immediately. They were prompt to obey; this is always the sign of a good servant. Luke v. 1—11 gives the moral preparation of Peter's heart for this step.

Verse 19.—Mending their nets. They were broken by the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke v. 6).

Themselves too. James and John were partners with Simon and Andrew (Luke v. 10).

LETTER ON BAPTISM.

THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

To the Editor of the "Believer's Monthly Magazine."

DEAR BROTHER,—I am told on good authority that some, in baptising confessors of the Lord Jesus, withhold the revealed Name of the Trinity. Since the Lord enjoined it at the close of Matthew xxviii., when He charged His servants to disciple all the nations, it is a daring licence to set aside His unmistakeable will and authority.

No doubt these Christians, who take upon them to ignore the given formula and to substitute what they have culled erroneously from the Acts of the Apostles, imagine themselves warranted by scripture and of course wiser than their brethren. I understand they are under the idea that Matthew xxviii. 19 contemplates only the future Jewish remnant and their action among the Gentiles before the age terminates; and that in the Acts of the Apostles

we have this commission virtually abrogated for us as well as the connected formula for baptism.

But it is certain that our Lord in His charge spoke after His death and resurrection, and that what He here laid down is distinctively Christian. His aim is as precise as in chapter xvi. 18, to indicate what was to take the place of the Jewish system, now guilty of His rejection and cross. As He was going to build His assembly "upon the rock" (His own revealed name, the Son of the living God), so He directs His servants to baptise the disciples of all the nations unto the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is unequivocally Christian baptism for the individual, as His assembly shews the church or joint relationship. Nor should there be a question that so acted the apostles and other servants of the Lord; for on them lay the responsibility to obey the Lord's commission. *They* were to see it carried out.

It in no way fell within the design of the Book of the Acts to repeat the formula, though we have every reason to be assured that the Lord's will was done, not only among the nations but with Jewish disciples. That Book constantly sets before us the Lordship of Him Who had been crucified of men. And the words employed on each or any occasion of baptising it never professes to give, as it is strange for believers to expect. It incidentally or historically mentions baptism (of course, with water) *in* or *on* (*epi*) the name of Jesus Christ (ii. 38), unto (*eis*) the name of the Lord Jesus (viii. 16; xix. 5), *in* (*en*) the name of the Lord (J.C.) (x. 48). Probably they may have also expressed the authority of the Lord's name for their own act of baptising or of the confession of those baptised; but to infer that they did not baptise them to the holy name of the Trinity is not only unintelligent and egregious

but irreverent. I am so satisfied that a baptism which omits the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is null and void, that I think such persons ought to be baptised duly according to the word of the Lord. The previous act was a wrong to Him, though ignorantly done in His honour, and moreover slights the Christian acknowledgment of the Trinity from the very start.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

W. KELLY.

FRAGMENTS.

REVELATION xxi. 9.—How singular and how frequent is the blending of the awful and the attractive in the Bible! It was “one of the angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues,” that invited St. John to view the Golden City.

ACTS ix. 11.—“For behold he prayeth.” This was the test, the emphatic sign that Saul of Tarsus was “of a contrite heart.” If prayer be not right, nothing is right. No appreciation of the sublimities of scripture, no apprehension of its depths, no acquaintance with its letter, can take the place of the spirit of prayer. But what a glorious superstructure can be reared on that foundation!

COLOSSIANS ii. 7.—“Rooted,” “built up,” “established.” There is a difference in the force of these expressions which it is difficult to give in English without a circumlocution. Rooted, like grounded in chapter i. 23, implies a fixed state, true of all who are “in Christ,” but the words respectively translated “built up,” and “established,” imply a continuous growth. In short all who are truly born

of God are rooted, and grounded, but all are not equally built up, and established. It is only one instance among a thousand of the wonderful niceness and richness of Greek.

R. B. JR.

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.

DEAR MR. YOD,—Just a line to ask you please to put in something especially for me when you write to your young friends in the *Believer's Monthly Magazine*.

I am in a bit of a fix about a young fellow in the office. He has got his knife into me because I have lately become a Christian. We used to be very chummy, but ever since he found out that I had changed he does all he can to annoy me.

The other day when he was calling over figures to one of the other clerks, he suddenly shouted out, "Hymn Number 54. Will brother Joseph (meaning me) kindly raise the tune." Of course, everybody roared with laughter—except me. I fear I looked very cross; I know I felt very warm. And when my tormentor saw I was vexed, he said something in a sneering way about "Gentle Joseph, meek and mild." This made me feel worse than ever, and I was very near letting him have it hot. In fact I told him so, but it only made him and his friends laugh the more loudly.

It was very wrong of me to feel so, Mr. Yod, wasn't it? I wish you would tell me what to do in such cases, because I am always having these things to endure. I expect you will say I ought to love him. Well, I believe I do love the dear young man in the bottom of my heart. But who could be very gracious to a fellow that is always getting at you like he does?

I have tried to feel it is a good thing for me to be a little persecuted, but it is no use.

I hope you can spare room in your next for this subject, and you shall have my best thanks.

Yours truly, "WORRIED."

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I think I am safe in supposing that the practical difficulty mentioned in the above letter is one not altogether unknown to you. I imagine that the circumstances that "Worried" pictures so vividly, in language not the most elegant, are the same (though perhaps experienced in another form) as you all have passed through at one time or another.

The scripture (and it is only one out of many others) that appears particularly suitable to his case is the exhortation, "Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21). This means that no Christian ought to be beaten, as our young friend confesses he was. Evil must not be allowed to triumph over grace in the manner he describes. We are called to overcome it, not with evil however, but with good.

If ever a man was set upon through no fault of his own and chased from one place to another, David, the son of Jesse, was. He was hunted, as he himself said, like a partridge on the mountains, by those who sought his life. For six years or more he was the object of the unremitting hatred and persecution of Saul. But at length there came a day when David's enemy unwittingly placed himself in his power.

While David was secreted in one of the wild fastnesses of the wilderness of En-gedi, Saul entered the very cave where the outcast and his companions were, to cover his feet. Here was an opportunity. One swift stroke, and the bitter foe

of David would rise from his slumber no more.

But no, the magnanimous Bethlehemite contented himself with cutting off the skirt of Saul's outer garment, and that not without regrets. When the sleeper rose and left the cave, ignorant of what had happened, the object of his animosity followed and called after him. The king turned, and David, prostrate at his feet, appealed to him with all reverence and affection. The strip of the royal robe he exhibited to prove he was not seeking the king's hurt, seeing he refrained from retaliation when it was in his power to do so.

The jealous monarch was moved to tears, and the old love for David re-asserted itself. The son of Jesse had gained the victory, and he had done so without blows or blood (1 Sam. xxiv.).

But while the conduct of David was beautiful and well worthy of our imitation, we are called even to higher things in the New Testament. David, in the instance mentioned, only forbore to do evil in return for evil. But the Lord bids us do more. He said, "Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you" (Matt. v. 44). We are to act with positive kindness to our enemies and to beseech God's blessing upon them.

In this, Christ has left us an example that we should follow His steps, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter ii. 23). As followers of Christ we are to expect that the world will be against us. But what an unspeakable privilege to be permitted to suffer for Christ's sake. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." "If

any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed" (1 Peter iv. 14, 16).

What a difference it makes when we look at such things as we are now speaking of as coming upon us because we are Christ's. "Worried" is concerned about himself and not about his Master. Let him bring Christ in. Let him say, "What would the Lord Jesus do in my place? What an honour to be here to represent Him!"

Depend upon it we shall never be able to endure a little suffering with patience unless we view it as our portion because we belong to Christ. Then we shall be patient. Then we shall have a little of the spirit of dying Stephen who prayed for his murderers. Then we shall overcome evil.

For when evil brings out evil *we* are overcome; but when evil only furnishes us with an occasion for the display of good, evil is overcome.

Our counsel therefore to our troubled friend is to study the example of Christ that he may learn (1) to be patient in suffering reproach, (2) to shew kindness to his tormentor, and thus prove he bears him no malice, but love. And if he finds it difficult to do this, let him pray for this person that seeks to annoy him. All feelings of resentment vanish at the throne of grace.

Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

Anxious Parent.—What will become of the little children of godly saints (those who have not reached a responsible age) when the Lord comes? Will they remain to pass through the great tribulation? They will no doubt be caught up on the ground that they are Christ's. If those who die in infancy are to be raised at His coming (1 Cor. xv. 23), would

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not those who are alive be changed for the same reason? **Will infants who die in the present dispensation of grace, and for whom Christ died (Matt. xviii. 11), form part of the Bride of Christ? Are not those who form the Bride said to be now baptized by one Spirit into one Body? Can this apply to infants?** We see no reason for thinking it could *not* apply to irresponsible infants who die; but help from any correspondent will be welcome. It must not be forgotten that the salvation of infants rests upon the fact that Christ came not only to save sinners (guilty ones) but "that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10); and this covers the *state* of all out of Christ.

F.B.—Will any be saved after the Lord comes? After the Lord comes for the church the gospel of the grace of God will no longer be proclaimed, but the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world (Matt. xxiv. 14). He that endureth the terrible trials of that time will be saved (Matt. xxiv. 13). The "sheep" of Matthew xxv. will of course be saved. But there are solemn warnings to those who neglect the present opportunities of grace (2 Thess. ii. 9—12).

W.C.—What is meant by "let us go on to perfection" (Heb. vi. 1)? Perfection here refers to a full-grown state in the knowledge of the truth, with especial reference to the present results to the believer of the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ. In the closing verses of chapter v. there is a contrast drawn between spiritual infancy and manhood. These were those who had not (though they ought to have done so) advanced beyond the first principles of the oracles of God, that is, the teaching given under the law. These babes still required milk and were unable to bear strong meat, that is, the characteristic doctrines of Christianity. The apostle therefore exhorts them to make progress towards full-growth. They were to leave the word of the beginning of Christ (Mark i. 1). It was not now so much the gospel of the kingdom, that is, Christ as the Messiah to reign on the earth. They had much to learn as to the privileges they then possessed, granted to them in consequence of the glorious Person and the gracious work of the Lord Jesus. This he proceeds to unfold in the succeeding chapters of the epistle. This "perfection," therefore, has no reference whatever to a condition of sinlessness. It is the state of Christian maturity produced by the reception of the word of God. Scripture makes the man of God perfect (2 Tim. iii. 16). See B.M.M., vol. i., p. 158; and observe "full age" (Heb. v. 14) and "perfection" (Heb. vi. 1) refer to the same state.

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THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE.

IT was said in times gone by, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1). This is as true now as ever. A man is here to-day and gone to-morrow. "All flesh is as grass," "which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven" (Matt. vi. 30; 1 Pet. i. 24). This fact is tolerably familiar; and the solemnity of it is the more likely to be underestimated than to be over-estimated.

But the period set before the Christian as that in which the greatest of all changes will be effected is when compared with a day what a day is when compared with an age. The apostle Paul wrote, in words which the Holy Spirit taught him, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

The space of time indicated by the expressions, "a moment," "the twinkling of an eye," is the briefest conceivable by the human mind. But it suffices for the transmutation of the bodies of all living believers from a corruptible to an incorruptible, a mortal to an immortal state. And the time, brief as it is, is ample for the Lord to

accomplish this stupendous change. For when He speaks it is done. And we gather from other scriptures that this great event takes place at the coming of the Lord, and that, in consequence of the shout of the Lord when He Himself descends from heaven, those who are then alive are caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 15—17).

But it is certain if we are to meet the Lord in the air our bodies must be changed before that possibly can be. And the word of God teaches expressly that they will be. We are duly authorised to "wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. iii. 20, 21, R.V.).

Here then, beloved of God, is our hope. We know not what a *moment* may bring forth. In the twinkling of an eye we are to be transported to our trysting-place above. Death is not our hope. The coming Christ is our hope. The grave is not our goal. We look to go up to Him, not down to the tomb. And oh! the blessedness of knowing it will be all in a moment. Just a step out of darkness into light, out of the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God!

Death comes suddenly to but a very few. And before the believer is put to sleep by Jesus he commonly has to endure many an hour of bodily pain which the superior joys of the spirit cannot render him altogether oblivious to. Most of those who depart to be with Christ are encompassed in their latter days with the trials of a sick-chamber. But when the Lord comes we shall be spared such trials. The cords of the "earthly house of this tabernacle" will not then be unloosed. We shall be, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1, 2).

Think, too, of the significant words, "We shall *all* be changed." Simultaneously, the wide world over, the saints of God shall know the transforming power of the shout of the Lord. It will not be then, as now—the parents this year and the children next, the sister this week and the brother next, the husband yesterday and the wife to-day. There will be no saints of God left to gaze with wounded hearts upon the lifeless dust of those who have departed to be with Christ. But husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, friends and neighbours, teachers and taught, *together* shall rise in glad obedience to the summons from on high. Upward they will be borne into the presence of the Lord, along with the ransomed of all time, to be conducted by Him into the Father's house, into that place He went away to prepare for us.

"Then, when the Redeemer's voice
Calls the sleeping saints to rise,
Rising millions shall proclaim
Blessings on the Saviour's name.
This is our redeeming God,
Ransomed hosts will shout aloud ;
Praise, eternal praise be given
To the Lord of earth and heaven."

THE ADVOCATE OR THE ACCUSER.

THIS is a practical question for Christians in these days. It is not a question of whether we are Christians or not, though it may often test that fact. Happily simple faith in the person of the Son of God and His work settles that question. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "He that

believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). We are "justified by his blood" (Rom. v. 9); as well as numberless other passages. But the question is, as professedly saved ones, do we take sides with the Advocate, or with the accuser of the brethren?

The advocacy of Christ is founded on His righteous Person, and His perfect work (See 1 John ii. 1, 2). His blessed work clears us from all the guilt of our sins, and in His blessed Person we have entire deliverance from our Adam state, He Himself—the dead, risen, and ascended One—being our righteousness before God. It is on this ground that He intercedes, does the work of an Advocate. If we sin after our relationship with the Father (as children to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will), has been settled, then the advocacy of Christ applies. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we [children] have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2).

The office of the Advocate then is not to get righteousness for us, nor to put away our sins, nor to make us children. That is all settled by Christ's death and resurrection, and faith in Him. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool: for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 12—14). It is to maintain us as children before the Father without sin, in face of the Accuser of the brethren (See Rev. xii. 10). When a child of God sins, communion is interrupted; the relationship remains, but the Father has no fellowship with the sin of His child. The Advocate pleads against Satan

who accuses. The Father hears the pleadings of the Advocate, Who thereon applies the word to our walk (John xiii. 4, 5), brings us to the confession of the sin, upon which the Father is faithful to the righteous Advocate, and just to the Advocate Who made propitiation, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9). Thus communion is restored, and the child of God walks in the joy and light of his Father's countenance. Thus the Advocate is literally the Manager of our affairs in our Father's Court, and has reference to His government of His children in this world. It reconciles the fact of a naughty child and a Holy Father.

The Advocate does two things. He pleads with the Father for us. He applies the word to us. The one maintains our cause (if we sin before the Father) against the Accuser. The other brings up our practical state to our standing, which is always maintained without sin by the righteous Advocate Who has made propitiation.

The failure in our practical state is from the fact of our having the flesh still in us. Our actual state is that of having two natures in one person. "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 25). And though by faith, and in Spirit, we are no longer in the flesh, yet actually it is in us, though by faith we reckon it dead; hence the failure. There is no excuse; but the fact is we fail. Our standing as children ever remains the same, even though we sin, owing to the righteous Advocate Who has made propitiation. "If any man sin we have an Advocate." But we have failed in our practical state. We are defiled. "Our bodies are washed with pure water;" that is true (Heb. x. 22); we have had once the washing of regeneration (Titus iii. 5); we are born again (John iii. 3); we need

not then to be put into the bath over again. But we have sinned, we have defiled our feet in passing through this sin-defiling world. This will not do for the Father's presence.

What does the Advocate do? He applies the word to us, washes our feet; the word judges us, leads us to confession and self-judgment. The remembrance of our Advocate Who made propitiation leads us back on our knees to our Father Who forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Thus the blessed work of the Advocate is on the one hand to plead for the children before the Father, if they sin; on the other hand to wash their feet with the word, to bring their practical walk and state up to their standing before Him. Satan, on the other hand, is the Accuser of the brethren. He accuses them before God day and night (Rev. xii. 10). He is the author of divisions between the children of God, by accusing them one to the other (Rom. xvi. 17—20). He would hire Balaam to curse the people of God, and failing in that he would use the same prophet to teach Balak to mix them up with the nations around, and partake of their sinful practices. He would excite Jehovah to try Job, speaking bad things of him before Jehovah's face (Job i., ii.). He would tempt David to sin in numbering the people of Israel (1 Chron. xxi. 1), and move Jehovah against them to destroy them (2 Sam. xxiv. 1). He would resist Joshua the high priest, and seek to prevent his filthy rags being taken from him, and his being clothed in a new raiment (Zech. iii. 1).

This is the Accuser's wretched work. Those that follow him are called false accusers, slanderers (literally, devils), because doing the devil's work. He whispers in the ear of a minister's wife (1 Tim. iii. 11) some false story about some brother or

sister in Christ. She spreads it about, and so the evil spreads, which perhaps may end in an assembly being broken up. Some aged sister sits leisurely at home (Titus ii. 3), and not having much to do is ready to hear stories perhaps from some worldly person about some child of God. She spreads it about to others who come to see her. It is a slander, a lie, and so the devil does his work, and perhaps some child of God gets a wound, or gets hindered in the work of the Lord for years.

I would solemnly ask every child of God who reads this paper, on whose side are you working? When some slander is uttered about a child of God, do you plead for him; go home and pray for him; if you know he has failed, do you go in love and humility, and take the word to him, and wash his feet? (John xiii. 14). This is the blessed work of the Advocate. Or do you listen to the story, go and spread it lightly to some one else, without knowing whether it is a fact or not? And if you are hurt by some brother, do you go in a pet to God, or pray in anger at him at prayer meetings (1 Tim. ii. 8), and accuse him? This is to do the devil's work.

But how happy is it for us to be associated with the blessed Advocate; on the one hand pleading for our brethren if they sin, on the other hand carrying the word to them and washing their feet. May the Lord grant His people increasingly this grace, so that the saints may see their blessed privilege of love to cover sins (Prov. x. 12), plead for their brethren if they sin, and act in faithfulness to them, in carrying the word to them, washing their feet, so that they might be cleansed from the defilement.

Thus we can overcome the Accuser by the blood of the Lamb, if we sin, openly resisting him by the

word of God's testimony, like the blessed Lord Jesus Himself. He answered the devil, when tempting Him to sin, by "It is written." So should we. If we sin, thank God we can always answer him by the blood of the Lamb, which is the balm for every wound.

Thus the blood of the Lamb and the word, the sword of the Spirit, are our instruments against the devil down here, whilst the Advocate maintains our cause before the Father up in heaven. In every case we are maintained, and are overcomers, more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.

A.P.C.

BELIEVING IN VAIN.

"SOMETIMES I feel troubled for fear that I am believing in vain. I do not exactly know what it means, but I am sure that there is such a thing as 'believing in vain' mentioned in the Bible; and also I have read of 'falling from grace', so that I do not feel at all happy."

So said a doubting, trembling soul, who knew very little of the Bible, not having read it carefully. Mistakes are often made by detaching a few words from the verse in which they are to be found, and weaving a net of human thoughts and reasoning around them. It would neither be fair nor wise to extract a few words from a letter written by a human correspondent, and give to those words a meaning quite different from that which the entire sentence was intended to convey.

As to the timid woman's anxiety, lest she should believe *in vain*, careful reading of 1 Corinthians xv. should have been sufficient to dispel her fears.

What then is meant by believing in vain? Belief

in anything unreal is not worthy of belief. Belief is useless, or *in vain*, if it rests in anyone or anything that cannot be depended upon. But the scriptural point of believing in vain is connected absolutely with the resurrection, or *non-resurrection* of the Lord Jesus. The fact is established that He died on the cross for our sins, but it is also certain that He rose again for our justification. He did not remain in the grave, but He rose from it. If He had *not* been raised from the dead, our faith in Him would certainly have been in vain, since we should then have never been justified.

In that case also the preaching of the apostle Paul and others would have been in vain; for it is the resurrection of Christ which is the proof that God is satisfied, and that all His righteous claims were met by the shedding of that precious blood.

Thus, if a person says, "Can I be sure that I have not believed in vain?" we may ask in reply, "Has Christ risen from the dead?" If He *has* risen from the dead, the believer is no longer in his sins, for his faith rests in One Who has done a complete and thorough work, to which God has set His seal, "in that he raised him from the dead."

Therefore, in this sense, it is impossible for one who believes in Christ (in Him Who was crucified and rose again) to believe in vain. There is no disappointment to the believer; no cause to fear that he may have believed in vain, for as surely as the Lord Jesus rose again, everyone who trusts in Him is connected with Him, the living Christ, the Head over all the members of His body, and eternal life is secured to all who have faith in Him.

No! the believer has every reason to be happy, joyful and confident. Christ by His own blood purchased every blessing for him, and not one of those who trust Him *can* believe in vain.

H.L.R.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTERS V. 12—viii.

THIS profound discussion forms the needed supplement to that which we have already had, and deals not with our sins, but with sin in the flesh, and deliverance in Christ learnt experimentally and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

Hence from Romans v. 11, which closes the former part, the apostle is no longer occupied with the evils we had done, and the grace of God in justifying the guilty by faith. He now lays bare the root of all that we are, and so goes up to Adam, the figure of Him that was to come. For as to man there are two heads of whom scripture speaks: as of sin and death in him who transgressed where all was good, so of obedience and life eternal in the face of nothing but self-will and ruin here below; the first man, and the Second.

No Jew doubted that one man's sin brought those dreadful consequences on the human race. If this was just on God's part, as they allowed, was it not worthy of God to bring in the gift by grace through one man, Christ Jesus? Adam was under *a* law, and the Jews had *the* law; and transgression followed for both. But the nations who had not law were none the less sinners, and thus obnoxious to death like the Jews; for in fact death reigned universally. But shall not the act of favour be as the offence? And shall not the gift be as through one that sinned? Accordingly, as the bearing through one offence was to condemn all men, so is it through one righteousness toward all men for justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners,

so through the one's obedience the many shall be constituted righteous (ver. 12—19). Thus grace far outwent sin; and if the Adam family were obnoxious to death through sin, the Christ family in spite of manifold sins shall be justified and reign in life. The law came in by the way that the offence might abound and so crush Jewish self-righteousness; but when sin (and not transgression only) abounded, grace exceeded far; that as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord (ver. 20, 21).

Chapter vi. meets the cavil that grace tends to license sinning. This, the apostle shews, contradicts the truth that we died to sin, and by baptism unto Christ Jesus were baptised unto His death, in order that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too should walk in newness of life. He that died has been justified from sin; for it is a question, not of sins forgiven, but of sin and of continuing in it, which death with Christ denies. Hence this also is the meaning of our baptism (ver. 1—14). But there is the further reply that being under grace, not law, is the way of holiness for those set free from sin and become bondmen to God. For the wages of sin is death, but God's act of favour is life eternal in Christ (ver. 15—23).

Then in chapter vii. Christ dead with Whom we were made dead is deliverance from law, as in chapter vi. from sin. Law provoked lust and condemned those under it. The Christian belongs to Christ dead and risen, in order that he might bear fruit to God (ver. 1—4). When we *were* in the flesh, fruit was borne to death; but now even Jewish believers have been discharged from the law through having died thus, so as to serve in newness of spirit (ver. 5, 6). Thereon follows the detailed case, which the apostle personates, as he often does, of

one converted yet still struggling under law with its powerlessness and misery, till experimentally learning that we have flesh unchanged, along with a new nature, one looks to God for deliverance and finding it in Christ as truly as before the remission of our sins, one thanks God for it, though the old man is as bad as ever, but with the mind one serves God's law (ver. 7—25).

Lastly, chapter viii. is the blessed conclusion of this appendix on indwelling sin through death with Christ, as chapter v. 1—11 was of pardon of sins through Christ's blood. We are in Christ where all condemnation is gone, as fully treated in verses 1—4 (the latter half of ver. 1 being spurious, but right in ver. 4). We are not in flesh but in Spirit, if so be that God's Spirit dwells in us—the distinct privilege of the Christian; and therefore we put to death the deeds of the body. For the Spirit we have received is of power, love, and sobriety, as the apostle reminds Timothy. Hence as He is a spirit of adoption, so He groans in us, delivered, yet with our bodies awaiting redemption which we now have only in our souls. Thus the Spirit, Who gives us joy, helps our weakness, interceding for us according to God. For we are called, as well as predestinated, and being justified, the apostle can say, "glorified": so sure is God's purpose (ver. 5—30). Then comes the final triumph even now: God for us, who against us? A series of unanswerable challenges of grace and truth in Christ follows, in the face of all opposing circumstances; and as "no condemnation" began the high argument, "no separation" from God's love closes it in verses 31—39.

W.K.

SOLEMN tunes to cheerful hymns, and cheerful tunes to solemn hymns, are not pleasing.

CHRIST OR THE VIRGIN MARY.

THE doctrine of the mediation of the Virgin Mary and the saints is really infidelity. The scripture declares there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; and what does it teach us as to this doctrine of Christ's intercession?

It teaches us that that divine and gracious person, the Son—Who is one with the Father, Who is God over all, blessed for evermore—came down so low and in such grace, that the poorest and vilest sinner whose heart grace drew to Him, found free access to Him, was never cast out. If it was a woman in the city that was a sinner, if Jesus was in the house, she was emboldened to go in, and count upon that tender goodness which inspired confidence to the heart, while it awakened the conscience in the deepest way, and gave a horror of sin.

That is, we are taught that such grace, such tenderness, was in Jesus—in that Holy One, Who had become like unto His brethren in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest, that He condescends to all our infirmities, and sympathises with all our sorrows, entering into them as none other could, with a heart such as none other had.

We are taught that He suffered, being tempted, that He might be able to succour them that are tempted; that He was tempted in all things like unto us, without sin; so that we have a merciful and faithful high priest, Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and hence we can come boldly to a throne of grace; that He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

This is what my heart learns of the blessed Jesus in the scriptures, that He Who can be touched

with the feeling of our infirmities now lives to make intercession for us.

But what does the Romanist doctrine teach me? That I cannot thus go to Him; that I cannot count upon His tenderness; that He is too high, too far off; that Mary has a tenderer heart as being a woman; and that I must go to Him, through her, as I should in the case of some king or great man, who would be too much above me to allow me to approach him; or that I must go to the saints.

Have they then tenderer, more condescending hearts than He Who came to this earth on purpose to assure us of His love? Did Mary, however blessed, come down from heaven to seek me in my sorrow and my misery? Or is Christ changed, and become hardhearted, since He ascended up on high? No, the doctrine of many mediators, and of the Virgin Mary, as the one through whose heart I am to approach Jesus, is infidelity as to the grace of Christ, denies His glory as a compassionate high priest.

He came down and suffered in this world that we might know we could go to God by Him; inasmuch as He could feel for our infirmities *Himself*, and would be touched with them. The Romanist doctrine tells me I cannot dare to do it, that I must get nearer, tenderer hearts, to go to Him for me. Ah! I prefer His own. I have seen and learnt what it was in His life down here. I can count upon it more than on any, be they what they may. It is the only heart that has shed its life-blood for me. I trust its kindness more than that of all the Marys and of all the saints that ever were, blessed as they may be in their place.

J.N.D.

HE who speaks should have something to say.

THE QUICKENING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WE have had before us the personality of the Holy Ghost, and have also considered His gracious work with regard to the word of God. Now we will enquire into His work in the soul, in producing new life towards God, where once sin and death reigned. This is unfolded very simply in John iii. Nicodemus came to the Lord by night. He had been outwardly convinced by the miracles which the Lord was performing, as were many others in Jerusalem at that time (John ii. 23). He came "by night," feeling instinctively that the world and Jesus were opposed, and that to be seen going to Him would bring down persecution, or at least reproach upon himself. He opened by saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." The Lord met him instantly with the solemn statement, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." How deeply humbling! What a check upon the thoughts of the ruler of the Jews! We learn here the solemn fact, that man, in his natural condition, cannot perceive or understand the things of God. Privileges and advantages make no real difference. Nicodemus had many. He was not a profane immoral man, nor was he even a Gentile. He was a Jew of high position as a teacher among his fellows, acquainted with the letter of scripture, and, we have no reason to doubt, moral and religious. What fairer specimen of humanity can be supposed? Saul of Tarsus was just such a man. Read his account of himself in Philippians iii. Possessed of every natural, dis-

pensational and religious advantage. Some perhaps would have understood the matter better if the Lord had spoken of the new birth in chapter iv. instead of chapter iii. In chapter iv., He is seen dealing with an openly wicked woman at the well of Sychar. Not there, but here, does the Lord say, "Ye must be born again."

All must learn sooner or later that man's nature is altogether antagonistic to God, altogether bad and corrupt before Him. It is not only that men have done bad things, but the very nature is bad beyond repair. Few accept this. We hear much in these days of improvement of man, of the raising of the masses, etc., but all this only shews that men have not accepted the verdict of God about themselves. If they did but bow to it, they would be thankful to be objects of sovereign grace and love.

But it remains true, in flesh dwells no good thing. Its mind is enmity against God, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. vii. 18; viii. 7, 8). This admits of no appeal and no modification. A man must be born again, or he can never see or enter the kingdom of God.

But how is this brought about? Nicodemus could not tell, nor can many in this day, but the Lord Jesus explains. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, etc." Here we have it in a few words. It is the direct work of the Spirit of God, acting by means of the word of God upon the soul. Perhaps I need hardly say that "water" here is a figure of the word of God. Some have imported the idea of baptism into this chapter and the Lord's Supper into John vi. But Christian baptism was not instituted until after the Lord's resurrection, and the Lord's Supper not until the night of His betrayal. Consequently neither can possibly be found in the early chapters of John's gospel.

The water is a symbol of the word of God, which the Jewish teacher should have understood from such Old Testament passages as Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, and Psalm cxix. 9. Christians have the thought confirmed in Ephesians v. and John xv. The Spirit of God brings the word to bear upon the soul, convincing it of sin and revealing the Saviour dead and risen. To this the soul believingly bows, and thus a positive new life and nature is imparted. As we read in 1 Peter i., "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." This is not an improvement of the old nature. By no means. That remains as evil as ever, to be kept under by the soul that has learnt deliverance through the death and resurrection of Christ. It is a life imparted that had no existence in the person before, enabling him now to sorrow for sin according to God, to believe the gospel, to love the Saviour, to pray and worship, and to love the ways of holiness and truth. It partakes of the nature of Him Who is its source—"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

This is not peculiar to Christianity. Ever since sin came into the world, men have been thus graciously wrought upon by the Holy Spirit. What is peculiar to this period is the Spirit's indwelling, of which we shall speak on another occasion; but His quickening operation in the soul is true at all times, irrespective of dispensational differences.

Still, the Lord says more in John iii. than could have been made known in Old Testament times; He speaks of eternal life. He had come from heaven to make God known and to shew what suits Him and His presence, and He was the manifestation of eternal life. Eternal life was in Himself; yea, He was it, a life heavenly in its

source and character, of which heaven is the proper and suited sphere, but which is the enjoyed portion now of all who believe in the Son. • The Son has been uplifted that life might be bestowed upon all who trust His name. It is not denied that saints of old time had eternal life. But the life was not made known in its full and heavenly character until the only Begotten Son came forth from the Father into the world. W.W.F.

THE SERVANT'S PROSPECT.

AND can it be the small unnoticed deed,
 So trivial and so passing, but still done
 For love of Thee, my Lord, and Thee alone,
 Shall one day bring its own immense reward
 Of honour, from Thy Father's mighty hand!
 Master and Lord! I scarce deserve the name
 Of "servant of the true and living God,"
 So poor and mean the utmost I can do;
 But still I wear Thy livery, blessed Lord,
 And fain would keep it bright, and as becomes
 A member of the household of the Lord.

Master, Thy word has thrilled me through and through,
 For Thou hast deigned to promise to exchange
 Places with me. And Thou hast told me, Lord,
 (And marked it with the emphasis of truth)
 That in the coming day of Thy return
 Thou wilt unloose Thy servants' garments, and
 Make them sit down and feast, while Thou Thyself
 (Once girded with the towel, and now, with gold)
 Wilt take anew the girdle, and come forth
 And serve—serve *me*—the least of all who wait
 As handmaids on the servants of the Lord.

Oh, Master! is it true? Can it e'er be?
 It must, for Thou hast said it, and, e'en more,
 Hast proved it, on the night of Thy deep woe.
 Knowing full well what lay before Thee then—
 The cross—and farther still, the Father's home—
 Thou then didst stoop to do the servant's work,
 And wash Thy loved ones' feet, as still Thou dost,
 Though now upon the throne. Each day brings forth

Renewed, fresh proofs of Thy stupendous grace
In serving us, while we rejoice to do,
With willing hands and feet, Thy blessed work.

But, gracious Lord, however wondrous sweet
The tale of Thy unceasing work of love,
Or the glad promise of the honour which
Thy Father shall bestow on those who serve
An absent, but an ever precious Lord,
There is one thing surpassing ev'ry thought—
One promise shining brighter than aught else.
We hear Thee say, and listen with delight,
(For Thou e'en now art dear, dearer than all)
We hear Thee say, "And where I am, there shall
My servant be!" Where art Thou, blessed Lord?
Where dwellest Thou? Wilt Thou not say to us,
As once Thou answeredst those who asked the same,
"Come! come and see"!

H.C.R.

GOING SHOPPING.

IT is our privilege, now that the Holy Ghost dwells in us, to bring everything within the scope of the written word. Thus, suppose you must go a shopping: there at once a question arises; and you will surely incline to one of two desires. In your purchase you will seek to please either yourself or Christ.

If among a multitude of shops you wish to know which is the right one to visit, it remains before you still to please Christ. Can one not ask one's conscience, what is my motive for going here or there? He is faithful and knows how to decide by the Spirit's use of the word in judging the secrets of the heart. In the great majority of cases such self-judgment would cut short many a visit to this or that shop, as well as make no small difference in what is bought. When one enters a shop, the temptation that occurs to the mind is to get what one likes as far as one can. Where is Christ in this?

W.K.

SPEAKING UNADVISEDLY.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—No doubt you have observed the very striking phrase used in the book of Numbers concerning Moses. We do not find our attention particularly drawn to his skill as a leader and a commander of the people, or to his wisdom as an administrator of the law, great and honoured of God as he was in these qualities. But it is the extraordinary meekness of his spirit that is esteemed worthy of especial mention. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3).

The circumstances calling forth this expression concerning Israel's lawgiver are such as add to its significance. They shew that in a moment of very great provocation Moses maintained an unruffled serenity and sinned not with his lips. His brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, moved with envy, murmured against him, saying, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?" This was surely enough, speaking after the manner of men, to rouse his spirit. For nearly forty years he had been with the people leading them on through the desert to the promised land. And now the members of his own family unite to accuse him of taking too much upon himself! As a rule we are capable of enduring less from relatives than from strangers. Persons pour out the vials of their wrath upon their own households with but little compunction. Moses however refrained his lips. Then it is we have the remarkable testimony to his meekness which has been quoted above. And Jehovah interposed on behalf of His silent servant, reproofing both the malcontents, and smiting Miriam with leprosy.

Very shortly after this incident we read of a

scene in which the conduct of Moses appears in strange and painful contrast with that just alluded to. The children of Israel came to the desert of Zin, and found themselves without water. This was not a new experience for the people. And during their long passage through the wilderness they had numerous opportunities of proving Jehovah's power and goodness in providing for them.

But the people chode with Moses and murmured against him, and through him against Jehovah. Then Jehovah in His wonderful patience bade Moses take Aaron's rod that had budded which was laid up before the Lord (Num. xvii. 10; xx. 8, 9), and to speak to the rock that water might flow to supply the needs of the congregation.

Moses obeyed, inasmuch as he took the priestly rod from the sanctuary. But as he stood before the rock he was so angry that he rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah (Num. xxvii. 14). Instead of *speaking* to it, the furious man lifted up his hand and smote the rock with *his own* rod, not once only but twice. The force of his passions, held in check for many a long day, now compressed itself in a dozen words or so which must have stung like so many scorpions, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Could this be Moses, that very meek man, yielding to an explosion of temper in this fashion, after a long life of exemplary humbleness of mind for nearly six score years, so soon after the brilliant moral triumph referred to above? It was indeed Moses; for absolute perfection was only to be found in One yet to come.

And his failure is placed on record that we may take heed lest we fall. It was but for a moment that he left the "door of his lips" unguarded (Ps. cxli. 3), and the burning words of passion flew forth, for ever beyond recall. For a moment he

was off his guard; for a moment he failed to watch; and his unruly, rebellious tongue spoke those unsanctified sentences that cost him his inheritance in the promised land. From the heights of Pisgah, the eye of Moses beheld that land flowing with milk and honey, but Jehovah forbade him to enter therein (Deut. xxxiv. 4).

It may seem to some of you a very severe sentence for a small offence. But it was not a small offence; the greater the saint the worse the sin. However the point I wish especially to bring before you is the exceeding great importance of unceasing watchfulness as illustrated in the example of Moses. Read carefully what James says about the tongue (Jas. iii.). The hasty word spoken in anger may cause untold mischief. Is it not when you are unthinking that you find this happens? Something does not please you. You have received a real or fancied injury. And before you are aware, your indignation is fired, and the savage word is spoken, which is speedily followed by unavailing regrets.

Oh, learn, I beseech you, to choke your wrath. Weep over your folly and sin in the presence of God. Be resolute in your endeavours to control the workings of your passions within. Firmly refuse to open your lips to utter your words while they are red-hot. Let them cool, lest like Moses you speak unadvisedly with your lips (Ps. cvi. 33).

Above all things, let the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" be before you as your example. He was "meek and lowly in heart," and we are to learn of Him.

"O patient, spotless One,
Our hearts in meekness train
To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may rest obtain."

I am, yours faithfully, "YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

DAN.—**What are the keys (Matt. xvi. 19), and when given to Peter?** The use of keys is to open doors. At Pentecost Peter unlocked the door of faith in an ascended Messiah and invited the Jews to enter. Later on, at Joppa, he did the same for Gentiles (Acts ix.). The keys are connected with binding and loosing (Matt. xvi. 19), a privilege promised to the others as well (Matt. xviii. 18), and given to them by the Lord after His resurrection (John xx. 23), but only exercised on the descent of the Spirit (Acts ii. 41). Notice the Lord holds the keys of death and of hades (Rev. i. 18). **What are the things new and old (Matt. xiii. 52)?** The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ was an old truth, being the theme of Old Testament prophecy; but the peculiar form it now takes during the absence of Christ on high was entirely a new truth. The new things included the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 11), which the Lord unfolded in this succession of parables. **What is the force of "hath ascended" in John iii. 13?** The ascension of the Son is viewed anticipatively here, hence the use of the perfect tense. With the Eternal Son there is no past or future; and He is so viewed in this Gospel. Compare John xvii. 4. See also answer to M.E. in B.M.M., vol. ii., p. 24; in connection with which a valued correspondent remarks that this ascension was in virtue of the "intrinsic power" of the Lord's person, whereas Enoch and Elijah were "taken up." **What is the difference between living water and water of life (John iv. 10, 11; Rev. xxi. 6)? also the living bread and the bread of life (John vi. 35, 48, 51)?** We should suppose "living water" refers to the Holy Spirit, and "water of life" to the everlasting life, especially in its satisfying character. In John iv. 14, we have a well (fountain) of water as in Revelation xxi. 6, indicating the source of the water of life. It is beautiful to see this gospel promise immediately following the solemn revelation concerning the end of all things (Rev. xxi. 1—5).

