

EDIFICATION

A MONTHLY
MAGAZINE

“Seek that ye may excel to the edifying
of the Church.” (1 Cor. xiv. 12).

VOLUME IV.

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20).

DURING the year before us we shall still make it our aim, if God permit, so to fill our pages that our title may truly describe our contents. We ask our readers to help together by their prayers that this end may be achieved.

When Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, gave all diligence to write of the common salvation, he found himself rather under the necessity of writing very searching words of warning concerning men, who had crept in unawares amongst the early Christians, and had proved themselves to be virtually apostate in character. Having very fully described these men and their dreadful work, he came, in verse 20 of his epistle, to the point of exhorting the true believers in view of the evil just described. What had he to say?

His first word of exhortation was this : "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." We are not told to *build up the faith*. This is what the "advanced" (?) religious thinkers imagine they

are doing. They forget or deny that the faith has been "once delivered unto the saints." It was *delivered unto* them; they did not discover it by scientific investigations; and it was delivered unto them *once for all*. Consequently it lies as a mighty basis or foundation beneath our feet, and on it we are to *build ourselves up*.

How can we do this except we keep the faith continually before our souls? Where is the faith to be found, whole, entire and undiluted, save in the Holy Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament? Do you wonder then that we stick very closely to the Holy Scriptures—expounded, applied, illustrated, and enforced by way of exhortation?

We need, of course, more than this. We need that with which no magazine on earth can supply us. Jude proceeds to exhort us to "praying in the Holy Ghost." How appropriately this follows, for the Holy Scriptures will not avail us apart from the Holy Ghost.

Not only are we to *pray* but also to *keep* ourselves "in the love of God," for only as saturated in Divine love can we rightly meet the situation. We are to *look* for "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," which mercy will be extended to us at His coming again. Further we are to *work* on behalf of others, having compassion

and saving them out of the evil, while hating the evil itself. And all the while it is only God Himself who can keep us from falling ourselves. This however He will do and present us faultless in glory.

There is much then that we cannot do in this or any other magazine. We just desire to do what we can and to help in the spiritual upbuilding of all our readers. It lies at the foundation of things, for, as we have seen, it stands at the beginning of that sequence of exhortations that has reached us through the pen of Jude.

We hope to undertake this service in the spirit of those who are praying in the Holy Ghost, and again we entreat all our readers to pray in the Holy Ghost on our behalf.

RESOLUTIONS.

THERE are some people who seem to think that the beginning of a New Year offers a favourable occasion for the making of resolutions.

It may be that some decide to slacken their energies in the Lord's service, otherwise their health may suffer.

When retrenchment is considered necessary either in spending energy or money, the

knife is so often applied not to business nor to dress but to the things of the Lord!

Others determine that they will give more time, money and attention to the interests of Christ, and map out a programme having that end in view. There may be those who resolve that they will be more diligent in their reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in the study of books which may assist them in the understanding of the Sacred Volume.

Now we do not wish to act as a "wet blanket" at such a time as this, but we want to say quite frankly to those who have made resolutions:—*Scrap them!* and to those who are on the point of making them:—*Don't!* Resolutions lead nowhere unless it be to bitter disappointment, sometimes verging on utter despair. The person who makes resolutions says "*I will do this;*" "*I will not do that;*" and the *I* who speaks has not the power either to do or not to do!

"Ah!"—says someone "but I will ask the Lord to help me." We are sorry to appear like discouraging that person by saying that the Lord will not be likely to do so, because the *I* who speaks was put out of His sight once and for ever at the Cross.

The new *I* does not make resolutions. His desires circle round not himself but

Christ, and having Christ as his centre, his Leader, his Object, his Pattern, by occupation with Christ he becomes like Him; and not by resolution, but by resemblance he lives a life that is well pleasing to Him. Philipians iii. gives us a little bit of the autobiography of a Christian who was characterised not by making resolutions but by God-given desire, by Spirit-inspired purpose; and by a consuming longing after Christ that overleaped every obstacle, and caused him to be whole-heartedly, unreservedly, consistently, during his entire Christian life, here for Christ. His ambition was:—"That I may win Christ;" "That I may know Him." Filled with divine energy he wrote; "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (verses 8 to 14). Christ was written on his heart and across his life. All his affections were centred in Christ; all his desires circled round Christ; the whole aim of his life was to be ever and only and altogether for Christ.

Does some one say "That is highly idealistic; we are not Pauls; and it is just because I desire to be in my little way what Paul was so decidedly that I venture to make these resolutions." You have made similar resolutions before, dear friend, have you not? Where have they led you? Have you not repeated them year by year, or perhaps more frequently, in hope that the New Year might be better than its pre-

decessor? But alas! Your hope was not realized. You had better give it up.

What then shall I do? Do nothing! Turn your eye away from yourself; from your ideals; from your resolutions; from your happy experiences; from your failures; from yourself in every sense of the word. Turn your eye upon the Lord Jesus! Let His beauty fill the vision of your soul; let His love thrill your heart; let His glory command you; let His claim upon you grip you; and in absorbing occupation with Himself you will—unknown to yourself—show forth His excellencies who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. There is no effort in this; no self-occupation and certainly no self-exaltation; but there is that beautiful manifestation of Christ that exalts Him; that brings joy to His heart; and that brings blessing to those who thus simply delight in Himself.

The chapter to which we have called attention sets before us a man, subject to like passions as we are, who was absolutely in love with the Lord Jesus. The vision of His glory had burnt up all that he had boasted in as a man in the flesh. His supreme claim upon him had led him to count everything but loss that he might win Him. He longed to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings in his life; and, if He did not come, to be "made conformable to His death" by dying a martyr's death;

and through resurrection to reach Him where He is on the other side. While that was his great desire, prompted by his deep devotedness, he said "we look for the Saviour." Because our conversation, (citizenship, commonwealth, politics) is in Heaven we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour to take us there. Then we shall have a body of glory like unto His body of glory; then we shall be free from every hindrance; then we shall feast our eyes upon Himself; bask in the sunshine of His love; and for ever and ever praise His Name.

Throughout eternity it will be *CHRIST!* He will fill the throne; He will fill Heaven and earth; He will fill the whole universe; He will fill every heart in the new creation; *CHRIST WILL BE ALL IN ALL.*

God desires, our blessed Lord longs, the Holy Spirit works that *CHRIST* may be writ large in our lives in this world here and NOW. This will be accomplished not by resolutions but by our being passive in the hands of the Holy Spirit that He may reveal the glories of Christ to us; shed abroad divine love in us; manifest the traits of Christ through us; and thus maintain us here to His praise and glory.

Shall we then not resolve one way or another, but earnestly give ourselves to prayer. Our desires may well focus themselves in this petition:—

"O fix our earnest gaze
So wholly Lord on thee
That with thy beauty occupied
We elsewhere none may see."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

"SOMETHING PRACTICAL."

Notes of a Talk on Romans xiv. 17 and 18.

TWO young Christians were overheard saying as they went together into a meeting, "I hope we shall get something practical to-night." I suppose we all feel like that in connection with such occasions. We need to encourage one another as well as instruct one another. Christianity is nothing if it is not practical. It does not consist simply of sound doctrine and correct phraseology.

The Apostle Paul said to young Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life" (2 Tim. iii. 10). He had evidently observed the close connection between these two things. There cannot be correct living with incorrect doctrine, but, on the other hand, our Christianity is to be seen not merely in what we *know* but by what we *show*. The doctrine is what we know: the manner of life is what we show. We may all feel greatly humbled when our Christianity is put to that test, still we do not wish the test to be reduced, but rather that we may receive grace to reach its requirements.

The truth of God's kingdom is peculiarly practical because our responsible life as Christians is in it, and will get its answer and reward presently in the coming kingdom and glory of Christ.

"The kingdom of God" is a term that is often used in relation to "the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven is really the rule of heaven but of course heaven's rule is God's rule. When we speak of the kingdom of God, we look at heaven's rule from the side of the moral features which characterize it; just as British rule has certain moral characteristics that distinguish it, such as liberty, even-handed justice, protection of life and property.

These things we may call the moral features of British rule, and in the same way Romans xiv. 17 sets before us the moral features of God's rule—righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. When Christ is on His throne, governing the world for God in universal power, the outstanding features of His rule will be universal righteousness, universal peace, universal joy.

It is our privilege as Christians to enter upon these things in a spiritual yet practical way now, for before these things are in display they are in testimony. We anticipate the public rule of Christ by exhibiting in our lives the features that will characterize His public rule when His day arrives. In that day the reins of all government will be put

into the hands of Christ, but we have anticipated it by dropping the reins of the government of our lives into His hands *now*, and thus are delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into His kingdom *now*. "Be British!" say some, meaning—practice in your life and ways the moral features of the rule in which you boast. Just so the practical features of God's rule in Christ should be seen in our lives.

It is true that when we are brought to God as sinners and get right with Him we are justified from all things through the work of Christ for us, and, consequent on that, peace with God follows. Then we receive the Holy Ghost and with Him come both joy and power. That however is not exactly what is referred to in Romans xiv. 17. It is not so much what we receive as what we exhibit—what characterizes us as being in the good and blessing of God's rule or kingdom. People often ask as to what may be the good of this or that. "What is the good of being in the kingdom of God?" Well, what will it be when the King comes? We might as well ask, "What will be the good of the Millennium?" "What will be the good of universal peace and joy, founded upon righteousness?" Is not that what every nation on earth is crying for?