The bread of life appears to be that which gives life, while the living bread is the living Christ in contrast with the manna. The manna was dead, and so were those who had eaten of it; but Christ is the Life (living bread) and He Who gives life (bread of life).

S. G.—**Why did Naaman require two mules' burden of earth (2 Kings v. 17)?** To build an altar for sacrifice to Jehovah (Comp. Exod. xx. 24). He who at first despised the waters of Israel (2 Kings v. 12) afterwards desired its dust.

E.—Do the twenty-four elders (Rev. iv. 4) represent the Old and New Testament saints? As has often been pointed out, the number twenty-four indicates a *complete* company. Compare the twenty-four courses of priesthood (1 Chr. xxiv. 7—18). Until the Lord comes, the company of the redeemed must consist of two classes, viz., those who are asleep and those who are alive, and therefore it has no complete representation either on earth or in heaven. At His coming the dead in Christ (including Old Testament saints) are raised, and the living changed; consequently they are here seen as a whole in heaven. And under this figure (elders) they appear throughout the book until the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. xix.). **Are they wearing the royal crowns, which all believers will have?** Yes; they are seen as priestly kings, seated on thrones (Rev. iv.), and as kingly priests (Rev. v.). They execute priestly office (Rev. v. 8), but have not yet begun to reign over the earth (Rev. v. 10). Still they sit on thrones and wear golden crowns. **Are we risen to all Christ rose to as man, or all He rose to as Christ (Col. iii. 1)?** Is not this a distinction without a difference? But we are not sure we understand the question. Will our correspondent write again?

A.J.K.—Does Acts xv. 19, 20, 28, 29, apply to the believer in our day? Yes. Total abstinence from uncleanness and from the eating of blood, whether in the body or out of the body, is binding upon all, both Gentiles and Jews. Compare (Gen. ix. 1—7).

E.C.—Is baptism necessary before breaking of bread? In scripture baptism follows immediately upon repentance and faith. It is the sign of the confession of Christ before the world, even as breaking of bread is the sign of the communion of the members of Christ's body (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). Consider Acts ii. 38—42; viii. 36; xvi. 33.

B.—May sisters pray in a prayer meeting for Sunday School Teachers? To what do 1 Cor. xi. 5—16; xiv. 34, 35 refer? Observe that assembly matters are taken up in verse 17 (1 Cor. xi.); so that the case of women praying referred to previously would be in private, not in public, meetings (Acts xii. 12; xxi. 8, 9). Elsewhere it is expressly stated that they are to be silent in the assembly (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 8—12). Even in private (1 Cor. xi.) they are not to step beyond their place, not praying or prophesying uncovered. We recommend the querist to prayerfully study the above-named texts in which important principles of action are laid down bearing on this question. Much depends on the character of the meeting.

THE
BELIEVER'S MONTHLY
MAGAZINE.

**PETER'S SERMON IN SOLOMON'S
PORCH.**

THE sight of the cripple, wont for so long to lie helplessly at the Gate Beautiful, whining for alms, but now walking with briskness and elation in Solomon's Porch, roused up the loungers in the temple-courts, and brought them to his side with the fewest and most rapid strides possible.

A crowd soon collected, with that remarkable rapidity characteristic alike of Eastern and Western cities, and Peter and John found themselves surrounded by widening circles of excited faces, staring at them and at the man they had befriended with ill-concealed amazement. Even sober and dignified rabbis paused in their learned discussions and deliberations as to, may be, the tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, and permitted themselves for a moment or so to regard the scene from the outskirts of the crowd with a certain degree of wonder.

A man who, seeing himself in the midst of such a congregation, could find no word to say, would be a sorry servant of Christ indeed. Not so Peter, who is more intrepid now than he was craven-hearted in the high priest's palace a little while

before. Here was a "season," and Peter had the word which was eminently "in season." As a witness of the ascended Christ, he embraces the opportunity to remonstrate with the guilty nation, and to invite them to repentance.

Why did they wonder so much at this miracle? And why were they gazing so intently upon the apostles, as if any power or piety in them was the cause of the cripple walking about?

They must look from the servants to the Master for the cause. Jesus, the Servant of Jehovah, was now glorified by God. But if God had glorified Him, what had they done to Him? They had delivered Him over to the Gentiles, and when Pilate could find no cause of death in Him, and would have let Him go, they refused to hear of such a thing. They denied their Messiah, the Holy One and the Just, and besought Pilate, as a matter of favour to them, to release the murderer, Barabbas, instead. Thus they had killed the Prince, or Author, of life, and His blood cried aloud from the ground.

Nevertheless it was the One Whom they had so wickedly slain, that God had raised from the dead; and it was through faith by and in Him that the cripple had received this perfect soundness in the presence of them all.

After this unsparing denunciation of their great guilt as the men of Israel in crucifying their Messiah, the apostle addresses them more mildly, for now the Lord's mercy is on his tongue. He knows his brethren had committed this great sin in ignorance, rulers and people alike. It was true they ought to have known. Their scriptures testified plainly enough of Christ. But they had ignored the voices of the prophets read in their ears every sabbath day.

Still, prayer had been offered on their behalf.

The Crucified One Himself had presented to His Father the plea of their ignorance; "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And the Father always heard the prayers of the Son (John xi. 42). The prayer from the cross was no exception; hence there was a city of refuge for these man-slayers. And Peter was before them, not as the messenger of divine judgment, but to announce that God's mercy and compassion had been extended to them. In their sinful rejection of the Anointed One, they had unwittingly fulfilled the prophecies that had gone before concerning His sufferings.

Thereon the fearless preacher exhorts them to repentance. Let them own their sin and turn to the Lord, and the seasons of refreshing for Israel and the whole earth shall come from the presence of the Lord. But they must repent, that the thick cloud of their sins may be blotted out. Let that condition be fulfilled, and God would send forth again the Christ Who had been appointed for them, even Jesus of Nazareth. For He Who was received up into heaven must remain secreted there until the times of the restoration of all things which had been the theme of God's holy prophets since time began.

The point was, therefore, whether they would repent, so that Christ might return there and then and set up His kingdom according to the Old Testament scriptures. They had refused Him Who spake on earth; now He was ascended; would they turn away from Him Who spake from heaven?

Then Peter, having referred to the prophets, quotes, by way of example, from the greatest of them, to shew that Jesus was the Prophet predicted by Moses (Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19). And, as that scripture declared, He was greater than the great-

est of the prophets, and His word, if refused, would bring destruction upon them. But, if accepted, those days of blessing in the earth would follow, of which, not Moses only, but all the prophets from Samuel onwards, had spoken.

The apostle proceeds to remind them that the Lord Jesus came to the Jew first. He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. For they were the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God had made with their fathers, saying to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." God, therefore, having raised up His servant, Jesus, sent Him to them *first*, to bless them in turning away every one of them from his iniquities. Would they be turned?

Here the speaker was interrupted, not by his immediate listeners, but by the responsible heads of the nation to whom he was appealing as the ambassador of the Lord. The priests, with some of the Sadducean party, and the captain of the Levite guard stationed in the temple to preserve order, came up and apprehended the apostles, and put them in safe custody until next day, for night was now drawing on.

But if they thus closed the mouths of Peter and John, and cut the sermon short, they were unable to imprison the word of God. In spite of sacerdotal malice, that had free course and was glorified. So that many of Peter's audience in Solomon's Porch believed, swelling the ranks of the converts to five thousand men.

NOTE. It is well to observe in connection with what has gone before, that "Son" should be "Servant" (Acts iii. 13, 26), referring to Jesus as so prophesied of (Isa. xlii. 1—7; xlix. 1—9; lii. 13—liii. 12; Matt. xii. 18). This may be seen in any

reliable translation, and also that in verse 19 we should not read, that their sins might be blotted out, *when* the seasons of refreshing come, but rather, *so that* these seasons may come. Another important and helpful change is in verse 20, where the promise is to send forth the Christ, Who was fore-appointed for you, even Jesus, etc., instead of to send Jesus Christ which was before preached unto you. It is the same Messiah Who will come to Israel again as came before.

HELP FOR BAD MEMORIES.

THERE was one Patrick Mackelwoth in the west part of Scotland, who had his heart touched in a most remarkable way by the Lord. After his conversion (as he told many of his Christian friends) he was so affected with the new world into which he had entered, together with the discoveries of God, and of a life to come, that for some months together he could scarce ever sleep, but was continually taken up in admiration.

His life was very remarkable for tenderness, and near converse with God in his daily walk. One day, after a sharp trial (having his only son suddenly taken away by death), he retired into private for several hours. When he came forth he looked so cheerful, that many asked him the reason of it, wondering at it in such a time.

He told them he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it again renewed, he would be content to lose a son every day.

It had been long his burden that he had such a bad memory, that he could retain almost nothing of what he heard; and bitterly complaining thereof to a worthy minister (Mr. James English) of Dally, he advised him that, when he heard any truth that

he desired to remember, he should commend it to the Lord and entreat Him to keep it for him, and to give it to him back again when he should stand in most need of it.

Accordingly this holy man did put the same in practice most seriously; and when he came to lie on his death-bed, unto his ministers, and divers other Christians who were present, he did solemnly declare how wonderfully the Lord did answer his prayers; for whereas want of memory had been his great burden, now the Lord had given him back all those truths that he had put into his keeping; so that what he had heard many years before, was now most clearly brought into his remembrance; which he shewed by repeating many particular truths, and notes of sermons, which at such and such times he had heard.

Extracted.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTERS ix.—xi.

WE have now to consider the bearing of these chapters. They are the divine solution of the question, how to reconcile the indiscriminate grace of God in the gospel (as we have seen in chapters i—viii.) with the special promises made to the fathers in favour of the children of Israel. Here all is cleared to the opened eye. The scriptures are decisive, which the Jews owned to be of God.

First the apostle shews how far he was from lowering his interest in Israel: they on the contrary were shutting out their highest privileges by their unbelief. Moses loved them no more than he;

but how blind were they in not recognising the Christ, not more truly of David according to flesh than One Who is over all, God blessed for ever! Psalms xlv. cii ; Isaiah ix. 1. (ix. 1—5). Next (in 6—13), he denies that the word of God had fallen through, for it is certain that not all are Israel that are of Israel. This he proves from the family of Abraham and of Isaac. Fleshly descent, “seed,” is not all : witness Ishmael and Esau. If the Jews must, as they would, repudiate the title of both lines, they must also admit God’s sovereignty : a principle plainly shown in Isaac, still more in Jacob where the mother and father were the same, and the children twins. It was God’s purpose according to election as Jehovah indicated before their birth, in the first book of the Pentateuch (Gen. xxv. 23), and sealed it by the last of the prophets (Mal. i. 2, 3). Is anyone ready to charge God with unrighteousness? The unrighteousness was in Israel beyond doubt, when they made and adored a calf of gold, and must have been justly destroyed but for that sovereignty in God which unbelief criticises and rejects : “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy” (Exod. xxxiii. 19). How would pretension to righteousness have suited Israel then? But God is no less sovereign in judgment, as the apostle cites Pharaoh’s case (Exod. ix. 16). God is judge, not man, who has no right to reply against Him. For has not the potter power of the same clay to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? In effect, however, He endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction, and vessels of mercy which He fore-prepared unto glory. The evil is man’s, the good is of God’s grace, whether of Jews or also of Gentiles, as Hosea declares (ii. 23 ; i. 10). On any other ground all was lost for Israel; but if God fell back on

His sovereignty, the prophet shews He would use it for Gentiles who believed, and this at the very time He executes judgment on Israel, guilty not of idolatry alone, but of rejecting their own Messiah, His Messiah, as is plain from Isaiah x. 22, 23 ; i. 9 ; xxviii. 16 ; viii. 14 (ver. 14—33).

In chapter x. the apostle re-iterates his earnest love for their salvation. Zealous for God, they ignored His righteousness in the gospel and sought to establish their own. For Christ is end of law for righteousness to every believer. Deuteronomy xxx. furnishes the proof : for there, when Israel lost their land by apostasy, God holds out His testimony for believers to lay hold of, though exiles from the land where alone the law could be carried out. Under the law they were ruined, where the word of faith (pointing to Christ) can alone avail, as Isaiah xxviii. 16 confirmed. But being the word of faith, not law, it is for Gentiles as much as Jews, and calls for preachers according to the principle of Isaiah lii. 7 ; liii. 1 ; Psalm xix. 4 ; and, as a fact, Jews needed it no less than Gentiles. Nor could Israel deny that God had made this known : Moses (Deut. xxxii. 21) and Isaiah had warned, not only of God's provoking Israel to jealousy, but of being found by a nation that sought Him not, while Israel was perverse and disobedient.

This raises the enquiry in chapter xi. if God thrust away His people (Israel), as indeed Christendom has long dreamt. Then three disproofs follow. (1) The apostle cites himself as witness of a remnant and refers to Elijah who erroneously thought himself alone, whereas God had and has a remnant, the fruit and pledge of grace, the rest blinded and for judgment (1—10). (2) Their fall, far from being definitive, is but to provoke Israel to jealousy, as already stated. Theirs is the olive tree, so that they are the natural branches, and the breach of some

was because of their unbelief. The Gentiles, now grafted in, were but wild olive; and if they continued not in God's goodness, they too should be cut off (11—24). (3) The prediction is sure, that, after the solemn dealing of God with His guilty people, and when the fulness or complement has come in during the partial blindness of the Jews as now, "All Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall be come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." According to the gospel, the Jews are enemies for the Gentiles' sake, according to election, beloved for the fathers' sake. God does not change His mind as to His gifts and calling. "For as ye once disobeyed God, but now were objects of mercy by their disobedience, so also they disobeyed your mercy that they too should be objects of mercy. For God shut them all together into disobedience that He might shew mercy on them all." No wonder that the apostle breaks forth into a transport of praise. For thus the special promises are fulfilled, while all pride of the law and pretension to righteousness vanish; and Gentiles who boasted, instead of enjoying all as mercy, with the Jews before them, are cut off, and all Israel return to His mercy and are saved.

W.K.

HEART BREATHINGS.

JESUS, Captain of Salvation,
 Lord of life and love,
 Fill me ever with Thy Spirit,
 From above.

Thou hast won the victory, Saviour,
 Peace eternal made;
 And the glory of Thy conquests
 Ne'er can fade.

THE BELIEVER'S

Precious blood did once flow from Thee
On dark Calvary's tree,
Blood from every sin which cleanseth
Even me.

All God's claims of truth and justice,
There were satisfied,
By the river of atonement
From Thy side.

Satan, sin, and death are vanquished
By the Father's Son;
And the wounds of Jesus tell me,
All is done.

Once forsaken, now exalted
To the Father's throne,
Heaven itself delights to welcome
God's dear Son.

Hark! those bursts of adoration
Circling round the throne,
To the Man by earth rejected,
Christ alone.

Earth, with all thy boasted treasures,
What art thou to me,
Since the Man Who lives in glory
Set me free!

Free from Satan's cruel bondage,
Free from chains of sin,
Free to worship, serve, and follow
Only Him.

Grace has linked my soul with Jesus,
Given me peace divine;
Ravished now, my heart's affections
Round Thee twine.

Soon with one awakening shout, Lord,
Thou wilt call for me;
And I shall, with ransomed millions,
Worship Thee.

Changed into Thy glorious image,
On Thy face I'll gaze,
And, in brightest glory, give Thee
Endless praise.

S.T.

THE SPIRIT AS A WELL OF WATER.

IN John iv., the Spirit of God is presented under a figure. The Lord Jesus speaks of Him as a well of water within the believer, springing up into everlasting life.

It is to be observed that this instruction was given by Him, not in Jerusalem to a Pharisee, but to a woman of Samaria, by the well of Sychar. To the Pharisee, He said the solemn word, "Ye must be born again," and then proceeded to unfold the meaning of the new birth and the Divine Person by whom it is brought about.

Here the circumstances are altogether different. The Lord is seen outside the circle of Judaism for the moment, and among the despised Samaritans. Why? Because of the enmity of the Jewish heart. He knew they were aware that His disciples were making and baptising many on His behalf; and knowing this would draw forth hostility, He withdrew from their midst. He went towards Galilee, and must needs go through Samaria. There He met the woman and ministered blessing to her soul, which resulted in blessing for many others also. If some reject His grace, their unbelief does not dry up, but diverts the channel; others get it.

It is a picture in some sort, of the Lord's position at the present time. He is away from Israel because they have rejected Him and He is shewing grace to the stranger. Here we come in. It is a lovely scene: a weary man by a well, yet withal, God manifest in the flesh, asking drink of a woman of Samaria. Why? Merely to satisfy His own need? Oh, no: He saw her need and meant to satisfy it out of the bounty of His grace. She had tried the world, but had found no rest to her spirit.

She had drunk deeper than most, but had proved it all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. She had found death in the pot at every turn. The Lord meets her; He begins gently and graciously—"Give me to drink"—words as marvellous as "Let there be light." The Eternal Son asking drink of an outcast like her! She was surprised. To her He was a Jew—she a Samaritan. The two races had no dealings. The Jews hated the Samaritans as imitators of their worship and aliens in their land. He answered, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John iv. 10). "The gift of God!" What glad tidings for a sinner! Not the law of God, which exacts, and curses all who fail to render its requirements; but God revealed as a giver. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This is one of the first and greatest principles of Christianity. Do you know Him thus, dear reader? Or do you regard Him as an austere Person, reaping where He has not sown, and gathering where He has not strawed? (Matt. xxv. 24). If so, you are a stranger to our God. He delights to give, He has given His Son, He gives eternal life to all who believe, and all things besides (John iii. 16; Rom. vi. 23; viii. 32).

And do you know the Son? The Lord said, "and *Who* it is." She did not know. She thought Him a mere Jew, until He proved Himself the Searcher of her heart. These are two essential principles of Christianity—God known as a giver, and the knowledge of the Only Begotten Son.

Well, the Lord speaks of the gift of the living water; the woman did not understand. She was so full of earthly things that she could not get above them. She spoke of the well, its depth, and His lack of a pitcher. How true it is that the natural

man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God! (1 Cor. ii. 14). He referred to the gift of the Holy Ghost, soon to be the enjoyed portion of all who believe in His name. This is quite distinct from quickening. He first acts on the man, implanting a new life, as John iii. shews; then after faith in the gospel, He takes up His abode within, and that for ever. This is peculiar to Christianity. The Spirit was not thus bestowed until Jesus was glorified, however He may have wrought in men from the first. This is a day of wondrous privilege. Would that all our hearts grasped it! Redemption being accomplished, the Son is in heaven, glorified as man at the right hand of God, and the Spirit is here, God's priceless gift to all who really believe in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Let us look further. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." A thirsty Christian is an anomaly. The Spirit is the seal to us of fulness of blessing. Having come from the glory into which Christ has gone, He assures us of sins put away, of righteousness completed, of acceptance, of sonship to the Father, and of liberty of access to the presence of God on high. All that was merely promised of old, as righteousness, salvation, etc., is ours now. The work is done, the Holy Ghost has come, all is made good to the souls of those who believe. How can we then thirst? I find a good deal of thirsting in the Psalms and in the Prophets; but I do not turn there for proper Christian experience. It is the language of souls under law, before redemption, and before the accomplishment of God's promises of grace. Those who are sealed with the Spirit of God have nothing left to desire, save to enjoy simply and fully what has been given.

But more—the Lord speaks of a well of water springing up into everlasting life. It is the Spirit acting as a living power in the Christian. As water always rises to its own level, so does the new man, led by the Spirit, ever rise up to God. What holy exercise should we be capable of apart from the Holy Ghost? He is the power of worship. He leads the soul beyond such systems as Jerusalem or Gerizim, up to the Father (where He is), in worship, in spirit and in truth. The Father seeketh worshippers. Wondrous thought! Once He sought sinners. Having found us as such, He now seeks us in a new way. Do we respond?

The Spirit is the power of prayer. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought”; hence we read of “praying in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. viii. 26; Jude 20). He identifies Himself with us in all our circumstances, forming our thoughts and drawing us forth suitably in prayer and intercessions.

In closing, how could we bring forth fruit without Him? (Gal. v.). Or how could we serve effectually apart from His power? (Rom. xv. 19). In every way He acts within us on earth to form us after the pattern of Christ, that we may be to His honour in this scene.

W.W.F.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

CHAPTER i. 21—28. *

²¹ **A**ND they enter into Capernaum. And immediately on the sabbath (*day*) he entered into the synagogue and **was teaching**. ²² And they were astonished at his **teaching**; for he **was teaching as having** authority, and not as the

* Words in italics should be passed over in reading as they indicate what should, for critical reasons, be omitted from the Authorised Version. Variations and additions are marked by heavy type.

scribes. ²³And there was in their synagogue a man **in the power of** an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ²⁴saying, **Ha!** what have we to do with thee, (*thou*) Jesus of Nazareth! Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. ²⁵And Jesus rebuked him, saying, **Be mute** and come out of him. ²⁶And (*when*) the unclean spirit, **having** torn him, and cried with a loud voice, (*he*) came out of him. ²⁷And (*they*) all were amazed **so as to question together** among themselves, saying, What (*thing*) is this? (*What*) **A new teaching with authority! Even the unclean spirits he commandeth**, and they (*do*) obey him. ²⁸And the report of him went out immediately into the whole region round (*about*) Galilee.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS.

Verse 21.—They went into Capernaum. This call of the four disciples (16—20) took place at Bethsaida, "the city of Andrew and Peter" (John i. 44).

Immediately. "A servant is to be known by his diligence." "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. xii. 11). What an example to us in this is the Lord!

Verse 22.—With authority. "His word does not consist of arguments which evidence the uncertainty of man, but comes with the authority of One Who knows the truth which He proclaims—authority which in fact was that of God Who can communicate truth." The Lord said, "I say unto you," in contrast with what was said of old time (Matthew v. 21, 22). The scribes laid aside the commandments of God for the traditions of men (Mark vii. 8). Jesus *proves* the authority of His word over the unclean spirit before their eyes (ver. 27).

Verse 23.—In the power of an unclean spirit. This rendering shews more clearly than the A.V. how thoroughly the poor man was held in bondage by

the evil spirit within. He speaks through the man.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that those who are in Christ are not in (*i.e.*, in the power of) the flesh but in (*i.e.*, in the power of) the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 9). So the apostle John was in (the power of) the Spirit on the Lord's Day (Rev. i. 10).

Verse 24.—Jesus of Nazareth. In this passage and some others (Matt. xxi. 11; Mark xiv. 67; xvi. 6; Luke iv. 34; xxiv. 19; John i. 45; Acts x. 38) the form of the phrase simply points out the fact of the Lord coming from the place, Nazareth. In other texts a different form of the phrase occurs, which appears to have special reference to His humiliation as a man in accordance with prophecy (Matt. ii. 23; John i. 46). As this distinction is not shewn in our translation, a list of the latter class of passages is subjoined, in which "Jesus the Nazarene" might be read in place of "Jesus of Nazareth." The term is used by:—

1. Jesus Himself to Saul, Acts xxii. 8.
2. the constables to Jesus, John xviii. 5, 7.
3. Pilate, on the cross, John xix. 19.
4. others in speaking of Jesus:—
 - (a) the crowd, Mark x. 47; Luke xviii. 37.
 - (b) the servant maid, Matt. xxvi. 71.
 - (c) Peter, Acts ii. 22; iii. 6; iv. 10.
 - (d) Paul, Acts xxvi. 9.
 - (e) false witnesses, Acts vi. 14.

A study of these passages will shew that the term, like Galilean (Matt. xxvi. 73; John vii. 52), is one of reproach, and is applied also to believers (Acts xxiv. 5).

To destroy us. The demons believe and tremble (Jas. ii. 19).

The Holy One of God. See this title in the Old Testament (Ps. xvi. 10; lxxxix. 19; Isa. xlix. 7; Hab. iii. 3). They, the unholy, own Him the Most Holy.

Verse 25.—Be mute. He suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him (ver. 34). The Lord received testimony from :—

1. John the Baptist.
2. the works He did.
3. the Father Himself.
4. the scriptures, John v. 33, 36, 37, 39.

But He refused testimony from :—

1. man, John v. 34; Mark i. 44; v. 43; vii. 36; viii. 26.
2. demons, Mark i. 25, 34; iii. 12.

He had received testimony from heaven (ver. 11); but this was from hell.

Similarly the apostle Paul following his Master's footsteps rejected testimony from the spirit of divination at Philippi (Acts xvi. 17, 18).

Verse 26.—Torn him. The spirit is malignant to the last, though the man was not hurt (Luke iv. 35).

Cried. But in obedience to Jesus did not speak.

Verse 27.—Authority. In verse 22 His authority is seen in teaching; here over the minions of Satan.

Verse 28.—Round Galilee. The report was confined to the province of Galilee, not spreading to the adjacent districts, as the A.V. might imply.

THE LORD'S LEGACY.

THE most precious legacy the Lord Jesus could leave His disciples was peace, His own peace (John xiv. 27). This is not the peace of a saved sinner (Luke vii. 50), nor of a justified believer (Rom. v. 1), but of one who in such a world as this, where evil is triumphant and Satan rules, has complete confidence in God, that His purposes

shall be accomplished. It is the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Phil. iv. 7).

I may not receive an immediate answer to my prayers, but all anxiety is gone, and my spirit, lifted above the pressure of the difficulty, walks with God in that peace which belongs to Him, and which nothing can break in upon. One cannot understand it, still less explain it to another.

This provision of grace applies in a very special way when the question is not our own temporal need, but difficulties connected with the testimony, which arise from the power of the enemy and our own enfeebled condition, which is caused by want of watchfulness and self-judgment.

This peace connects the soul with God as such in life and faith; knowledge of truth (necessary indeed for service, 2 Tim. iii. 16) will not give this power.

The faithful amongst God's earthly people, after the rapture of the church, will be exposed to terrible tribulation on account of the unrestrained power of the devil; but Isaiah xxvi. 3 presents the same blessed truth in principle. An unbroken sense of the peace of God ever determines the faithful character of outward life and testimony.

G.S.B.

CONFESSING CHRIST.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—It is a very poor sort of Christian discipleship (if, indeed, it has any right at all to the name) that is sought to be carried on in secret. There were some in the days of the Lord who believed on His name, "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God"

(John xii. 42, 43). They were able to listen quietly to the malignant plottings that were going on among the priests and rulers against the person of Jesus Christ. They carefully repressed every sign of emotion when foul calumnies and vile aspersions reached their ears against the name and character of Him Whom they believed to have come from God as the Messiah of Israel. They studied to avoid every word or look that might cause any of the other chief rulers to charge them with being followers of Jesus of Nazareth. For they were anxious to stand well with their fellows. And in their circle it was not considered a respectable thing to have any dealings with the Nazarene. They feared therefore to confess Him; for the Jews had agreed that if any man did confess He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue (John ix. 22).

I suppose you will allow that it would not be a commendable thing in a son to stand by in silence and hear the name of his mother spoken lightly of, and false accusations brought against her. You probably think a son's love for his mother, would, under such circumstances, send the blood tingling through the body of the most timid young man so that he would be bound to speak. The son that silently acquiesced in what was thus falsely declared in his hearing even nature itself teaches you to condemn.

Nevertheless it is not an unheard-of thing that there are young Christians who are sufficiently craven-hearted to hear the name of the Lord Jesus traduced without so much as uttering a word of protest. They permit the sneer or jest against Christ to pass without remark. Nay, they even appear to join the unholy mirth, lest they might be charged with being disciples of Christ, and the laugh raised against them as well as against Christ.

If I am addressing one who has been guilty of such unworthy conduct, I beseech you to consider what a wrong you are doing the Lord. Think of His love unto death. Think of His tears and blood for you. You know how He loves you. You know what He has delivered you from. You know He is the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One. And yet though you know all this you have not a word to say for Him. The Lord Himself said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32).

I have thought that some mistake the real meaning of confessing Christ. Merely to tell others in so many words, or to give them cause to think, you are a Christian, is to fall short of what is due to the Lord. As the apostle wrote, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"; so is it far better for you to speak of the Lord than to speak of yourself. It is of small use for you to mount a pedestal, as it were, and look down upon others who are unbelieving with airs of lofty superiority. If you display such a spirit you will have no influence for good whatever. It is testimony concerning Christ that is blessed of God.

No, no ; it ought not to be necessary for you to inform your companions you are a Christian ; they ought to be able to see it in your ways. If you have to label yourself, it must be because you are rather a doubtful specimen. Depend upon it the world knows a Christian when it sees one. Make it a rule therefore to talk as little as possible about yourself, and as much as you can about Christ. Always seek to say a good word for the Master. That unintelligent pieman witnessed a good confession before men who is reported to have been in the habit of re-iterating, "I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all; but Jesus Christ is my all in

all." The desire of his simple heart was to exalt the Lord.

Do not be ashamed to own Him. Remember the scripture has said that whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. It is the unbelieving who will know everlasting shame and contempt. What have you to be ashamed of?

The Spirit of God closely connects confession with the lip and faith in the heart. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9, R.V.). It is not enough to own the Lordship of Jesus when, in your chamber, you bend before Him as Lord of all and *your* Lord. Do you also tell the unbeliever that He Who died is risen and glorified? Are you prepared to maintain the perfect purity and holiness and glory of His name and person against every adversary?

I should like you to read the following extract concerning a clever medical student in one of the London hospitals not five-and-twenty years ago. "His hospital career subsequently was a most successful one; and the combination of his acknowledged attainments with the simple fearless witness he bore to the name of Christ, made the presence of such a man among the students a conscious power for good. Everyone soon got to know that S—'s Christianity was of a different stamp from that which was professed more or less by those around him. It had a true 'ring' about it. His heart was full of the love of Christ; and he was not backward in speaking of that love to others, when he could wisely use the opportunity of serving the Master."

Here then is the secret of bold confession of Christ. Get your soul saturated with a sense of the excellencies of the Lord. Let Him be before

you ever as the One Who loved you and gave Himself for you. And out of the abundance of your heart your mouth shall speak.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

Waiting.—Does "them also which sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14) refer to the souls of departed saints brought with Him to join their resurrection bodies, or to their coming "with all his saints" on the day of His appearing? The apostle had already alluded in general terms to the Lord's coming *with all* His saints (1 Thess. iii. 13). He then particularly assures the saints that those who had fallen asleep would form a part of the company "*with Him*" when He comes (1 Thess. iv. 14; v. 10). But how could this be? By a special "word of the Lord," or revelation (1 Thess. iv. 15—17), the apostle explains that it will be effected by raising dead saints and catching up the living, concluding his explanation with the words, "*So shall we ever be with the Lord.*" It is true that in the separate state the spirits of believers are with Christ (Luke xxiii. 43; Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23); but here the complete man (body, soul, and spirit) is viewed. Hence it is only after resurrection or transformation, that we shall be "with the Lord" in the sense of this section. In fact, the bringing with Jesus is shewn to depend upon His death and resurrection. Else why does the apostle say, "If we believe that Jesus died and *rose again, even so* them also," etc. Is it not that he has before him the resurrection of the dead in Christ (Rom. viii. 11) in order that they may be brought with Him? It cannot be denied that the class of *sleeping* saints is specially referred to in verse 13. And it is also certain that it is only as to their bodies that these saints sleep; as to their souls they are in conscious bliss (Phil. i. 23). Therefore the apostle asserts, in effect, that those who have been put to sleep as to their bodies, will, in the day of His appearing, be brought with Him in their glorified bodies (Col. iii. 4). The event named here (1 Thess. iv.) is "our gathering together unto him" (2 Thess. ii. 1), the raised and the changed going up together to *meet* the Lord in the air. The very term

“meeting” forbids the thought that the coming of verse 14 is prior to the resurrection, which it must be if the saints are said to come in their disembodied state.

W.G.T.B.—Ought I to join and subscribe to an association of my fellow-officials to obtain redress of grievances as to salary, etc.? Is it right to receive any benefits that may accrue, and yet not subscribe? A Christian in the execution of his duty to his employer must of necessity come in contact with the world (1 Cor. v. 10); but this seems a question of voluntary association to extort benefits by means of agitation from those in authority, and is therefore contrary to the spirit of the word which forbids such alliance (Rom. xiii. 1—7; 2 Cor. vi. 14—18; 1 Pet. ii. 18). You may have difficulty in convincing others that the subscription is not the point at issue, but an opportunity for doing so may occur if you are watchful. After all, from whom does promotion come? See Psalm lxxv. 6, 7.

W.H.B.—Will the faithful Jewish remnant be all born after the rapture of the church? If so, they will be children preaching the gospel of the kingdom. They will be “born *again*” after the church is gone, but they will not necessarily be a new generation. God will work again among His ancient people, and many of the sons of Israel will be turned to the Lord their God. By them, the “brethren” (Matt. xxv.), the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (Matt. xxiv. 14; Rev. xiv. 6, 7). A vast number from the Gentile peoples will accept this gospel (Rev. vii. 9; Matt. xxv. 33—46) and enter into millennial blessedness under the rule of Messiah (Rev. xxi. 24). Kindly say if this does not meet your difficulty.

S.G.—We are sorry to hear of the circumstances you mention. You have truly an interest in our prayers. We think you will find the best of advice and guidance in 1 Peter iii. 1—6.

K.M.—Explain “Swept and garnished” (Luke xi. 25). By whom was this done? The Lord in this illustration depicts the state of the Jews in relation to idolatry, which is a direct cheat of the devil (1 Cor. x. 19, 20). The unclean spirit is the spirit of idolatry which had taken possession of the nation and was the cause of their captivity (2 Chr. xxxvi. 14—18). From their return from Babylon in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah until the days of the Lord, they were in the state described as “empty, swept, and garnished” (Matt. xii. 44), that is, they had abandoned idolatry. But

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in the last state of that wicked generation, in the days of antichrist, when the abomination (O.T. word for idol) of desolation is set up in the holy place, the power of Satan over the Jews will be sevenfold greater than before (Rev. xiii. 11—18). The "swept and garnished" state therefore was the platter clean only outside—outward propriety but inward depravity.

Reception.—In the case of simple souls we think the practice is as you suggest. Though, for obvious reasons, more care is necessary in receiving from suspected quarters.

Christians and Sacred Cantatas.—In all questions of a practical nature especially, we hope our young friends will not fail to seek *personal guidance from the Lord*, and what is more important still, never to act till they *are sure* they have His guidance. We can only point out principles founded on the word of God, which they must seek wisdom to apply to the particular case. (1) It is surely an exceedingly solemn matter for a Christian to seek to entertain a worldly audience by singing "sacred" subjects. How can one who loves the Lord bear to think of His name, and even His sufferings, taken upon unholy lips and for unholy ears? We must not cast our pearls before swine. (2) To use the proceeds of the concert for charitable purposes appears to us no justification whatever. How does it appear in the eyes of the Lord, that His servants make persons pay to hear them sing about Him? Judas was not justified because he professed to think more about the bag for the poor than about the Lord (John xii. 4—8). (3) To purchase a ticket and become one of the audience amounts to tacit approval of the proceedings. We read the Lord was the "song of the drunkards" (Ps. lxix. 12); would we willingly have listened to them? While we do not compare "sacred cantatas" altogether to such songs, is it not a frequent occurrence that the performers know not Him of Whom they sing? (4) Surely reverence for the Lord would keep a believer out of the audience as well as out of the choir. (5) In our opinion "sacred concerts" are the more dangerous as they assume an air of sanctity they do not possess, which is likely, nevertheless, to entrap the unwary. The Christian has his songs, the world has its songs; it is always most serious to attempt in any way to mix the two.

A.R.—What was the Urim and the Thummim (Exod. xxviii. 30)? It means "lights and perfections," and was inseparable from the breastplate which bore the names of the tribes. It appears to signify that the people were thus always graciously represented before God according to His light and perfection in spite of their failure.

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FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

THE terms, "death" and "life," are used in the Gospel of John with great frequency to denote, not the departure of the soul from the body, but man's spiritual condition Godward. It is shewn that the infinite love of God for the world caused Him to give His Only-begotten Son that the believer might have everlasting life. While, on the other hand, it is stated with fearful emphasis that the unbeliever shall not see life (John iii. 36).

It also comes out that without the possession of this life it is impossible for man to know God, or to have communion with the Father and the Son. So the Lord Himself declared in John xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He Himself was that Eternal Life; and, moreover, He was here to bestow it, wheresoever there was faith in Him, and in the One Who sent Him.

Further, the presence of the Son of God in this world brought out with startling vividness the real state of man in his relations with God. It was proved that there existed an utter incapacity on the part of man to recognize that He was the Son of God.

It was such as could not be described as a state of torpor; it was worse; it was a state of absolute death as far as participation in anything divine was concerned.

There was activity enough in the ways of sin. The Jews sought earnestly to kill Jesus; but why? Because He said He was the Son of God. When Pilate would have released the Lord, they refused to hear of such a thing; but why? We have a law, they said, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. Thus the very reason they give for their hostility to the Lord, only proves they were entirely ignorant of the fact that He was the Son of the living God. They were utterly *dead* to the beautiful display of divine love in His person.

Hence, it is made plain that there was a great gulf between the Son of God and those to whom He came. This gulf was as wide as that between life and death—a gulf athwart which there can be no line of communion.

An illustration of this may be taken from the creation. When Jehovah took of the dust of the ground and moulded the human form, it was no more than a dead inert mass, irresponsive to Him, until the Creator breathed into the nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. This life, thus and then given, sinless and unfallen, was fitted to hold converse with God (Gen. iii. 8). But as soon as sin entered, the link was severed. Man feared God and fled from Him, anticipating his expulsion from Eden. An insurmountable barrier had risen up between man and God. A state of spiritual death fell upon Adam and his family.

This state was true from the beginning and is shewn in Genesis iii; but the full and final test was when Christ came. He laid down the great marks

of distinction between the living and the non-living. Those that heard His word had life, for He gave it to them; but those that believed not were without life.

This fact, surely, is of the most weighty significance. What can be more solemnizing than to learn that the Son of God passed through this world as through a moral and spiritual graveyard. Divine love had its perfect manifestation, but there was no response to that love. A deathly stillness was upon the hearts of men. If any came to Him, they received life (John v. 40), but otherwise the world was a scene of desolation and despair, where death had universal sway.

What a dreary waste it must have appeared to the heart of the Son of God! Yet in Him was life. He was the bread of God come down from heaven to give life to the world (John vi. 33). "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." So that, though the presence of the Lord threw into bold relief the state of spiritual death in which man was, it is, nevertheless, a theme for endless praise that a remedy was found to be in Himself. If man had no life, the Son of God could and would bestow it. For He was the Life as well as the Way and the Truth.

Moreover, it is of importance to know that what the Son was doing then, He is doing still. For He announced in words which have not yet been revoked, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." His voice gives life now as ever. Those that possess this life are said to have passed out of death into life (John v. 24). They have passed out of one state into another. The word used implies this; it is that employed in John xiii. 1,

in reference to the departure of Jesus out of this world unto the Father.

A very practical question arises with regard to this point. Are there any marks that distinguish such as have passed out of death into life? There are three; the first two are found in John v. 24 and the third in 1 John iii. 14.

1. Hearing the word of the Son.
2. Believing the Father.
3. Loving the brethren.

1. *Hearing the word of the Son.* When the Lord raised the widow's son, He said to the dead body, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." To Jairus' daughter, He said, "Maid, arise." To the brother of Martha and Mary, He said, "Lazarus, come forth." In each case, the dead heard that voice and lived. In a spiritual way, Saul of Tarsus heard the voice of the Son from heaven; and the new life bestowed recognized the identity of the Lord of glory and Jesus of Nazareth Whom he was persecuting.

Have you, dear reader, heard the voice of Jesus? Can you say,

"I have heard the voice of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have seen the face of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied."