Well, that is the *present practical* good of being in God's kingdom now by putting

Christ on the throne of our hearts. If we let Him control our lives, we are bound to be right in all our relations with others. That is righteousness.

Then there is peace. Not this time peace *with* God, but more like the peace *of* God keeping our hearts and minds. Stayed on God, trusting in God, we are kept in perfect peace, and this is the opposite of fretting, worrying and being worn out with over-anxiety. In the Psalms we have a fine example of the heart being kept in peace in the midst of turbulent circumstances. Psalm iii. shows what God can be *for* us, and Psalm iv. what God can be *to* us.

We are ready to say, "I cannot expect God to keep me in His peace if I am in these trying circumstances because of my own folly. It is no use praying to Him now because I have grieved Him and He will not hear me and answer me." Satan will be ready enough to say, "Now He will rap your knuckles: it is no use looking to Him!" That is practically what David's enemies were saying "There is no help for him in God" (Psa. iii. 2). *But that is the very direction in which I AM looking.* "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head." I need not hang my head like a bulrush, thoroughly "under the weather," as it is put. Rather like David we may say, "I laid me down and slept." What peace! An undisturbed

rest, and the source of it was not in David but in David's God of peace. Then like David we also shall be able to say, "I awaked; for the Lord sustained me."

There are many crying, "Who will show us any good?" (Psa. iv. 6). They see failure within and around. Everything is going to the bad! But in Job we read, "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." Leave God out of your circumstances and depression sets in. David cries, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." He felt that everything depended upon the countenance of God, and how it was in relation to him. The countenance is the place where both love and anger are expressed. An uplifted countenance means love. A countenance fallen—like Cain's—means anger. A countenance averted means sorrow.

Then it was that David could say, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." Should not we be like him and therefore be maintained in peace and gladness? What a splendid testimony that is to the practical good of the kingdom of God; and what a failure in testimony there is if we are not exhibiting that feature of the goodness of being under God's rule!

God is "the God of peace" says Romans

xv. In Paganism there is the belief that certain deities preside over their destinies. They have one god of peace, another of war, a god of plenty, and so on. But all these gods are ready to turn against them, and if they are to enjoy peace and plenty and success in war they must propitiate them to avert their anger. God stoops down to us and tells us that He as our God combines in Himself all that we shall ever need. Peace, patience, consolation, hope and all else are to be found in an all-sufficient God. And then, beyond all, He adds what a poor pagan could never hope to find in his false gods, for in 2 Corinthians xiii. 11 He describes Himself as "a God of *love* and peace." There is a peculiar sweetness in that !

So righteousness, peace and joy are the accompaniments of the rule of God. We cannot have peace without righteousness, and it is certain we cannot have joy without peace. Joy is at the top, like cream, but peace is beneath like the milk, and you cannot have cream without milk.

Now notice how it adds, "He that in these things *serveth Christ*," You may say, "I thought the service of Christ was doing some sort of Christian work, teaching, preaching or the like." Not necessarily; you may not be able to do any of these things but you may serve Christ all the same. How? By practising righteousness in all your dealings; by your heart being kept in peace in

the midst of the most trying circumstances : by your life overflowing with joy in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost will do it for us if we let Him engage our hearts with Christ. Thus we shall give testimony to those around what a fine thing it is to be under the rule of Christ in God's kingdom.

At the outset the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost in spite of being buffeted and persecuted. What moral superiority they manifested in the presence of the howling mobs that roughly handled them, and what a contrast was their calmness and joy to the turbulence and violence that surrounded them !

Well may people say of such " They have got something which I haven't. I wish I had ! " This is the way that Christ is served ; by making people wishful and anxious to be in the joy of God's kingdom.

Then not only is Christ served thereby but it is "*acceptable to God* and approved of men," To be acceptable, or well-pleasing to God is proper Christian ambition, as we are told in 2 Corinthians v. 9. Not to make peoples' ears tingle with wonderful eloquence, nor to astonish them with marvellous exploits in our service, but to be acceptable to God and also *approved of men*. Yes, men, unconverted men, know how to approve of a person who lives the Christian life and has

the courage of his convictions. They may not love him, but they will approve his life. They will show him respect even if they do not show him love.

The supreme thing with the Christian however is to be acceptable to God.

ART. C.

THE BOOK OF GOD.

JOHN Wesley had an effective way of dealing with infidels and doubters, which was substantially as follows:—

He affirmed that,

(1) The Bible is a book, and if God is not its author, it must have been written by some man or men without supernatural aid.

(2) It must have been written by good men or bad men, if it was composed by more than one man.

(3) If it is false in its statements, it is a bad book, and it could not have been written by good men; since good men would not have written so bad a book as the Bible is, if it is a false book, nor have been the authors of so great and grave falsehoods.

(4) Bad men could not, and would not, have written so good a book as the Bible is confessed to be, even by infidels.

First, because it is not possible that men,

who were bad enough to have perpetrated so great a fraud, and to have told or written such monstrous lies as are contained in the Bible (if it is not true), could have conceived such a sublime philosophy, so perfect a system of ethics, so faultless and lovely a character as that of Jesus.

Second,—even if we could conceive of men being able to invent the Bible, such men could have had no motive in writing such a book, every line of which condemns their badness, and consigns them to eternal punishment, while it instructs them that the only way to happiness is through the denial of all carnal appetites and desires, and a life of self-sacrifice and personal righteousness and holiness.

(5) Since, therefore, as we cannot conceive of good men writing so bad a book (if it is not true), or bad men writing so good a book, for even infidels acknowledge it is a good book, we must come to the conclusion that its authorship is from another source, and that source is clearly stated in the Bible. "All Scripture is given by INSPIRATION OF GOD." (2 Timothy iii. 16)

As nothing is more easy than to think, so nothing is more difficult than to *think well*.

What is the reason there is so much preaching and so little practice? *Want of meditation.*

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Hebrews i).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

A FEW preliminary words may be useful, before we consider the chapter in its details.

Although in our Bibles the title of this wonderful treatise always appears as, "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews," yet the author of it was led by the inspiring Spirit to suppress both his own name and the name of those to whom he wrote it. Almost every line of it however bears witness that it was addressed to Hebrew believers, and there are in it a number of small allusions which make it pretty certain that it was written by Paul. If so, we have in it that epistle to Jewish believers which Peter, in his second epistle, mentions as having been written by "our beloved brother Paul" (iii. 15).

As we go through it we shall see that the occasion of it was that a certain weariness had come over these saints, their hands were drooping and their knees feeble in the

Christian race, and these disquieting symptoms raised fears lest this backsliding tendency might mean some of them falling into open apostasy.

We shall see also that the main burden of it is the immeasurable superiority of Christianity to Judaism, although the latter appealed to sight and the former to faith only. Incidentally also it called upon them to cut their last links with the worn out Jewish system, to which they had such a tendency to cling, as the Acts of the Apostles shows us. It must have been written only a few years before the imposing ritual of Judaism ceased in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The importance of this epistle for the present hour cannot be exaggerated. Multitudes of believers today, though Gentiles and hence in no way connected with Judaism, are yet entangled in perverted forms of Christianity, which consist very largely in forms and ceremonies and ritual, which in their turn are largely an imitation of that Jewish ritual, once ordained of God to fill up the time until Christ came. It may be that most of our readers are, through God's mercy, free of these systems today, yet most of us have had something to do with them, and almost insensibly the influence of them clings to us.

If our faith is stirred up as we read it; if our spiritual eyes get a fresh sight of

the immeasurable glories of Christ, and of the reality of all those spiritual verities which are established in Him, we shall find ourselves thoroughly braced up to "run with patience the race that is set before us."

Now let us turn to chapter i. The epistle opens in the most majestic manner. Hebrews is the only book in the Bible which begins with the word, GOD. We are at once brought face to face with the tremendous fact that God, who had spoken to the fathers of Israel by prophets in former days, had now spoken in divine fulness and with finality in His Son. Just notice in passing that this first verse witnesses that the epistle is to the Hebrews, for the expression, "the fathers," would have no meaning for a Gentile.

God being the *living* God, it is only to be expected that He would *speak*. Before sin came in He spoke freely to Adam, and face to face; afterwards He only addressed Himself to chosen men, who became thereby His mouthpieces. The prophets had to speak just what He gave them, and often they uttered words, the full meaning of which was hidden from them, as we are told in 1 Peter i. 10-12. When the Lord Jesus came to accomplish redemption God told out all His mind. He spoke not merely *by* Him as His mouthpiece, but *in* Him. The distinction, is not made in our Authorized version, but it should be, for the preposition

in verse 2 in not "by" but "in." It is an important distinction, for it at once preserves the unique character of our Lord. When the Son spoke it was God speaking, for the simple reason that the Son was God.

Having mentioned the Son, the Holy Spirit proceeds to unfold His glory, not only that glory which is His essentially as God and Creator, but also that which is His by reason of His redemption work. This leads to a long but very necessary digression, which lasts until the end of the chapter; so much so that all these verses might be placed within brackets. We should then read straight from the word "Son" to the beginning of chapter ii. and find the sense complete. "God . . . hath . . . spoken unto us in His Son . . . therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed." Indeed it is not until we arrive at verse 3 of chapter ii. that we discover what is the main drift and theme of this Divine speaking. It was "*so great salvation* which first began to be *spoken by the Lord.*" When God formulated His demands upon men it was sufficient that angels should serve Him, and that a man such as Moses should be His mouthpiece. Now that His great salvation is the theme the Son Himself comes forth and speaks.