2. *Believing the Father.* The Father Who sent the Son is equal in purpose of love with the Son. He had come in His Father's name. In the question of eternal life He and His Father are one (John x. 30). He was upon earth to set forth God as Father. He that receiveth the Son receiveth the Father that sent Him (John xiii. 20). In the blessing of man therefore the Father and the Son wrought together, as the Lord said to the Jews,

“My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” This roused their ire further. But the Lord established that the new life He bestows is characterised by hearing the words of the Son and by believing the Father.

3. *Loving the brethren.* This third test is in 1 John iii. 14. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

Those who possess eternal life love all those similarly blessed. There is a common bond of life, which displays itself in mutual love.

These are divine tests which we ought to apply with all solemnity to our state before God.

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.

IN John vii. the Spirit of God is brought before us again under the figure of Living Water, but the circumstances and instruction for our souls are different. The feast of Tabernacles had come round, and all were going up to Jerusalem to keep it. It is noticeable in John's Gospel that the feasts are always called “the feasts of the Jews” (ii. 13, vi. 4, vii. 2, xi. 55), whereas in Leviticus xxiii. they are declared to be “the feasts of Jehovah.” This altered way of speaking of them is not without meaning; they had become mere forms; they were no longer occasions when loyal hearts gathered up to God's centre, because moved by a sense of His goodness. This had faded completely, and they had degenerated into merely ritualistic observances. The Lord's brethren urged Him to go up to the feast, to avail Himself of the opportunity of making Himself known to the world (John vii. 1—5). They had no faith in His person. They

saw not in Him the sent one of the Father, here for the accomplishment of the Father's will and glory. Their counsel was purely carnal; what else could be expected? The Lord did not go up when others did, but in the midst of the feast He went up as it were in a private way. He went up, not to join in the hollow rejoicings of the season, but to meet the longing of any individual seeker who might happen to be among that religious crowd.

The feast of Tabernacles was a memorial of Israel's passage through the wilderness, and typifies the coming kingdom of Messiah when all Israel shall be restored and be found in the land of their fathers, filled with the goodness of the Lord. How solemn therefore, that He should have to take His place entirely outside of its celebrations!

God hates mere forms. He cannot bear men who honour Him with their lips, while all the time their hearts are far from Him. Thus it was at Jerusalem. The feast was running its course; ritual was in full swing; all were filled with rejoicing; but the Son of God held Himself entirely aloof.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink" (John vii. 37). It is possible there were some thirsty souls in the throng. Hearts in whom divine craving has been created by the Holy Spirit cannot be satisfied with the mere forms of religion. These satisfy flesh. Too often they serve as a veil to hide from the soul its true condition in the sight of a Holy God. Flesh loves religion and the more pompous it is, the more it is preferred. But true hearts want something more; whether they know it or not Christ alone can satisfy them. Here we see the rejected Jesus outside all the display and religiousness of the hour, inviting any thirsty souls to come to Him

and drink. What such could not find in mere religion, they would find in Him. And is it not so to-day? Can all the carnal forms and display of Christendom slake the thirst of a soul who is feeling after God? Nay, they keep the soul at a distance; they cast a cloud over it and plunge it into distress and doubt. But Jesus can satisfy every longing. He is still outside. Those who really seek Him must go forth to Him without the camp, as Hebrews xiii speaks. Having found Him the heart is divinely satisfied. It never thirsts again. How can one thirst, knowing deliverance and acceptance, being assured of the Father's love, enjoying liberty of access to God without a veil, filled with the Holy Ghost, and taken up with Christ?

The Lord adds more. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (vers. 38, 39). Here we have more than satisfaction for our souls, the gift of the Holy Spirit as an overflowing power. Observe, there could be no such thing until Jesus was glorified. He had received the Spirit personally at Jordan, as an expression of the infinite delight of the Father in Him; but He must go into death and accomplish redemption ere He could receive the Spirit in a new way for those who believe in His name. (Luke iii. 22; Acts ii. 33).

Having thus the Spirit of God, we are responsible to be channels of blessing while passing through this arid scene. But I must be satisfied myself, yea, more than satisfied, ere I can impart to others. I cannot give away if I have not enough myself. What a test for all our hearts! Have we enough?

Have we found in Christ risen and glorified sufficient to satisfy every desire of our souls? He was enough for Paul, everything else in comparison was as loss and dung (Phil. iii.). "Freely ye have received, freely give." All around are needy souls. The world cannot meet their need, religion cannot; those who have the truth can, by presenting Christ in all the glory of His person and the efficacy of His work. But it must flow from the inward parts, or but little blessing will result. That which comes from the head, while it may please the ear and charm the intellect, leaves the poor famished soul where it was before, unsatisfied, unfed. May the Spirit of God work so uninterruptedly in us all, ministering Christ to our souls, that we may overflow in happy, holy service, to the Lord's glory and the blessing of man.

W.W. F.

VISITING CHRISTIAN JAPS AT CHATHAM.

ON Saturday, 13th March, 1897, two friends and I went on board the Japanese battleship, *Fuji*, as she lay in one of the great docks of Chatham Dockyard. Having some Japanese gospel portions and scripture cards to distribute we were admitted on board.

As we were attempting to explain our errand by the aid of a few Japanese words and the Chinese written character (which is largely used for classical purposes by the Chinese, and more or less familiar to the Japanese reader, illustrated by the lettering in Chinese on the ribbons of the seamen's caps);

the English caretaker came to our help, saying, "I will call one of the Christians."

He soon returned, accompanied by a happy-looking young Jap, who commenced to exchange greetings and to make use of the gospel cards which we had brought, and, further, to turn to one or two passages in the Gospels by way of Christian greeting.

Two more of the Christian sailors shortly after joined our company, and we were soon engaged separately in conversation. As I was talking to one of the new comers who read and pointed out passages from his own copy of the New Testament, one of my companions shewed me with great joy a card which one of the new comers had given him, on which was written in good English characters, "Unto you which believe he is precious."

So, for about an hour we continued to communicate as best we were able with these interesting visitors. In the midst of the conversation the question, "Are you a Christian?" was more than once asked of us by one and another of their number.

The next (Sunday) afternoon three of us again visited the ship in hope of being able to induce some of them to come to the Sunday school and share more freely in the hearing of the word. This, however, we found could not be done, as none were allowed to leave the ship on that day.

We were, however, admitted on board and were soon surrounded by some of the sailors, when one of them asked me again the same question, "Are you a Christian?"

Presently we were joined by the senior amongst them, with whom we had conversed the day before, and were by him invited to the lower deck. We were soon seated at one of the tables, and writing materials being produced, an hour was spent in mutual exhortation by reading and writing

命をすつより大なる愛
 (約翰福音十五章三十一節)
 人の友の爲に己の生

portions of the word. The annexed example is a specimen which was written at the table, being the Japanese version of John xv. 13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Thus having sought to impart comfort "by the mutual faith of one and the other," we took our leave of these interesting visitors, meditating, amongst other thoughts engendered by the circumstances of our intercourse with them, upon the

blessing with which the Lord has accompanied His own word in the Islands of Japan, and the honour He has put upon those of their people who twenty-eight years ago united in asking those who brought the gospel message to their shores, to give them *only the word of God and none of the traditions of men*. So, like those of Berea of old, they are evidently characterised by the love and searching of the scriptures.

The next day I encountered two of them in a shop, and was again accosted by the enquiry, "Are you a Christian?" Is there not a lesson in this? Have not many in our land yet to learn that it is not being born in England nor even the administration of certain ordinances that make a Christian? There must be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that faith which enables us to rejoice and say, "Unto us who believe he is precious." May this question receive the attention from each that it deserves.

Reader, if you have not this faith, think of your solemn condition. And if you know the blessed

joy and peace of believing, may the examples of the Bereans of old, and the Christian Japs on board the *Fuji*, awaken anew your desires after that word in which are unfolded the glories of the Person and the perfections of the work of Him in Whom you believe.

T.J.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTERS xii.—xvi.

AFTER the episode of the three chapters preceding, the direct course of the epistle proceeds. The apostle beseeches the saints by the compassions of God, so fully shewn, to present their bodies (for they are now vessels of the Spirit) a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God, their intelligent service or one governed by the word. Outwardly they were not to be conformed to this age, yet not by mere externalism, but changed by the renewing of the mind unto their proving the will of God, good, well-pleasing, and perfect. They were to be lowly, and obedient to God in the Spirit, each acting according to the place God chose, many members in one body, but each in his own function. The gifts pass from those in the word to moral and gracious service in the varying circumstances of saints on earth, blessed with all good and its expression to all, in a spirit of gracious and holy sympathy. Such is chapter xii.

In chapter xiii. the saints are set in their due relation to higher authorities of the world. Every soul was to be subject. For there is no authority but of God; and the existing authorities have been

ordained of God. To resist authority is to oppose God's ordinance; and they that do shall receive judgment, not "damnation" (which is an extravagant mistake here as in xiv. 23), but chastening (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 29—32). Conscience therefore acts, and not merely dread of punishment. The Christian is to pay honour as every other debt, love alone the due that can never be paid off. And love works no ill, and is the law's fulfilment. Besides, it is already time to wake up: salvation, our deliverance for glory, is nearer than when we believed. As in day-light let us walk becomingly, not as the dissolute world, but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and making no provision for lusts of the flesh.

From chapter xiv. to xv. 7 is the great seat of brotherly forbearance as to things above which "the strong" rose in liberty, but which burdened "the weak" with scruple. Many Jewish saints did not realise their deliverance from meats forbidden, or from days enjoined by the law; which Gentile believers knew to be outside Christianity. This led to friction and trial: to judging on the one side; and to despising on the other. The apostle does not hesitate to declare for freedom, but urges receiving the weak, not for discussions of such points. Conscience, though uninstructed, must not be forced: doing, or not doing, "to the Lord" is a great peace-maker. Each shall give account of himself to God. We are therefore now if strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, receiving one another, as Christ received us, to God's glory.

This question, to which the union of Jew and Gentile naturally gave occasion, leads on to the apostle's explaining God's ways from verse 8 and onward. Jesus was minister of circumcision for God's truth to stablish the promises of (*i.e.*, made

to) the fathers, and that the Gentiles (who had not promises) should glorify God for His mercy. And proofs are produced not only from the Psalms xviii. 49, cxvii. 1, but from the law (Deut. xxxii. 43) and the prophets (Isa. xi. 10). He appeals to the God of hope to fill the saints in Rome with all joy and peace in believing, and give them to abound in hope; and the more so as he had no doubt of their actual blessing and ability to admonish each other. But he does not hide from them the grace given him by God to do Christ's public service toward the Gentiles in the holy work of the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. What a difference from Israelitish holiness with its fleshly mark of circumcision!

Then he speaks of the extensive work he had already wrought in might of signs and wonders, in power of the Spirit, preaching the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum round about, and this where He was not named (as in Isa. lii. 15). This had been the hindrance; but as he had no more of this work in those parts undone, and had long desired, he would visit them on his way to Spain. He was going now to Jerusalem in remembrance of the poor saints, as those of Macedonia and Achaia wished with their contributions; after which he would set off by them into Spain, assured to come with the fulness of the blessing of Christ (Omit "the gospel of"). But he beseeches their earnest prayers for him that he might be delivered from the disobedient in Judea, and that his service in Jerusalem might be acceptable to the saints. The Acts of the Apostles shew how he got to Rome.

Chapter xvi. is the fuller of personal commendations and salutations to individuals, as he was as yet a stranger there. But what associations

of love and faith ! What comfort to Phœbe going to Rome ! What joy to Priscilla and Aquila in such a mention from him ! and to the assembly in their house !—a notice of much interest. Then follows a roll of brothers and sisters with the distinctive marks of honour which a single eye does not forget, closing with a call to them all to salute one another, and to receive the salutation of the churches of Christ. It is the mind of heaven on earth. In verse 17 he is equally earnest in warning against those that make divisions and stumbling-blocks contrary to the doctrine learnt. They formed divisions, but were to be avoided. For such serve their own belly, he says with disgust, whatever their fair speech to deceive the hearts of the harmless. The obedience of the Roman saints was known : so they should be wise unto the good, and simple as to the evil. And a second time he commends them to the God of peace, and more fully and triumphantly. Yet he adds the names of saluting Christians with him, and the scribe of the epistle, Tertius ; and after more salutation prays that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with them all. Then he himself ascribes glory to Him that was able to strengthen them according to his gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery as to which silence had been kept in everlasting times, but now manifested, and by prophetic scriptures according to the eternal God's command made known for obedience of faith to all the Gentiles ; to an only wise God be glory for the ages. Amen.

W.K.

God loves us, not for what we are, but for what He can make us.

THE INCOMPARABLE LOVE OF GOD.

HUMAN AND DIVINE LOVE CONTRASTED.

HUMAN love of whatever degree or kind yearns for and insists upon an object which it believes to be worthy of it. But it is one of the distinguishing characteristics of divine love that its object affords no originating impulse whatever. For "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

It is well for us to lay the thought of man's real condition much upon our hearts; since it were comparatively a small matter to point out that the ephemeral creature, man, was unable to shew any excellence capable of exciting the love of One so far removed from him as his Almighty Creator.

Indeed, reasoning from this thought only, some have *falsely concluded that it is incredible, and even impossible, for God to entertain even the slightest regard for man upon earth.* Nevertheless, the astonishing truth, exceeding all human conception, and revealed, not in nature but in scripture, is that, though man is in a desperate state of irreconcilable hatred and antagonism to everything divine, *God loves him in spite of all.*

GOD'S LOVE IS NOW MADE KNOWN.

Neither is this a matter of speculative theory, but an *actual fact*, bearing the highest credentials. God's love has now been manifested. It is no longer a secret of the divine bosom; for its display was perfect and sufficient, being made in and by the person of the Only-begotten Son of God, Who came tabernacling in flesh as the only competent exponent of that love. "In this was

manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John iv. 9).

GOD'S LOVE PROVED BY CHRIST'S DEATH
FOR HIS ENEMIES.

Moreover, God has been pleased to allow His love to be *tested and proved*. And the proof He has given is that which ranks as most convincing in man's estimation. For the fullest possible attestation of one's love is to lay down one's life. No sacrifice can exceed this. "Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life" (Job ii. 4). But *Christ laid down His life*, as He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John x. 15).

Among men, however, it is barely conceivable that such an extreme sacrifice could be made for any but a friend or benefactor. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rom. v. 7, 8).

Thus, blessed be His name, God has abounded above the thoughts as well as the sin and bitter enmity of His creatures, and bestowed His Son both as the propitiation for our sins and as the incomparable witness of His own incomparable love (1 John iv. 9, 10).

DO YOU BELIEVE IT?

Have *you* ever known and believed that God is love? Is not the proof sufficient for you? God calls you to look at Christ and Calvary for the exhibition of His love, and not the things around you.

The world is full of the fruits of sin ; yet physical pain, mental anguish, and universal sorrow do not deny the goodness of God but proclaim the evil of man.

Strange that though the Son of God came from heaven to stem the overflowing tide of woe, so many still give credence to the devil's lie, rather than to God's truth that He is love. But let it not be forgotten that those who continue to resist this super-eminent love will assuredly add to the weight of their everlasting condemnation.

ONE THING I DO.

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

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

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

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

J.N.D.

FRAGMENTS.

FIRST LOVE.—We are in perilous times, and seducers are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Nothing but first love will keep us. I have thought lately that there is a very close connection between Revelation iii. 5 and xix. 8. In few words, though the subject is a wide one, I think that “first works” (the fruits of *first love* to Christ) are the only approved ones in that glad day. First love thinks only of *Him*, and does all to *Him*,—small things or great. Love to souls is in *itself* right, but that may become *first*; then it is not right. And only what is right will adorn the bride in that day. Oh, to love *Him* because He first loved us, and never to forget that He loved *me* when I had no love for *Him*!

A WORD OF COMFORT.—No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous. There is an “afterward,” and the Lord waiteth for the “peaceable fruit.” Looking unto Jesus, and not forgetful of the exhortation which speaketh unto us as unto *children*, are the blessed consolations which the Spirit ministers to us in all our sorrows and difficulties. Every thing distasteful to the natural man works for good to the spiritual life.

X.

ACTS ix. 16.—“How great things he must *suffer* for my name's sake.” This was said of the apostle who *did* more than any other. But what he *suffered* was of greater consequence than what he *did* in the eyes of the All-loving and All-wise. It is needless to point out the exceeding beauty of this striking fact. But how it reveals the finger of the Holy Spirit! Surely an uninspired writer would have rather revealed his great deeds.

R. B. JR.

AN UNDIVIDED HEART.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—You should earnestly seek to be whole-hearted in your christian life and testimony. Observe how many times the phrase, “whole heart,” occurs in Psalm cxix. It embodies the thought that thoroughness must characterize all who have to do with God.

This was pre-eminently so in the Man, Christ Jesus. He could say in the fullest sense of the words, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” He was literally consumed with the desire to do the will of the Father Who sent Him.

So was it with the apostle Paul. Few servants of Christ, if any, had so many strings to their bows as he had. Yet he writes to the assembly in Philippi, “*This one thing I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” He compares himself to a runner in the stadium, fastening his eyes upon the goal ahead where the prize is in view, and straining every nerve to be foremost in the race. He bends and concentrates his entire energies upon the attainment of the object before him. To relax his attention even for a moment is but to court failure.

So if you would gain any distinction whatever in the path of christian faithfulness, you must be unswerving in your aim and effort. Set the Lord always before your face; fasten your eyes upon Him; firmly close your lips; and go forward, “cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart.”

Even in ordinary matters of knowledge and action, the principle to which we now refer is recognised. For a man to accomplish anything

of value, it is found to be absolutely essential that he should devote the whole of his powers to one end. The student commonly selects one science, which he follows exclusively. It may be geology, or botany, or any other, but no person hopes to attain eminence in more than one. Indeed, it is often found that a branch only of a single science is sufficient to occupy the studies of a lifetime. Life is so short, the ramifications of knowledge are so complicated, and man's mental abilities are so limited, that whatever the range of research may be, unless the results are collected and used for the elucidation of some particular point, time and energy are practically wasted.

Our present concern, however, is with spiritual things, and divine exhortation is independent of support from the practical wisdom of the world. I do hope you will lay it well to heart that you should make absolutely everything you engage in subserve to the interests of Christ. The one thing you are here for is to testify for the Lord. Therefore in all your reading, in all your pursuits, in your companionship and society, see that everything is made to help to a bright and faithful witness for Christ.

Remember it is the double-minded who are unstable in their ways. You may have many advantages; but if you are unstable like Reuben, you surely will not excel. You cannot serve God and mammon; so the Lord Himself warned. If you seek a name and fame in the world, you will miss a place of honour in the roll of saintly worthies.

Infirmity of purpose characterised the ten revolted tribes of Israel. They were feeble-minded, and were drawn away into the heathen idolatries around. So Jehovah said of them, Ephraim hath mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned (Hosea vii. 8). The figure is an

expressive one. In the process of baking, the Orientals turn their cakes over and over that they may be thoroughly and evenly exposed to the influences of the heat. An unturned cake is burnt not baked, and it is of course useless, unless both sides are equally baked.

So you should remember that any attempt on your part to serve two masters *must* end in disastrous failure. Demas allowed his heart to set itself upon the world, and soon the difficult path of testimony grew irksome to him. The end of it was that he forsook Paul the aged prisoner of Jesus Christ. And so will it be with you. Directly the love of the world and its things enters the soul, love for Christ and for the things above is sure to wane. It is so easy to drift into the world where there is want of watchfulness.

Bear in mind that declension *always commences in the heart*. Hence the exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." But it is also written, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Let Christ be before your heart as your treasure. Let Him have supreme sway over the powers of your whole being. An undivided heart is the secret of true and faithful testimony for Christ.

Watch therefore against anything that seeks to intrude between your heart and the person of the Lord. Upon the first sign of anything that displaces Christ in your affections, confess it at once that you may be restored. Is not the Lord worthy of the service of your whole self? Depend upon it there is no one nor anything else that is worth living for.

"There's nought on earth to rest upon;
All things are changing here—
The smiles of joy we gaze upon,
The friends we count most dear ;

One Friend alone is changeless,
The One too oft forgot,
Whose love has stood for ages past ;
Our Jesus changeth not.

"The sweetest flower on earth,
That sheds its fragrance round,
Ere evening comes has withered,
And lies upon the ground ;
This dark and dreary desert
Has only one green spot ;
'T is found in living pastures,
With Him Who changeth not."

I am,

Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

E.B.D.—Can you offer an explanation of "**The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened**" (Rev. xv. 5)? The temple (*naos*) refers only to the "holy" and "most holy" places, and does not include the courts where the brazen altar and the laver were. The tabernacle of testimony takes in the whole structure. The prophet therefore sees the holy place in heaven, no longer on earth, and from thence issue the messengers of judgment.

DAN.—"Let the dead bury their dead." What does it mean? Let those who are spiritually dead and utterly unawakened to the claims of the kingdom of God allow their filial feelings to keep them at home with their fathers till their death ; but he was to go at once and preach the kingdom. It is hardly to be supposed that his father was lying dead at that moment. But he was putting Christ in the second place. Compare "Seek ye *first*" and "Suffer me *first*" (Matt. vi. 33 ; Luke ix. 59, 60). **Who is the son of peace?** (Luke x. 6). It should be "*a*," not "*the*," son of peace ; and means one peacefully disposed towards them, who would welcome them to his hospitality. Compare "son of perdition," "son of consolation," "sons of this world," "sons of light." **Did eternal life come by doing the works of the law? What is the force of**

“This do, and thou shalt live” (Luke x. 28)? The law *offered* life (Rom. x. 5) but could not *give* it (Gal. iii. 21). The fault was with man who could not do what the law commanded. So it has always been true that the just *lives* by faith (Gal. iii. 11—12) and not by deeds of law.

W.H.P.—Why is it “fellowship with him” (God), and “fellowship one with another” (1 John i. 6, 7)? It must be remembered that John writes of the absolute spiritual status of the believer before God. So that “walking in the light” refers to a Christian, and “walking in darkness” an unbeliever. Verse 6 is a solemn test of one’s position. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” It is an utter impossibility for one doing the works of darkness to have fellowship with Him Who is light, for that is the privilege of one walking in the light. In verse 7, we have two additional privileges of those who walk there:—(1) fellowship with one another; and (2) cleansing by the blood of Jesus. It is not thought necessary to state in verse 7 what is implied in verse 6, *viz.*—that we have fellowship with Him.

W.E.—Why the change from “love of Christ” to “love of God” (Rom. viii. 35, 39)? In verse 35 Christ is named, as following the preceding verse, with which it is connected. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ that died, &c.? In verse 39 the apostle rises to the grand climax. The source of this love is God Himself. Notice even here God’s love is said to be “in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. viii. 39). **In what way did Balaam cast a stumbling block before Israel (Rev. ii. 14)?** It would seem the women of Midian are blamed (Num. xxxi. 16). Balaam was responsible, for it was by his advice that the Midianites tempted Israel in this way. See both the texts you refer to. **Is it implied that the burnt offering (Lev. xvi. 24) was not of a sweet savour, since that fact is not stated?** We think not, as even the lowest form of the burnt sacrifice is stated to be of a sweet savour unto Jehovah (Lev. i. 17).

S.G.—What part should Christians take in the celebration of the coming Jubilee? The part of Christians is clearly to give thanks to God for His answer to the prayers of 1 Timothy ii. 2, in that we have been enabled for so long to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. **What does “honour the king” mean (1 Peter ii. 17)?** Render due respect and obedience to the one placed in supreme authority. **Starting hymns.**

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As a rule, we should say it would be a breach of decorum; but there may be exceptions.

A.M.H.—Please explain Romans viii. 28. What is your difficulty? Every event of our lives is so controlled by our God as to result in blessing for us.

M.W.—Kindly explain Romans vii. 25. It is the conclusion of the experiences of Romans vii.; and happy the soul that has reached it. The two natures are contrasted in their spheres of action which will never change their characters. The mind serves the law of God; the flesh the law of sin. Though we should remember the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death.

A.J.K.—What is the meaning of the kingdom of heaven suffering violence (Matt. xi. 12)? It is never an easy matter to be a follower of Christ. The "violence" here is strong energetic faith, breaking down every difficulty which the Jews would find in entering the kingdom when the King was to be crucified and then to depart to be unseen in the heavens. Even John, the greatest born of women, was stumbled because there was no outward display of the kingdom-glory.

W.T.—"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10). Please explain. It means exactly what it says. We are to give the most earnest heed that our whole conduct may correspond with the place to which we are called and for which we are chosen. Verses 5 to 8 shew what we are to be diligent in. **What are the "altar" and "camp" (Heb. xiii. 10—13)?** We have here a contrast between Christianity and Judaism. Those who were serving the tabernacle (Jews) had no right to partake of the "altar" (1 Cor. x. 18), that is, to have communion with Christ. The allusion is to such sacrifices as the priests partook of in the holy place (Num. xviii. 9, 10). The "camp" is the place of worldly religious profession, outside of which the Christian is called to take his stand. In such a place Christ suffered—"without the gate." It is ours to be associated with Him, "bearing his reproach." See the action of Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 7—10).

W.C.—Accepting money from people of the world for Christian work. We certainly ought not to encourage unbelievers in the thought that by contributing to a good work they qualify themselves to obtain salvation which is "without money and without price." "Thy money perish with thee," said the apostle to an unconverted man, "because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts viii. 20). See also 3 John 7.

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WINNING CHRIST.

IT is a total mistake to suppose that a Christian has no object to live for ; that he escapes the eternal consequences of his sins, but that he must on that account pass on in an aimless existence, waiting about in the world until he is transported to brighter scenes above.

It is equally an error to imagine that a believer is to concentrate his energies to amass wealth, to win fame and popularity, and, by any and every means, to exalt himself in the eyes of his fellows. The man of the world, if he has any purpose at all in him, can do no other. But we are not of the world even as Christ was not of the world (John xvii. 6, 14).

Let the earthly-minded strive for the perishing prizes of the moment. Let our minds be set on the heavenly things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. iii. 1, 2). Let our gaze be directed on high.

In that direction was the gaze of the apostle Paul. The vision of his faith forced its way through the very heavens right up to the throne of God itself. There, encircled by the effulgent glories lavished upon Him, was the blessed Christ of God, Who had loved the mad persecutor and given Himself for him.

As he looked upon that glorious sight, his enraptured heart lost all concern for earthly things. As one looking for a moment at the sun shining in its strength is thereby blinded to everything else, so was it with Paul gazing on Christ in glory. All beside he counted but dung, and flung away as worthless when compared with the bright vision above.

The all-absorbing desire of his soul was that He might win Christ (Phil. iii. 8). He sought that the autobiography of his life here might be summed up in one word—Christ (Phil. i. 21). The apostle was so taken up with his Master, that he could not rest until he was conformed to Him in everything—in humility and lowliness of mind, in suffering and in death.

Of course there was the certainty of being like Christ at His coming; but Paul wanted it here in this world; and to this end he strove with all his energy that he might win Christ.

Beloved, what do we know of such an intensity of purpose in our lives? Are we like the apostle, animated by an all-consuming desire to win Christ? Oh, to have that blessed One more before us, that the brilliancy of His glories may cause the things of this world to fade from our eyes.

THE SPIRIT AS ADVOCATE AND TEACHER.

IN John xiv. we are in a sensibly different atmosphere. The Lord uses figures no longer, but speaks directly of the Spirit of God as a divine person, Whom He would send from the Father after His ascension on high. The communications of John xiii.—xvi. are always precious to the

believer's heart. The Lord was just about to leave His own. The hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father. Before doing so (and His pathway lay through death), He gathered His disciples around Him in Jerusalem, and put the facts of their new position before them, or as far as it was possible to do so at that time. He promised to return and introduce them into the Father's house. He promised to manifest Himself to them in a spiritual way, as a result of their keeping His word, and (what is particularly before us now) spoke to them of the other Comforter, Whom He would pray the Father to send.

John xiv. 16, 17. The Spirit could not come until Jesus was gone. He was not given to all Old Testament believers, as now to all who are Christ's. Redemption must be accomplished, and Christ must be glorified as man at the right hand of God, ere such a gift could be granted to the saints. The work is done, Jesus has gone, and the Comforter is present. The word rendered "Comforter" here (*Paraclete*) is the same as that rendered "Advocate" in 1 John ii. 1. It means one who takes up the cause of another, and who pledges himself to see us through all our difficulties. What a provision for our souls in such a world as this! He has come to abide for ever, in contrast with the Lord Jesus, Who was only with His disciples for a short time and then returned to the glory. The world cannot share in this. Some have taught otherwise, but the scripture is very plain to a simple mind. The Spirit has not become incarnate, as the Lord, therefore it cannot see Him, neither does it know Him. "But ye know him," the Lord says, "for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." This is true Christian knowledge and experience. But how many fall short of it! How much real unbelief there is abroad as to the personal presence

of the Divine Spirit! Many in this day pray for His outpouring, or for a fresh baptism, while others dread lest He should leave them because of their shortcomings and failures. But He is to be with us for ever—the righteous basis being the sacrifice of Christ.

John xiv. 26. The Lord promised the disciples also that He should be their Teacher, and bring all things to remembrance that He had said to them. Much that the Lord told them they could not understand then, but when the Spirit came, what a flood of light was thrown back upon all the gracious communications of the Lord Jesus!

John xv. 26, 27. Coming from the glory, He would bear witness to Christ. He would bear testimony to the glory into which He has entered for us, that our souls might be formed by it. What could we know of this but for Him? What could Rebekah have known of Isaac and his father's house, had not Eliezer told her, who came from thence? The Spirit loves to bring before us the blessedness which is now His, and to assure our hearts that all is ours because we are in Him before God. He would use the disciples also. They knew all the facts of the Lord's life and should bear testimony to all the things they had seen and heard. We know how this enraged the Jewish rulers, in the Acts of the Apostles.

John xvi. 7—15. Now the Lord goes a step further. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away." Filled as they were with Jewish thoughts, this was inexplicable. It seemed rather incalculable loss. They looked for a kingdom of glory on earth, for the restoration of Israel's scattered tribes, and for all that the Old Testament prophets had spoken of to the fathers. They knew not yet that His death and resurrection would inaugurate a new order of blessing, heavenly

in character, of which the indwelling Spirit is the Divine Seal. God has brought in an altogether better thing than the kingdom, though He will not disappoint faith as to that in its day. Souls who believe in the Son while He is thus hidden in heaven, are privileged to know the blessedness of accomplished redemption, of sonship with the Father, and of union with the exalted Lord as members of one Body. All this could not be known until Jesus went away and the Spirit of God came down. His presence here is solemn as regards the world. He convicts it of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The world's greatest sin is its rejection of Christ; and this the Spirit presses. Righteousness is only to be seen in Christ at God's right hand—there is none here. Judgment has been pronounced, because the prince of the world is judged, and the world and its chosen prince are to share it together. Judgment is not yet executed, but will fall when God's present purpose of grace is completed.

As regards the saints, the Spirit is the guide into all truth. He is the Spirit of truth. The Lord had many things to say but the disciples could not bear them then. They were not in a position to enter into the circle of truths which we call Christianity, until the Spirit came. But now we are fully furnished. We have the complete word of God, Paul being used to complete its subjects, and we have the Holy Spirit to unfold it to our hearts. Why is it, that in very many cases the souls of the Lord's people are so lean? Why do such a number fail to apprehend the mind of God as unfolded in the scriptures? Because man is so generally looked to, to the overlooking of the Spirit of God. He may use means to lead on our souls, indeed this is His usual method. Gifts have been given, teachers among others, that we may grow up into Christ in

all things ; but such must ever be regarded as but vessels of the Spirit. The Spirit is the true Guide ; our dependence must ever be upon Him.

W.W.F.

SET APART.

SET apart to Thee, Lord Jesus,
Thee alone,
As a trophy of the mercy
Thou hast shewn—
Mercy that embraced the justice
Of the throne.

Set apart, because redeemèd
By Thy blood ;
Brought into the priestly kingdom
To Thy God,
Yet to tread the path of sorrow
Thou hast trod.

Set apart from all earth's pleasures
By Thy cross ;
For Thine own name's sake to suffer
Shame and loss,
Counting all that once was charming
Now but dross.

Set apart to be Thy servant,
Since made free
From the thrall of sin and Satan ;
Glad to be
Captive in love's golden fetters,
Now round me !

Set apart to offer to Thee
Endless praise,
Feeble now, but soon resounding
Suited lays,
Round Thy throne, throughout the nearing
Timeless days.

Set apart by God the Father—
Kept for Thee ;
Called, and justified, and waiting,
Soon to be

Glorified, and in Thy likeness
Reign with Thee !

Set apart in Thee, Lord Jesus,
Thou the Head
Of Thy church, and risen with Thee
From the dead,
To adore the grace that on me
Thou hast shed !

Set apart through God the Spirit,
To believe
All the truth, without Whose power
None believe,
And, through His own wondrous working,
Praise to give.

Set apart, but not *my* setting,
All is Thine !
Thine the thought, and Thine the planning,
So divine ;
Thine the praise, when in Thy likeness
I shall shine !

H.C.R.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS i.—iv.

WE now enter on a very different theme from that developed in the epistle to the Romans, where the foundation of the gospel is in question, and the individual privilege and walk of the saint. The same apostle writes on the corporate walk of Christians and the church. This difference is made evident in their respective addresses. To those in Achaia he writes, but as "the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints called, with those that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs

and ours." It is a remarkable description, and, as written by the Holy Spirit, surely means to warn against the imminent danger to which the new institution of His grace, His assembly, was to be exposed. The mighty work of grace in each is presupposed. They were saints by God's calling, which is not forgotten in addressing them in their corporate position. Further, there is care taken from the start to guard against all independency, "with all that in every place," etc. (verses 1—3). No countenance is given to the assumption that the church is free to change or innovate; it has to walk everywhere, and, we may add, always, obedient to the word and in fellowship.

The usual thanksgiving follows for the grace of God given them in Christ Jesus, which assuredly was no mere form from the apostle. But we may observe that it is in no way for faith as he says of the Roman believers, but for gifts of grace while waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who also would confirm them blameless in His day. Solemn responsibility with encouragement he thus awakens: "God is faithful, by whom ye have been called to the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (verses 4—9).

Thence he turns to their state, and reproaches them with their divisions. They had set up schools of thought among themselves, like the Jews and heathen, saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Assuredly Christ was not divided, nor was any servant of His crucified for them. The apostle thanks God that, as things were at Corinth, he had baptised only a very few of them, lest any should say that he had baptised unto his name. His repudiation shews the mistaken place assigned to baptism. For he presses the superior dignity of

evangelising, which Christ sent him for, and the contempt which God puts on the world's wisdom by that which is its foundation, Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Gentiles folly, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Far from choosing the wise, powerful, noble, God had chosen the foolish, the feeble, the vile and despicable, and things that are not to annul those which are, that no flesh should boast before Him. But he adds the position and blessing too: "Now are ye of him in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, as it is written, he that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord" (verses 10—31).

Hence when Paul first testified at Corinth, it was not the world's wisdom he urged, but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified. No truth makes less of man, and more of God, when those who heard were men, yea, guilty and lost sinners. But when believers can bear and indeed need more, when they are not infants but grown men, "perfect" here as elsewhere, he could, and in fact, did lead them to learn of Him everywhere, incarnate, risen, glorified, and coming again. And this leads him to make known that all hangs for the truth on the Spirit of God, Who now does far beyond what the O.T. made known. We have Christ and redemption accomplished for the soul; and hence as He is on high, the Holy Spirit is now sent down, God revealing by Him what had previously been reserved. Thus the all-important relation of the Spirit to Christ comes fully out. Revelation, communication by words, and reception, are alike and only by the Spirit of God. So foolish was it to cry up man's mind or the spirit of the world (chapter ii.).

The Corinthians addressed were not "natural" as once, nor were they "spiritual" as they ought to have been. They were "carnal." They falsely estimated their state, and, in fact, needed the food of babes, rather than of men in Christ. The proof of their carnality, of their walking "as men," was their setting up Paul and Apollos. The servants thus shrouded the Master to their loss, who were then fleshly. God gives the increase. The most honoured fellow-servants are but God's journey-men; while the saints are God's building. If Paul was given as a wise architect, the sole foundation is Jesus Christ; and hence the serious question of what one builds on Him. Happy he who builds things precious that stand the fire! Sad is he, who, though saved, loses his building of what the fire consumes! Terrible is his lot who corrupts God's temple and is himself destroyed! Here the world's wisdom only ensnares. Besides, it is real folly; for all things belong to the saints, not only Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, but world, life, death, present things and future; "all are yours, and ye Christ's, and Christ God's" (chapter iii.).

The apostle then in the beginning of chapter iv. exhorts that he and others like him should be accounted as servants or officials of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. These are Christian truths which were previously hidden as being incompatible with the restrained object and the earthly character of Judaism, but are now essential to the gospel and the church. They have nothing to do with the notion of sacraments, which superstitious men have fancied. Now fidelity is requisite in a steward, and the Lord is the One that examines; not the saints, who have neither the place nor the power, but are responsible in matters of discipline, as we shall see in chapter v. When the Lord comes, He will make manifest the hidden;

and then shall be to each the praise from God. He had applied the case to himself and Apollos, not to set man up but to humble him and exalt the Giver (6, 7). In fact God had given apostles the last place in suffering at that grand spectacle Christianity affords to the world, both angels and men. And the lightminded worldliness in Corinth adds point to the comparison: "*we* fools for Christ, but *ye* prudent in Christ; *we* weak, but *ye* strong; *ye* glorious, but *we* in dishonour." And as he had opened this in verse 8 by saying that they "reigned without us," in 11 he continues, "to the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are in weakness and buffeted, and wander homeless, and labour working with our own hands. Reviled, we bless; persecuted, we endure; blasphemed, we entreat; we became as the world's offscouring, refuse of all, until now." How overwhelming the contrast, not for the Corinthians then only, but for the still more selfish and vain development in our day, as ever since!

Yet he tenderly assures them, that it was not as chiding but to admonish them as his beloved children, he writes (verse 14). "For if ye had ten thousand pedagogues in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begot you through the gospel. I entreat you then, be mine imitators." "Teachers" is not the word in verse 15, but a slighting term expressly. And in his love had he sent to them one so beloved and faithful as Timothy, "who shall remind you of my ways that are in Christ, according as I teach everywhere in every assembly" (verse 17). The church, as the Christian, stands in liberty; but it is the liberty of Christ, never the liberty of differing as we like, or to oppose others. The Spirit of God dwells there to maintain the glory of the Lord Jesus, Whose mind is one. Petty man sets himself up. The

apostle lets those know who said he was not coming, that he was, and quickly, if the Lord will; when he would know not the word of the puffed up, but the power. It was love, and to spare them, that he had not come sooner (18—21).

W.K.

THE WORD OF GOD.

THE apostle John's manner of introducing the Lord Jesus before our notice in the opening chapter of his gospel, is quite in keeping with the grand sublimity of a theme so wonderful and attractive.

He writes, "In the beginning was the Word." Now if I were in the presence of a large company, not one could tell exactly what was passing in my own mind while I remained mute, but directly I expressed my thoughts in words, all would become conversant with them. And if the thoughts of fellow-creatures are hidden from one another until they find expression in words, how could the creature enter into the thoughts of his Creator unless One gave expression to them?

To the Son we are indebted for the expression of God's thoughts (Ps. cxxxix. 17). As "The Word" He is God expressing Himself in creative power and might, (John i. 1—3), yet not only in this, for "The Word became flesh," and dwelt among men; "in the world," but by it unknown; in grace owning relationship with "His own" people of Israel, though these received Him not. The Son of man had nowhere to lay His head, yet was He ever "full of grace and truth."

John contrasts Him with Moses, saying, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John then adds "No man hath

seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."