However the immediate theme before us in chapter i. is the unique glory of the Son. Immediately He is mentioned our

thoughts are swept forward to the moment when His glory shall be fully manifested, and then back to the moment when first it appeared, as far as all created beings are concerned. On the one hand He is the Heir not merely to David's throne but of "all things," and this expression covers things in the heavens and not only things on earth. On the other hand when the worlds were made He was the Maker of them. God created indeed, as we are told in Genesis i. 1, but when the Persons are distinguished, as in this Scripture, creation is attributed not to the Father but to the Son. The Son—whom we know as our blessed Lord Jesus—was the mighty Actor in those creatorial scenes of inconceivable splendour.

Verse 3 brings before us three great things concerning Him. First, we have *what He is*, as the outshining of the glory of God and the exact expression of all that God is. Secondly, we are told *what He has done*. By Himself He has done the work which purges sins away. How He did it we are not told for the moment, but we know it was by the death of the cross. Thirdly, *where He is* comes before us. He has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; that is, He sits in the place of supreme power, from whence everything shall in due season be administrated. How wonderfully these three things go together! The efficacy of the work that He did was

dependent upon the fact of who and what He was; whilst the proof and demonstration of the efficacy of His work is found in where He is, in the fact that He is seated in the place of supreme power. If any believer in Jesus is still plagued with doubts and misgivings as to whether his sins are really and effectively purged away, let him look by faith to that seat on high where Jesus sits, and doubt no more!

In verse 3 we also find the wonderful fact that the Son is the Upholder of all things. The previous verse has set Him before us as the Creator of all, and as the One who shall inherit all things, now we discover that all things are upheld and hang together by the word of His power. We may talk sometimes about the laws of the universe. We may observe the working of the law of gravitation, though the real why and wherefore of it is unknown to us. We *may* even, before we are much older, have to listen to fickle "science" altering or overturning all that she had previously asserted as to these laws. Well, so be it! We know that THE LAW of the universe is the word of His power, and this is all that really matters. Any laws which we may observe, or think we observe, are very secondary, and should the leaders of scientific speculation suddenly reverse their pronouncements we shall not turn a hair.

Let us put this together then in brief

fashion. The Son is the Creator, the Upholder and the Heir of all things. He is moreover the exact Expression of all that God is, being God Himself, and being that exact Expression He has come forth to be the Divine Spokesman on the one hand, and the Redeemer on the other. Had He spoken only we should all have been terrified; but as He has made purification for sins as well as speaking, we can receive with joy the revelation which He has made.

In verse 4 He is contrasted with angels, and this contrast is not merely mentioned and then dismissed; the theme is elaborated at considerable length, and continues to the end of the chapter. It is very definitely CONTRAST. In saying this we are pointing out one of the characteristic features of this epistle. As we proceed we shall find continued references to the old order of things, established when the law was given by Moses. These old and material things bore a certain resemblance to the new and spiritual things established and introduced by the Lord Jesus, and hence they were designed to act as patterns or types. Yet when these types are put alongside the realities which they typified an immense contrast is seen. As the heavens are high above the earth so the antitype exceeds the type. In our epistle the *resemblance* is taken for granted, and it is the *contrast* which is stressed.

It may be asked however, Why is the con-

trast with *angels* so elaborated, and even carried on into the next chapter? What is the point of it? Well, every Jew knew that angels played a very large part in connection with the giving of the law by Moses, though but little is said of them in Exodus. The words of Stephen, recorded in Acts. vii. 53 show this, as also the second verse of our second chapter. This display of angelic might gave a very powerful sanction to Moses and the law he brought them, in the minds of the people. And now there appears amongst men the Divine Spokesman, yet to them He is but Jesus of Nazareth, a humble and despised Man. There is no beauty about Him that they should desire Him or His words, nor is there any display of angels to accredit Him. It became therefore of the utmost importance to insist on the true glory of His person as being immeasurably above all angels. Had He been visibly attended by ten thousand times ten thousand, it would have added nothing to Him!

Two things are said in verse 4. First, He has a more excellent name than angels *by inheritance*; second, He has been *made* better than they. The words, "Being made," may also be translated, "Having become," or, "Taking a place." The first refers to His superiority by reason of His Godhead glory; the second to the place He now occupies in Manhood, as the Accomplisher of redemption. And notice that His superiority

is equally pronounced in both, as evidenced by these little words in the sentence. "SO . . . AS." Read the verse again for yourself, and see.

These facts, as stated in verse 4, are supported and proved by a remarkable series of quotations from the Old Testament, extending from verse 5 to the end of the chapter. Let us just notice how the argument runs.

Verses 5 and 6 contain three quotations giving the pronouncements of God when introducing the Lord Jesus to men. They very definitely support what is said in verse 4, especially the statement as to His being better than angels by *inheritance*.

In verse 7 we have a quotation which plainly states the nature of angels and the reason why they exist. They are spirits in their nature and they exist as ministers to serve the Divine will. This is in contrast to what goes before and also to that which follows.