We see therefore that the apostle's *first* introduction to us of the Word, is as God the beneficent Creator, and as the full expression of that grace and truth which came by Him; and for himself and his fellow-believers he makes the grateful acknowledgment, "Of Hisfulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

"The Word" is also "The Life." We have already seen that, as the former, He is God *expressing* Himself; and now we may add that, as "The Life," He is God *giving* Himself.

We know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and, believing, in Him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and, as Peter shews, our responsibility is to set our hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. i. 13).

"Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also [Israel] which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Very remarkable is the fact that the same hand that wrote of "The Word" in the opening chapter of that gospel which bears his own name, there as the expression of creative power and might, yea, moreover, of "grace and truth" which came by Him, should be chosen of God, to bear witness that, when He comes to take vengeance, "His name is called the Word of God" (Rev. xix. 13).

He that was and is the perfect expression of "grace and truth," shall become, at His own manifestation before a guilty world, the perfect expression of *the wrath of the sin-hating God*.

In wonderfully expressive, while figurative, language, John gives certain details with reference to

the first two of those "three last woes." What is the third and most dreaded of these? Let the Lord's own words to His disciples on Mount Olivet answer this question. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

To then living Christ-rejectors, who had before despised Him and refused the "grace and truth," He will appear as "The Word of God" in that great day of His wrath, in which they will vainly call upon the rocks and hills to hide them from His face. Then will He "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked."

Now is the time to "Kiss the Son"; *now* to receive pardon and peace through Him. It will be too late then. Those who despise Him shall behold and wonder and perish.

A. J.

A HINT FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKER.

How homely were the Lord's words! How very simply He illustrated His teaching! Gathered to hear Him speak, and again scattered to their homes, His hearers would be daily reminded of His words. A flight of sparrows in the market place—your heavenly Father feedeth them: a camel unloaded at the gate—and they remember the words of "Jesus of Nazareth:" or an invitation to a feast it may be—and the invitation of the Great King is brought to mind. Without a parable spake He not unto them.

May we not learn a lesson from Him, in winning

the children, giving point to our teaching with everyday parallels, the commonplace incidents of life.

A boundary stone is noticed in the pavement with its inscription almost gone. The children have seen such too: "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." And whenever the little ones see a writing rubbed out, or a tombstone with the inscription effaced, your words are remembered.

You run after a tram-car perhaps, and as you breathlessly take your seat you congratulate yourself that you are now fairly on your way to your destination, but—it is the wrong car, and does not go there. How many there are striving, having a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; dead in earnest, but—in the wrong car.

Illustrations are numberless. Is it not, fellow workers, a way of following our Master, truly a Teacher come from God?

May the Lord Himself give us observant eyes to note these things, and ready tongues to use them for His glory!

T.B.

HE HATH DONE THIS.

PSALM xxii. unquestionably speaks of the cross of Christ. David by no means relates his own experience when speaking of being forsaken of God and not heard. In all his troubles and adversities he found God very near to him, as the books of Samuel shew; indeed, the deeper his distress, the sweeter his realisation of the presence and grace of God. But Psalm xxii. speaks of a holy man forsaken! It is Christ. The Spirit here testifies beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and does not omit the glories that follow (1 Pet. i. 11).

Psalm lxix. speaks with equal fulness of the sufferings of the blessed One; but the difference between the two psalms is very great. Psalm lxix. at the close calls for judgment upon the ungodly, "Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them;" while on the contrary, Psalm xxii., after the woe is past, speaks of blessing flowing all around. Why the difference? Simply this. The one views the cross more particularly from the human standpoint, as the culmination of human wickedness, for which man is responsible; the other gives the divine side, the cross as an atonement for sin. That blessed work being done, blessing can flow.

There are three circles of blessing; "my brethren," in which we have a part (ver. 22); "the seed of Jacob" (verse 23); and "all the ends of the world" (ver. 27). What wonders has the cross wrought, what glory for God, what blessing for men! Apart from it there could be no blessing for any; but in virtue of it God is able righteously to call souls into the enjoyment of heavenly blessing, as at the present time; and others into earthly bliss in the day that is coming.

But what has struck me so forcibly in the last verse is, that the cross will be the theme presently below as well as above. It is of millennial days that we read in the words, "They shall come and declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this." We can readily understand that the cross will be the theme of praise and worship above. There we shall sing, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain." Our hearts will never tire of it. We shall learn more of its depths when we see Him and are with Him. Our hearts will burn within us. It will be an endless theme—"that he hath done this."

But how wonderful that it will be thus, after its

own manner, below! Here, where He was cast out and crucified, where His blessed name is still disowned, it will be said, "that he hath done this."

The cross is the centre of everything. By it God has been glorified as nowhere else, and it is the basis of all blessing both for heaven and for earth. Zechariah xii. and Isaiah liii. shew that the tribes of Israel will yet learn the true meaning of the cross, and will be brought beneath its shelter; others too, who have not Abraham to their father, will learn somewhat of its worth.

When all are at rest beneath the beneficent sway of the Son of Man, when the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, then it will be said, "that he hath done this."

W.W.F.

GIVING AWAY TRACTS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I am anxious to write a few words to you on the subject of tract distribution. I feel sure if you only set to work in earnest faith and love you might accomplish a great deal more than you do. But before making any practical suggestions to this end, I should like you to see that the circulation of the truth by written means is positively enjoined by the apostle Paul, so that it is a kind of Christian service fully accredited by scripture.

At the close of the epistle to the Colossians, the apostle sends greeting to the brethren in Laodicea, which was a town in the proximity of Colosse. Moreover, he desires that when those he was addressing had read his letter themselves, they should cause it to be read also in the assembly of the Laodiceans; while on the other hand, they were to read the epistle from Laodicea (Col. iv. 16).

There has been at different times a good deal of speculation as to this epistle from Laodicea, which I will say nothing about, for in the end the guesses all leave us as wise as we previously were with regard to it. The fact is the epistle was not written for the *permanent* benefit of the church, and so it has not been preserved. And we may be quite sure that if it were necessary for *us* to read its contents, it would be within the covers of the Bible.

But you must observe that the express wish of the apostle is for the circulation of—

1. The inspired letter to Colosse in Laodicea.
2. The uninspired letter from Laodicea in Colosse.

So that it follows as a simple matter of course that we are to make use of the means that lie in our power in order to spread—

1. The word of God among those who have it not.
2. Ministry based on that word, and written to extend its understanding and practice.

Circulation of the scriptures. Through the providence of God there are few homes in our land without one or more Bibles. But there are some such, especially where the influence of Popery is found. Do you know any? The whole of the New Testament may be purchased for a penny, and a complete copy of the scriptures for a few pence. Need I say more?

If you teach in the Sunday school, make a point of seeing that every scholar has its own Bible, with its name written inside the cover. Encourage the class to bring their own Bibles to school, and use them. On another occasion I hope to say more

on this head. But I am hastening now to reach the second point.

Circulation of tracts, especially among Christians. Have you ever considered how quickly tracts might be scattered if each person were in earnest to do even a little in this way? Allow me to put it arithmetically.

Mr. Buy-the-truth-to-give-away purchases one dozen tracts and distributes them among twelve others ;

These	12	buy 1 doz. each and give to	144	others.
The	144	"	"	"
The	1,728	"	"	"
The	20,736	"	"	"

and so the tide would roll on.

This would be accomplished if each person circulated only a dozen tracts. Do not suppose, however, that I mean you should stop when you have given away your dozen, and wait for the others to do their share. The above figures are given to illustrate how rapidly the truth of God may be brought before the eyes of many by the simple means of passing from one to another.

Take care *what* you circulate. Don't spread rubbish. The object of tract distribution is to benefit men's souls. Only the reception of the word of God can do this. And your tract should be a suited means to this end.

There are some publications offered for sale for this purpose, that contain such a proportion of spiritual nutriment as reminds one of that famous homœopathic soup, which was reputed to have been made from one robin's leg and one pinch of salt per gallon of clear spring water. Don't mock people, whose eternal interests you have at heart, by asking them to accept such worthless stuff.

Never give away what you have not read and tested for yourself. You will be wise if you ask advice as to good tracts of someone whose judgment is to be respected. The word of God, of course, must finally decide.

Seek to give a *suitable* tract to meet the particular need of the person you want to help. Do not take it for granted that something on security, assurance, and happiness is the thing. It is possible that the subject of repentance would be better. You may as well believe in those wonderful remedies that are puffed up as cure-alls,—headache, toothache, backache, coughs, colds, corns, and everything else you like to mention. No; you must try to diagnose your case before you prescribe medicine.

You will, however, have to keep an assortment of tracts at hand. The man who goes shooting will find that the birds can rarely be induced to wait while he loads his gun. So you will find that while you are going to purchase, the door of opportunity will often be shut. Before the tracts are down from Paternoster Row the man is gone, or his interest is gone, which amounts to the same thing.

But now a word or so as to *when, where, and how* to circulate tracts. One good plan is house-to-house distribution. Take a district, and then go systematically through it, street by street. Don't push tracts under the doors, nor throw them about the roads promiscuously, under the plea that God can use them to some chance passer-by. It is true that God *can*, but you have no warrant to expect that He *will*. For every one picked up and read, fifty will go to the dust-heap; and God is opposed to such extravagant waste. No; knock at the door, and ask if you may be allowed to leave a tract. Remember the servant of the Lord must be "gentle

to all." At the same time give (if opportunity offers) an invitation to the preaching.

In your walks, too, you will very often have an opportunity of dropping the good seed on good ground. Try and exhibit a little of the grace of God in the way you offer persons a tract. Don't force it upon them as if you were a police officer with a warrant of arrest. If rebuffed, receive it with cheerful serenity. Let your manner commend the Master you are seeking to serve.

If you use a cycle, you can easily reach some outlying village in an hour's ride or so, where you will find many who will welcome any helpful booklet you have to give them. Don't make the cycle an excuse for *not* going; thirty minutes in the train and half-an-hour's walk from the station will land you safely there, not much behind the cyclist.

Call at the cottages. Leave your tracts. You may perceive an occasion for saying a seasonable word. But you had better say too little than too much. Above all, don't assume airs. The Grandfather Greybeard style is not seemly for young folk in their teens, especially towards their elders. Be humble-minded, and study the apostle's letters to Timothy.

There are other spheres, of course, for tract distribution. Seek the Lord's guidance as to what line He would have *you* take up. If you are to be blessed in this work, you will need His help and guidance as much as in preaching to some vast congregation. May the Lord lead you in it!

Let us each serve the Master, and have but one aim—
To be used for the glory of His blessed Name;
He has left us below to work while we wait;
Let us seize every moment, both early and late.

I am, Yours faithfully, "YOD."

ELECTION.

THERE is great comfort in the doctrine of election. It tells me that my history is a very old one. It did not begin when I believed. That was an event far down in the course of my history, which began before the worlds were framed.

Counsels concerning me constituted the first great fact. My foundation is *there*, be my faith weak or strong. My origin is divine, and venerable, and holy; and this foundation is immovable (Eph. i. 4).

Extracted.

CORRESPONDENCE.

G.L.—Paul a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27). The apostle would have them and us know that preaching to others is not *in itself* a guarantee of one's own standing before God. In every true child of God preaching is accompanied by practice. The apostle applies the principle to himself as an example (not that he has doubts as to himself). He kept under his body and brought it in subjection, which was a sure proof of the possession of eternal life, but service was not (Matt. vii. 22). See the solemn case of Judas. Notice it does not speak of one being a castaway *after receiving eternal life*, but after preaching to others. Those who have eternal life can never perish. In the next chapter (1—12) the apostle gives actual examples of castaways.

H.S.—Is the "lake of fire and brimstone" figurative language (Rev. xx. 10)? The expression is figurative, but figurative of a *real* punishment which continues for ever. There is an allusion, perhaps, to the judgment of God which overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xix. 24, 25). You have our sincere sympathy and prayers that, if the Lord will, you may see your heart's desire. Oh, for an unchanging trust in Him!

W.E.—Greek Prepositions. Your question has its importance, but is a little out of place for these pages. Ask the Editor of the *Bible Treasury*.

J.H.—What is the mystery of God (Col. ii. 2; Rev. x. 7)? Mystery, in Biblical usage, refers to some truth long concealed but now revealed. In Colossians (i. 26, 27; ii. 2) it refers to what was unknown till apostolic times, viz., that God was calling out from Jews and Gentiles those who are to be associated with Christ in heavenly glory. But in Revelation x. 7 the church cannot be referred to, for it is seen completed and in heaven from chapter iv. This mystery, on the contrary, is finished when the seventh angel sounds, and that is the moment when Christ takes the kingdom and puts down all evil (xi. 15—18). From the fall up to that time when the Man Christ Jesus judges the world in righteousness, sin has appeared to have its own way unchecked. That a holy God permits this appears to be the mystery here spoken of. It should be remembered that xi. 18 concludes the first division of the book, and coincides with the advent of Christ to take His kingdom (Rev. xix.).

R.—Are believers made righteous before God and afterwards justified? Both expressions refer to the same act.

A.S.—Shall we “receive for the things done in the body” before our conversion (2 Cor. v. 10)? Manifestation before the judgment seat of Christ would seem to include the whole life in the body; but reward for service would, of necessity, be confined to the life as a child of God. This passage (2 Cor. v. 10) speaks generally, and does not especially refer to service. Observe it does not say “receive for the things,” but simply “receive the things.”

M.M.—In what sense was Paul debtor (Rom. i. 14)? In the sense that we are all debtors to love all men (Rom. xiii. 8—10) and to desire their salvation. In addition, the apostle was commissioned to bear the Lord's name before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel (Acts ix. 15). Therefore he declares himself a debtor to all nationalities and all capacities.

R.Q.—Marriage. You are individually responsible faithfully to obey the truth as the Lord has shewn you. This often brings us into difficulties, and even hardships, which the Lord duly values, and will display in their true worth at His appearing. The registry office is the civil recognition of the marriage tie, which must be owned (Rom. xiii. 1—7), and is surely public enough. It is good, however, that in such an important matter we should, at the same time, seek the fellowship of the Lord's people to invoke His blessing.

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J.D.B.—Evolution.—We heartily endorse your vigorous protest against the boastful pretensions of the book you refer to. Were there not such pressure on our space, we would print your letter *in extenso*. The author, though violent, is honest, and boldly avows open antagonism to the Bible. We confess we do not fear this so much as the evil influence of so-called "Christian scientists," who seek to harmonise the scriptures and the theories of evolution, always, of course, at the expense of the word of God. Genesis flatly contradicts these theories. Which shall we believe? An attempted mixture of light and darkness is hateful to God, and should be to us, though, alas! a great many are thereby deceived.

R.M.S.—Matthew xviii. 18, etc. We do not recollect receiving your query on these texts. Binding and loosing refer to admittance into and exclusion from the assembly. See *B.M.M.* for March last, page 71.

A.L.R.—Is the path of wisdom (Job xxviii. 7, 8) the path of faith? No; the reference is to the means, unknown to birds and beasts, whereby man obtains precious ores from the earth. See context.

B.P.—Is there a church of God and a church of Christ? There is but *one* assembly. The distinctions you name are not found in scripture, nor exactly the expression "church of Christ," though He builds it (Matt. xvi. 18), it is His body (Eph. i. 23), and He loves and cares for it (Eph. v.). The saints in a city constitute the assembly of God in that place, because they are its representatives (1 Cor. i. 2). The "church of God" is the term more usually employed (Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. i. 2; x. 32; xi. 16, 22; xv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15). "Churches of Christ" occurs once only (Rom. xvi. 16), and there it certainly has no sense of invisibility, for they send salutations to the assembly at Rome. We advise a careful study of all the passages referred to above.

C.M.H.—Jubilee (so-called) Festivities. Let us not forget that the believer is separate from the world, from its things, and from its spirit (John xvii.; 1 John ii. 15; 1 Cor. ii. 12). It is a delusion to suppose that loyalty compels us to take part in the popular fêtes and shows. Your suggestion that special prayer should be made for Her Majesty the Queen on the 22nd instant is a good one.

THE
BELIEVER'S MONTHLY
MAGAZINE.

**BEFORE THE COUNCIL FOR
HIS NAME.**

ON the night of the Paschal supper Peter, with a burst of passionate devotion, declared, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke xxii. 33). But the impetuous apostle was trusting his heart of flesh, and the same night witnessed his sad failure. Taxed by some pert damsel of the high priest's household, he denied his Master with oaths and curses. Now, however (Acts iv.), this same man, with John, is granted the honourable distinction of being led to prison for Christ's sake.

On the morrow after the scene in the temple-courts, there was a great assemblage of the religious potentates of the Jews—rulers, elders, scribes, and the members of the high priestly family. They appear to have been mostly of the Sadducean persuasion, who held there is no resurrection (Acts xxiii. 8); consequently the apostle's allusions to the resurrection of the crucified Jesus from the dead, had touched them to the very quick (Acts iv. 1, 2).

They could not but feel that this single example of resurrection was sufficient to overthrow the whole host of their subtle, hair-splitting arguments to the contrary. In truth they had just cause to fear for their pet theory; for simple minds that

had hitherto been overwhelmed by their learned exertions, could not fail to appreciate the force of the incontestable proof that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus afforded of victory over death.

What should they do? The streets of Jerusalem rang with testimonies to the risen Jesus. There appeared to be witnesses everywhere that God had raised Him from the dead. They seem therefore to have concluded that it would be the wisest plan to pass over the point that troubled them most, and seek to fabricate a charge out of the miracle performed at the gate Beautiful.

At any rate, the council do not say a single word to the apostles as to the obnoxious doctrine they were preaching. But when they had summoned Peter and John before them, they asked them by what power or name they had wrought this sign.

It was a critical moment for the prisoners. They were before a tribunal which they had been taught to consider as the supreme religious authority on earth. But they had the Lord's promise, "When they deliver you up [to councils], take no thought [be not anxious] how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. x. 19, 20).

At that moment the Lord fulfilled His promise; Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost; and words of divine wisdom were given him to speak.

The apostle's answer bears a character which is the invariable indication of the Spirit's prompting, namely, the magnification of the name of the Lord Jesus. The attention of the council is turned away from the good deed, from the impotent man, and from the apostles themselves, to Jesus Christ of Nazareth and His exaltation.

Peter declared, simply but with unmistakeable

emphasis, that the miracle was wrought in the name of Him Whom they had crucified, Whom God had raised from the dead.

The chief priests did not interrupt the speaker at this point to deny that Jesus was risen, by asserting that His disciples stole away the body while the soldiers slept (Matt. xxviii. 11—15). No; they were the fathers of that lie, and they were ashamed of their own offspring.

Seeking to preserve a judicial calm in spite of the homethrust, they allowed the speaker to continue. Nor was Peter loth to proceed. It was a rare opportunity to be able to present a gospel testimony to the senate of Israel, and he made good use of it.

Referring to their scriptures he identified Jesus of Nazareth as the Stone, rejected of them, the builders, but now become the head of the corner. This was a familiar figure of the Messiah (Gen. xlix. 22—24; Ps. cxviii. 22; Is. xxviii. 16; Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45; Zech. iv. 7), both in His rejection and in His exaltation, as they surely ought to know. But though they had cast Him out, the grace of God had provided salvation for them in Christ. His, and His only, is the name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

The learned rabbis were struck with astonishment at the boldness of Peter and John, the more so as they knew them to be unlettered and uncultured men, trained rather to cast nets than to state arguments. But what could they say? They recognised the prisoners as being the followers of Jesus. These very two were in the high priest's palace on the night of His examination. They were torn with doubts. If they denied the resurrection, here were two before them who had eaten and drunk with Him. If they disputed the miracle, the cripple himself, well known to them

all, was present, not crouching now, but standing erect in his new-found strength, and they felt how difficult it would be to persuade him or anyone else that he was labouring under a delusion.

This they owned in their private consultation. It was useless to deny the miracle. They resolved however to forbid the apostles to speak or teach the people any further in that Name. These commands they proceeded to lay upon Peter and John with a great show of authority.

But the servants of the Lord in their reply set the matter in its true light. They had received their commission as witnesses of Jesus Christ from God. Was it right for them to obey the council rather than God? They were bound to speak what they had seen and heard.

The council threatened them with the consequences if they dared to disobey, and dismissed them.

How solemn the position of these rulers of the Jews! They knew God had raised up Jesus from the dead, and had also honoured His name by healing the cripple. They could not *deny* the truth, but they deliberately *defied* it. Their stiff necks refused to bow to the evidence of their great guilt and God's greater grace. So they set themselves in battle array against the Lord of Sabaoth. How vain must such a contest be!

"I long to see His glory ;
 I long to hear His voice ;
 I long, without a shadow
 Of darkness, to rejoice ;
 To gaze on all the beauties
 That shine in Jesus' face ;
 And feel that 't is for ever,
 I dwell in His embrace."

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

MANY Christians regard doubts and fears as a part, and a necessary part, of their experience. If uncertainty does not rise up at times, to mar their peace, and hinder their joy, it is assumed there is no evidence of life in the soul. And having their thoughts turned in upon themselves, hope becomes dim, and faith weak. When God directs their hearts again to Christ, their faith and hope is in measure restored, and they are able to rejoice in the Lord for a little. But settled peace is never known.

Now according to the word of truth, this is by no means the normal condition of a Christian. The Lord reproved Peter's want of confidence in Himself (Matt. xiv. 31) when he looked at himself and his circumstances rather than at Christ. It follows, therefore, that doubting is not according to God's mind. It is rather distrusting and dishonouring Him, because He is one who fulfils all His promises. Has He spoken and will He not do it? He is the unchanging One.

Shamefully rebellious as Israel was, His love underwent no change towards that nation. Hence His word, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). And the false prophet was compelled to bear testimony to the fact that God had not beholden iniquity in Jacob; neither had He seen perverseness in Israel (Num. xxiii. 21). The prophet Jonah made God's habitual mercy, grace, and kindness to man, an excuse for disobeying His command and fleeing to Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh (Jonah iv. 2).

But the most glorious manifestation of God's love is seen in His giving His Son for fallen man. Truly "in *this* was manifested the love of God towards us" (1 John iv. 9). Moreover, He "com-

mendeth His *own* love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

Now the sinner by believing in Christ becomes a saint—a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And he is called to assume the pilgrim and stranger character in a world that is opposed to him. But love does not leave him alone in the way. Hence he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Thus God's love sustains him through his pilgrimage.

The day of judgment is coming, however, when the Christian's walk and ways will be severely tested. Has he not cause therefore for doubt and fear in view of it? Not at all. For in this very thing is love *with us* made perfect that we may have confidence (or boldness) in the day of judgment (1 John iv. 9—18). And the perfection of this love consists in God making us like Christ. "As He is so are we in this world." Therefore, as one says, "There is an end of judgment practically as an object of dread, because I am the same thing as my Judge. He judges by His own righteousness, and that is my righteousness. I am that." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

It is clear, God's love began the work of salvation for us, sustains the new life in us in communion with Himself, and will secure our safety in the day of judgment. Surely then in view of all this provision of grace it is dishonouring to God to distrust such love.

Further, the commands of scripture are directly opposed to anything like uncertainty. "Rejoice evermore!" said Paul (1 Thess. v. 16). Also, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say rejoice" (Phil. iv. 4).

Here the apostle not only gives the command but emphasises it by repetition. Now these plain and positive injunctions are so worded that they apply under any and every circumstance; in storms

and calms, in showers as well as sunshine. For the assuring word is that *all things* work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). Therefore there is no occasion for despondency at any time.

But perhaps some one may say, "I know all this and I desire to be rejoicing always, but I find within an evil nature still. And this grows worse and worse apparently as time goes on: how then can I rejoice under such circumstances?"

To such I would say, God calls upon you to rejoice neither in your *condition* nor in your *feelings*, but in the *Lord*. You have therefore as the ground of your joy, One Who is above being influenced in any way by your evil nature. The carnal mind is the same in every man, and will never be improved. It is irreparably bad, and the closer you walk to the light the more this is manifest. For that which maketh manifest is light; and so by walking as children of light, the evil in our nature is more clearly seen, and this is surely evidence that we are the Lord's.

To sum up—God has shewn love in such an incomparable way, that we can but trust Him, and enjoy to the full the privileges His grace has given us. May He enable all His children to do this for His name's sake.

W.T.H.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS V.—VI.

IN this next division we have the apostle availing himself of evil rumours which had reached him, not about their general party spirit on which he had dwelt so fully from chapter i. to iv.,

but on special evils, the abominable case of incest as yet unjudged in their midst (chap. v.), their worldliness in going to law before the unjust (chap. vi. 1—11), and their abuse of liberty, or licentiousness, denounced and corrected (12—20). As the portion is short, we may dilate the more.

Desperately evil as were these disorders, general or special, the apostle did not lose confidence in the words of the Lord during the early days of his work at Corinth: "Fear not, but speak because I have much people in this city" (Acts xviii. 9, 10). With these evils of theirs weighing on his heart he wrote to them as "the church of God which is at Corinth," sanctified (as they were) in Christ Jesus, saints called (or by calling). The inconsistency of their practical state with their standing, individually and corporately, was extreme; but he remembered the Lord's assurance, and pressed home their responsibility. There is no sufficient ground for assuming a lost epistle from chapter v. 9 of this epistle, any more than an unrecorded visit from 2 Corinthians xiii. 1, 2, though not a few have argued for both. The worst enormity may glide into the church through its evil state or individual pravity; and thus Satan incessantly seeks to dishonour the Lord and destroy those who bear His name. Then comes, as here, the testimony of the Holy Spirit to judge the evil and deliver the saints. It is the rejection of His testimony, the maintenance of the evil notwithstanding, for which they forfeit their place as God's assembly. From heinous evils, as here, the church may be restored, as the second epistle proves; for incomparably less unjudged the church may have its candlestick removed, as we read in Revelation ii. 1—7.

What a grief for the apostle to write about the common rumour of fornication among the Corin-

thian believers, "and such as is not even among the Gentiles, so that one should have his father's wife!" But it was a great aggravation that they, the saints generally, were puffed up, and did not rather mourn, in order that he that did this deed might be taken away from among them. Though not on the spot, the apostle could, and does, pronounce on the case. "For I, absent in body but present in spirit, have, as present, already judged him that hath so wrought this, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye and my spirit being gathered with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Thus did it seem good to divine wisdom that we should have the extreme act of excommunication fully left on record. If the Corinthian assembly had known and discharged its duty, we could not have had it in so solemn a form. For in this instance the apostle joins the exercise of his own official authority and power with the duty of the church to put away the offender. He could deliver to Satan, and thereby to sore trial of mind and body, though with the good and holy aim of the flesh destroyed in order to the spirit's salvation eventually; as we learn in 1 Timothy i. 20 that he could act similarly in cases demanding it without the church. But, with apostle or not, the church is bound not to tolerate but to remove the wicked person from themselves (verse 13).

In order to explain the principle further, and to shew its application fully, the apostle uses the figure of leaven, intelligible to everyone familiar with its working, and especially to such as knew the care to get rid of it required at the paschal feast, which bore typically on the redeemed. Leaven represents evil, and evil in its tendency to

spread and in its character of contaminating. "Your glorying is not good: know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also, Christ, was sacrificed: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened things of sincerity and truth" (verses 6—8). Christ's sacrifice, set forth in the paschal lamb, is the ground and means by which Christians are unleavened. The feast of unleavened bread that follows, figures the hallowed condition that attaches to them imperatively. We who believe in Christ are now celebrating that feast during our earthly sojourn as pilgrims and strangers, if we rest on His redemption. This the Corinthians in their levity had ignored, and the apostle most instructively rebukes them with the authority of that word which abides for ever. If they did not yet know God's mind about discipline, divine instinct left them inexcusable. Granted that they had no elders, nor experience; but they had gifts, and should have felt rightly. Instead of mourning, they were puffed up and boasting: never a becoming state; but how shameful at such a crisis! The will of God was fully declared; theirs was to judge themselves and obey. Here we have authoritatively the fullest light from on high to guide us, and to guard from like error.

"I wrote [or rather "write," the epistolary aorist] to you in the epistle not to mix with fornicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or the covetous and rapacious, or idolaters, since then ye must go out of the world. But now I write [same aorist as before] to you not to mix, if any one called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard,

or rapacious; with such a one not even to eat. For what have I [to do] with judging those outside? Ye, do ye not judge those within? But those without God judgeth. Remove the wicked person from yourselves" (verses 9—13).

Here the scope is shewn to embrace not only the immoral but the evil generally, though in no way to give an exhaustive list; as other scriptures duly denounce other sins. For instance also false and wicked doctrine does not here find a place; whereas in Galatians v. it is treated as "leaven" no less than immorality, and in 1 John fundamental error as to Christ's person is dealt with more stringently still as "antichrist," or not bringing Christ's doctrine. Thus is the church preserved from legislation and called to be true in this respect as in all others to Christ's glory. We have only to do God's will, as He did it, perfectly.

In chapter vi. 1—11 the apostle insists on the incongruity of the saints appealing to the tribunals of that world which they are destined to judge, yea, to judge even angels. Yet at Corinth, instead of bringing a difference before the saints, they, like men who had no faith, appealed to "the unjust"! Even those little esteemed in the assembly could well judge such matters; for he speaks to make them ashamed. Why did they not rather suffer wrong? Alas! they did wrong, and to brethren, forgetting that wrongdoers (and he enumerates more than in chapter v.) shall not inherit God's kingdom. Their past evil was no plea; seeing that they were washed, were sanctified, were justified (an observable order) in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

This introduces the abuse of liberty. It is not Christian to be under the power of anything. Even now the body is for the Lord; and as God

raised Him up from the dead, so will He raise us. We shall be conformed to Him in that glorious change, and are to act now in faith of it. Our bodies are Christ's members. How shameful and disloyal to be joined to a harlot! For this was the habit, one might say the religion, of the Corinthian community. Hence the enormity of fornication in a saint—one spirit with the Lord. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in us, and this of God. We are not our own, but bought with a price, and therefore to glorify God in our body. The rest of the verse in the Authorised Version and others is a spurious addition from bad MSS.

W.K.

RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST.

THE Lord was now risen. His mighty work was accomplished. He was now alive from the dead to die no more. He had laid down His life for God's glory and for our redemption, and had taken it again in resurrection. God had shewn Him the path of life, and He was soon going into His presence, where there is fulness of joy, to His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.

But first, the Lord shews Himself to His own. Mary Magdalene has the joy of hearing His blessed voice once more, causing her to dry up all her tears, and changing her lamentations into divine rejoicing (John xvi. 20—22).

It was the first day of the week. The Sabbath (an high day just then with the Jews) He had spent in the grave. Now He comes forth to inaugurate a new order of things on the ground of His precious and perfect sacrifice. The old order was now judicially done with; God no longer owned it.

Judaism was an empty house. The Lord finds His own gathered together (John xx. 19—23). They feared the Jews, and so assembled, as it were, in secret. Contrast with this their boldness in the presence of the enemy after the descent of the Holy Ghost. But the Spirit had not yet come, hence we observe only the weakness and timidity of poor human nature. The doors were shut. The Lord came and “stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” Precious words from the lips of the risen Jesus! Glorious proof that all the work was done! “He came and preached peace.” He had drunk the cup of wrath for them (and for us), little though they understood it at the time. He had stood in the breach and met and endured in His most holy person all that was due from a righteous God against sin. All being past, every question having been righteously settled, He is able to speak “peace” to His own.

And not only so, but He shewed them His hands and His side. The memorials of Calvary were not effaced, nor will they ever be. The adoring disciples could see with their very eyes something of what the Blessed One had passed through in deepest love to their souls. His incarnation was not sufficient to make peace. Death must be endured, His blood must be shed. He has made peace by the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20).

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” This is not needless repetition, He was giving them a commission now. His Father had sent Him into the world for His glory, and to bear witness to the truth. His work was done, and He was about to resume His place at the Father’s right hand. But He never leaves Himself without a witness; therefore the disciples must take His place in this scene. Mark carefully their place and

ours. Taken out of the world, heavenly persons because associated with Christ, sent into the world to bear witness for Him. Such is our business here: would that all our hearts realised it more! In connection with the commission, then, the Lord says, "Peace be unto you." Amid all the disturbances and trials of this hostile scene, we are privileged to enjoy, not only peace with God as to our sins, but the peace of Christ filling our hearts (John xiv. 27; Col. iii. 15).

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." What is this? Clearly not yet the gift of the Spirit as a divine person to abide with them: for He said to the same disciples some days later, "*Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;*" "*ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;*" and He told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to "*wait for the promise of the Father*" (Acts i.). The Spirit came from heaven in fulfilment of this on the day of Pentecost; not before. To understand these words of the Lord in John xx. it is necessary to refer to Genesis ii. 7. There we have the Lord God first forming the man's body of the dust of the ground, then breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Here then, we have the Lord breathing His own risen life by the Holy Ghost into His disciples. They were converted men before, beyond all question; now they partake of the great blessing peculiar to Christianity, the risen life of the victorious Son of God. Let it be distinctly understood that all the saved from the very beginning of time have had divine life in their souls communicated to them by the Holy Spirit, but it could not be said of saints before the cross that they were partakers with a risen Christ. This is "life more abundantly," as the Lord speaks in John

x. 10. The possession of this places us in Him beyond death and judgment. It is a life that Satan cannot touch, and that we cannot forfeit. It is heavenly in its character, and eternal in its nature. Heaven is its proper and suited sphere.

The difference between the Spirit as life and His personal indwelling may be seen in Romans viii. In verses 1—11 we have Him presented as characterising our life and relationship to God, instilling Himself into all our thoughts and feelings; in verses 12—27 He is spoken of as a distinct person dwelling within us, bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, groaning within us, and leading us out in prayer according to God.

The words of the Lord in John xx. 23 should be carefully weighed. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This is supposed by some to mean priestly absolution. Need I say that there is no such thing in Christianity? A priestly class now is a denial of the work of Christ. All believers are equally priests unto God (1 Peter ii. 5; Rev. i. 6). The Lord's words refer to reception and discipline in the assembly, and should be compared with Matthew xvi. 18, 19; xviii. 18, 20.

When the assembled saints receive a person, whether out of the world, or for restoration after exclusion, they "remit" his sins; and when one is put away, as the wicked Corinthian, they "retain" his sins. But this is administrative for the earth, and must be distinguished from the eternal forgiveness of the soul.

W.W.F.

FIERY trials make golden Christians.

BELIEVERS sin less but they are not sinless.

GOD can strike straight strokes with crooked sticks.

PILGRIM PATIENCE.

PATIENCE, pilgrim ! on before thee,
 Past this wild and trackless waste,
 Gleams the light of heavenly glory ;
 Gird thy loins and forward haste !
 There is stored thy robe of white ;
 There reserved thy crown of light ;
 There thy golden harp to raise
 Heaven-taught songs in Jesu's praise.

Darkness dense may be surrounding ;
 Moon and stars refuse to shine ;
 In the covert foes abounding,
 Thy destruction their design—
 Cheer thee, pilgrim ! onward go ;
 Faith defeat shall never know ;
 Guarded close by secret power,
 Fear thee not this darksome hour.

Is thy heart impatient getting,
 Chafing at the devious way ?
 Is thy ransomed spirit fretting
 In her prison-house of clay ?
 Patience still ! the way will cease,
 Then the goal—unbroken peace ;
 Thou in earthy bonds no more,
 Free in light for aye to soar.

Brightly beams the Star of morning ;
 Token He the day is near ;
 See, e'en now, the glory dawning ;
 Soon the Master will be here.
 Patience then ! the end is nigh ;
 Close at hand thy home on high ;
 There, thy pilgrim suffering o'er,
 Patience thou wilt need no more.

"THE Apocalypse is not all about prophetics and the great beasts, but a simple soul can find marrow and fatness, and what the poor call 'fine-reading for the soul,' in it."

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

CHAPTER i. 29—39. *

²⁹ **A**ND **immediately**, going out of the synagogue they came with James and John into the house of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ **Now** Simon's mother-in-law lay in a fever, and **immediately** they speak to him about her. ³¹ And coming up he raised her, having taken her by the hand; and the fever left her immediately, and she served them. ³² And evening having come, when the sun set, they kept bringing unto him all that were ill, and those possessed by demons; ³³ and all the city was gathered at the door. ³⁴ And he healed many that were ill of various diseases, and cast out many demons, and did not suffer the demons to speak because they knew him. ³⁵ And rising in the morning long before day, he went out and departed into a desert place, and there was praying. ³⁶ And Simon and those with him followed after him; ³⁷ and, on finding him, they say to him, All are seeking thee. ³⁸ And he saith to them, Let us go elsewhere into the next country-towns, that I may preach there also, for for this am I come forth. ³⁹ And he was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS.

Verse 29.—Immediately. The characteristic use of this word is seen in this and the two following verses. Coming out of the synagogue, the Lord

1. immediately enters Simon's house.
2. immediately is told of the sick woman.
3. immediately heals of the fever.

*Words in italics should be passed over in reading as they indicate what should, for critical reasons, be omitted from the Authorised Version. Variations and additions are marked by heavy type.

Simon and Andrew, with James and John. These four are named together again in Mark xiii. 3.

Verse 30.—Simon's wife. Compare 1 Corinthians ix. 5, which proves Peter was married, though it is nowhere else definitely stated.

They tell Jesus. When sickness or trouble is in the house, do we immediately tell the Lord? Luke says they besought Him for her (Luke iv. 38).

Fever. Luke the physician calls it a "great" fever. The courtier's son (John iv. 52), and the father of Publius (Acts xxviii. 8), are others who were miraculously healed of this disease.

Verse 31.—She ministered. She was perfectly restored to health, and began at once to set bread before them. Compare the ministry of the angels to the Lord (Mark i. 13). It is beautiful to note that she used her new strength to serve the Lord and those with Him.

Verse 32.—When the sun had set. This marked the close of the sabbath. "From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (Lev. xxiii. 32). Compare "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn (or, be dusk) toward the first day of the week" (Matthew xxviii. 1). At sundown, on our Saturday evening, some of the women went to see the Lord's sepulchre. During the sabbath day, the Jews would scruple to carry sick persons through the streets of Capernaum to the house of Simon (Jer. xvii. 21, 22; John v. 10). They therefore waited until sunset.

Diseased and possessed. Those physically ill are distinguished from those possessed by evil spirits.

Verse 33.—All the city. The news of the public miracle in the synagogue had spread throughout Capernaum.

Verse 34.—He healed many. Jehovah's Servant was never weary in well-doing. The importunate

crowd received no repulse from the Lord, though it was late in the day.

Verse 35.—Great while before day. The hours of rest were shortened in the evening to serve (ver. 34) and in the morning to pray (ver. 35). Just as there was the rejection of the enemy's testimony (ver. 34), so there was the fullest leaning upon God's power (ver. 35). He forbade the demons to speak of Him, but also expressed His dependence upon God in prayer; in both displaying the excellences of Jehovah's perfect Servant. Everything was to come from God; but nothing from Satan. Let the servants of God beware lest they become *too busy to pray!*

Verse 38.—Preach there also. The Servant came forth to preach the gospel of God (ver. 14), not to win popularity by working miracles. He leaves the excited crowds who were seeking Him in Capernaum because of the miracles He did, and goes into the next country-towns.

REMEMBERING THE WORDS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—In order to derive a good measure of the practical benefit of the scriptures for your souls, it is of importance that you should have its words resting in your memories. It is not always practicable in times of sudden difficulty and need to turn to the word of God itself, and there seek for counsel and guidance. In such emergencies the advantage of having the mind, to any extent, stored with the letter of the word is realised. Hence the necessity, one might almost say, the absolute necessity, of familiarity with scripture.

We shall discover that this principle, of which we now speak, is recognised in the holy writings

themselves. We have there recorded instances of spoken or written words being brought to remembrance, and used with salutary effect upon the conscience and heart. These examples will illustrate the truth to which I wish to draw attention.