In verses 8 to 12 we get two quotations giving us utterances of God to Christ, in both of which He is addressed as Man and yet He is saluted as God and as the Creator.

In verse 13 comes the quotation giving the decree which has exalted Him to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and this, we are assured, is something which never was said to angels. They are but spirits who

are glad to serve, according to the Divine will, such humble creatures as those who once were fallen sinners, but who shall be heirs of salvation. All this, and particularly verses 9 and 13, show us that He is better than angels, inasmuch as He has *taken a place* which is so much higher than theirs.

There are seven quotations in all from the Old Testament in these verses: one in regard to angels and six in regard to Christ. These latter come from Psalm ii. 7; 2 Samuel vii. 14; Psalm xcvi. 7; xlv. 6, 7; cii. 25-27; cx. 1., and each deserves to be separately studied.

The first is deeply interesting for it shows that even as a Man born in time He is the Son of God. These words from Psalm ii. anticipate the virgin birth, and their fulfilment is announced in Luke i. 35. We may say they give us God's utterance to Christ at His incarnation.

The second is remarkable as showing how the Holy Ghost always has Christ in view. Reading Samuel we might think that the words only referred to Solomon. *Immediately*, Solomon was in view, as the words following those quoted show; but *ultimately*, Christ was in view.

The third gives us the decree concerning Christ at the moment of His reintroduction into the world in power and glory; not His first coming, but His second. We read the

Psalms and the "Him" is clearly Jehovah. We read Hebrews and the "Him" is clearly Christ. What does that teach us? Notice also that the term "gods" may be used of any who represent God, whether angels as here, or men as in Psalm lxxxii. 6,—the passage which the Lord Jesus quoted in John v. 34.

The fourth is what is said to the Son by God at the opening of the Millennial kingdom. He is a Man, for God is His God, yet He is addressed as God. As Man He has His fellows, or companions, yet He possesses a gladness which is above them—and how glad we are that He does!

The fifth gives us the divine word addressed to Him in the moments of His deepest humiliation and sorrow—we might almost say, in the garden of Gethsemane. He who is being cut off in the midst of His days is declared to be the mighty Creator, who shall ultimately consume or change all in creation which needs changing, and yet Himself remain eternally the same.

The sixth turns our thoughts to Christ as the risen One and gives us God's utterance to Him as He ascended into the heavens. Thus we are conducted to the place where Christ is; and we are prepared to see Him there and to learn the meaning of His session in glory when we come to chapter ii.

All this wonderful unfolding of the excellence of our blessed Saviour is in order

that we may be impressed with the greatness of the One in whom God has spoken to us. He is, as chapter iii. 1 puts it, "the *Apostle . . . of our profession.*" An apostle is a "sent one," one who comes forth from God to us, bringing the divine message. Our Lord Jesus has thus come forth, bringing us the complete divine revelation; only He is Himself God. This fact at once lifts all that He has said to us on to a plane far above all that went before. The prophets of old were fully inspired of God, and consequently all that they said was reliable and comes to pass, but they could never convey to us the revelation which we have in Christ.

Into the marvellous light of that revelation the Hebrews had been brought. And so have we, thanks be to God!

F. B. HOLE.

A Christian is what his faith is. It does not follow because he was abiding in Christ yesterday he is so to-day. You can't accumulate faith any more than you can accumulate breath; if we want to go on living, we must go on breathing.

The growth of a believer is not like a mushroom but like an oak; many sun-showers and frosts pass upon it before it comes to perfection, and in winter when it seems dead, it is gathering strength at the root.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

An Address to Sunday-school Workers.

IT is taught clearly enough in the verses that we have read (Isa. vi. 1-9) that before we can rightly do anything for the Lord, there must be a divine work in our own souls.

Now this is too often forgotten. If we went through the Sunday-schools of the land and had some talk with those who teach, we should find that scores had put their hand to the plough who know nothing of this preliminary work of God.

How can we speak to others of the love of Jesus, if *we* do not know that love ourselves? how invite them to come to the Saviour, if *we* have not come? how call on them to flee from impending wrath, if *we* have not fled? how speak to them of the precious blood of Christ if *we* are not under its shelter and cleansing power?

There must be, therefore, a work of God in our own souls before we can rightly set heart or hand to the service of the Lord. In the personal experience which the prophet narrates in the opening of this chapter, we notice two points.

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First, he realizes by divine teaching his unfitness for the presence of God. "Woe is me! for I am undone." He comes to the conclusion, so to speak, that there is no room in the same place for God and for him.

Having made this heartfelt acknowledgement, he is brought into contact with the altar. The live coal touches his lips, and he learns that his iniquity is taken away and his sin purged.

Is it not evident, then, that before we can serve the Lord we should ourselves know the power of the precious blood of Christ, and thus be at home in the presence of God? But are we perfectly at home there? Have we known, first of all, what it is to be unsuitable so as to exclaim with the prophet, "Woe is me!"? Do we so know the cleansing power of the precious blood that we can stand before God's holy throne, where all His glory shines, without misgiving?

No one can serve the Lord with freedom unless there be first that blessed work of God in heart and conscience. I am persuaded that there are not a few who wear smiling faces in the company of their fellow-Christians, whose conscience needs to know the value of the precious blood of Christ which perfects the believer for ever, and gives him boldness to enter into the holiest.

All of us here have set our hand to the work of the Lord. Our spheres of service may be different, but all are surely interested even if not actively engaged in this happy work among the young.

There are certain things so necessary to be borne in mind in connection with this and anything that we may seek to do for the Lord.

First, ere we can run, we must get His command to go. As the eyes of the Lord look down on the vast wastes of humanity to whom He would have His salvation sent, He says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" And the ready answer is, "*Send me.*" The emphasis is on the "send," not on the "me." He is the Lord's willing servant, ready to take his Master's message at his Master's word. But he must be sent.

Secondly, we need to remember what the Lord says in the early part of John xv., "Without Me ye can do nothing." He was speaking to His own immediate disciples who were about to be entrusted with the most important commission that had ever been committed to men. But ere they went forth the Lord pointed out that no matter what the power they would receive, they were absolutely and entirely dependent upon Him, as the vine branches upon the vine. So with us; we may labour and toil, we may talk and teach, but without Him we can *do*

nothing—nothing that will last. That is the lesson we have to learn. Oh! that God would grant us an adequate sense of our absolute dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we might never forget those words, “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

Another point, in John vii., we shall do well to bear in mind is that, if living waters are to flow from us on the right hand and on the left, we must go to the Lord Jesus and drink. We must go to Him, not to fill our empty pitchers to satisfy the thirst of others, but for ourselves. What a poor thing it is to search our Bibles simply for other people! We need to read His Word for our own souls’ blessing, and to get it woven into the very texture of our spiritual being. Do you thirst to know more of His love, and of His great salvation? Do you thirst to know more of Jesus in the various offices He fills? Do you thirst so to have the Holy Ghost revealing more of His beauty that out of an overflowing heart you may be able to say, “He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely”? Then do not neglect to come to Him and drink.

Again, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. vi. 9). What a word of encouragement! Surely if anything can be called well doing, it is to gather the young together and speak to them of a Saviour who is so dear to our own hearts.

But we are apt to grow weary. We sow the seed; we pray and watch for it to shoot up. But the earth that covers it is hard, and we see no springing blade. Then perhaps we say, "I have sown the good seed and would water it with tears if I could, but I see little or no result." Dear discouraged worker, be not weary in well doing, for in due season you *shall* reap, if you faint not. Oh, that your faith may lay hold of that faithful and encouraging word!

Once more, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters" (Isa. xxxii. 20). Not simply, blessed is the man that sows beside Sunday-school waters, but beside *all* waters. How many opportunities of blessed service for Christ do we miss! I often feel sorry to find myself in a railway carriage without some gospel books to give away. "Oh!" says some one, "nothing comes of that." Don't be too sure! Only ten days ago I received a letter from an unknown correspondent telling me something of his spiritual history. He had been converted in childhood and made a public profession of religion in his youth. But as years rolled on he wandered far away from God into paths of worldliness and sin. Travelling by train, not so very long ago, there sat in the same compartment a man, evidently in the humbler ranks of life, who was not ashamed of Christ nor afraid to distribute the gospel books he had. That man's example and fearless consistent ways were instrumental in the restor-

ation of this backslider. Precious fruit for God! What an incentive to sow beside all waters!

Lastly, let us be careful how we live. The apostle Paul, writing to the Philippians, said, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." What did he mean? Did he mean that since the gospel of Christ had been made a blessing to their souls and had brought them the knowledge of salvation, they had to walk according to it? Although that is true, it is not quite what the verse means. The apostle speaks of himself as having been set for the defence of the gospel. But not the apostle alone. The Philippians stood for its defence likewise. If the apostle was one of the captains in the army of the Lord, they were private soldiers; but whether it was captain or private soldiers, they all alike stood for the defence and confirmation of the gospel. Now, says the apostle, if you are identified with this glorious testimony which God is sending through the world, see that it receives no damage by an inconsistent life. Oh! let us be careful if we have set our hand to the gospel plough that our individual life shall commend that testimony and cast no blot upon it.