Take the familiar case of the apostle Peter. When, on the night of the Paschal supper, the Lord spoke to His disciples of the sorrowful scattering about to ensue, the son of Jonas expressed his own determination of remaining faithful to the Lord, whoever else might deny Him. The Lord, however, warned the self-confident man that before cock-crowing that same night he would thrice deny that he so much as knew his Master.

And it was so. The words of the Lord appear to have faded from Peter's memory. And three times the apostle, with all possible emphasis, declared that Jesus was utterly unknown to him. It was then that the stillness of the night was broken by the crowing of the cock. It was then too that the eyes of the Lord encountered those of Peter. And the word of the Lord hitherto forgotten was brought afresh before his soul in all its living power: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Poor Peter *remembered* this (Luke xxii. 61), was convicted of what he had done, and went out weeping bitterly. The word and the look of the Lord wrought repentance in his heart, and, unlike Judas, he was restored.

Again: when the Galilean women came to the sepulchre, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus, they saw two angels who reminded the seekers of what Christ had said in Galilee, that on the third day He would rise again. "And they *remembered* his words" (Luke xxiv. 8). These words coming to them at that juncture, confirmed what the open grave proclaimed, and what the angels declared, "He is not here, but is risen."

In like manner, after His resurrection, the disciples *remembered* that Jesus had said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Only then did they discern that He referred to the raising up of His body, and they "believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John ii. 19—22).

Another instructive example is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles. While Peter spoke the words of the gospel to Cornelius the centurion, and those with him, the Holy Spirit fell on those who heard the words. And the apostle forthwith commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord (Acts x. 44—48). But when Peter is relating these circumstances to the brethren in Jerusalem (Acts xi. 16), we learn what passed in his heart, and see the reason for his promptness in commanding that the Gentiles should be baptised. He said that when he saw that the Spirit had fallen on them, "Then *remembered* I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost." It was the very word suited to the occasion, and coming before him at that moment provided him with the needed guidance and authority in the reception of the Gentiles.

Now in these instances we observe how words known beforehand were brought opportunely to mind, to serve some useful purpose. In this lies the practical value of the scripture; but before it can be so used in any case it is necessary to have read the words previously. If you are in danger of being drawn away after earthly pursuits, and such a text as, "Set your affection [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 2), comes to your aid, it is because you are familiar with that verse from past reading.

So that if you commit portions of the Bible to memory, it is evident you prepare yourself to receive some help and comfort from the scriptures when you most need them. For instance, the verses you read or learned this morning, may not have a direct application to you to-day. Days and weeks may elapse; and then in a moment of sharp trial they will come to you, like the arm of a strong man, to lean upon. *But they would not so come to you, had you not previously learned or read them.*

Committal to memory is of great assistance in quoting the words of holy writ with exactitude. In no other book is the importance of rigid accuracy so essential. The difference of a word may be the difference between truth and error. Nay, we find that even the difference between the singular and the plural in an Old Testament promise, is made the basis of argument as to New Testament truth (Gal. iii.).

The apostle is shewing that Christ is the true seed of Abraham, to Whom the promises were made. This he establishes, by pointing out that the terms of the ancient promises mentioned "seed," and not "seeds"; so that one person, not many, was in view. This person therefore was Christ, and not the sons of Israel (Gal. iii. 16).

We ought, therefore, to be very jealous for the exact expressions of God the Holy Spirit, lest we add to His words, like Eve who added, "Neither shall ye touch it," to the prohibition (Gen. ii. 17; iii. 3). The apostles, too, thought that John was not to die; but "Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John xxi. 23). Read the warnings against this snare (Prov. xxx. 5, 6; Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

Accustom yourself to check your own quotations with the Bible itself, and also the references of

others. It is not uncommon to hear, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the *sins* of the world" (John i. 29); "It is appointed unto *all* men once to die" (Heb. ix. 27); "Come unto me, all ye that are *weary* and are heavy laden" (Matt. xi. 28); "Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we *can* ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20). Not one of these misquotations is unimportant; and you can easily multiply similar instances if you watch what others speak or write. But be very sure you watch yourself, that *you* make no mistakes.

I am, Yours faithfully, "YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

E.A.S.—Will you please explain James ii. 1? Believers should not toady to rich persons. "Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" means believing in Him as the object. (Compare Mark xi. 22, margin; Rom. iii. 22; Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iii. 9; Col. ii. 12).

T.—Can you give any scripture to shew that the Lord Jesus was the most beautiful person that ever walked this earth? No; we cannot. We are told nothing of the human form of the blessed Lord, save in the most general way, as in Isaiah lii. 14; liii. 2. We ought to respect the silence of scripture, and not seek to know Him after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16), but rather in a spiritual way as now risen. It is the sight of Christ by faith, as He now is, that transforms us morally into the same image (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18). All attempts of human art to depict the person of Christ, as He was, oppose this spiritual view, and should be shunned by us. The work of every artist must be purely imaginary, and it is always dangerous to speculate about the Incarnate Son of God, whether with pen or pencil.

E.G.F.B.—What becomes of the heathen who die without a chance to hear the gospel? They will be judged according to the light they had (Rom. ii. 12-16).

A.T.—May I try to answer the questions? Certainly; we trust you will find the exercise helpful.

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A.I.K.—What is meant by, “Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter i. 19)? The Christian period, during which we are waiting for the Son from heaven. Old Testament prophecy is compared to a light (lamp) shining in a dark place until the present interval, which is called the dawning of the day, when we have the day star (Christ our hope before He comes as the Sun of Righteousness) arisen in our hearts.

M.A.Y.—Is it possible for a believer to be without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit until he is baptised? We do not think scripture warrants the thought that the indwelling of the Spirit is in any way a result of baptism. The latter is the appointed mode of confessing Christ before the world; sealing is God's own sign of having appropriated a redeemed one for Himself. And while Acts ii. 38; viii. 12, 17 speak of the gift of the Holy Spirit *after* baptism, in Acts x. 44—48; xi. 15—17 He was given *before* baptism. So that there is no necessary connection between the two either in order or significance. Such a state as you mention is possible, and perhaps more frequent than is generally supposed, but it certainly is not the Christian state described in the New Testament. For, in point of fact, no one can cry, Abba, Father, until the Spirit of God's Son is sent forth *into the heart* (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6). **Does not the Spirit take possession directly a soul is born again?** Cornelius was born of God, for he feared God with all his house, and prayed to God alway (Acts x. 2); but he nevertheless needed to hear words whereby he and his house should be saved (Acts xi. 14). After he had heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation (Eph. i. 13), the Holy Spirit fell upon him. As soon as we have the Spirit, He beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. viii. 16). This is not always at the moment of the new birth. Read carefully the answers to A.B., page 23 of the number for last January.

M.R.—Please explain Acts xix. 1—7. These disciples only knew the preaching of John the Baptist as to the coming Messiah. This they believed, confessing their sins, being born of the Spirit. But of all the facts that are narrated in the earlier chapters of the Acts they were ignorant. They needed to learn of a dead, risen, and ascended Christ. This gospel they heard from Paul, and as a token of their faith, confessed the name of the Lord Jesus in baptism. Then the Holy Ghost was given. See the above answers to M.A.Y., and say if you have any further difficulty.

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WHO SHALL ROLL AWAY
THE STONE?

THE devotion of Mary Magdalene and the other women, who were found early in the morning on the way to the sepulchre of Jesus, is touching indeed. If they had not the intelligent faith of that other Mary who came beforehand to anoint His body to the burying (Mark xiv. 8), they were determined not to be behindhand now in this service of love and respect. The rising sun beheld them with their spices and ointments, approaching the garden where was that new sepulchre containing (as they supposed) the body of their beloved Lord.

But now a difficulty occurs to them which they do not appear to have considered before. The sepulchre was closed by a great stone. How was it to be removed? Clearly, until it was taken away, they could not perform their self-appointed task. So they kept saying among themselves in real anxiety of heart, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

In their perplexity they came to contemplate this great difficulty. But, behold, the obstacle existed alone in their imagination; *the stone had already been rolled away*. The power of the Lord had been before them, and an angel had rolled

back the stone from the door of the sepulchre; "for it was very great" (Mark xvi. 3, 4).

Beloved of God, is it not often with us as with those women of old? We rack ourselves with fears and forebodings of the immense difficulties in the path before us, which indeed appear to us to be altogether insuperable, and completely to block our onward progress. But, lo! we find we have been torturing ourselves to no purpose. The obstacles have disappeared from before us; for we had been undervaluing the grace and love of God. He Himself has taken care of our needs, and the great stones we so much dreaded He has rolled away.

We once thought we should never be bold enough to tell our unconverted friends we were the Lord's and to brave their ridicule. But when the moment came, our strength was as the day. When the question faced us of renouncing some dear, but worldly, companion for the Lord's sake, what a great stone it seemed! But in His own marvellous way, the Lord brought us through. Losses of relations and friends, home comforts and business prospects, health and wealth, have confronted us from time to time, and our hearts have fainted with fear lest we should be overwhelmed.

But, oh, the tender grace of God! when we came face to face with the trials, how often we found the stones rolled away, and what we had so much feared has never even come to pass. The loved one we were already mourning as dead, the Lord gave back to us from the gates of the grave. The howling waves that threatened to swamp our little barque sank to a peaceful calm without so much as a ripple. Poverty knocked at the door, but never entered, for He Who feeds the ravens does not starve His children.

And, as it is with temporal, so with spiritual matters. There are gigantic sons of Anak, and great cities like Jericho, walled up to the very heaven. The whole might and craft of Satan and his hosts are engaged to keep us from enjoying our spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph. vi.). Who shall roll us away this great stone? It is already done. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James iv. 7). Satan is already overcome. The hosts of God have only to approach Jericho in the way of faith, and its walls fall flat. His power wins the victory.

The way to avoid spiritual depression is to bring God into all our difficulties and to count on Him. Probably it never occurred to the women that God would send His angel to roll away the stone for them. They thought of Peter and John and others who were not there to help them; but not of God.

So is it with us. When we see difficulties we cannot remove, we look about for some friend to help us. But God, is He not often the last one to whom we turn? Yet how comforting to reflect that God removed the stone although the women forgot Him!

Nevertheless they were more anxious than was necessary. They put a burden on their own shoulders they need not have borne. And if we do the same, we shall be far more to blame than they, for we have their example to profit by. Let us be always confident. "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."



Love's secret is always to be doing things for God, and not to mind because they are such very little things.

SILHOUETTE : JEPHTHAH.

THE chiefs of Gilead turned Jephthah out of their city with a great deal less reason than the Athenians had for ostracising Alcibiades, or the Romans for banishing Cicero. Those who would serve their fellow-men must be prepared for that kind of treatment occasionally; was not even David expelled from Jerusalem, and a Greater than David driven outside its walls to be crucified?

But in Jephthah's case there was some reason after all. It is true that he was a good man, and a brave and patriotic soldier, but there was a stain upon his birth; the public sense of morality had to be vindicated, and it is much easier to vindicate it at the expense of a man like Jephthah, than by irritating restraints on one's own conduct.

However, when the people of Gideon presently found that they were on the verge of destruction by the Ammonites, they remembered with dismay that they had turned out the only man who could save them. So their elders wait on the outcast, and urge him to come back and help them, offering him the position of permanent ruler if he will do so. Jephthah answers them somewhat coldly, for he was proud and stern, like all strong but sensitive natures that have been unjustly dishonoured, and who have not that courteous grace which characterised Gideon.

The elders, however, conduct themselves very humbly, and they are certainly to be commended, not blamed, for their patriotic endeavour to make amends for the former injustice. It was "inconsistent," but there is an honourable as well as a dishonourable inconsistency. Jephthah returns with them to the place of approaching disaster as a "man of opportunity," a help in time of trouble.

There is a certain massive strength of simplicity

and sagacity in the way in which he addresses himself to the dangers. He "uttered all his words before the Lord," taking counsel from the source of all wisdom and strength. He then sends a firm, temperate despatch to the Ammonites, requiring the reason of their warlike approach; and on their replying—in a much more civil tone than was usual with them, for they were a peculiarly coarse and brutal people, and foully insulted even David's friendly ambassadors—he argues the merits of the case calmly with them, doing all he can to avert the horrors of war; for a man like this one does not carry a nation into war "with a light heart," though he knows that an appearance of weakness in such cases will only increase its likelihood. The enemy, however, refuses to withdraw, and Jephthah heads the Hebrew army, joins battle, and defeats him with a prodigious slaughter.

But he is chiefly remembered for his dreadful misfortune. He had taken a vow that if he were successful in the battle, he would offer up for a burnt offering whatsoever came forth of the door of his house on his return.

When after the battle he approached his home, "behold, his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child . . . and it came to pass when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low . . . for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." The conversation between them is infinitely pathetic. At the end of two months "he did with her according to his vow." However this matter is viewed it seems a frightful misfortune, and more or less in keeping with the adversity which had awaited him in his birth, and apparently followed him in sorrow and banishment through life.

It is strange that some people seem to be born to a peculiar (outward) misfortune. The mystery is comfortably explained by many prosperous persons—whose bread never falls on the buttered side, and who preach the gospel of Success—by saying that such persons have only themselves to blame; that they are usually more or less shiftless and awkward. Even if that were true, it only pushes the misfortune a little farther back, for is it not an evil to be constructed with such a left-handed tendency? There are those, too, who are born blind, or otherwise infirm; it cannot be said that *they* brought it on themselves.

It is a mystery, for instance, to think of a man like Carey translating the Bible for the Hindoos, whilst horrified by the shrieks of his poor mad wife in the adjoining room. And such mysteries admit of no easy and complaisant solution; we must wait; some day we shall know more of the reason why there can be such a paradox as an upright life persistently unfortunate.

But this much we can see even now; that only in such lives can the very highest phases of faith (and perhaps of love and hope too) be revealed. If Paul had not had that thorn in the flesh, there would not have been the same meaning in those words, "My grace is sufficient for thee." If Milton had not gone blind, we could not have had that tranquil and serene expression of resignation and trust in his sonnet—

"When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide—"

in which he draws this final consolation for all sorrowing and weakened souls—

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

Can the celestial beings look down on a more beautiful sight than on one like the ancient pilot.

lifting up his weather-beaten face in the tempest, and calling to the great God of the sea, "You may drown me if you will, or you may save me if you will, but whatever comes I shall keep my rudder true;" and this when he knows that a slight turn out of the course of truth will give him present peace and security. It is one thing to adhere to the course of Right against human opposition and natural obstacles, and quite another when, in addition to these, providential succour seems all on the side of the enemy, and God Himself seems adverse; when men and devils have done their worst, and the heart cries, "My God, my God, why hast THOU forsaken me!"

And here is where the high heroism of Jephthah was revealed. If he had been a less conscientious man he could have saved himself from this frightful disaster; or he could have saved himself if he had been a more enlightened man, for he would have known that such a sacrifice could not be pleasing to Jehovah.

But that is all beside the question. We must take the facts as they existed. His own hand loosed the tempests that destroyed his hopes, and that he did deliberately and because of his (misguided) sense of rectitude. Yet he still held on his course and kept his rudder true, saving and governing the nation.

But we must not be surprised if we find him somewhat hard and embittered by these untoward events. He never had the suavity and grace of Gideon, and when the Ephraimites came up as was their way, after the battle was over, and abused him for not waking them in time to take part in it, instead of giving them a soft answer, as Gideon did, to turn away their wrath, he struck them down with rough, heavy blows.

They certainly deserved a severe lesson, for

their impudent vanity was astonishing; but it cannot be denied that it was hard treatment to slay so many of them for pronouncing Shibboleth *Sibboleth*, as the Sicilians slew the French for pronouncing the word Ciceri instead of *Chicheri*. But those were dark times, and we do not now approve of sticking swords in our brethren for dropping an H in a party Shibboleth; well, that is, unless it is our own particular Shibboleth, of course.

J.C.B.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS VII.—XI. I.

IN this section of the Epistle we have answers to questions which seem to have been submitted to the apostle on marriage and meats, with a notice of the detraction of his authority.

There is a spiritual energy which raises one to whom it is given above ordinary conditions. But the institution of God, as here in marriage, remains all the same. If Paul was a witness of the former, none the less does he maintain the latter. Marriage is the rule as laid down of God; but the Holy Spirit may and does exceptionally lift up this one or that for worthy reason above the need of marriage. It was a question of God's gift; so that he who marries does well, and he does better who does not marry. The contrast of this holy wisdom is seen in the world-church, which turns the exception of grace into an ecclesiastical rule of corruption, and builds up thereby a city of confusion, hateful to God and ruinous to man. The apostle calls for mutual consideration in married life, as well as prayer, as having to do with God and the adversary.

This leads him, in an interesting and instructive way, to draw the line between what he counselled, and what the Lord commanded by revelation, though the apostle was inspired to give both. He deals also with mixed marriage, and looking at position and occupation, reminds us that God has called us in peace. Hence too, if one were called as a bondman, it was not to be a concern; but if one could become free, to use it rather. For the bondman called in the Lord is His freedman; likewise the called freeman is Christ's bondman. Bought with a price, they were not to be bondmen of men, but abide with God, wherein they were called. He presses also the time straitened and the passing away of this world's fashion as reasons for not setting the heart on change. Such is the outline of chapter vii.

In chapter viii. he speaks of meats of animals sacrificed to idols; and, quite allowing the nullity of an idol, he points out the danger for conscience in those who lacked that knowledge seeing a Christian at table in an idol-temple. Gracious thought for another is better than knowledge empty, and selfish, and sinning against Christ.

This largeness of heart in the apostle exposed him to the false charge of looseness and self from those really guilty, and brings in the parenthetical chapter ix. in which he vindicates his apostleship, and glories in its grace. He maintains title to eat and drink, and lead about a sister-wife, as also the other apostles, specifying the Lord's brethren and Cephas. "Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right not to work?" Yet he draws the plain title to support from all labour—from the soldier, the husbandman, the shepherd, and herdman. Nevertheless he used no such title, supported though it was by the clear case of those that served the altar in the law. While asserting the right, he refused to

use it for himself (not "abuse") in the gospel. It was God's grace in it that filled his heart and led his course, free from all, yet making himself bondman, so inexplicable to man and hateful to the worldly mind, becoming all things to all, that he might save some. A fellow-partaker with the gospel, he was living what others only preached, lest he, after preaching to others, should himself be rejected.

This warning, though transferred to himself (as he says in chap. iv. 6, "to himself and Apollos for their sakes," who were in danger), he follows up in chapter x. by pointing out the ruin of so many in Israel of old, who all were baptised to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink (chap. x.). Is the Christian more indifferent, because privilege is now greater? Idolatry is a great danger for the professing Christian, as it was to the Jew. Yet what condemns it more than Christ's death? What more inconsistent with the Lord's table? For demons were behind the idols; and this is a serious thing. True liberty is profitable and edifies; it cannot be at the expense of God's glory, to which we as Christians are called to do all things, giving no occasion of stumbling to Jews or Greeks or God's assembly. So it was the apostle pleased all in all things, not seeking personal advantage, but that of the many that they might be saved; and he called them to imitate him, as he did Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1).

W.K.

"As a child cannot hold two apples in his little hand, but the one putteth the other out of its room, so neither can we be masters and lords of two loves."

SOMETHING BEYOND.

WHAT would life be without hope? What would death be without hope? Each day, even in the affairs of this life, a "something beyond" is expected. We think of what we shall do or see in the evening, or to-morrow, or next week, and this sort of anticipation keeps up the spirits, and nerves the heart and hand to energy. But what can be more touching than to hear a dying person say, "I am going, but I have no hope. There is nothing bright before *me*."

Whether in health or in sickness, in life or in death, a good hope of eternal blessedness gives joy and peace of a most solid kind; and when this hope is a certainty, because founded on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, what can shake its steadfastness?

Mrs. E. was left a widow with two little boys, Charles and William. Her husband died of consumption at the age of twenty-seven. In her early girlhood she had given her heart to the Lord, and in her deep trial she was enabled to trust a Father's love, knowing that He would take her and her orphan children under His protection.

The little ones learned to read the word of God when very young; Charles could read his Bible at four years old, and William at five, mother and sons studying the holy scriptures together. She taught them to see everything in God, and God in everything, from the small blade of grass to the mighty orbs of the heavens.

They loved to learn and had serious thoughts from time to time, and when about fourteen years of age, they laid hold on eternal life, trusting in the blood that was shed for sinners on Calvary.

When Charles was thirteen he went into an office with a view to a clerkship, and William a

little later was apprenticed to a trade. In the course of time they finished with success what they had undertaken, and both lads went to London, whence William proceeded to Liverpool, where he is still honourably employed.

The mother, when parting with her beloved boys, commended them both to Him Whom they loved and trusted, giving them these texts: "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things [*i.e.*, food and raiment] shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33); "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Is. xxvi. 4). And she ceased not to present them before the Lord in frequent prayer.

In a few years Charles was attacked by the disease that had proved fatal to his father, and was ordered to return to his native place, the Island of Guernsey, where his mother received him with tenderness, and did everything for him that her loving heart could suggest.

His London employers were very kind, and told him to stay until his health was restored. When his mother heard him speak of this, she thought, "My dear Charles is still young, and may be flattering himself that he will recover."

So she said to him, "Ah! my dear Charles, if you were to live to my age, and have a thousand a year, you would still have to go and leave it behind."

His answer will never be forgotten by her. He looked at her stedfastly, drew himself up, and said, "Oh, mother, what is a thousand a year compared with what I have before me,—*my happy home.*"

She then felt satisfied. Her dear one was safe. He was going to the Father Who had lent him to her for twenty-six years, and she glorified God for this testimony of his hope. A bright hope indeed

it was. He was always speaking of the happy home to which he was going.

The last month through which he lived was June. Several times he said, "Mother, I think I shall live this month out; then my happy spirit will wing its way on high, for 'Heaven is my home.'" He composed some beautiful lines, each verse ending with these words:—

"Heaven is my home; 't is home to me,
And there my Father's face I'll see."

On the last day of June, the doctor said, "You are near your end." Charles smiled. "Are you prepared for a change?" His answer was, "Yes, sir." "Then," said the doctor, "let us thank God for it." The good doctor told the mother to kneel beside the bed, and when she had done so, he joined his hands over the sick man and thanked God for Jesus Christ's sake.

During the next night, which was his last, Charles was very quiet and happy. In the morning he said to his mother, "I want nothing more in this world but prayer,—then soon, praise."

With a smile on his face he passed away in perfect peace, at ten in the morning of the first of July. And the fond mother's heart was comforted, for she knew that "absent from the body," he was "present with the Lord."

"Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's right hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thine earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days;
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight and prayer to praise."

H.L.R.

◆

"LORD, I confess this morning I remembered my breakfast, but forgot my prayers."

CONFESSION OF SINS.*

WASH Thou my feet, O Lord ; how foul the way,
 When I, forgetting Thee, forsake Thy side,
 And, for the moment, foolishly do stray,
 Into that road that stretches far and wide.
 Now I return, and lovingly entreat,
 "Lord ! Master ! bend and wash my soiled feet."

O Lord, what joy to rest beneath Thy wing,
 To hear Thy tender voice that calls me Thine !
 Yet oh ! how oft I stray, and have to bring
 My burdens unto Thee. Blest Saviour, mine,
 Back to Thee now I tearfully retreat,
 And sob, "O Jesus, Lord, wash Thou my feet."

Lord, I am clean ; washed in the precious blood
 That Thou didst shed for me when far away ;
 E'en me, from crimson wounds salvation's flood
 Was poured to cleanse, and all my debts to pay ;
 And yet I strayed ! Returning, I repeat,
 "Lord, I am foul ; bend Thou and wash my feet."

Oh, joy and bliss to know that Thy strong arm
 Will never fail me. Though all else denied,
 Thy grace suffices. Thou, my shield from harm,
 Let me not stray again from Thy dear side,
 Since now I hear Thy whisper, low and sweet,
 "Child, thou art clean, for I have washed thy feet."

L.L.

Buenos Ayres, 3rd March, 1897.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

THIS was a wonderful day in the history of the ways of God. Redemption was now accomplished. Christ was glorified as Man at His right hand. The moment had come for God to give effect to His counsels formed before the world was. Accordingly the Spirit of God •

*" He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."—John xiii. 10.

descended according to the promise of the Lord Jesus. The disciples are shewn as a waiting company. They had been bidden to tarry in Jerusalem until endued with power from on high. The day of Pentecost had come, and they were gathered together with one accord in one place. It was the first day of the week, the formal meeting day of those who believe in Jesus, being the day of His glorious resurrection from among the dead.

While together, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts ii. 2, 3). Such was the manner of the descent of the Holy Ghost. Never had He come from heaven to dwell in and with the saints before. He had wrought in them, of course, producing in the first instance a sense of sin, then faith in the living God; but He had never been given of God as His seal upon any. He had come upon certain persons (as prophets, etc.) at times for special purposes, but the time had now come for something beyond all this. During the present period He dwells within every believer, making his body His temple. The blood having been shed and sprinkled, the oil has followed, to use the language of the type (Lev. viii.).

"But," it may be asked, "why should He come upon the disciples in the form of tongues of fire, when He descended upon the Lord Jesus as a dove?" The answer is to be found in the character of the recipients and the testimony they were called to bear. The Lord was here as the expression of God's grace and love. He came not to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Personally He was the

meek and lowly One: what more apt emblem of this than a dove? As for the disciples, their testimony was of a very solemn, as well as blessed, character. The word of God through them, while it brought peace and blessing to all who received it, nevertheless judged all before it, and gave no quarter to anything of the first man. Their testimony was to branch out to both Jews and Gentiles, hence "cloven tongues."

The first effect of the Spirit's presence was that they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Thus did God surmount the confusion brought in at Babel (Gen. xi.), though the time had not come to do away with it. He intended the gospel for every creature. The law was given in one language, and to but one people; but the gospel of God's grace, God's precious testimony concerning His Son, could not be thus limited. Gentiles and Jews were equally needy, and all should have the offer of the Saviour. This, however, the early Christians were slow to learn. They were ready enough to preach Christ to the children of Israel; but God had to specially intervene to make Peter open the door to the Gentiles, even though the commission was clear and plain (Acts x.; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts i. 8). So slow is the heart to take in the extent of God's thoughts of grace.

The tongues, I need hardly say, were miraculous. Peter and the others had not learned these languages, yet they were suddenly able to speak them. Who but God could have wrought this? It astonished the multitude. Being the feast of Pentecost, Jerusalem was full of Jews from all parts of the Roman empire, and they heard these men, who were evidently all Galileans, declare in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. Some were honest, and enquired concerning the

marvel. Cavillers were not wanting, as always, who attributed it to wine. The early hour of the day (the third) should have preserved them from such an insinuation, as Peter soon pointed out.

It was not fleshly excitement; it was divine power. A Divine Person had come down from the glory into which Christ had so recently entered; and was here to bear testimony to Him and His finished work. Thus it was that day. Peter was the chosen vessel. He had but recently denied his Lord with oaths and curses, but grace had fully restored him; and he was bold as a lion. He could even charge the Jewish people with the very sin of which he himself had been guilty (Acts iii. 14). So reassuring is the grace of the Lord. Peter reminded the multitude of the prophecy of Joel. God had spoken of an outpouring of the Spirit, before the great and notable day of the Lord: need they wonder at what had occurred? Then he brought home to their consciences their dreadful sin with regard to Jesus. They had rejected and slain Him, but God had raised Him up, and exalted Him. This he proves conclusively from their own scriptures; for Peter could see the bearing of all these passages now that the Holy Ghost had come.

The result we know. Three thousand persons were saved and added to the little band. Thus was the church of God commenced, though the truth concerning it was not unfolded until Paul was called, some time later.

W.W.F.



"SAY the strongest things you can, with candour and kindness, to a man's face; and make the best excuse you can for him, with truth and justice, behind his back."

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

I WOULD like to draw attention to a few scriptures upon this subject. One thing needful, above all else, is that we should have the Lord *Himself* before our hearts, a living, bright reality. He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. He bare our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. ii. 24). He loved us and gave Himself for us (Eph. v. 2). In searching the word on this and all other subjects, we want our *hearts* to be enraptured with the wonderful Person Who is coming. If a long-absent loved one was expected, in proportion as we loved that one, we should be counting upon the time of the arrival. So in proportion as our hearts are drawn out in love to Himself, shall we be counting upon that bright morning without clouds, when He shall come again to receive us unto Himself.

What a prospect! We shall see His face (Rev. xxii. 4). We shall see Him as He is (1 John iii. 2). With Job we can say, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold" (Job xix. 27).

We have much in the New Testament that speaks of His coming again to receive us unto Himself. Just before He suffered He gathered His sorrowing disciples around Him, and spoke words of comfort to their hearts. He told them, "If I go and prepare a place for you *I will come again* and receive you unto myself" (John xiv. 3). He has gone away, but He has not yet returned. We know why it is, He is gathering out of this world, out of the depths of sin, those who will share in His glory. The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. iii. 9—15). He waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth—the fruit of His work and suffering on

Calvary's cross—and hath long patience for it (James v. 7). He is waiting; and while He is there the day of His grace rolls on, and sinners are being saved. He waits up there, with heart yearning for the moment when He shall have all His redeemed with Himself; and we here are waiting, yearning for the moment when we shall gaze upon His blessed face, and be for ever with Him. May the Lord direct our hearts into the patient waiting for Christ, or the patience of Christ (2 Thess. iii. 5. margin).

There is no time stated when He will come, for He would have us to be ever on the tiptoe of expectation. The early Christians turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). Their hearts were occupied with Him Who had delivered them from the wrath to come, and were in a waiting attitude. What can be more simple than to be expecting a person? We are expecting the Son from heaven. Since we have believed in Jesus this world has become to us a wilderness. We are pilgrims and strangers here (1 Pet. ii. 11). Our calling is a heavenly one (Heb. iii. 1). We are looking for the same city as Abraham was (Heb. xi. 10); heaven is our home. From thence we are looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. iii. 20). He is our hope (1 Tim. i. 1), and looking for Him is looking for that blessed hope (Titus ii. 13).

Because He has been waiting nearly nineteen centuries we must not think, "My lord delayeth his coming" (Matt. xxiv. 48). He is not slack concerning His promise (2 Pet. iii. 9). The word still stands, "Yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). Scoffers are saying, Where is the promise of His coming? But the heart that desires to be true to the Lord,

still hears those strengthening and encouraging words, "I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11). Again, to remind our hearts of the blessed fact, in the last chapter of God's word we find written three times over, "I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20). May our hearts respond, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

Till He come it is our privilege to shine as lights in this dark world, holding forth the word of life (Phil. ii. 15, 16). At the same time we must make up our mind that if we will live godly in Christ Jesus we shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12). But whatever befalls us, the bright hope of His coming should ever cheer our hearts; be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. We should think of *His* long patience, and remember whatever befalls us His grace is sufficient; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (James v. 8). How blessed that servant who will be found doing His Lord's will when He comes (Matt. xxiv. 45, 46). He would have us with our loins girded about and our lights burning, and we ourselves like men that wait for our Lord. We, so to speak, should have the thumb on the latch ready to open unto Him immediately (Luke xii. 35, 36). w.c.

—◆— NOTHING TO SAY.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I have nothing particular before me to write about this month; so that I shall occupy but little space. It only occurs to me to improve the occasion by recommending it as a good rule for your own guidance, that if you have nothing to say, to say that and no more, and if you have anything to say, to say it in as few words as will clearly convey your idea.

The scripture is such a perfect model in the respect of using no unnecessary words. Yea is yea, and nay is nay. Let such be your aim. Don't talk, talk, talk, for the sake of talking. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."

You have probably heard some good men inform their audience that they have "just one word more;" and you expect the speaker to resume his seat at the close of, at least, the next sentence. But no, on he goes, for quite five minutes. Then, as his voice sinks with what you regard as his final remark, he suddenly states that he has discovered "another word," which he proceeds to impart to his hearers as before.

This tantalising habit arises in most cases from continual efforts made to keep on speaking with no purpose before the mind, and without having anything definite to say. And being practised in private conversation, it speedily becomes an inveterate habit.

Cultivate the practice therefore of thinking of what you are about to say. Scripture counsels you to be "*slow to speak*." And though you may on that account speak less, you will undoubtedly say more.

I should be glad to hear from some of my young friends on subjects which may be of general practical interest.

I am, yours faithfully,

"YOD."



"Wi' Christ I'm jist like the laverock that kens the mornin' has come, an' is gaun to rise frae its nest on the earth to mount the lift (sky), an' wi' its wee bit cheery sang meet the rising sun."

CORRESPONDENCE.

W.C.—Who may not be received at the Lord's Table? Reception at the Lord's Table should be on adequate testimony that the persons to be received are Christ's, and are walking in ways of faith and godliness. In this manner Saul was received at Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26, 27). Saints visiting an assembly where they are unknown should furnish themselves with letters of commendation (2 Cor. iii. 1). Persons like Simon Magus, whose hearts are not right in the sight of God, have, of course, no part or lot in the matter (Acts viii. 21). Scripture also declares that certain classes of persons are to be excluded from fellowship, viz. (1) those guilty of immorality (1 Cor. v.); (2) those propagating false teaching (Gal. v. 8—12); and (3) those not abiding in the doctrine of Christ (1 John ii. 18—29; 2 John 9). Let the honour due to the name of the Lord govern every decision in matters of this kind. **Are fruitbearing and service the same?** Hardly; generally speaking, the former includes the latter. Thus love and faith are fruit (Gal. v. 22), but we also hear of the *labour* of love and the *work* of faith (1 Thess. i. 3); on the other hand, meekness and gentleness are fruit, but scarcely service. Fruit is the result of the new life God gives; service of the "gift" He gives.

"One thing I do."—We are informed by some of our correspondents that the author of the verses on page 113 of the *B.M.M.* for May last was not J.N.D., though they appeared in print many years ago above his initials.

F.B.—Who are the unworthy (1 Cor. xi. 27)? The text reads, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, *unworthily*, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." You will observe it does not speak of any persons as being unworthy, but of eating in an unworthy manner. Irreverence, or forgetfulness of the presence of the Lord, was the sin for which the apostle rebuked the Corinthians. We ought always to beware of partaking of the bread and wine carelessly or thoughtlessly. Every Christian should commemorate the Lord's death, but at the same time should take heed *how* it is done. See the solemn warnings that follow this verse.

H.W.P.—How are we to understand, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. viii. 9)? Is he not yet sealed? In Romans viii. 1—10, the Spirit is viewed in regard to the effect He produces in the believer, but subsequently (11, etc.) as a distinct person indwelling and witnessing. So that when He

is spoken of as the Spirit of Christ (ver. 9), He is looked at as giving the believer a moral likeness to Christ, without which a person is not His. Therefore it is not so much the Holy Spirit Himself that is in question here, as the *effect* of His presence in the believer. Now when sealing is spoken of, it is the Spirit Himself Who is the seal that God gives (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13; iv. 30). We do not think, therefore, that sealing is so much referred to in this passage, as the blessed office of the Spirit in conforming the Lord's own to the image of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 18). This likeness to Him is true of each and all who belong to Him. **Is the "Spirit of life" (Romans viii. 2) the resurrection life the Lord breathed on His disciples (John xx. 22)?** Surely so. Christ, the Prince of Life, Who knew no sin, overcame sin and death; and in His victorious resurrection that connection with sin and death to which He submitted for our sakes, ended with Him for ever (Rom. vi. 9, 10). Such a life is imparted to us (the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus), thereby making us also free from the law of sin and death (Rom. viii. 2). **How is the "righteousness of the law fulfilled in us" (Rom. viii. 4)?** The righteousness of the law here means the righteous demands of the law, which are necessarily fulfilled in every person who walks after the Spirit. For "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law;" since "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 8—10). **Jesus standing (Acts vii. 55) and sitting on the right hand of God (Heb. i. 3; x. 11, 12).** As you say, the attitude in which Stephen saw the Lord Jesus was plainly indicative of His readiness to return (Acts iii. 20) as Israel's Messiah, if the nation would repent. But they stoned Stephen; and immediately (Acts viii. 1) the witnesses were driven from Jerusalem, and scattered everywhere. In Hebrews (written afterwards), His seat on high is a proof of His accomplished work.

Poplar.—What is the voice of the Son of God (John v. 25)? When the Lord Jesus speaks to a dead soul, He bestows life; it hears the voice and lives. Just as when the Lord called to dead Lazarus, the corpse lived and came forth. Hearing the preacher is very different from hearing this voice. It speaks within. It is only known to those who hear it. Have you not heard it? As to resisting the Spirit, see an example in Acts vii. 51.

R.E.F.—Explain 2 Corinthians vi. 17, and also 1 Timothy ii. 9, 10. The first is a most general call to entire separation from the world, and to remain without contact with what is unclean. It is not enough to *come out*;

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there must be not so much as a *touch*. We hope to insert a paper on this subject shortly (D.V.). "Modest apparel" (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10) is in contrast to the efforts of the worldly-minded to bring themselves into prominence by means of showy or eccentric attire. Neatness is a mark of every Christian lady.

E.N.—Hating father and mother (Luke xiv. 26); would this apply to the first claims that the Lord has over me in everything, especially with regard to staying away from the Lord's table sometimes, in order to be with and to please my relatives? We hardly think so. The Lord spoke of a time when the parents would deliver their children to death even, because they professed Christ. In such cases, obedience to Christ meant disobedience to parents. We do not know your circumstances, but we imagine it is a question of a different nature, if we understand it aright. Do not forget that the same word of the Lord that bids you remember Him at His table, commands you to honour and obey your parents (Eph. vi. 1, 2). If they wish you to remain away *sometimes*, and you obey cheerfully, "this is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. iii. 20), for in obeying them you obey Him. But depend upon it, sulks at home and smiles in the meeting is far from pleasing to the Lord. If your parents sought to prevent you from being a disciple of Christ at all, it would be quite another matter.

W.E.—What did the Lord restore that He took not away (Psalm lxix. 4)? The psalm refers especially to what the Lord endured from the hands of man. This phrase refers to the principle of grace whereby the Lord yielded up even what man unrighteously demanded of Him. See the instance of the temple-tax (Matt xvii. 24—27), and, by way of contrast, that of Zaccheus (Luke xix. 8). **Explain "Lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 12, 19).** In the former verse it appears to mean the grasping of the blessedness of eternal life in its future display, so that we are thereby moved to greater energy. In the latter verse, eternal life should be the *real* life (R.V.). The rich are counselled so to use their wealth that the returns will be due in eternity. This is the true life, which living for self or for the present world is not. The context shews *how* to lay hold of this life. **What "day" is referred to (2 Tim. i. 18)?** The day of our manifestation (i. 12; iv. 8), which is ever connected with our responsibility (1 Cor. i. 8; Phil. i. 6, 10). It is then that the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 21), which has kept us all along the way, will be seen by us. Now we none of us realise *how much* mercy we continually need.

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AN APOSTOLIC PRAYER
MEETING.

WHEN Peter and John were dismissed by the council, we read that they went direct to "their own company." While it is not surprising that the two apostles should thus seek to be found among fellow-believers, this is a significant reference to the fact that there now existed in Jerusalem a band of persons perfectly distinct from the followers of the Jewish religion.

This new society was first constituted by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.). And the nucleus then formed was daily augmented by converts through the preaching of the word. Now the position of this company in relation to the Jews around them was more visibly defined than ever by the action of the Sanhedrin in apprehending the apostles, and forbidding them to speak in the name of Jesus. It was very patent that the assembly of believers was not only separated from the nation but that the two were utterly opposed. They were not only different but contrary.

Such was the state of things which Peter and John reported to the assembly of believers. They had just received from the council the strictest injunctions not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus (Acts iv. 17). On the other hand, the Lord had commanded them that they should

preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 47).

The servants of the Lord apparently never questioned for a moment as to what they were to do—to speak or to be silent. They felt they must obey their Master. But they did feel, and rightly so, that they were altogether insufficient of themselves to encounter such opposition as that of the sacerdotal heads of the nation. They were called to face the deadliest foe of God's people on earth—a form of religion without its power or truth.

This sense of their own weakness pervaded the whole company and brought them to their knees before God. Every heart was alike, throbbing with the intensity of earnest desire to be strengthened to fulfil the perilous task before them. It was a special occasion. They needed a special supply of grace and mercy. And with intelligence and faith they spread their petitions before the throne of omnipotent love.

Their prayer was strikingly in accordance with their circumstances, shewing that it was no stereotyped form. They were opposed by a great earthly power; but they remembered the Lord, and that He was the mighty Sovereign of the universe. "O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them is" (Acts iv. 24). The earthly power that seemed so formidable in view of their own strength, faded into utter insignificance before the remembrance of the power of the Lord.

It is always the way of faith to put such contests in their true light as being between God and the world. Then it is that faith triumphantly exclaims, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Moreover, these men of God discerned that this persecution by the council was but another out-

break of that ineradicable spirit of animosity which so recently rose to its climax in crucifying the Messiah. But even in that most infamous of evil deeds where man seemed the victor over Christ, faith knew that God was sovereign. He had foreseen it all. The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David had foretold the great confederation of earthly potentates, Jewish and Gentile, against the Lord and His anointed. And what was the net result of their plotting and planning, their scorning and scourging, their crucifying and slaying? They never in a single act of their violence went a hair-breadth beyond the limit prescribed beforehand by the will and power of God. This, the flood tide of human passion, never for a moment rose above the divinely-set bounds. They could do no more nor no less than whatsoever His hand and His counsel determined before to be done.

Such were their thoughts of the omnipotence and omniscience of their Master as they bent low in His audience-chamber. And their faith rose up to plead His power, and not in vain. They were confident that He Who had walked on the furious waves of human wrath that raged around Calvary would maintain His control over the turbulent passions that now surrounded their little company so ominously.

They beseech the Lord, therefore, not to pour out vengeance on their enemies, but to look on their threatenings. They desire not that their foes may be destroyed, but that they may be enabled to triumph over their difficulties. "Grant unto thy servants" (1) that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, and (2) that the name of Jesus may be honoured. The answer came swift and ample. The place was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They spake the word of God with boldness.

Fellow-believers, what experience have we of such prayer meetings as this? Do you know of any reason why we might not unite before God in supplication, and have similar answers of power? Mark, this company was (1) of one mind; "they lifted up their voice with one accord." (2) Their petitions were based on the revealed mind of God in the scripture (Psalm ii.). They knew therefore they were heard (1 John v. 14, 15). (3) They desired to receive strength to serve the Lord (as they had been commissioned to do) in face of the threats of the Jewish rulers. (4) They sought that the name of God's holy Servant, Jesus, might be glorified in the eyes of unbelievers by signs and wonders being done through His name. Oh, that such a spirit of prayer as that of old might be among us when gathered together!



THE RESTING-PLACE OF FAITH.

CHRIST is the great and proper object of faith. My faith, therefore, should rest on *Him*—not on myself, nor anything in myself. He that trusts in himself, or in his righteousness or holiness, is a Pharisee, not a Christian.

If I look at myself, what do I see? Imperfection, short-comings, defilement, sin. "In me," that is, *in my flesh*, "dwelleth no good thing." Looking at myself, therefore, can never give me comfort, confidence, or peace; but must and ought to be a constant ground of self-humiliation. The Spirit of God would thus keep me humble and watchful, making me sensible how little I am like Christ, my perfect pattern. But the constant sense of my short-comings is not to hinder my peace, because I trust in *Christ* for acceptance—not in *myself*. I believe the testimony of God, Who cannot lie, that

Christ "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." I believe that He took—not some of my sins, but all my sins upon Himself, and endured the wrath of God—the righteous judgment, which my sins deserved.

Seeing, then, that God in His wondrous grace has dealt with *Him as my substitute*, and has accepted *His* work in my behalf, and, therefore, views *His* death, and the judgment which He endured, as *my death and judgment*—my soul enjoys *perfect peace* with God, in resting on a *perfectly finished work*. Christ is my surety—my righteousness—my only ground of confidence before God; and knowing His all-sufficiency, and His acceptableness to God, I dare not doubt. He "appears in the presence of God FOR US." (Heb. ix. 24). *His* acceptance with God is, therefore, *my* acceptance; for I am "*in him*." "*As he is, so are we*," even while in this world: for we are "*one with him*." We are viewed as *in Him*.

There is, therefore, no room for doubt in the soul that really believes God's testimony respecting those who are in Christ. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

Now, what is commonly substituted for this peace-giving faith in Christ, is the estimated amount of the Spirit's work within. *The effects of the new birth* are made the ground of rest to the soul, *in place of redemption*.

The natural result of this error is, that at times, when I see the flesh working, I sink into despondency; and thus, having put my *imperfect* experience of the Spirit's work in the place of the full belief of the *perfect* work of Christ, the confidence which I am commanded to hold fast, never exists, and, in the end, I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this proceeds from substituting the work of the

Spirit of God in me, for the work, atonement, and resurrection of Christ actually accomplished: *the sure resting-place of faith* never varies—never changes in value before God.

If it be said, "Yes, but I fear to indulge this confidence as to my perfect acceptance with God, because I often find my faith weak, and my evil nature working." Well, this does not alter the great fact of your acceptance with God, if indeed you are a Christian—if indeed you are *in Christ*; and to whatever extent these doubts and this dimness of spiritual perception proceed, they should be treated as unbelief and sin—not as the proper or normal experience of a Christian.

Whenever the question of our acceptance remains unsettled, the standard of genuine practical holiness is necessarily lowered. Instead of continually seeking to "walk worthy of God," in the joy of present salvation, our minds become engaged in self-examination as to whether the fruit of the Spirit has been sufficiently manifested to satisfy us that we are Christians; and when satisfied on this point, we become well pleased and contented with ourselves, and are in danger, from dwelling on our graces and our own attainments, of falling into self-righteousness and spiritual pride.

The discovery of indwelling sin in the Christian, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for his doubting; because it was by reason of sin—it was to atone for sin—it was because we were sinners, that Christ died.

The Spirit of God, indeed, leads me to judge sin in myself, and to hate it; but it also gives me to know that I shall not be judged for it; for Christ has borne the judgment of sin for me, and He being raised from the dead as a divine attestation that the sins which He bore had been put away, there is an end of that question.

But it will perhaps be said, "I fully believe that Christ is truly the Son of God—one with the Father: I believe in all His work and grace; but I do not know that I have an interest in Him. This is the question, and this is quite a different question." Not so: it is the subtlety of Satan, and want of scriptural intelligence, which would still throw you back off Christ. God, for our comfort, has identified the two things, by stating, "that by him ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

In a word, to say, "I believe in Christ, but I do not know whether I have an interest in Him," is a delusion of the devil; for God says, it is those who believe who have the interest. That is God's way of dealing. I have no more right, on scriptural grounds, to believe that *in myself* I am regarded by God as a sinner, than that *in Christ* I am accepted as righteous; for God has irreversibly settled both these questions. The same divine testimony which declares that "*there is none righteous,*" declares also that believers "*are justified.*"

ANON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS XI. 2—XIV.

WE have here another section of the Epistle, as distinct, or nearly so, from what precedes as from its concluding two chapters.

Before coming to the assembly which was compromised in more ways than one at Corinth, the apostle regulates the relative place of the man and the woman in themselves. The importance of this is the more evident from the humanitarian free-

thinking of our own day which leaves out God's mind and order. Paul wished them to know that the Christ is the head of every man (*andros*), but woman's head [is] the man, and the Christ's head God. Hence not men, but women, in praying or prophesying were to have their heads covered before others in token of subjection, as the act otherwise seemed to deny it. For the woman was created for the man and of him, though the man by her; and angels looked on who should see godly decorum. Neither is without the other, but all things of God, which unbelief forgets or takes no account of. For woman to act like a man is to her shame, and of the contentious people who ignore God's will (2—16).

Nor was it in private only. The Corinthians were coming together for the worse. Schisms already existing would surely lead to heresies or sects, which in effect deny the one body of Christ, the church, though the approved are thereby made manifest. How low too at such an occasion as the Lord's Supper the dishonour put on the poor!—really on the church of God; so that such a supper was not the Lord's. Therefore as *he* emphatically received the Supper from the Lord, he here also delivered it to them in all its grace and holy solemnity for the remembrance of Him, the centre of the church's worship, when the Lord's death makes selfishness in any form hateful, yet fills the heart purified by faith with thanksgiving and praise, and claims vigilant self-judgment, lest any slight might bring on the Lord's chastening now, that one be not condemned with the world by-and-by. So the apostle rules the severance of a meal, even were it that called the love-feast or Agape, to hinder such disorder in future (17—34).

Thereon follows the greatest unfolding which scripture furnishes of the presence and working of

the Holy Spirit in the assembly with the love so essential to right and worthy operation, and the Lord's regulation of it accordingly against abuse, in chapters xii.—xiv. It is designedly apart from the Lord's Supper, though that Supper was in fact the most indispensable aim on the most important occasion that the assembly met where the Holy Spirit acted in all holy freedom. But it seemed good to the Lord to treat of His Supper separately, and before entering on "the spirituals" or manifestations of the Spirit which are here explained. The apostle opens it by guarding against the imitative intrusion of demons, whose aim is to debase Jesus, the Son of God, as the power of the Spirit works in exalting Him. Now there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; as there are of service, but the same Lord; and of operations, but the same God that worketh all in all.

It is a question here, not of souls saved, but of discerning spirits who sought to dishonour the Lord and deceive if it were possible the very elect. None the less but the more is the Holy Spirit sent down and here in the church to glorify the Lord and bless His own as His witnesses of Jesus in glory. The presence of the Spirit is more momentous than even the gifts He distributes and directs. It is that which constitutes the one body (13); and the assembly is bound to own and act on it; which is exactly what Christendom has in effect denied since the apostles, perhaps the most perverse of the perverted things the apostle warned of as at hand. There was but one Spirit, as also but one body; as faithfulness means walking by faith, so it is the shame of any to confess truth they do not seek to carry out at all cost. The Corinthians were light and carnal, and their failure is turned to everlasting profit by the inspired instruction and corrective.

The gifts are manifestations of His power Who dwells in the church and works though sovereign to the Lord's glory. The one Spirit's baptism at Pentecost established that unity, which unbelief overlooks and in effect denies. Every true assembly is Christ's body, as the apostle told the Corinthians they were (27), though their state was bad enough to draw out the gravest rebuke. But it is the refusal to bow to the word and judge the evil which forfeits the title of God's assembly; and the Corinthians did bow to their restoration, as the second Epistle shews. Again, it is in the assembly as a whole that God set, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, etc. (28). Ministry therefore, that is, gift in exercise, is set in *the* church. The gift in its variety is for all. There is no such idea in scripture as *the* minister of *a* church; which supposes and generates all sorts of error. The edifying gifts are on the same principle and from the same source as the sign gifts (miracles, healings, tongues, etc.), but far more important and permanent and set in the higher place, whatever Corinthian vanity preferred.

There was however a quality higher than all, and of deep necessity for the right working of every gift, as indeed for the well-being of every saint, to the Lord's praise. It was love: a sad word among the Greeks, who readily claimed the most refined place of the first man; but how blessed and blessing and divine as heard and seen and proved to death and deeper still in the Second! And this is essential both for the individual Christian (who alone loves, as begotten of God), and for the assembly. Again, it accounts for its place here, between the presence and the operations of the Spirit in chapter xii. and the order of His action, for which every member is responsible, in chapter xiv. It is striking to observe how the passive

characters of love take precedence of the active, while the intermediate dwell on that joy in good which is truly godlike, as it well becomes the children of God now on earth, though love never fails and abides for ever.

It is well to note in chapter xiv. 3 that we have no definition of prophecy here, only its description in contrast with "a tongue." Edification is the great criterion for the assembly, as comely order is due to Him Who dwells there, and to the Head. Revelation, now complete in scripture, is distinguished from knowledge; and power is subject to the Lord's authority Who gives rules which bind even prophets who might plead divine impulse, as they impose women to silence in the assembly. They might use their gifts at home, though as subject to order, like Philip's four daughters who prophesied. The word of God does not come out from the assembly, nor does it come to one only. Through a called and inspired channel it is for all the church, being the Lord's commandment. "But if any be ignorant," is the withering rebuke of the independent, "let him be ignorant." God has not only spoken but written, and His word abides for ever. May we be subject to the Lord.

W.K.

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 shew,
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, 't is done, and once for all ;
" 'T is 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, 't was 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.

IN THE FLESH AND IN THE SPIRIT.

THE eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is the climax of a very important series of instruction. Most readers have doubtless observed that the epistle is divided into three parts. Part I. consists of chapters i.—viii., and brings out the fulness and completeness of God's salvation. Part II. embraces chapters ix.—xi., and is dispensational, explaining God's present dealings through the gospel, in view of the special promises made to Israel. The remaining chapters (xii.—xvi.)

are practical, pressing upon the recipients of God's mercies a becoming walk below.

Part I. is however subdivided. In Romans i.—v. 11, the apostle takes up the question of *sins*, and shews our complete justification from them all through the death and resurrection of Christ; from chapter v. 12 to the end of viii. it is more a question of *sin*; and our complete deliverance from both our old standing and former bondage is shewn in the risen Christ. We were once in Adam (chap. v.), and were then lying under death and condemnation; we were once under the bondage of sin (chap. vi.) as truly as Israel of old were under the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt; we (or at least Jewish believers) were once under the law with all its solemn consequences for our souls (chap. vii.).

But from all this we have been delivered. We have passed out of our old position by death, and we are now before God in the risen Christ. This Romans viii. brings before us fully. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (ver. 1). The added clause mars the beauty of the Spirit's words. Our standing is not dependent on our walk in any way, though our enjoyment of it is. "In Christ" describes our new position before God, through grace. We have in Him a life which death cannot touch, and which is beyond all condemnation. We have all the advantages of His risen position. All that is His in virtue of His accomplished work is ours also. The same divine favour and love which rests upon Him, rests upon us also who are in Him. Marvellous place to be brought into! Mighty change from our former place in the first man, where all consequences brought in by Adam's fall were ours, because of our connection with him as our head. Adam became head of

a race after the fall, and all therefore have his position, with everything that attaches to it; Christ became head of a new race after His resurrection, and all who are in Him share the blessedness that is His, our sins having been put away for ever, sin having been condemned in His death and righteousness established.

But if "in Christ" expresses our new standing before God, "in the Spirit" characterises us now as men walking below. Romans does not regard us as in heavenly places, as Ephesians, but as those who are set free to walk to the glory of God on earth. "In the flesh" characterised our former state. The flesh was the source of all our thoughts and actions. Flesh is antagonistic to God and they that are in it cannot please Him. The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. The sure result of following its course is death, as the apostle speaks, "For to be carnally minded (or the mind of the flesh) is death . . . if ye live after the flesh ye shall die" (verses 6, 13).

We are not in the flesh now (vii. 5; viii. 9), though the flesh is still in us. It is no longer a controlling power, it does not characterise our lives as once. Faith treats it as a condemned thing, and allows it no place. If it acts, it leads us from the Lord into some by-path of sin and sorrow. We are not now debtors to it, to live according to it. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. viii. 9). The Holy Spirit is God's great gift to every believer; and it is He, in contrast to the flesh, Who now gives character to all our walk and ways. He gives us the happy knowledge that Christ is in us—as He Himself said, "In that day ye shall know

that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20)—He forms all our thoughts and desires, teaches us how to pray, enables us to bring forth fruit for God, strengthens us for all our conflicts with the enemy, and sustains our hearts along the road by His gracious ministry of Christ to us. He is our Leader, and by His power we are enabled to mortify the deeds of the body.

Every soul will do well to enquire of itself before the Lord how far this is practically realised. It is one thing to know and accept it as doctrine, quite another to walk in the power of it. Every Christian *lives* in the Spirit or he would not be a Christian, but every Christian does not necessarily *walk* in the Spirit (Gal. v. 25). And we should not forget, too, that it is perfectly possible for a true believer to sow to the flesh and not to the Spirit. Lot is a painful instance of this in the Old Testament. This brings us under God's governmental dealings. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap:" and this is as true for the Christian as for others; though it is not possible, through God's grace, to lose the eternal life, which he has in the Son (Gal. vi. 8).

"The mind of the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. viii. 6). The secret, therefore, of a peaceful walk is to follow the gracious leading of the Divine Indweller. If flesh is habitually judged and mortified, and the Spirit of God allowed His true place, our souls thrive and grow. Things that would disturb and cause bitter sorrow, do not intrude themselves then. The Spirit has not to be occupying us with ourselves and our state, but is free to lead us on to a fuller knowledge of Christ, which is His delight.

The apostle, in Romans viii., traces the Spirit's gracious work in us and for us, onward to the resurrection. "If the Spirit of him that raised up

Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (ver. 11). Our bodies being the temples of the Holy Spirit, the God Who raised up Jesus will not suffer them to remain in the grasp of death. "Because of his Spirit" (for so the sentence should read), He will raise them up at the appointed hour, and conform us to the image of His Son.

W.W.F.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

CHAPTER I. 40—45.*

⁴⁰ **A**ND there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and falling on his knees to him, and saying to him, If thou **wouldest**, thou canst **cleanse** me. ⁴¹And **being** moved with compassion, he **stretched out** his hand, touched him, and **saith to** him, I will; be **cleansed**. ⁴²And (*as soon as he had spoken*) immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. ⁴³And **strictly charging** him, he **immediately** sent him out, ⁴⁴and **saith to** him, See thou say nothing to any **one**, but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing **what** Moses **enjoined** for a testimony to them. ⁴⁵But he, **having gone** out, began to proclaim [it] much and to **spread** abroad the matter, so that he [Jesus] could no more openly enter into **town**, but was without in desert places; and they came **unto** him from **everywhere**.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS.

Verse 40.—Leper. This disease illustrates the

*Words in italics should be passed over in reading as they indicate what should, for critical reasons, be omitted from the Authorised Version. Variations and additions are marked by heavy type.

defiling character of sin (Rev. xxi. 27). The leper was ceremonially defiled, and was excluded from the camp of Israel (Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2—4) and from the city (2 Kings vii. 3). This rule was so rigidly enforced that no exception was made in the case of Miriam, the sister of Moses (Num. xii. 14, 15), or for king Uzziah (2 Kings xv. 5; 2 Chron. xxvi. 21). No human skill could heal the leper, as Jehoram's exclamation testifies (2 Kings v. 7). Indeed leprosy was viewed as a living death; as Aaron said when pleading for his sister, "Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb" (Num. xii. 12). The leper's rent garments, bare head, and covered lip were all signs of mourning as for death (Lev. xiii. 45; Num. vi. 9; Ezek. xxiv. 17). This terrible infliction exemplified the ravages of sin upon man's body more than any other.

Cometh unto Him. Under the law the leper could not come (or, be brought) to the priest until the plague was healed (Lev. xiv. 2), so that he was practically shut out from the benefits of divine service. But here the leper comes to Jesus in order to be healed.

Thou canst cleanse me. This was faith, for we only know of one leprosy-cure before—that of Naaman (2 Kings v.)—that he might have heard of.

Verse 41.—Moved with compassion. A beautiful expression, characteristic of the Lord almost exclusively. See Matthew ix. 36; xiv. 14; xv. 32; xviii. 27; xx. 34; Mark vi. 34; viii. 2; Luke i. 78; vii. 13; x. 33; xv. 20; Philippians ii. 1.

Touched him. Any other touching the leper would himself have been rendered unclean (Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2).

I will: be cleansed. An echo of the leper's request.

Verse 42.—Leprosy departed; leper cleansed. The

healing and the cleansing are similarly distinguished in Leviticus xiv. 1—9.

Verse 44.—Say nothing to anyone. This was in strict accordance with the character of Jehovah's Servant (Isaiah xlii. 2, 3). He was not here as a wonder-worker.

Shew thyself to the priest. The one who pronounced him unclean (Lev. xiii. 44) was to pronounce him clean (Lev. xiv. 7), thus affording an incontestable proof of the reality of the miracle. Besides the Lord had not come to destroy the law; He invariably respected its requirements.

Moses enjoined. See Leviticus xiv. 1—9.

Verse 45.—In desert places. He withdrew Himself from the applause of men, but was still accessible to the needy; and they came to Him from all quarters.

FOR EVER SEATED.

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter x. 12, where Christ is spoken of as having "for ever sat down," it is in contrast to the many priests standing, their many and repeated sacrifices never allowing them to say that their work was done. Whereas the one sacrifice of Christ, when He as the spotless Victim offered Himself to God, settled once and for ever the question of sin, and His shed blood atoned fully and finally for the sins of His people.

In abiding proof of His atoning work being done, He as the one and only Workman (if it may be reverently so said) has for ever sat down on the right hand of God. A blessed and uninterrupted seat of holy rest, before and with Him to Whom the work was rendered! No more offering for sin! Never more blood to be shed for the remis-

sion of sins! For God and Christ Who were together in judgment at Calvary are now together in heaven, where no sin can be. God is fully and everlastingly satisfied, and Christ is for ever seated, never to rise to repeat His work. More the believer cannot need, in respect to a guilty conscience and its being once and for ever purged. He rests as God Himself rests, in the infinite value of the accepted blood of Christ. Faith can ever boldly repeat the language of contrast to the blood of bulls and goats in peace and triumph: "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14). The throne of God in light, holiness and righteousness, and a burdened conscience charged with its guilt, thus find their peaceful meeting-place in the precious blood of Christ.

Such is the reasoning of the Holy Ghost, Who has come to bear witness to the finished work of God's own Son; no less to apply it so as to give holy and abiding rest of conscience to those now favoured to draw near to God, by the new and living way, without a veil between (Heb. x. 20).

The uninterrupted seat of Christ and the state of the believer's conscience alike go together; "for ever sat down" and "for ever perfect," the latter the fruit of the former, in the perfection of what it is to God (Heb. x. 12, 14).

Well may such a work, not only beget faith's unbroken confidence in it, but endear the glorious Person of Him Who did it, and the God of love Who gave Him, both to maintain the rights and majesty of the throne, and the soul's deep, deep need. Praise, eternal praise be to God for such a gift of love, and for love's mighty work, giving such present and eternal peace.

G.G.

DEAF SHEEP.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—We are not usually very complimentary in our remarks as to the sagacity of sheep when compared with other animals. We hand it about from one to another as a kind of proverb that sheep are silly; and when we are enumerating a person's virtues we do not include "sheepishness" as one of them.

Nevertheless, in scriptural usage, the figurative references to sheep are numerous but not always with a derogatory sense. Their own defencelessness and consequent dependence upon the guardianship of the shepherd aptly illustrate the feeble condition of the people of God in the world, thrown as they are upon resources not found within themselves. On this occasion however, I wish to bring before you one of the qualities of the sheep, which I have called its *deafness*, and which is really one of its safeguards.

You will, I know, recollect at once that a good deal is found in John x. about the Shepherd, the sheep and the sheepfold. Among the several things stated with regard to the sheep, it is there said that they hear the voice of the shepherd but that they do *not* hear thieves and robbers (John x. 8).

You are aware, of course, that in Syria, a sheep, when called by its name, will run out from the flock to the shepherd to be caressed, just as we are accustomed to see a dog run to its master. But if a stranger calls, the sheep are utterly heedless. They continue to browse with entire disregard to the unknown voice. The shepherd they hear and follow; but to the stranger, or to thieves and robbers climbing up some other way they are completely deaf. They know one voice—that of the shepherd; all other voices must be from strangers, and to such they close their ears.

Clearly, in this lies one of the means of their safety. Let them only refuse to listen to the calls of unscrupulous men who would decoy the flock away to its own destruction, and they are safe.

So it is with the sheep of Christ. There are times when they should be as though they were deaf. Such seasons are particularly when Satan, the great enemy, comes with the seductive voice of the stranger. There is no mistaking him when he comes as the roaring lion, or the destructive wolf. But when he adopts an artful manner, and comes with fair speeches and deceitful words, it is then the sheep must turn a deaf ear to his insinuations lest they be led astray into paths of danger and death.

Oh, do beware of your cunning adversary. When a thought or suggestion arises, either from within yourself or from some outward source, refuse to entertain it for a single moment, if it does not coincide with the voice of the Good Shepherd. It is the parleying with evil thoughts that is so very dangerous.

Eve listened to the voice of the stranger, when he said, "Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" You know with what result.

Satan put it into the *heart* of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land (Acts v. 3). He hearkened to the subtlety of the enemy, and was stricken down with sudden death.

Had they but refused to hear, how different the result! The tempter's voice came to Joseph in Potiphar's house. But he resisted the devil. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He was a *deaf* sheep; for none are so deaf as those who *won't* hear.

It will be an excellent attainment on your part if you are able, on certain occasions, suddenly to

become stone deaf. Saul was to be commended for this just after he was anointed king. The children of Belial despised him, saying scornfully, "How shall this man save us?" Moreover they accentuated this formal opinion of theirs by sending him no presents. But we are told, Saul was as though he had been deaf (1 Sam. x. 27, margin). If the son of Kish had always acted as wisely as he did then we should have had to read a very different history of him.

Depend upon it a deaf ear is quite a valuable member to possess. For instance, a person comes to you and starts a long rigmarole of Brother So-and-so's bad ways. Give him the deaf side at once. Keep as quiet as you can while the abuse goes on. Make him feel he is getting just as much encouragement out of you as he would out of a gatepost. You will be surprised how soon he will tire himself and change the subject or walk away. If you doubt this, go and talk to a post yourself for ten minutes and observe carefully the effect it has upon you.

Always use the deaf ear for sceptical arguments against God and the Bible. As a Christian the truth of God's word is a matter within your own personal knowledge. No healthy person wishes another person to assure him by arguments that he is alive. No believer ought to require a book of "Christian evidences" to convince him of the divine power and authority of the scriptures. He is in a sorrowful state, if such be the case.

Evidences have their worth, but do not forget it is perfectly unnecessary for you to be able to unravel the sophisms of the infidel before enjoying the Bible. I am reminded of an old proposition among schoolboys which stated that "Every cat has at least two tails." The mode of demonstration is familiar to the sceptic. It is laid down (1) that

no cat has two tails, and (2) that every cat has at least one tail more than no cat. Then the bold inference is drawn that every cat has at least two tails. This is very absurd, of course, and the boy who stated it seriously in the logic class would probably incur a flogging and be sent to examine the housekeeper's tabby. And yet this is the kind of reasoning that is served up by the class of people referred to. Don't listen to them.

If a person told you that in a half-hour he could prove that two and two are five you wouldn't waste the thirty minutes. And if a man says he can prove the Bible is a collection of fairy tales, give him the deaf ear and the cold shoulder. Such men as he are but thieves and robbers.

The other day I came across some lines which I copied years ago; I think you will like to read them. They are on studying the Bible.

"Read; mark; learn;
Its pages turn and turn;
And for reward you'll find the Lord,
And your heart within will burn.
Dig; search; explore;
With labour more and more;
And for your toil in this rich soil,
You'll find the golden ore.

"House of treasures! Here I find
Food and medicine for the mind;
Sword to wield
Against the foe;
Helm and shield
To ward his blow;
Garments for the heavenly-born;
Gems, the spirit to adorn;
Songs of praise in sunny hours;
Dirges when the tempest lowers.
But I need not thus go on
Naming treasures one by one;
Why should I the rest recall?
Christ is here,—and Christ is all."

I am, Yours faithfully, "YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

F.B.—Please explain Ecclesiastes x. 2. What the wise man plans in his heart he carries out by his right hand, the figure of prompt effective action; on the contrary, the fool's plans are worked out with the left hand, that is, either not at all, or in a lazy, clumsy manner. While the wise man is working, the fool is dreaming or muddling.

A.J.K.—Will you please tell me the meaning of "The strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56)? When man was told by the law what he was to do and what he was not to do, he desired more than ever not to do what he should and to do what he should not. Therefore when the law was given the offence abounded (Rom. v. 20). Man after he had the law was a greater sinner than before (see Rom. ii. 17—29). The effect of the law is not to change man's evil nature, but to draw out the evil that is there (Rom. vii.). "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). And as the guilt of the law-breaker is thereby increased, it is called "the strength of sin."

W.T.—Why "in his body" (2 Cor. v. 10)? The phrase "in (or, by) his body," limits the matters gone into before the judgment-seat of Christ to the things done during a person's life on earth. **Please explain Matthew vi. 23 (latter part).** You must read carefully the whole of verses 22 and 23. "The light of the body is the eye;" if the light "that is in thee be darkness [that is, if thou art blind, though claiming to be able to see as well as any and better than some] how great is that darkness." A blind man cannot see in the light any more than in the dark. The Jews are examples of those whose light was darkness, for they closed their eyes, lest they should see and be converted (Matt. xiii. 15). The verse means that the person who thinks he is going right when he is going wrong is the one who will go furthest astray. A terrible example of the result of this delusion is found in the present Laodicean condition of the professing church. Christendom believes itself to be rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing; but it is, in fact, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17).

W.C.—Why is it "longsuffering to usward" (2 Pet. iii. 9)? It is properly "to you-ward." Peter addresses a professing company among which may be persons like Simon Magus, needing repentance, and who are in danger of perishing in spite of their profession (See 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2).

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OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

THE office of a priest was to represent others before God. It supposed, on the part of those represented, weakness and failure, and the consequent need of mediation by another. Thus the children of Israel were declared to be a "perverse and gainsaying people," and a priest was needed to intercede for them, in order that their sinful infirmities might not bring down judgment upon them, but rather occasion the display of Jehovah's love and tender compassion.

Now if Aaron was to present a failing people before Jehovah, he must present them in a glory and perfection suited to His holy presence. His perfection, however, consisted not in the glory of his person, but in his priestly attire. The high priest's garments were for "glory and beauty."* Typically, his dress prefigured the perfections and glories which centre in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, now in God's presence for us.

The ephod is the first of Aaron's garments described (Exod. xxviii. 5—7), and was worn over the other garments. The groundwork of its material was "fine linen twisted," upon which the colours,

* See "glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 7) which is quoted from the *Greek* version of Exodus xxviii. 2.

blue, purple, and scarlet were emblazoned. It was interlaced throughout with thin fine gold wire, thus adding strength and beauty to the whole fabric.

The girdle of the ephod was of the same material and was used to fasten the ephod to the person of the priest.

The breastplate was also of the same material and design as the ephod, to which it was carefully secured at the lower corners by a lace of blue, and at the upper corners by chains of gold, which were themselves fastened to onyx stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. Upon the breastplate were twelve stones set in gold, each bearing a name of a tribe of Israel. The onyx stones on the shoulders each bore the names of six of the tribes of Israel "according to birth," so that when attired in his high-priestly robes, Aaron bore the memorial of the people upon his shoulders and upon his heart before the Lord continually.

Referring to the Lord Jesus, of Whom Aaron was a type, it is well to bear in mind that His priestly work is not on behalf of unbelievers, but of believers, and of all believers. Just as the whole congregation of Israel was represented by the high priest (their names being upon the onyx stones), so every failing child of God is borne upon the shoulders of our Great High Priest. Not one is forgotten. The weak are there equally with the strong in faith; the young as well as the old. The babes, young men, and fathers have each their place, for it is "according to birth." Blessed thought that His Almighty strength sustains every one of us before God.

And further, we are borne upon His heart as well as His shoulders. The saints are the special objects of Christ's affection and favour. Hence the beloved John says, "To him that loves us and

washed us from our sins" (Rev. i. 5). And as His loved ones He presents us to God; and "whatever claim the desire and wish of Christ's heart has to draw out the favour of God, it operates in drawing out that favour upon us." Thus we stand in the same favour as Christ, for we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6; 1 John iv. 17).

Aaron's ministry was only exercised when he went into the holy place (Exod. xxviii. 35), but that of the Lord Jesus is continual, for He is ever in the presence of God. For the Forerunner has entered within the vail now to appear there for us, and ever to make intercession (Heb. vi. 19, 20; vii. 24, 25; ix. 24).

Further, the Urim and Thummim (lights and perfections) were in the breastplate. And Aaron was to bear the judgment of the children of Israel before the Lord continually according to these. So is it now. In grace, the Lord Jesus bears the failures of the saints in their ways, so that these failures may be judged according to the light and perfection of God. We are thus preserved before Him without spot, and presented to Him in all the perfect fragrance of what Christ is.

Again, Aaron with the golden plate upon his forehead (Exod. xxviii. 36—38) was to "bear the iniquity of the holy things." Truly a somewhat strange expression, and yet a much needed provision. Whoever brought a sacrifice the priest alone knew how to appropriate it—to separate what was fit for God from what was only refuse. It is indeed most blessed to think that our Great High Priest thus ministers for us. How our worship is tainted by the impurities of the flesh, and our service clogged by its infirmities! It needs an unerring eye to separate the precious from the vile. This we have in the Lord Jesus, Who offers to God what is of the Spirit in the full value of His own

sacrifice. Hence we are called upon to offer through Him the sacrifice of praise continually (Heb. xiii. 15). In this and in no other way will our worship be acceptable to God.

W.T.H.

"I KNOW HE DIED FOR ME."

"**H**ERBERT L—— has fallen off the scaffolding, and broken his back," was the sad news scattered quickly amongst those who knew the subject of our narrative. How sad for those praying parents who loved their child so tenderly! Yet they received this news with "Thy will be done" upon their lips; for God had allowed it, as the following will disclose, and the parents felt it was so, owning that God's merciful hand was in it all.

At the time of the accident Herbert L—— was twenty-three years of age—a fine, strong young man; and, to look in his face, one would say that he had many years of life before him.

When a boy he attended Sunday-school, listened to solemn appeals to fly to Christ for salvation, but seemed to resist the strivings of the Spirit of God. Earnestly and prayerfully has the writer of this little narrative pleaded with him. All seemed dark and useless, as far as man could perceive; but God had purposes of grace otherwise. His love would eventually find a lodgment in his poor heart.

Herbert L—— was not happy as years passed on. He could find no rest for his soul in the passing pleasures of this world, so he joined the army. Being a soldier, he thought, would smother his "religious sentiments," as he called them; but they were beyond his or any other power to eradicate. No, he could not erase the impressions

of eternal things ; and the incorruptible seed, the word of God, had taken root. His parents yearned over him still, and cries and tears went up to God on his behalf. He became restless and unhappy in the army, and eventually was "bought out."

He came home to his native place, and still followed the ways of sin. But God's eye was upon him ; and as Herbert (being a carpenter) was working on the top of a high house at Stoke Newington, London, he unwarily put his foot on the end of a plank with no stay under it, and fell to the ground. He was picked up and taken to the hospital insensible, when it was discovered that his back was broken.

He lingered some eight or nine months, and, by the grace of God, finally "fell asleep in Jesus." "What!" you say, "fell asleep in Jesus, after resisting the truth as he did?" Yes, "fell asleep in Jesus," so calmly, so peacefully; for he knew what a great sinner he had been, and was conscious of the mighty love that saved him.

God revealed Himself to him in a very wonderful way during the accident. As Herbert was falling from the scaffolding he had vivid thoughts of his past sinful life. In a moment he thought of his sins, of eternity, of God, of judgment, and of the Saviour. Like a panorama, all seemed to pass before his mind ; so much so, that when his relatives and friends visited him they found him calm and resigned, believing that God had arrested him in His mercy.

The writer visited him a short time after. On approaching his bed he noticed a heavenly smile upon the sick man's countenance. Asking him if he was right for eternity, and if he knew the Saviour's love, he replied, "Yes ; and I know He died for me."

Let not the reader, if unsaved, trifle with God's

strivings; for He may not meet you as He did Herbert L——. This was indeed a brand plucked from the fire. God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Reader, can you meet a holy God? Unless your sins are put away, He must deal with you in judgment. God can only save a sinner upon the basis of absolute righteousness. "The wages of sin is death." Christ came into this world and died; He was a sacrifice equal to all God's righteous demands. And oh, wondrous, matchless grace, He saves, yea, accepts and justifies, every poor sinner who believes in Jesus! Reader, are you saved? Are you resting upon the finished work of Christ? When Jesus trod this earth He was the embodiment, the expression, of all that God is in love towards sinful man. Men grope about this poor world, seeking after lasting pleasures, but cannot find them. Remember, death may overtake you suddenly, and is it worth your while to trifle with eternal things and with the salvation of your soul? There is no foundation for souls to rest upon outside Christ, Who was God manifest in flesh.

C.M.H.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS XV., XVI.

NEXT comes the great unfolding of Christ's resurrection and its consequences. Some of the Corinthians doubted that the saints rise. They had no question as to the soul's immortality,

but ventured to deny that the dead rise. The apostle treats the matter from its root in Christ, and thus decides it for the Christian, associated as he is with Him, as man is with the head of the race. It is for the apostle fundamental, bound up not only with God's counsels but with the gospel itself, which announces the glad tidings of Christ dead and risen. With this accordingly he begins, proved by the weightiest and fullest testimonies, his own closing them (1—11). Then (12—19) he reasons on Christ's resurrection out of, or from among, dead men as the incontrovertible truth which utterly destroyed their speculation. "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" For this denies Christ's, and if so, Paul's preaching, and their own faith; nay, it would make them false witnesses of God Who in that case had not raised Christ, and they must be yet in their sins, as those put to sleep in Christ had perished and Christians alive most pitiable of all men.

This he interrupts with a sort of parenthetical revelation, terse, pregnant, and profound. "But now hath Christ been raised from out of the dead, firstfruits of those that are asleep. For since through man is death, through man also is resurrection of the dead." Two heads have thus their families respectively characterised, dying, and made alive. "But each in his own order (or, rank): Christ firstfruits; then those that are Christ's at his coming. Then the end, when he shall give up the kingdom to the God and Father, when he shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he put all the enemies under his feet. Death, last enemy, shall be annulled. For he subjected all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are subjected, it is evident that he is excepted who sub-

jected all things to him. And when all things shall be subjected to him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all" (20—28). The resurrection of those that are His is at His coming, to reign with Him. The end is, when He judges those that are not His, yet raised, and delivers up the kingdom, all enemies put down, for the everlasting scene, when not the Father, but "God" (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) shall be all in all.

Then he renews the reasoning, and refers in 29 to 18, and in 30 to 19, which clears up the sense. Why by baptism join such a forlorn hope, why share such a life of danger, if dead men are not at all raised? Paul's life was in view of resurrection; as theirs denied it who merely eat and drink. Let such not be deceived, but wake up righteously and sin not. Ignorance of resurrection is ignorance of God and holiness, to the shame of those that speculate. And why raise curious questions? God surrounds us with even natural facts of analogous character. Wheat and other grain, after death of what perishes, spring up not what was sown, but of those kinds and not different, yet in a new condition. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly. So too is the resurrection; and here again and yet more richly the last Adam, the Second Man, is contrasted with the first; and we who believe are styled heavenly, as we shall in due time bear that image, as now we bear the image of the earthy or rather dusty man, Adam (29—49).

Christ's life, and in resurrection if men were to be His associates, alone suits God's kingdom and incorruption (50). This introduces a mystery or secret of God not revealed in the Old Testament: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in an eye's twinkling, at the

last trumpet; for trumpet it will, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed" (51, 52). And this new christian truth he connects with Isaiah xxv. 8 and Hosea xiii. 14, the heavenly things with the earthly; for the kingdom of God, as our Lord shews (John iii. 12), comprehends both. All is wound up with a call to his beloved brethren to be firm, unmoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that their labour is not vain in Him.

This is fitly followed by the various details of chapter xvi. As he directed the assemblies of Galatia to collect for the poor saints in Jerusalem, so he wished those in Corinth to do. Each first of week is a most proper day for the Christian, in the sense of his blessing and of that infinite grace which was its source, to lay by him in store as he may have prospered. The apostle would not use personal influence when he came, but whomsoever they should approve, these he would send with letters to carry their bounty to Jerusalem; and if meet for him also to go, they should go with him. How incomparably better is God's way than man's societies and their machinery or devices! Christ and His work is the centre of all. It was only when restoration wrought that in his Second Epistle he explains why he did not then visit them. But while tarrying at Ephesus, he would have no despising of Timothy if he came. And he lets them know how much he besought Apollos to go to Corinth, who, though not now, would come when he had good opportunity (1-12).

The apostle then charges them to watch, stand fast in the faith, play the man, be strong. "Let all ye do be done in love." They had failed in all: he despaired in nothing (13, 14). They knew the house of Stephanas, that it was the first fruits of Achaia, and that they devoted themselves to the

saints for service; so he besought them to be subject to such and to every one working together and labouring. This is the more notable, as we never hear of elders in the two Epistles to the Corinthians; and if there had been they must naturally have incurred special blame. Apart from such (who needed appointment by those who had discernment and authority) there were, as we learn, labourers to whom the subjection of the saints was due, as we also find in other Epistles: a fact of the utmost importance for the present circumstances of the church. Further, he speaks of Stephanas with two others he names coming and by their practical love refreshing his spirit, "and yours" he graciously adds. "Own therefore such" (15—18). Salutations of assemblies and individuals follow, as he affixes his with his own hand (19—21). But as he desired the fullest flow of holy affections with one another, he pronounced an unsparing curse on any one that loved not the Lord Jesus Christ: "Let him be anathema, Maran-atha" (our Lord cometh). This assuredly was no licence for such to be in their midst (22). Not content, in the face of much he had suffered from them, with the prayer, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you," he concludes with, "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus, Amen" (23, 24). What more Christlike!

W.K.

EVENING HYMN.

TUNE—*Evensong.*No. 206, *Bristol Tune Book.*

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

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

Though the darkness closes round us,
 Shutting out all else but Thee,
 Light is ours, for God's own glory
 Beaming from Thy face we see.
 Morning Star, Thy rays so bright
 Shine with hope athwart our night.

Slumber, Lord, Thou never knowest,
 Trust we then our souls to Thee ;
 Put to sleep by Thee, Lord Jesus,
 Let Thy peace upon us be.
 Ever Thou our souls hast blessed ;
 Bless us now in taking rest.

THE ANOINTING, THE SEAL, AND THE EARNEST.

IN 2 Corinthians i. 21, 22, the Spirit of God is brought before us under three striking figures. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." The apostle is setting forth the settled place of blessing into which God has introduced every believer in Jesus. We are no longer in Adam, exposed to death and condemnation, but *in Christ*, and in Him we find every purposed blessing made everlastingly good. But so abounding is the grace of our God, that over and above all this, He has given us the Holy Spirit as the anointing, the seal, and the earnest. He dwells within us.

(1) *The anointing.* The Lord Jesus received the Spirit in this way when walking as a man on earth as we read, "Thy holy child [servant] Jesus, whom thou hast anointed;" "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts iv. 27; x. 38). This was an expression of divine delight and complacency in Him personally. The Father saw in Him perfect dependence and faultless obedience; the Spirit was sent upon Him in token of His full approval and complete satisfaction. He was the true meal offering "anointed with oil" (Lev. ii. 4). Believers are anointed with the Holy Ghost on an entirely different principle. It is not because of what God sees in us, but because of what His eye sees, and what His heart has found, in the risen and exalted Christ. One grand result of the anointing is, that we have fellowship with the mind of God. The Holy Spirit introduces us into the circle of the thoughts of God, as revealed in His word. It is not enough that we should be born again, the Spirit must be possessed ere any advance can be made in the things of God. Hence when the beloved apostle warned the babes against the many antichrists that were even then abroad in the world, he refers them to two things as safeguards. (1) Apostolic teaching: "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning" (1 John ii. 24). (2) The anointing: "the unction which ye have received of him abideth in you," etc. (1 John ii. 27). Souls who avail themselves thus, and abide in the circle of the Spirit's instruction, are preserved from all the many efforts of the enemy. Our hearts are then in the enjoyment of what the Spirit imparts; and thus are in a position to reject the devil's counterfeit. There may not be ability to expose the error that is presented, but it is known to be

not the truth, and that is sufficient for the simple soul (compare John x. 5). In considering the anointing, we are reminded of our kingly and priestly place. Both kings and priests were inducted into their office in this way. Both dignities are ours through divine grace. Believers are "a holy priesthood" now, with title to draw near to God through the rent veil; and in the approaching day are to reign with Christ, when all things are given into His hand by God. Suffering is our appointed lot meanwhile.

(2) *The seal.* "Who hath also sealed us." The Lord Jesus could say of Himself, "Him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27). The same is true of all who believe through His death and resurrection. Sealing follows faith. This is quite plain in Ephesians i. 13. "In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Thus we note two distinct operations of the Spirit of God: first He works in us to produce faith in God and in His Son; then He is given as God's seal. Believers are thus marked off as belonging to God. Our connection with the world has been broken, the fetters which once Satan bound upon us have been severed, and we are now the possession of our God (1 Pet. ii. 9). Do all our hearts respond loyally to this? Are we yielded up, body and soul and spirit, to Him, for His service and glory? Alas, there is not a little keeping back of part of the price. How much selfwill works, how strongly the world is clung to by not a few of those who really belong to the Lord Jesus! Let each one of us own more thoroughly His gracious claims and surrender ourselves entirely to Him.

What immense comfort that this Divine Seal will never be removed from any, even the feeblest believer. Many are defective as to this point.

Many fear that the Holy Spirit will really be withdrawn, because of their faulty ways and walk. Not so. God gave me His Holy Spirit well knowing what I should turn out to be, and gave Him not because of what He saw in me, but because of what He saw in Christ. This will never change. But a careful holy walk is nevertheless due from us. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30).

(3) *The earnest.* "The earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." This is in view of the future inheritance. God intends to give everything in heaven and in earth to His beloved Son. The usurper may hold at present part of His dominions, but divine power will shortly wrest them from him and give them over to the Lord Jesus. He will share this universal inheritance with us; such is the purpose of His heart. But it cannot be given to us yet. There are purposes yet to be accomplished, and enemies to be put down. The Spirit of God dwells therefore within us as the earnest (or pledge) of all that is to come. He is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. i. 14; 2 Cor. v. 5). Thus we wait in confidence for God to make good all His word. As the seal, the Spirit is the token of God's claim on me; as the earnest, He is the token of the claim which divine grace has given me on God.

He is not the earnest of divine love, nor of relationship. We know and enjoy both now. We are already in a circle of boundless unchanging love, for all the affections of the Father's heart rest upon us in Christ Jesus; and we are already children of God. But the inheritance is not yet ours, for it has not yet come into the hands of Christ—hence the earnest of the Spirit. He waits

at the right hand of the Father; we wait in this scene for the same appointed hour. The Holy Ghost is the present blessed link.

W.W.F.

YOUR BIOGRAPHY.

IN the first seven verses of Ephesians ii. is to be found something of the past, the present and the future of each true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. It tells us the character of his past life; his present standing; and also of a future honour. This is more than biographies of the day do. It gives details of the believer's past life, which no biographer would, for human biographers are never quite impartial; and it tells something of the future, of which no biographer would think to prophesy, however much he might try to anticipate the bestowal of honours and favours.

Is it not true of all believers—whether Jews or Gentiles—that we were dead in trespasses and sins, that no life beat in our hearts towards God, until, by the same power that raised up Christ from among the dead, we were quickened together with Him? And thus we became of the new creation—possessors and partakers of eternal life; and freed from all that state and condition of things which must come into judgment.

What grace and love He shewed towards us! Though we were following the inclinations of nature in everything; going along with the course of the world; willing servants of him who is the prince of the power of the air, yet God was so interested in us as to deliver us from all this by His own quickening power.

It was because of the GREAT love wherewith He loved us, that we are not only quickened, but

raised up with Him. And while it was once true of us that we were under the control of the spirit that still, alas! works in the children of disobedience, our present position is that of being raised and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. What a marvel of mercy that it should be so!

Without a spark of anything in us to attract His love, or to make us objects of His grace, yet He loved us with a "great love" in His desire to make us subjects of future glory. And this is His intention concerning us, for He will make manifest in us not His *grace* merely; not the *riches* of His grace only; but, the *exceeding* riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

Of this display of His grace and love for us, our true and impartial Biographer tells us. It is a future manifestation in the ages to come. Raised in glory or changed in a moment at His coming, we shall be manifest before the *bema* of Christ; at His appearing in glory to set up His millennial kingdom, we shall be manifest with Him; and throughout eternity it will be manifest that the Church of God, the bride of Christ, has a special place of honour and privilege with the Lord Himself in glory.

Well may the apostle exclaim, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus!" Surely this glorious fact should affect our lives now, that with exercised and chastened hearts we might seek to walk before Him until He comes again, for it is only while we are here that we can live and work for Him to bring forth fruit for His praise and glory.

It is for us now to seek to fill up the middle part of our biography in service for the Lord Who will make due record of it all. Then it will be with gladdened hearts we shall remember what our

Biographer now tells us, that though we once followed in the course of this world, whether it was in obeying the grosser desires of the flesh, or the more refined (though equally fallen and rebellious) desires of the mind; yet, there is a day to come when our God will *shew forth* the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards *us* through Christ Jesus. What a time that will be!

If you who read do not know the Lord; have not yet proved His saving grace, may you do so now by faith in His finished work, that the blessed truth of the above may be your own.

H.W.P.

THE DOMESTIC CIRCLE.

THE apostle enters (Col. iii. 18—22) into the diverse relationships of life, giving warnings against that which would endanger them, by shewing what the christian character of each one of them is.

To the *wife*, obedience—affection was natural to her. “Thy desire shall be to thy husband.” To the *husband*, affection and kindness—his heart may be indifferent and hard. *Children* are to be obedient; *fathers*, gentle, in order that the children’s affections may not be estranged from them, and that they may not be induced to seek that happiness in the world which they ought to find in the sanctuary of the domestic circle, which God has formed as a safeguard for those who are growing up in weakness; the precious *home* (if Christ is acknowledged) of kind affections, in which the heart is trained in the ties which God Himself has formed. This being done in connection with the Lord, by cherishing the affections, preserves from the passions and from self-will. Such a home, where its strength is

rightly developed, has a power that, in spite of sin and disorder, awakens the conscience and engages the heart, keeping it away from evil and the direct power of Satan. For it is God's appointment.

* * * * *

God has formed the relationships of home, and whosoever fears God will respect them. Grace is requisite. They give occasion, through their intimacy itself, to all that is most painful, if grace do not act in them. The apostle warns us here of this danger. If the Lord is the bond in them, if our still closer union with Him forms the strength of our natural relationships, then grace reigns here as elsewhere; and, to those who stand in these relationships, they become a scene for the lovely display of the life of Christ.

It will be observed how the apostle consequently introduces Christ into them, and especially in regard to those who are subject in these relationships, viz., wives and children, in order to sanctify, by so exalted a motive, the obedience suited to their position.

J.N.D.

FRAGMENT.

How good it is to know how frail we are that we may truly trust in the Lord whose grace is truly wonderful! In His mercy I got to the breaking of bread yesterday, and was much refreshed in spirit. It is a wonderful thing that in the midst of all the ruin of the church, as entrusted to the members of it, who many of them have lost sight of the Head, that the Lord Himself should be as truly in the midst of two or three gathered in His name as at Pentecost. Surely the three thousand gathered in their homes to break bread needed no devices of their own, no human arrangements or provisions,

but found His presence enough; and their gladness and singleness of heart proved it was enough. May He keep ours single and we shall be glad too.

X.

OVERCOMING THE WICKED ONE.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—One of the marks of the advance from spiritual infancy to spiritual youth is victory over Satan. The apostle John gives three characteristics of young men (1 John ii. 14):—

1. Strength.
2. God's word remaining in them.
3. Overcoming the wicked one.

In the previous verse (13) the last of these attainments is the only one mentioned concerning the young men; it is evidently an important one.

I fear lest some of you forget what a cunning and powerful adversary you have—one who is set upon doing you all the mischief he can. There are young persons who seem to regard their greatest foe as they do some “bogy” of the nursery. They think it a mark of superior wisdom to doubt the existence of such a being. But scripture is clear. Hear what Peter says, who had experience of Satan's power himself (Matt. xvi. 23; Luke xxii. 31): “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith” (1 Peter v. 8, 9). This power should not be despised. Those who speak lightly and jestingly of Satan speak evil of “things of which they know not.” Even Michael the archangel when contending with the devil, disputing about

the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). How much less should we disregard the one who is called "the prince of the power of the air" and "the god of this world."

At the same time, it is of exceeding comfort to recollect that verse which says, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4). And, again, we read, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James iv. 7). His power is indeed mighty over those who yield to him; but when he is resisted in the confidence of faith he flees like a beaten foe.

The powerlessness of Satan against the saints is vividly pictured by John Bunyan in his famous allegory. You may remember how the pilgrim after climbing the hill Difficulty entered into a very narrow passage, and what was the great alarm of Christian to find, on looking ahead, that there were two lions in the way! One lion is more than most timid pilgrims care to encounter, but the sight of *two* ramping and roaring against him filled Christian with fear and trembling and caused his toes to make violent efforts to get round where his heels were.

Before, however, the "right-about-face" was accomplished, Watchful's encouraging voice fell on his ear, bidding him to fear not but to go forward, for the lions *were chained*. Then we see him advancing tremblingly, gathering himself together in the centre of the path, while the lions roar on each side of him. But when he finds he has got safely through, he claps his hands in glee and runs on to the gate of the Porter's lodge.

Let my timid readers therefore take courage; Satan may bark, but he cannot bite. Face him in the power of faith, and the victory is yours.

But the question may be asked, How am I to

know what is of the wicked one, and what is not? And, in seeking a reply to this question, it should be borne in mind that Satan is too crafty to allow himself or his devices to be easily seen, any more than an angler throws in his bare hook in the hope of catching fish. Peter did not suspect his adversary the devil in the questions of a servant maid and others; but it was he, nevertheless, even as at the beginning he made use of the serpent to tempt Eve. You may be certain, therefore, that the father of lies will use a mask to deceive. How needful for you to be sober and vigilant, to "watch and pray."

The great sphere of Satan's operations is the world. He is the "prince of this world." "The whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19). And those who have overcome him are warned not to love the world neither the things that are in the world (1 John ii. 15). Its honours and its pleasures he uses to decoy the believer into the paths of error and sin; and its powers he uses to terrify him out of the path of obedience.

Are there any means to detect his temptations? Yes, assuredly; the word of God infallibly exposes his wiles. It was by the use of the written word that the Lord Jesus overcame the Evil One in the wilderness. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit which puts to flight the enemy.

But perhaps some of you may fear lest you may not be able to think of the right text at the right moment. There is, however, a safe rule for your guidance under such circumstances. *Never pursue a line of conduct which you are not sure is sanctioned by scripture.* Never act in doubtful cases. Wait until you have light. On a cross-country road in a dark night, you know how perilous it is to take an unknown turning. It is more so in matters of conduct; so that you should always refuse if

possible to be drawn into taking hasty steps. Wait and the needed light will be given, that you may avoid the danger before you.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

F.F.—The presence of children at the breaking of bread. Has Joshua iv. 6 any bearing? The stones of Gilgal were a memorial of the passage of the Israelites over Jordan (Josh. iv. 6). Like the feast of the pass-over (Exod. xii. 26) it was to be a sign to future generations of what Jehovah had done. The parents were to explain these signs to their children. Psalm lxxviii. 3—8 refers to instruction in the general principles of the law, and not in the meaning of these signs particularly (See Deut. vi. 7 ; xi. 19). As the breaking of bread is not the season for instructing on-lookers as to its meaning, Joshua iv. 6 does not apply. At the same time, there seems no scriptural reason whatever for excluding children or any persons from witnessing the celebration of the Lord's Supper, except such as create disorder or disturbance. The shewing (or, announcing) the Lord's death (1 Cor. xi. 26) is the testimony thus given to such as do not partake of the Supper.

G.S.M.—Manifestation and reward (2 Cor. v. 10). The brief reply to A. S. (*B.M.M.* for June, p. 143) was carefully worded, and any lack of definiteness was caused by the effort to be concise. It seems apparent enough that the passage in question (We must all appear [be manifested] before the judgment seat of Christ) is most general in its bearing, and applies to believer and unbeliever alike (*Every one will receive*). The thought of his own manifestation made Paul a *faithful servant*, while the thought of the manifestation of the ungodly made him an *earnest preacher*, since he knew it would result in their everlasting punishment. This passage ought not to be confounded with 1 Cor. iii. 12—15 which expressly refers to the servant's *work* and to that only. "Manifestation" has a much wider scope. It is blessedly true, as you say, that not the slightest act of true service for the Lord will lose its reward ; but surely we learn here that at the tribunal of Christ all the *motives* of man's heart will be dis-

played, not only those which resulted in acts of service, but also those which animated the general Christian life (See Phil. i. 10, 11); not only in the "cup of cold water," but in love, joy, meekness, etc. To restrict this passage, therefore, to the service of believers is to rob it of a great deal of its force and meaning; for while it includes that, it also embraces *the whole history of every man's life in the body*.

E.R.—Women riding bicycles. Bicycle-riding is not dealt with in so many words in scripture; and, like many other practical questions it really involves further questions. Instead of stating any judgment of our own, it will be better for you if we mention the chief points for your consideration before the Lord that your own conscience may be exercised to approve the thing that is excellent. (1) Is there anything unseemly in this mode of recreation for a woman? Scripture is clear (1 Cor. xi.) that woman has her own functions and sphere of action in distinction from man; and it is certainly opposed to her getting out of her own peculiar sphere (1 Tim. ii. 9—12). You must therefore consider whether there is anything in bicycle-riding contrary to a proper spirit of Christian modesty, especially bearing in mind that the great tendency of the present age is to undervalue the soft and delicate qualities which belong to woman alone and to seek in preference attainments of a more robust nature. (2) Will it bring you into worldly associations? (3) Will it injure your Christian testimony? Will persons you are seeking to help be in any way hindered by seeing you ride? (4) In most circumstances, it would be well to ask whether there is sufficient justification for the expense involved. Our money is not our own, and we should be careful how we spend it. Before buying a bicycle, you ought at least to face the above questions. If you are not clear before the Lord as to them, wait. Ask yourself what is your *reason* for wishing to ride. That most of your friends ride is not a good reason. We must not do all our friends do, nor all that our friends say is right. We trust you may be guided in this as in every matter.

G.S.—Will you kindly explain 2 Timothy ii. 20, 21? To what does the word "these" refer in verse 21? These two verses embody instructions of the utmost moment for the believer as to his association with others who profess faith in Christ. Verse 20 describes the condition of Christendom at the time the apostle was writing—a condition which is unaltered to-day, save for the worse. God's house which was the assembly (1 Tim. iii. 15), the home of divine truth upon earth, was invaded by forms and

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principles of evil. Evil men were found among the saints (Acts xx. 29, 30) and false doctrine was taught along with true (2 Pet. ii. 1). Thus, the great house, as the apostle speaks, contained vessels of wood and earth as well as vessels of gold and silver; vessels to dishonour as well as to honour. This is exactly the present state of things—an indescribable mixture of truth and error under the name of the Lord. Verse 21 affords direction for the believer under such circumstances. He is to purge himself from "these" (*i.e.*, the vessels to dishonour), and by so separating himself he becomes a vessel unto honour himself, "sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." This command is the converse of 1 Cor. v. 7. There the *assembly* are called to purge out the wicked person that they may be a new lump. Here it is *individual*: the majority are on the side of evil. Hence we read, "If a man" (not the assembly) "purge himself from these" (not the offender being put away). It is a matter for the most serious consideration that things are now in such a ruinous condition that, if a man wants to be a "vessel unto honour," he must get clear away from the vessels unto dishonour.

E.J.Y.—Why were the golden pot with manna and the rod that budded missing from the ark (2 Chron. v. 10)? Because Solomon's temple was suited to Israel as dwelling in the land of promise even as the tabernacle was for the passage through the wilderness. In their wanderings the people needed the manna (God's food from heaven, Exodus xvi. 35), and the budding rod (the sign of the priesthood, Numbers xvii. 8; xviii.). But the temple pointed to millennial times of God's unmeasured blessings, hence they are absent (1 Kings viii. 9).

T.P.—Husband and wife breaking bread together. Where there is positive inability to have fellowship with other saints, the presence of the Lord may surely be counted on (Matt. xviii. 20). You meet not as husband and wife (Gal. iii. 28), but as co-members of Christ's body, and if on scriptural ground this represents the assembly of God in that place.

W.C.—Obtaining mercy of the Lord in that day (2 Tim. i. 18). The Lord's mercy is His tender forbearance with us in spite of our crooked ways and our continual weakness individually (1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2). The full result of this mercy will be in bringing us to glory (Jude 24). In the day of manifestation we shall learn what we owe to His mercy. See reply to W.E. (*B.M.M.* for August last, page 192).

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**GREAT POWER AND GREAT
GRACE.**

THE religious chiefs in Jerusalem had declared to the apostles their deliberate intention of putting an end to their preaching. They sought to terrify the little band by threats of severe pains and penalties. But their threats were unavailing, for they were seeking to intimidate men whose hearts were already fortified by the Lord's own words against such a contingency. "Fear not them which kill the body," He had said. So that the frowns and harsh words of the Sanhedrin came as no matter of surprise to those who had thus been warned that they were going forth as lambs among wolves (Luke x. 3).

But more than this; abundant aid from on high was to be had for the asking. If there was any alarm at all in their hearts as they found that the "powers that be" were certainly bent upon closing their mouths, they recollected with joy that golden promise of the Lord Jesus, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John xiv. 14). Accordingly they spread their case before the Lord, and their prayer was not in vain. They sought specifically that they might speak the word with boldness (Acts iv. 29). And it is expressly

pointed out for the assurance of our faith that they were subsequently enabled to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts iv. 31).

Not only with boldness did the apostles speak however; their word was with *power*. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts iv. 33). This is important to observe. While the speaker was strengthened to deliver his message fearlessly in spite of the dangers that menaced him, the hearers were compelled to acknowledge in their inmost hearts that this testimony of Christ was "with power."

Indeed this power is, of necessity, the invariable accompaniment of all effective preaching. What indeed is the gospel itself? Is it not "the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 18)? And if Paul went to Corinth "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling," his preaching was nevertheless "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 3, 4). In like manner, writing to the Thessalonians, the same apostle declares, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power" (1 Thess. i. 5).

If we were asked, Does such a power exist to-day? we should unhesitatingly reply in the affirmative. We have received the Holy Ghost. He is the Spirit of power (2 Tim. i. 7). We have the word of God. It is in itself "living and powerful" (Heb. iv. 12). The word of truth and the power of God go together (2 Cor. vi. 7). And the man that is full of the Holy Ghost is full of power also (Acts vi. 5, 8).

On the other hand it is far from being true that every sermon that is preached is "with *great* power," or even with any degree of power, in the scriptural sense of the word. There is no mis-

taking that power in one's own soul, when the word is ministered in the Spirit. In a moment it transports us from the murky glooms of earth to the sunlight of heaven itself. In a moment it sets our hearts leaping with joy and quickens our souls with tenfold devotion. Like a thunderbolt it strikes the airy castles our own selfishness has reared and shivers them to atoms. Ah, yes; we know this power in our own hearts. We ought therefore the more earnestly to desire that the word may be received with such power by all who hear it, whether saints or sinners.

Why is there such a general lack of power accompanying the testimony of the witnesses of the Lord Jesus? Can it be that the ambassadors of Christ sometimes preach themselves, and not Christ Jesus the Lord? It is so easy and natural to take advantage of the prominence into which a preacher is of necessity brought to glorify oneself. This idea of self-glorification if unchecked speedily and insensibly becomes the governing motive for service. But, if so, there certainly can be no power. For the Spirit of God is here expressly to glorify Christ (John xvi. 14). The man, therefore, who is seeking to glorify self puts himself out of the line of the Spirit's action. There may be eloquence, and power to move the feelings; there may even be such a display as to cause the audience to say, This man is the great power of God (Acts viii. 10); but such is not the "power" of apostolic days and of apostolic men.

In other cases, it is to be feared that preachers modify their preaching to suit those who hear them. If ever there was a man of power it was the apostle Paul, but that was because he sought to please not men but God. As he himself said, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10). But it is the danger of all

preachers to seek so to speak as to tickle the ears and gratify the tastes of the audience. The question then, instead of, What would God have me say? becomes, What would people like to hear? Instead of, What portion of truth is the subject of my message to-night? it becomes, Under what text can I work in those four new anecdotes I have just heard?

Can it be wondered at that men who are governed by such thoughts lack the power of God? Nay, nay, my brethren; do not be deceived. The power that can bring smiles to men's lips or tears to their eyes is *not* the same power that puts the truth of God in their hearts. If you want your feeble testimony to be with power, have Christ before your soul. Keep the first personal pronoun out of your lips and out of your heart, and talk about Christ. If you are anxious to magnify Him before the eyes of others, the Holy Spirit will use your words, and there will then be power.

But among the apostles there was not only "great power," it is also recorded that "great grace was upon them all." The latter is even a more blessed feature than the former. While power enabled them to speak well of Christ, grace enabled them to live like Christ. And the testimony of the life always exceeds in power the testimony of the tongue.

Power without grace puffs up; and so an individual having no ballast gives himself out, like Simon Magus, as "some great one." It is when there has been a display of power, say in the preaching of a servant of God, that the temptation comes to that servant to take the praise to himself. It is then that the grace of God is needed to keep one in one's right place. Otherwise thoughts creep into the mind such as, What a fine sermon I gave

them to-night! How pleased they all seemed! What a number came to hear me!

Oh, thou poor worm, what hast thou that thou hast not received? Truly thou hast nothing to be proud of. Give God the glory, for be sure that He will not give His glory to another. Seek grace to keep low.

We find that more than once in scripture humility and grace are closely connected. Grace makes a man humble, and grace keeps a man humble. God "giveth grace unto the humble" (James iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 5). If the humble man were not to receive "more grace," he would be proud of his very humility. Alas, that it should be so.

To men kept humble by grace God can entrust great power to be used for His glory. But otherwise men will be inflated with pride, as was Nebuchadnezzar. What power was given to him! Lacking grace, however, the vain boast fell from his tongue, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" May the Lord keep us from such soliloquies as we view our little Babylons! Let us seek grace to be clothed with humility that the power of the Lord may rest upon us.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS I.—VII.

THE Second Epistle does not admit of sections so defined as in the First, being less ecclesiastical and dogmatic. It is restorative rather than corrective, and overflows with the sense of God's compassion and encouragement in the midst of tribulation and sufferings. The address here,

"to the church of God that is in Corinth" adds, not "with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours," but quite appropriately, "with all the saints that are in all Achaia." It is less external and more intimate: not thanks for gifts and power but blessing for delivering grace. The apostle's heart was full. He had drunk deeply of Christ's sufferings; but now his encouragement also abounded through Christ; and both, he assures them, were for their encouragement and salvation. If they had passed through sufferings, he would have them know what had been his in Asia, "when excessively pressed beyond power, so as to despair even of living." Having the sentence of death within to trust in the God of resurrection, he confides, counting now on their prayers for thanksgiving also. And as conscience had begun its good work in them, he can speak of his own, and explain as he did not in the First Epistle why he had not gone to Corinth. Their state forbade it, not his levity or aught of fickleness as some said. This leads on to a wondrous assertion of God's immutable word of grace in His Son, and the no less power of our establishment and enjoyment by the Holy Spirit, with which he ends chapter i., assuring them now of his love in desiring to see them at Corinth only with joy.

Little did the Corinthians conceive his grief and earnest desire for joy from them (chap. ii.). Not only had he and they grieved, but sufficient to the one who had caused it by his evil was this punishment by the many. They should shew grace now, lest he should be swallowed up with grief, and their obedience in confirming love as they had in judging. In blessed grace, and ungrudging maintenance of the church's place, the apostle says, "To whom ye forgive anything, I also, for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, [it was]

for your sakes in Christ's person, that no advantage be gained over us by Satan ; for we are not ignorant of his devices." What a contrast with either the assumption or the indifference of worldly religion ! What a defeat he anticipates of Satan's aim ! This again gives occasion for their learning how his heart yearned over them right through. At Troas though a door was opened in the Lord and he came for the gospel, he had no rest for his spirit at not finding Titus, but went on to Macedonia, where he met him and got good tidings of Corinth. Was this a loss ? "Thanks be to God who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ and manifesteth through us the savour of his knowledge in every place." The apostle identifies himself with the gospel, a sweet savour to God in the saved and in the perishing. And who is competent for these things ? He was not as the many, trading with the word of God ; he gave it as purely as he received it from God.

Chapter iii. contrasts the law with the gospel, and in particular exposes the mixture of the two, the favourite device of those who misread Christ. For did he begin to commend himself ? Did he need letters of commendation to them or from them ? *They* were his letter, written on his heart, manifested that they were Christ's letter ! What grace for the apostle so to write of them ! What an honour for them so to hear ! His competency was from God Who made us competent, new covenant ministers, not of letter but of spirit ; for letter kills, but spirit quickens. Then in a parenthesis, which includes from verse 7 to the end of verse 16, he sets out the law graven on stones, as a ministry of death and condemnation, introduced with glory but annulled ; whilst the ministry of the Spirit and righteousness is the surpassing glory, and the abiding in glory. The Lord is the spirit of what in the letter only kills ; but where the Spirit

is there is liberty. Law was a veiled system like Moses' face; whereas in the gospel "we all with unveiled face looking on the glory of the Lord are transformed according to the same image from glory unto glory as by the Lord the Spirit."

Therefore having this ministry, even as shewn mercy, we faint not. Grace banished fear and dishonesty, and gave by manifestation of the truth to commend oneself to every conscience of man in the sight of God. So chapter iv. begins. All is out in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Man is lost, man under law most guilty and blinded by the god of this age; God in the glory of His grace, and the believer face to face without a veil. Self is not our object, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake. But we have this treasure yet in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God and not out of us; in everything afflicted, but not straitened, always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. Such is the principle; then comes the fact: "For we that live are ever delivered unto death on account of Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh." This life works in others: we believe, and therefore speak, knowing Him Who raised up the Lord Jesus and will raise and present us with those we serve for His sake. Far from our fainting, the inward man is renewed day by day. Our momentary light affliction works for us a surpassingly eternal weight of glory, looking as we do, not at the seen but the unseen and eternal things.

In chapter v. we have the power of life in Christ tested not only by death but by judgment. The Christian is shewn more than conqueror thereby, as, if dead, rising like Christ, and if living, mortality

swallowed up of life (vers. 1—4). Nor does Christ's judgment seat abate the constant confidence, for our manifestation before Him will only prove the perfectness of His redemption, though there may be loss also. The glory begun abides. Then the love of Christ constrains, besides the sense of the terror of the Lord for such as meet judgment in their nakedness, so that we persuade men to receive the gospel. The judgment of charity is, that "One died for all: therefore all died;" He died for all "that the living [which is only by faith in Him] should live no longer to themselves but to him who died and was raised." Even Christ after the flesh is known no more, but dead, risen, and glorified. So that if one be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things are passed, behold, they are become new; and all are of the God Who reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation. This he explains to the end, characterised by God in this way and now based on Christ's work.

Chapter vi. describes this ministry of God's grace; not only in its source and distinctive properties and glorious end, but in its irreproachable character and its deep exercises through all circumstances. Assuredly the Corinthians were not straitened in Paul, as he could now freely tell them; it was in their own affections. But true largeness of heart goes with thorough separateness from all evil. The exhortation follows against any incongruous yoke with unbelievers. What has a Christian to do with helping to draw the world's car? Righteousness, light, Christ forbid such a part. And what agreement has God's temple with idols? The saints are a living God's temple, more deeply than the O.T. expressed; wherefore the call to come out of their midst and be separate and touch no unclean thing was the more imperative. How they knew them-

selves received, God's Fatherhood, and their own sonship, the gospel had already proved. "Having then these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear" (chap. vii. 1) is the real close of the chapter.

In chapter vii. 2—16 the apostle concludes what had been interrupted by the marvellous exposition of the Spirit's ministration of the gospel, the matter of grief which grace had turned into blessing. He enlarges on what chapter ii. only touched, and lets them know what his letter cost him, when he knew its effect on them. It was grief according to God working out repentance to salvation unregrettable. Love is of God, and creates happiness rising above self, sorrow, sin, and Satan. The grief of the world works out death. The teaching is highly valuable, not only in a moral way but in the light of God cast on the assembly's clearance of itself from the evil which it is bound to judge in the last resort. "In every thing ye proved yourselves to be pure in the matter."

W.K.

RETROSPECTION.

O H, precious Saviour! as I view
 Thy wondrous acts of love towards me,
 Thy mercies every morning new,
 Thy grace unfathomed as the sea,
 Lost in astonishment and praise
 I fall adoring at Thy feet;
 Feeble the worship I can raise,
 Would that it were more loud and sweet!

Yet, Lord, as I the path recall
 Which Thou hast marked for me below,
 And see Thy love shine out in all
 The way Thy hand hath made me go,
 In spite of waywardness and sin,
 O'erruling all my folly still,

Praise to Thine own great name to win,
With blessing rich my cup to fill.

Ne'er wearying in Thy matchless grace,
But from the "eater" forcing "meat ;"
Making what seemed but deep disgrace
Yield blessing fresh, and new, and sweet ;
Lord, at thy feet I can but fall ;
Words may not utter love like Thine—
Oh, that I could Thy grace extol
Who deign'st to let me call Thee mine !

But, precious Saviour, louder praise
Shall rise from these poor lips of mine
When *all* the wonders of Thy grace
Revealed in Thine own light shall shine !
Deeper each day their depth I prove,
But when my latest need is o'er,
Unfathomed still that tide of love
Which then in glory I'll adore !

H.C.R.

THE ONE BODY.

WE have had before us the work of the Spirit of God in the individual believer ; we will now consider His gracious operations with regard to the church of God. There are not only blessings and responsibilities of an individual character, which every believer should know ; there are corporate ones also. The reception of the Holy Spirit introduces the believer into the wonderful unity spoken of in scripture as "the body of Christ." Of the truth concerning this, the apostle Paul was the honoured administrator. Neither John nor Peter tell us anything in their Epistles about the church. The conversion of Paul—then known as Saul of Tarsus—was of a very remarkable character. He was not brought to the knowledge of Christ through the preaching of the gospel (God's usual way of acting), but was

arrested by the Lord Jesus on the Damascus road when actively engaged in the persecution of His saints. On that memorable occasion Paul learned among other things, the following weighty truths ; (1) that Jesus of Nazareth, Whose name he so cordially despised, was a glorified Man in heaven ; (2) that He owned His saints on earth as part and parcel of Himself. The Lord did not speak of them as His disciples, nor even as His brethren, but as "Me" (Acts ix. 4).

This then was the vessel chosen of the Lord to unfold to the saints the great purpose formed in the divine heart concerning Christ and the church, before the foundation of the world. It was not made known in Old Testament times, as we read, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. iii. 5). It was "hid in God," not even in the scriptures, as some have affirmed ; though, now that the truth is revealed, faith can turn back to the Old Testament writings, and observe many striking pictures of it.

The body of Christ is dealt with especially in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians. In the former we get the heavenly order ; in the latter, the earthly. In Ephesians we have the divine counsels, and our many blessings in association with the risen Head in heaven ; in 1 Corinthians we have rather our responsibilities as members of Christ and of each other, called to walk together below.

Notice carefully that Christ became Head of the body, the church, in resurrection (Eph. i. 20—23). Union in incarnation is never taught in scripture, but the very opposite. It was impossible that the holy Jesus should unite Himself to sinful and fallen humanity. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or for ever abide alone (John xii. 24). God be praised, He has died, putting away

all our sins by His one sacrifice, and is now in glory as Man, against Whom no charge can be laid. Hence, in virtue of the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, every believer is one with Him on high. In this wondrous circle of blessing the distinction between Jew and Gentile has no place. The former was outwardly nigh to God, having the sanctuary, the law, etc.; the latter was afar off from God, having no part in the promises, and no hope (Eph. ii. 12). Now the wall of partition is broken down. The God Who raised it has demolished it, the enmity between Jew and Gentile is slain through Christ's work, and every believer in Him is brought into a wholly new place of blessing. We have been made nigh through the blood, we have access by the Spirit to the Father, and share with the exalted One all that has come to Him as result of His toil. What a position for the Christian! Blessed as Christ is blessed, loved as He is loved! Accepted too in His acceptance. Would that every saint entered into it in simple faith. We should not then see true souls going mourning all their days, as so often is the case.

Now turn to 1 Corinthians xii. Here we have the side of responsibility. This epistle presents to us the church of God, not as blessed in the heavenly places in Christ, but in its practical working on earth. The apostle uses the expression, "the Christ," to describe the Lord and His saints (ver. 12). How wonderful! It helps us to understand the "Me" of Acts ix. 4. This unity he shews to be due to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Faith does not unite us to Christ, but the Spirit. It is important to see this clearly. This helps too as to the limits of the body of Christ. It began when the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost; it will be completed when the Spirit of God leaves this scene at the Lord's coming. Believers neither of

preceding nor succeeding dispensations come into it. They will have their own portion of blessing, of course; but they have no part in the church of God.

Then we get practical exhortations (1 Cor. xii.). The apostle lays down that every member has his place assigned to him by God, and there is to be no discontent (ver. 14—18). The ear, the eye and the foot have their own proper functions. All are necessary. There are no irresponsible members in Christ's body. Not only is there to be no discontent, but contempt is forbidden (ver. 19—25). The more gifted must not slight others, as though they are of no value. None can be dispensed with. The feeble furnish occasions for the exercise of love and patience (Rom. xiv. 1—6); and the "uncomely" are to be cared for also, the blemishes being graciously covered, not exposed. All round there is to be godly care and affection, and a holy recognition in every way of the profound and divine fact that we are all members one of another, as of the risen Head above.

The apostle concludes the section with, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 27). In the early days of the church, all this was understood, at least in measure, and acted on in faith; but what can we say now? For many dreary centuries the great truth was completely lost, and to-day how few enter into its meaning in power! We hear much of "bodies" that men have formed, and of persons being members of them; but how feebly is it grasped that there is still "one body and one Spirit" on earth! Where this is learned from God, separation from all that is of man must ensue. Not that the church of God can now be reconstructed as at the first; but the few who are content to be together in simplicity as members of Christ's body, in dependence

on the Holy Ghost, will never fail of blessing. The Lord knows how to minister to, and sustain His own.

The one body finds its great expression in the breaking of bread. "We being many are one loaf, one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf" (1 Cor. x. 17). Anything like sectarianism has no place here. As members of one body it is our privilege to meet, and in that simple character to remember the Lord until He come.

W.W.F.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

CHAPTER II. 1—12.*

¹ **A**ND on his entering again into Capernaum after *(some)* days, it was reported that he was at home. ² And immediately many were brought together, so that there was no longer room *(to receive them)* even at the door; and he was speaking the word to them. ³ And they come unto him bringing a paralytic *(which was)* borne by four; ⁴ and not being able to get nigh to him on account of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and having opened *(it)* up they let down the couch whereon the paralytic lay. ⁵ And Jesus, seeing their faith saith to the paralytic, Child, thy sins are forgiven *(thee)*. ⁶ But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ Why doth he [or, this *(man)*] thus speak? He blasphemeth; who is able to forgive sins except one, God? ⁸ And immediately Jesus, knowing well in his spirit that they thus reason within themselves, saith to them, Why

*Words in italics should be passed over in reading as they indicate what should, for critical reasons, be omitted from the Authorised Version. Variations and additions are marked by heavy type.

reason ye these things in your hearts? ⁹ **Which** is easier, to say to the **paralytic**, Thy sins are forgiven (*thee*); or to say, Arise, and take up thy **couch** and walk? ¹⁰ But that ye may know that the Son of man hath **authority** on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the **paralytic**), ¹¹ **To thee I say**, Arise, (*and*) take up thy **couch**, and go (*thy way*) **unto** thy house. ¹² And he arose, and immediately taking up the **couch** went **out** before (*them*) all, **so that** they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw (*it*) **thus**.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS.

Verse 1.—Capernaum. This town was a specially favoured town by the Lord in His Galilean ministry and was the scene of many of His mighty works. Thus in Mark i. we have the casting out of the unclean spirit, the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, and of many other sick folk there. After leaving Nazareth where He was brought up, He came and dwelt in Capernaum (Matt. iv. 13)—called "his own" city (Matt. ix. 1). It was specially denounced by the Lord for not availing itself of its many privileges (Matt. xi. 23, 24).

Verse 2.—Spoke the word. Compare Acts viii. 25; xi. 19; xiii. 49; xiv. 25; xvi. 6.

Verse 3.—Paralytic. Another example in Acts ix. 33. This disease illustrates the powerlessness of the sinner (Rom. v. 6). The man must even be brought into the Lord's presence.

Verse 4.—Could not come nigh. Compare Matthew xii. 46.

Uncovered the roof. The four bearers with the pallet ascended to the housetop (Luke v. 19) probably by the usual outside staircase (Matt. xxiv. 17), and made an aperture in the roof of the upper room of the house where the Lord probably was teaching (Acts i. 13; ix. 37, 39; xx. 8). While the exact

details of this action are uncertain, their extraordinary earnestness is perfectly clear. It is a case where actions spoke louder than words.

Verse 5.—When Jesus saw. There was no fervent petition as in the case of the leper. It is "a beautiful example of the way in which the Giver of all good things gives *before* we ask and *better* than we ask. This poor suppliant had as yet asked nothing; save, indeed, in the dumb asking of that earnest effort to struggle into the immediate neighbourhood of the Lord; and all that in this he dared to ask, certainly all that his friends and bearers sought for him, was that he might be healed of his palsy." But the Lord went to the root of the matter and dismissed his burdensome sins.

Their faith. Surely the united faith of the five. *To the paralytic.* Forgiveness of sins is not an abstract statement or doctrine; it is an assurance addressed to the individual forgiven.

Thy sins are forgiven. The change from "be" to "are" is worthy of note; for the Lord stated a fact, not a mere wish. From that moment and onward the man was a forgiven person. Every child of God has his sins forgiven (1 John ii. 12).

Verse 6.—Reasoning. These scribes had reasoned better if they believed more. "Through faith we understand."

*Verse 7.—*It was true as the scribes assumed that none could forgive sins but God only. But Jesus *was* God "manifest in flesh," so that He had power on earth to forgive sins. Their reasoning was correct; but their assumption on which they based their reasoning was utterly false. Reason without faith in Christ leads men away from God.

Verse 8.—Perceived in His spirit. He hears thoughts as well as words.

Verse 9.—To say. Notice an emphasis on "to say," which occurs twice in the verse, and on "I

say" in verse 11. The Lord was about to demonstrate that His words were weighted with authority. The false prophets on Carmel *said* Baal would send down fire from heaven; but it never came. The Lord had *said*, Thy sins are forgiven; but there was no visible effect. Now He was about to say, Arise and walk: and if a visible effect followed, it would shew to these unbelievers that when He "spake, it was done." When He said, Arise, the paralytic arose; so in like manner when He said, Thy sins are forgiven, the man was forgiven. One effect was known by sight; the other by faith.

Verse 10.—Forgive sins. The prophecy concerning the Messiah (Psalm ciii. 3) connected the forgiveness of sins and the healing of diseases. Did not the scribes know this?

Verse 12.—Glorified God. It was the perfection of the Servant of Jehovah that He did His mighty works in such a way that God was glorified. Man's successful actions are generally taken advantage of to glorify self.



EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.



LOVE even in us, in and by the Spirit, how sweet it is! But the fountain, the deep sweet well of love, is Christ. So the woman of Sychar proved, and so may we. x.

IN the quiet moments of the night I have pictured her sorrows and have thought how weak the vessel to weather such a storm. Her sorrow draws out much intercession; and this is comfort, for the Lord hears it and will answer in His own time. x.

WE are not to want a kid to make merry with our friends apart from Him, nor any other refuge from the storm than Himself, Who is a present help in the time of trouble. When by grace we returned from the far country, it was to the Father, to be His children and in His arms, although our first thoughts might have been set on the "bread enough and to spare," which even the servants enjoyed.

X.

How strange, yet true, that we should ever be cast down; yet is it not so? Stronger saints than we confess to this state; Daniel did, and so even Paul. But they learned an unfailing spring of comfort in God, Who comforteth those who are cast down. And it is a lesson well worth exercise to really learn, "What time I am afraid I will confide in thee," and another verse, "My heart trusted in thee and I am helped, therefore my heart rejoiceth in thee."

X.

PEACE: BE STILL.

The rest that follows pain is sweet,
 And after tempest, calm;
 The sorrow must be given, else
 We needed not the balm.
 A night of tempest drear and wild
 He gave—He knoweth best—
 The boisterous winds and waters raged,
 But now He bids them cease,
 That we, when He has said "Be still,"
 May know, with hearts at rest,
 A little thrill of thankfulness
 That He has given us peace.

T.B.

THERE is no harm in making a mistake, but much in making none.

PIETY AT HOME.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—It is rather singular that some young believers have a difficulty in discovering what they consider to be a suitable sphere for the exercise and development of their spiritual energies. They imagine that if they were only going out as missionaries to the deadly Congo or to some lonely Pacific isle, they would have opportunity to display to the world such Christian heroism and self-sacrificing devotion as have rarely been seen. They are overwhelmed by the fact (we all are for that matter), that of the 1,500,000,000 inhabitants of this world it is computed that only 400,000,000 *profess* the name of Christ, a proportion of a little more than one in every four. But because they seem as yet unable to originate and carry out some gigantic scheme for the blessing of mankind generally, they are still waiting for an opening to take part in some grand Christian enterprise.

Allow me to say to such ambitious souls that the *first* thing expected from you is to "*shew piety at home.*" You must not expect to begin at the top rung of the ladder. You should remember that David, who was eventually raised to be king over Israel, commenced his career by keeping his father's sheep. So that you have not to travel thousands of miles to find your sphere. You are already in it.

I recollect the first time I came to London from the country, asking a policeman where Hyde Park Corner was. The officer with imperturbable gravity pointed above my head where I read for myself, "Hyde Park Corner" in big capitals. I was already there.

So is it with many young persons with more modest aims than the above. They are very desirous of something to do in the way of Sunday-school teaching or preaching. But they altogether

overlook the apostolic injunction, "Let them learn first to shew piety at home" (1 Tim. v. 4).

Are you saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Here you have your work. You need not so much as look out of the window to find it. "Shew piety at home."

In the verse quoted (1 Tim. v. 4) "piety" has the sense especially of that affectionate duty and respect which is so becoming in young believers towards their elderly relatives, and the more so where (as in the text) that relative is a widow. The apostle wrote, "If any widow have children or nephews ['descendants' is said by scholars to be the better word], let them learn first to shew piety at home and to requite their parents: for that is acceptable before God." From the general terms used, it may be seen that the apostle without specially mentioning anything refers to whatever is due from the younger to the elder members of the family.

I am quite prepared to hear that some of my young readers think it is quite unnecessary to call attention to this subject. They say, "We all know how to behave towards our parents. We knew that before our conversion." But I think I shall be right in supposing that these objectors are the very ones who have not conscientiously sought to "shew piety at home."

Nay, my young friends, you forget that however obedient and dutiful you may have been when you were unconverted, you could not have displayed the life of Christ. When born again, you received a life entirely new, which manifests itself in the ways of Christ. I am sorry if you have not yet learned that unless you are watchful it is self that rises to the surface and not Christ. The same thing may be done either for self or for Christ. I mean that you may, for instance, obey your parents in

order to please yourself, or to please Christ. The latter is shewing piety at home. The spirit of Christ is then displayed in all your filial relationships, and all the household can see it.

I do not wish to undervalue in the slightest degree teaching or preaching or missionary work. But I venture to say that *piety at home is more important than a class in the Sunday-school or speaking at the corner of the street.* And the reason for saying so is found in my text, "Let them learn *first* to shew piety at home." And what God has put first, it is always wrong for us to put even in the second place. How much more to neglect it altogether!

It is a feature of the present day that young folks set themselves up to know a good deal more than their elders. The young shoulders claim to have old heads on them. Mr. Timothy Novice thinks that his father is very deficient in the knowledge of scripture, and that he is not at all clear as to the difference between Babylon and the Beast. And when his mother says that in her young days young persons were not so forward and presuming as he is, he frowns and replies somewhat haughtily that she has forgotten what exceptional advantages he (Mr. T. N.) has had, and so on. Is this a godly spirit? It is not the spirit of Christ. Read the last three verses of Luke ii.

My young friends therefore must be careful not to give themselves lofty airs in the house. Don't exalt yourself even at home. Be clothed with humility. Remember, too, that the great secret of shewing piety at home is in the exercise of self-denial. Love yourself and please yourself *last*. To be a sturdy Christian you need a thorough training in such unselfishness. And the best place for this is the home circle.

Why is home the best place? Because there you are more off your guard than anywhere perhaps.

You know that if you are denied your own way, you fly into a tantrum more quickly at home than elsewhere. Because for some reason you are not allowed to go to the preaching, or some other meeting, you are suddenly attacked with a fit of the black sulks. You don't mind "showing off" before your parents. But why should you keep your sweetness for your Christian friends and sourness for your family? You must *first* learn to shew piety at home. It will make you a better teacher of children, and a better disciple of Christ in every respect.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

W.T.—New wine and old bottles (Matt. ix. 14—17). The verses deal with the contrast of law with grace. The Lord brought in that which was not an improvement of the old order of things, but what was quite new. Law and grace are so different, that they cannot be mixed without spoiling each other. Patching the old garment of legal ordinances with the new gifts of grace only make matters worse. *All* things must become new. So with new wine in old wine-skins: the joys under the new covenant are altogether incompatible with the principles of the old covenant, which made men groan rather than rejoice. It is important to be quite clear that there is a *total difference* between law and grace, and that they cannot in any wise be amalgamated. Galatians v. 4 shews how the "rent is made worse."

C.M.—Young Christians and Music. We read your letter with sympathetic interest. The warning is needful and timely against allowing music or any other pursuit to be a snare for the heart and to cool the ardour of one's love for the Lord. As you say, "It is a very easy thing to find an excuse for what *we want to do*." The subject of sacred concerts has already been referred to in these pages (*B.M.M.* for April last, page 96).

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A.R.—What is the “royal bounty” typical of (1 Kings x. 13)? We cannot say. Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba whatever she asked for and, in addition, gifts that were in keeping with his regal splendour and extraordinary wealth. Does not this remind us of Him Who always gives us “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”?

Restoring that which He took not away. S.R. (New York) writes :—“Will you permit me to call attention to the answer to a question in your Magazine (August last, page 192) as to Psalm lxix. 4? Do you not think that in this psalm we have the trespass-offering aspect of our Lord's death? We had defrauded God, and He, taking our place in grace, paid back that which we had taken away—yea, and added a fifth part thereto. This is singularly beautiful and suggestive, and seems to me to present an important side of divine truth as to the atonement. While the presence of enemies is noted, as it is also in Psalm xxii., is not the thought prominent that He is dealing with God about our trespasses and their consequences?”

We print our correspondent's letter, though we are unable altogether to endorse his remarks. The *special* feature of this Psalm seems to be the Lord's sufferings from man, followed (22—28) by judgment on His adversaries, while in Psalm xxii. the expiatory side is followed by world-wide blessing (22—31). The phrase in question consists of the most general terms, so that it is difficult to say positively what is particularly referred to. If the restoration was to God, and not to men as stated in reply to the first querist, it would include the whole of Christ's life and death wherein He rendered to God everything man failed to give, and more beside. This, of course, takes in the thought of S.R.

A.T.—“Power on her head because of the angels” (1 Cor. xi. 10). Please explain. The apostle here gives an additional reason for women covering their heads. The angels ought to see godly decorum among those who are redeemed (comp. 1 Cor. iv. 9; Eph. iii. 10; 1 Peter i. 12). “Power” means the sign of woman's subjection to authority which is a veil or covering (Gen. xxiv. 65). The case you mention (if we understand the circumstances aright) where the only brother present declined to close the Sunday School with prayer himself, it only remained to act as though he were not present. But such an instance would surely be very exceptional.

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THINGS THAT MAKE FOR
PEACE.

IT takes only two to make a quarrel, and then it often takes a hundred or more to make peace again; for "the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water," and that surely is a good reason why we should "leave off contention, before there be quarrelling" (Prov. xvii. 14, R.V.).

A large proportion of the wrangles among brethren would never be known, if it were more generally understood that it is almost invariably the best man who steps out of the dispute first. But too many, alas! are imbued with the mistaken notion that it involves a great loss of dignity to let another person have the last word. It is to be feared however that such persons have but a very meagre apprehension of true Christian dignity.

Of old, there was a war of words between Abram's herdmen and Lot's herdmen. The father of the faithful, the depository of God's promises bade his nephew take his choice, and go in whatever direction he pleased, only let there be no strife between them. Will anyone seriously allege that Abram, in this generous and self-renouncing offer, sacrificed one iota of his dignity? Truly he had the greater right; but it is only rarely that the

greater right is found, as then, in conjunction with the greater grace.

There may be some reasonable excuse for the rarity of such a spirit as Abram's, nineteen centuries before Christ, but none whatever now,—nineteen centuries after Christ. No one with the Gospels in their hands can pretend that when the Lord Jesus was here below He contended for *His* rights. He was meek and lowly in heart. The cruellest taunts and jeers of His enemies did not rouse Him to retaliate. Even their blows and spittle did not provoke Him to utter one revengeful word. And we must not forget that especially in this particular spirit of meekness He has left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. ii. 20—24). If we had more of this spirit of His, we should certainly be more at peace among ourselves.

“But we don't expect to have this kind of thing to put up with in the assembly of God,” exclaims some fiery Boanerges. “We look for something more Christlike from our brethren. If a man is cantankerous, he must be made to know his place.” It is perfectly true we all ought to be gentle and humbleminded. But there are the bellicose brethren; and how are we to deal with them? Will an angry word turn away their wrath? Can you subdue the workings of flesh in others by the working of the flesh in yourself? Are the weapons of our warfare carnal? No; on the contrary it is by such means that bitterness spreads, and that breaches are widened.

On such occasions it is that we are called to set ourselves earnestly to pursue the “things that make for peace.” And the assembly is the sphere for the exercise of this virtue. Who but saints having a difference with one another could be exhorted to “be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil.

iv. 2)? Such words could not be addressed to worldlings. And while we find exhortations to peace and mutual forbearance in almost every Epistle of the New Testament ; we ought not to be very surprised to encounter contentious persons in our midst to-day.

What is to be done with a crotchety brother, who insists on having his own way, and is full of spiteful and abusive remarks? Let us remember that all of us are distinctly enjoined to "be of one mind, live in peace" (2 Corinthians xiii. 11). Our individual aims therefore should be to preserve peace at any *personal* sacrifice whatever (always excepting the name of the Lord and His word). Let us pray for him. Let us be patient with him. Let us refuse to retaliate in any sense. Let us believe that he is misled rather than actuated by evil motives. Let us not despise him, or be angry with him. Considering ourselves if we were tempted in like manner, let us seek to restore him *in meekness*.

But beside the persons who abuse and those who are abused, there is another class who do a great deal of mischief (let us hope unconsciously) by their idle gossip. Brother X says something naughty about dear brother Y. At once the chatter-mags set to work, and the tale spreads like wildfire. Brother X has fifty excellent qualities ; but they are all forgotten, and his single transgression (arising perhaps from some misunderstanding) is magnified by the busybodies, until he is regarded by many as nothing but a wolf in sheep's clothing. Instead of the matter being quietly settled between brothers X and Y themselves, it is carried by these tattlers over a whole county, and perhaps farther.

We have no sympathy with those who appear to find such a relish in retailing the faults of others. They have an eye for the ugly. If there is a black

spot anywhere, they are sure to see it and point it out to everyone else. This is not the love that covereth the multitude of sins. It is one of the things that make not for peace, but for discord.

We ought therefore to discourage this circulation of evil reports by means of small talk. It would certainly tend to a spirit of concord among the saints, were there less of it. Let us not repeat matters ourselves, nor listen to these scandal-mongers. Above all, if we are personally aggrieved, let us refuse to talk about our grievances. For if we are in the right it is unnecessary to justify ourselves; and if we are in the wrong it is, to say the least, waste of time to do so.

And surely we ought not to forget ourselves so much as to say such things for the sake of exposing another's faults. That would be doing the work of an enemy at once, since it makes for division, not for peace. It certainly has the appearance of seeking to gain the hearers on our side, to be crying ourselves up, and running the other man down. And it is idle to pretend the matter is settled, and that we have forgiven the one who did the wrong, when we are all the while proclaiming his sins from the housetop.

May we remember the Lord's words, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS VIII.—XIII.

THE way was now clear for the apostle happily to treat fully of that collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, which he had briefly introduced in the last chapter of his First Epistle.

Now that grace was doing its work, he can speak of the grace bestowed on the Macedonian assemblies in their own deep poverty and trial. And beyond hope it was ; for they gave themselves first "to the Lord, and to us by God's will." Taking nothing himself from the rich Corinthians, Paul was the more earnest for others ; not as commanding, but, through the zeal of others, proving also the genuineness of their love. As they abounded in much, let them abound in this grace too. What a motive and pattern is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ! He gave in this his opinion—he would not say more. It was expedient, or profitable, for them who purposed a year ago to perform. A willing mind was the great thing without burdening any. Titus too was jealous for them ; and Paul sent with him the brother whose praise was in the gospel through all the assemblies and chosen by them as "our fellow-traveller with this grace." For the apostle was careful to provide things honest not only before the Lord but also before men. Hence he sent a second unnamed brother (22) of oft-proved diligence, but now much more diligent "through his [not, I think, Paul's] great confidence as to you." They were to shew the proof therefore.

Yet another chapter (ix.) is devoted to the theme. He knew their ready mind, of which he boasted to Macedonians, that Achaia (of which Roman province Corinth was the metropolis) was prepared a year ago ; and he would not that "we, not to say, ye," should be put to shame. Nor does he fail, in awakening their souls to the joy of grace practically, to remind them that God loves a cheerful giver ; and would have us abound to every good work, with thanksgiving to God as the result. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift, the spring of all grace by us.

In the later chapters (x.—xiii.) he vindicates his authority, entreating them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ; let others boast of natural appearance or of fleshly arms. His arms were powerful according to God for overthrowing strongholds, and leading captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ. He was ready to avenge all disobedience when their return to it was fulfilled. If boasting somewhat more abundantly of what the Lord gave him, he would not be put to shame. As strong by letters when absent, so he would be present in deed. He had not gone beyond the measure God had apportioned, but hoped, their faith increasing, to be enlarged among them, and yet more to evangelise beyond them, instead of boasting in another's rule as to things ready. He that boasts, let him in the Lord; for not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends (chap. x.).

Jealous over the beloved Corinthians, whom he had espoused, he says in chapter xi., as a chaste virgin to Christ, he fears lest their thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to Christ. In the most touching way he asks if he committed sin in abasing himself that they might be exalted, and in every thing kept himself from being burdensome to them, though Macedonian brethren supplied his want. God knew whether it was lack of loving them; but so he did to cut off occasion from some wishing it, against whom he thunders as deceitful workers. To speak of his own devotion, labours, and sufferings, he counts to speak as a fool; but we are indebted to that unworthy occasion for details of the deepest interest. They had compelled him in their folly (chap. xi.). Was there any heroism in being let down in a basket through a window by the wall?

In chapter xii. he glories in what "a man in

Christ" he knows (without saying who, for flesh had no part in it) experienced when caught up to the third heaven. Otherwise he gloried, not in any thing man loves to attach to his name, but "in his infirmities." He knew not even whether it was in the body or out of the body; so completely was it apart from all living associations or nature, before God in the glory of His Paradise. Yet was it as a check to this unequalled distinction (of the deepest moment to all subsequent life and service), lest he should be exalted by the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that there was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Nay more, he tells us that he prayed the Lord thrice for its removal, but had the answer, "My grace sufficeth thee, for power is perfected in weakness." It is dependence in faith, the true and signal secret of all Christianity in practice. "Behold this third time I am ready to come to you." He had been at Corinth once and long. Only their state, and his desire to come when they were restored, hindered him when ready to come a second time. This is the true force of coming a "third time." How painful to such a heart to rebut the imputation of craft, when they could not deny his personal unselfishness! or of their supposing he was excusing himself to them! All was really in love for their edifying; but he feared lest perhaps on coming he should find them not as he wished, and he be found by them such as they did not wish.

Chapter xiii. closes this part and the entire Epistle with an overwhelming appeal, not only spoilt by false punctuation in the Authorised and Revised Versions; but making way for wrong doctrine at issue with the gospel. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me (who is not weak toward you but is powerful among you, for he was

crucified of weakness, yet he liveth of God's power; for we too are weak in him, but we shall live with him by God's power toward you), try yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove yourselves. Or recognise ye not as to yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate" (3—5). As *this* alternative was the last thought which could occur to the childish vanity which questioned Paul's apostleship, the application turns on their own standing in the faith. As surely as they were in it, he was an apostle to them. If Christ were not in them, they were reprobates and not entitled to speak on such a question. Where was their vapouring now? But his prayer was that they might do nothing evil, and his joy to be weak if they were powerful, praying also for their perfecting, and writing thus when absent that when present he might spare severity. He adds a farewell message of suited tenderness and care, with a commendation which speaks to the hearts of all believers ever since. Who, accepting it from God, has not profited?

W.K.

THE EVER-LIVING PRIEST.

ACCCESS to God as a purged worshipper, and, as a partaker of the heavenly calling, on the way to eternal rest, are significant truths taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews; by the former, drawing near to God having no more conscience of sins; by the latter, as associated with Christ risen, Who is not ashamed to call His redeemed, "brethren." To such, the world, the scene of their Lord's rejection, becomes henceforth but the passage leading to holy and heavenly rest. It is in this heavenly journey that the be-

liever learns the unspeakable blessedness of the significant, "Ever liveth" (Heb. vii. 25). Jesus Who died for His people's sins, is not only seated for ever as to His sacrificial work, but as their Great High Priest, He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

If the sinner needs the one and only sacrifice for his sins, the believer no less needs the one and only High Priest for all sorrows, temptations and difficulties on the way to heavenly rest. The same Jesus Who went through this world as the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, learning as the perfect, holy Man, obedience by the things He suffered, is now in heaven, having passed out of the world by the way of death, both as the righteous martyr and as the holy, sinless victim.

His presence in heaven becomes the precious occasion for His timely service during the hour of His people's need who are no longer sinners troubled about their sins, in misery and bondage, dreading final judgment; but needy saints, in their manifold sorrows and exercises, ever rising up day by day, in this unrighteous, Christ-rejecting world.

The same devoted love of Christ that shone so brightly in every scene and circumstance of His path here, still continues, in its suited activity in heaven, varying in its action to the need of His own still in the world. Precious Saviour, Lord and High Priest, Thy love unceasing has anticipated all, from the cross to the glory!

He washes our feet from daily defilement for a holy walk in a sinful world, as well as rendering precious priestly ministry in loving sympathy and succour to the tried and tempted; He no less promises His pledged sufficiency to save to the uttermost tempest-tossed saints, until landed on the eternal shore, where sin and sorrow are unknown. In view of the glorious eternal future, and in the

appointed experience of the present, how timely, sweet, and encouraging therefore is the truth, "He ever liveth."

A contrast equal to that between the one and many sacrifices is also seen in the many dying high priests of old, to the One Who as to His person, future glory and blessing, is after the order of Melchisedeck, but Who now lives in the power of an endless life—while God's earthly Israel await the royal action in blessing, when their true Priest and King comes out of heaven. His people to-day who partake of a heavenly calling, are privileged to know and enjoy His present service and action whilst hid in heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Not only representing them in the beauty and perfection before God, He serves them in all their appointed afflictions and sorrows.

Thus the love that supplied what holiness demanded, by dying on the cross, is the same that anticipated and provided for every step and stage, from the cross to the glory. It only remains that such divine love in wisdom and grace should in faith be known and appropriated, to live, walk and act in the confidence and peace of what it has done and is now doing. Then peace of conscience, happy holy worship, and daily consistency as heavenly pilgrims, will be the proper outcome. May God by the indwelling Spirit so apply the death of Christ as the one and only sacrifice for sin and sinners, and His daily priestly service in heaven, produce these results in us.

G.G.



THE Lord may lead us round, but He will lead us right.

"Do not sound a trumpet, and say, 'Come, see how humble I am!'"

THE SPIRIT IN THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

THERE are two main branches of the Spirit's work amongst Christians; (1) in the individual believer, and (2) in the assembly of God. The latter is not so commonly apprehended as the former. Very many believers understand His blessed operation in the individual, but few comparatively enter into the meaning and blessedness of His action in the church of God. We find the two things clearly marked in 1 Corinthians. In chapter vi. 19, we read, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" The connection shews that believers are here addressed individually, for the apostle is exhorting to personal holiness. Then in chapter iii. 16, we read, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Here he addresses "the church of God which is at Corinth" (ch. i. 2), hence the instruction is of a very different character.

It is a vital truth of Christianity, that the church is "an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. i. 22). Of old, God dwelt in the tabernacle in the midst of His redeemed people, and later in the temple which Solomon built for His name. But there was always distance between God and the people. The veil shut God in, and the people out. There was no drawing near to God within the sanctuary (Heb. ix. 8). But mighty changes have been wrought through the accomplished work of Christ. Not only is sin put away, so that a purged conscience is the birthright portion of every believer, but the Spirit of God has come down from heaven to form the church and to

dwell in it. As we read, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them" (2 Cor. vi. 16). God the Holy Ghost dwells in the church, to guard the lordship of Christ, and to lead out the saints in all their exercises towards God. This is very little understood. It was thoroughly believed in the first days of the church of God. The shaken building (Acts iv. 31) and the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 1—11) were striking proofs that a divine Person was really among them. And though we have no such outward signs now, His presence is as real and true; faith has but to act upon it.

He is the assembly's all-sufficient Leader and Guide. When together for worship or prayer, what further need is there for anyone to regulate or superintend? Such human provisions were only made when the truth of the Spirit's presence became weakened in men's minds. In 1 Corinthians xii. 10, 11, it is laid down that the Spirit distributes to all the saints severally as He will. There is great variety, and all is needed for general edification and blessing. The modern idea is concentration, not distribution, as if it were possible for one member of Christ's body to have everything requisite for the help and advancement of all. Those who act on such principles most assuredly suffer deeply in their souls in consequence.

1 Corinthians xiv. is of great value as to the regulation of things in the church of God. Everything is to be done for edification, this being the golden rule that is laid down. For this reason those in Corinth who possessed the gift of tongues were not to exercise them unless an interpreter was near by. We read of prayer, singing and prophecy. Verse 26 would seem to shew that there was considerable eagerness in the Corinthian

assembly to take a part in the public gatherings of the saints. But the saints are not bidden to keep silence and to fall back upon an official leader; but are simply told, "Let all things be done unto edifying." Liberty is allowed as of God, but apostolic counsel is given. The only persons who are to keep silence in the church are the women, and this on natural as well as on other grounds. When the Spirit of God is really looked to and trusted, the saints will not come together in vain. However few and feeble they may be, the divine Indweller will not fail to give them through one vessel or another what their souls desire and need.

What real unbelief has long existed in Christendom as to all this! By some, the Spirit of God is prayed for, as though He had not yet come; by others His presence is recognised as doctrine, but that is all. All this is serious dishonour to God, however little intended. Let it be our earnest and unceasing prayer that God may graciously arouse the whole church to a deeper sense of the reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and to more simple reliance on Him for all the need of our souls until the Lord Jesus come.

W.W.F.

LETTER ON PIETY AT HOME.

MY DEAR "YOD,"—Your word as to "Shewing Piety at Home" * seems to me very important and necessary in this day of rushing hither and thither—especially with young people.

Does not the Lord's injunction to the man in Mark ii. bear on what you wrote? He was to carry his bed to *his house*, not to the synagogue or

* B.M.M. for last month (page 260).

to the temple. The Lord said, "Go thy way into thine house"—"shew piety at home." Also the one who had the two thousand demons cast out of him was told, "Go *home* to *thy friends* and tell *them* how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark v. 19).

Napoleon said, "No man is a hero to his own valet;" he knows too much about his master. So, alas! it is too often in the home-circle. Christ is not manifested, and "actions do *not* speak louder than words" for the glory of His Name.

I once got a lesson from an old sergeant in my regiment some thirty-seven years ago—aye, and more. A godly Scotchman he was, named Graham. I was quite a "*butcha*" (a baby) as they say in India; and I was tried by finding several of the men very forward in meetings, in prayer and giving out hymns; but in their barrack rooms they were not so tidy, and on parade their arms and accoutrements not so clean as they should be.

I asked old Graham as to this. He quietly replied, "Have ye never heard, sir, of kirk saints and hame de'ils?" I never had met with that saying before; but, alas! is it not too true? There is great show at "kirk," and long faces; but at home——.

Well! "Charity begins at home;" so may *I* take a warning, and "shew piety at home;" and "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in *all things*" for His sake.

S.V.H.

A LAMP AND A LIGHT.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—Did you ever in descending a dark flight of stairs reach the bottom before you expected to? If you did, you probably recollect with what an unpleasant jerk your descent terminated on account of the false step you took.

If there had been a lamp for your feet, it would not have occurred.

Now in a spiritual way the word of God is a lamp unto the feet (Psalm cxix. 105), and if you neglect its light you will stumble woefully. But there is no need for a Christian to take a single step in the dark. The Lord said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). And it is by His word that He affords you direction for your next step.

We have an illustration of this when the remnant returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The people desired Ezra the scribe to read to them from the book of the law that they might learn what His will was (Neh. viii. 1). They found that they were commanded to keep the feast of tabernacles just at that time of the year (ver. 4). The commandment was a lamp to them (Prov. vi. 23); and they immediately obeyed it. Later on they read that Ammonites and Moabites must not come into the congregation of God for ever (Neh. xiii. 1—3). They at once separated themselves from the mixed multitude.

Thus they were led on, "line upon line, precept upon precept." And it is always so with those who *desire* to be guided every moment and in every thing.

Let us take a practical illustration. You meet a person whom you think would form a desirable companion for you. Now do not act hastily. Do not take a step in the dark. Allow the light of the lamp to fall upon the matter. Consider what the consequences may be. Is the person such a one as the word commends? If you wait on the Lord in this earnest way, you are sure not to be deceived.

But you will remember that in the same verse

from which I have already quoted, the word of God is compared to a light as well as a lamp. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105).

You will observe that the lamp is for the *feet* while the light is for the *path*. This shews that the word of God not only supplies direction for your next step, but also the principles that should govern your conduct generally.

When you have been guided in the matter above referred to—whether such and such a person should be your companion or no—you have proved the value of the word as a lamp to your feet. But when you also gather from its pages that unbelievers and even worldly-minded Christians are unsuitable associates for a child of God, you have the word shedding its light on your path. For it gives you a general rule for your conduct, because its truth applies not to that one case only but to every case.

There is another use of the word's light, which is even more important still. It shews you what to do as well as what not to do. It gives you a sort of bird's-eye-view of the path before you. This is helpful, for it tells you accurately what is expected of you.

Take, for instance, the fact that believers should be continually looking for the personal return of the Lord Jesus, which is laid down in the Epistles of the New Testament. This tells you of your constant duty. It is true not for one day alone but for every day and for all the days.

Then, again, there is another cardinal principle which illuminates the path of every Christian who will only heed its light. The believer is instructed that his journey through this world will, of necessity, involve a course of self-denial and endurance of hardships.

The word of God makes it clear that directly you become a disciple of Christ, a cross is laid upon your shoulder. If the light of the word enables you to see this, you will not be surprised or stumbled when it comes. You are shewn that the pathway of the Master was:—

1. Suffering in this world.
2. Glory on high.

You are also told that it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master. Therefore you may be sure, that if you are faithful your pathway will also be:—

1. Suffering in this world.
2. Glory to come.

Seeing this principle beforehand will explain a good many things that will befall you; and you will not count it anything strange if you fall into a great many trials of one kind and another. Read the life of Christ. See what He endured. And He left us an example that we should follow His steps. And in the track of His footsteps we are sure of the "light of life."

I earnestly trust that my dear young friends will assiduously cultivate the habit of consulting the word of God (1) for guidance in every circumstance of difficulty, and (2) for general counsel as to the plans and purposes they make for the direction of their conduct.

I have just read some lines for the first time which I transcribe for your benefit, with just a slight alteration, the better to suit the purpose of the quotation.

"And dear as is Thy place on high,
 Thy footsteps are below;
 Where Thou didst go through shame and wrong,
 There also would I go.
 Lord, where Thou died'st I too would die,
 For where Thou livest there too am I.

One lonely path across the waste—
 Thy lowly path of shame ;
 I would adore Thy wondrous grace
 That I should tread the same.
 The Stranger and the Alien, Thou—
 And, I the stranger, alien, now."

I am, yours faithfully,
 "YOD"

CORRESPONDENCE.

Making Mistakes. We have been told that there is a mistake at the bottom of page 259 (last issue). We do not at all wish to be found among those referred to there as "making no mistakes." That class is of ancient origin, and was composed of such as trusted in themselves that they were righteous (Luke xviii. 9), and consequently needed no repentance (Luke xv. 7). But we understand the scripture in these passages to be giving the *persons' own opinion of themselves*, and that opinion was not worth much. We have heard persons say that they never made mistakes ; but we had only their own word for it. We would prefer to have heard them own their faults and forsake them ; but this practice is not at all as common as may be supposed. Let us confess our mistakes that they may be turned to our profit, and not be "wise in our own conceits ;" such was the sense meant to be conveyed in the sentence objected to.

R.M.—Preaching in cycling costume. Probably this was done without thought, and if the person were spoken to kindly and graciously he would perhaps desist, when he knows several are grieved. We have nothing to say against the bicycle when legitimately used as a means of bodily exercise, or as a mode of expeditious travelling. Nothing can be said in its favour however when used immoderately. As to riding on the Lord's day, we should fear lest we might be confounded with the crowds of worldly persons who spend that day in pleasure-seeking, having no regard for the Lord's name.

W.E.—Does the Lord's expression, "It is finished" refer to the scripture, "I thirst" (John xix. 28—30)? Surely not. We confess we have no sympathy with views which destroy the moral grandeur of these words of our Lord in which He, the Son of God, declares the com-

pletion of His work of redemption. In verse 28, we have the fulfilment of each detail stated. (All things were now finished). In verse 30, the work is viewed as a comprehensive whole and said to be finished (perfect). In John xvii. 4 it is said to be finished (aorist). Verses 28 and 29 deal with the quotation from the Psalm, but verse 30 gives us the Lord's final word and act; and who shall measure their profundity? **Lord's table and Lord's supper.** Briefly the difference in the expressions seems to be that the Lord's table is where the Lord is allowed exclusively to rule and govern by His word, and the Lord's supper is where the solemn significance of the bread and the wine is duly realised by those who partake. I Corinthians x. refers to *where* it is eaten, and I Corinthians xi. to *how* it is eaten.

H.W.R.—Can you tell me the meaning of Galatians vi. 6? He that is instructed by another in the word ought to assist the teacher in temporal matters. See an example (Rom. xv. 26, 27). "Communicate" means to have practical fellowship (Phil. iv. 15; Heb. xiii. 16).

S.T.J.—Please explain Mark xv. 25 and John xix. 14. Mark shews six hours and John three on the cross. The seeming discrepancy is removed by observing that in John we have time reckoned by the Roman mode, and in the other gospels by the Jewish mode. The Romans counted the day from midnight (as we do) so that the sixth hour in John would be six hours after midnight, or six a.m. This was the hour when Jesus was *delivered* up to be crucified and led away from the judgment seat. Mark refers to the hour, later than this, when the Lord was actually placed on the cross; this, he says, was the third hour. Now the Jews counted from sunrise, or six a.m. The third hour, therefore, in this case was nine a.m. At the ninth hour (three p.m.) the Lord gave up the ghost, making six hours on the cross (Mark xv. 25, 34). There is nothing in John contrary to this.

A.J.K.—Will you please explain the "unity of the faith" etc. (Eph. iv. 13)? This defines the purpose for which gifts (apostles, prophets, etc.) are bestowed in the church. True ministry is given to instruct us in the same thing (*i.e.*, the truth as now revealed). All believing this truth will constitute the "unity of the faith." If you observe that *knowledge* is the subject of the apostle here it will help to understand the passage. The "perfection" is the maturity of knowledge, as in Hebrews v. 14; vi. 1. The knowledge is of Christ especially, as He is now made known in the New Testament, and referred to in this passage as "the measure

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of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Compare "fathers" (1 John ii. 13). Briefly then, ministry is the means by which we grow to a state of manhood as regards the truth concerning Christ, and that state is the "unity of the faith."

E.O.—Will you kindly define the difference between supplications, prayers and intercessions (1 Tim. ii. 1)? We give the words of another; "Supplication" implies earnestness in pressing the suit of need; 'prayer' is more general and puts forth wants and wishes; 'intercession' means the exercise of free and confiding intercourse, whether for ourselves or for others." Thus the terms cover so many varieties of prayer. It may be noted that "prayer" in 1 Timothy iv. 5 is the same word as is given as "intercessions" here; and in the following places it is the same as is here translated "supplications" (Luke i. 13; ii. 37; v. 33; Rom. x. 1; 2 Cor. i. 11; ix. 14; Phil. i. 4, 19; 2 Tim. i. 3; Heb. v. 7; Jas. v. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 12).

E.A.S.—Does the spirit of a dead saint go immediately to God? Yes (Eccles. xii. 7); in New Testament words it goes "to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). Stephen, falling asleep, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59). To be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). It is *immediately*, because the Lord said to the robber, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). **What is the meaning of "being raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44)?** The spiritual body is a body suited for heaven, as the "natural" body was suited for the earth. It is the body of glory like Christ's which the raised and changed saints will receive at the Lord's coming (Phil. iii. 21).

W.C.—Do the "dead in Christ" (1 Thess. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 22) include Old Testament saints? Surely; because there are but the two classes, viz., those "in Christ" and those "in Adam" (1 Cor. xv.); and only the former partake in the "resurrection of life." Each one "in Christ" belongs to that new creation (2 Cor. v. 17) of which Christ is the head. These two families are similarly distinguished in Romans v. 12—21 in connection with righteousness. If Abel was in Christ's family for righteousness (Heb. xi. 4), was he not also for resurrection? There are privileges peculiar to the church, but the "better resurrection" is not one of them (Heb. xi. 35). The first "all" (1 Cor. xv. 22) includes all men; the second "all" refers only to all saints. Notice that we read of those who "die *in the Lord*" after the church is gone from the earth (Rev. xiv. 13). These are raised to share Christ's reign (Rev. xx. 4).