Only a day or two ago I received a letter from some one living miles from here. Words of anguish are in that letter, and the spiritual sky of the writer is black with

clouds. How did it come about? Here is the story briefly told. Converted young, brought to know God as his Father, the heart was filled with the joys of God's salvation. Christian companionships were formed and confidence given to Christian persons. But the individuals in whom this confidence was placed broke down; their life was not as it should have been. Then the devil succeeded in occupying the writer with the failings of other people. Darkness came in between the soul and God. The lips became sealed against prayer and there was no reading of the Bible. Then the devil said, "Give it all up." "But if I give it up, what will the other dear members of my family say, and what will Jesus think? I cannot do that, but how can I get back? How can the joys of God's salvation be restored to me?" Do you see, all this began by the inconsistency in the life of another? We have to be watchful over ourselves, that no inconsistency on our part be used by the evil one to the damage of souls and of the testimony of God.

To this exhortation *all* believers will assuredly do well to give heed. But it applies in a very special way to us who seek to serve the Lord. Many eyes are upon us. God grant that in all our ways we may bring glory to His Name, and honour to the gospel which we proclaim.

THE CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

(From notes of an address).

THE word, *disciple*, is one that has largely dropped out of our vocabulary, or if it is held it is used in a very loose way, as though it were just interchangeable with the word, *Christian*. It is derived from a Latin word meaning a scholar, learner or follower, and that of course is what every *Christian* should be, for discipleship is just a full practical expression of Christianity. It is not God's intention that there should be any divorce between the two. Waning affection for Christ may be the explanation of why we so rarely think and speak of ourselves as disciples. How often we have sung together,

"Oh! tell us often of Thy love,
Of all Thy grief and pain,
That we may in some small degree
Return Thy love again."

Now discipleship is just that special way in which we can really return His love.

The term, *disciple*, is not limited to its Scriptural use. It is often used in connection with a school of thought or design initiated by some master mind. A great philosopher or painter arises and founds a school. Others charmed and fascinated by their teachings or works become their disciples. They set themselves to catch the master's spirit and to follow his ideals. Presently you may see traits of these several masters exhibiting themselves in their dis-

ciples, and you may be able at once to recognize the school to which they belong. Sometimes the fascination is so great that men have surrendered many a comfort and lived on a mere pittance, at great cost to themselves, in order that they might reach their objective and become like their illustrious master. In this connection read, Matthew x. 25, and Luke vi. 40.

Discipleship then involves certain conditions, and if we would discover what they are we must read Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33. The Lord Jesus said that apart from the things He specified in these verses, "If any man come to Me . . . he cannot be My disciple." Now contrast this with John vi. 37, where He so plainly says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." What a comfort these words have been to many a poor sinner! Have we not often told such that coming to Him is just a way of showing their faith in Him, and that believing in Him they are forgiven and saved, and they become Christians? What then about Luke xiv. ?

Luke xiv. shows us that many of us might more truthfully and more consistently be called believers than disciples! "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother . . . yea, and his own life also, *he cannot be My disciple.*" "Whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after Me, *cannot be My disciple.*" "Whosoever . . . forsaketh not all that he hath, *he cannot be My disciple.*"

Discipleship imposes these tests, whereas no test is imposed on those who would become Christians.

My salvation, my becoming a Christian, does not depend upon anything that *I can do*, but I *am* asked to do something very serious if I would become one of His disciples. It costs me *nothing* to be saved, but it costs me *much* to be a disciple. I get all the blessings of the Gospel by a simple faith, but then faith works by love, and it is this love to Him that will lead me after Him, that will take me into the path of a disciple. The moment I begin to show my allegiance and devotion to Him, or in other words, begin to "return His love again," that moment it begins to cost me something.

What is the reason for this? It is because, as we sometimes sing, "Our Lord is now rejected." When the circumstances depicted in Revelation xiv. 4 are reached it will be quite easy to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," but it is not so now. If the Master has been "disallowed indeed of men," then His disciples must be prepared to be disallowed also; not perhaps by fire and sword and rack, as our predecessors were, but by being cut by old friends, by being left out of their company, by being ridiculed and sneered at. A disciple is not above his Master, and He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John xv. 18).

There is nothing of legal constraint about true discipleship, but rather the constraint of love. "The love of Christ constraineth us," is the language of one whose heart has been won by grace.

Grace is the character *His love* takes in its activity towards us, so utterly undeserving. Discipleship is the character *our love* takes in its activities towards Him, who is so infinitely deserving.

Grace displayed *costs Him*. Discipleship displayed *costs us*. We rightly sing,

"For this, Oh may we freely count
Whate'er we have but loss;
The dearest object of our love,
Compared with Thee, but dross."

It is Luke alone who gives us the absolute conditions, the *sine qua non*, of true discipleship, though both Matthew and Mark refer to following Him, and Matthew records the words in which the Lord expressed His desire for them, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me." In that way we are to take character from the Master. It indicates that there is such a thing as growth in discipleship.

How sweeping are the conditions! "If any man . . . hate not . . ." How is it that I am called upon to hate those whom the Word of God says I am to love? The fact is, He must have no rival in the heart of a true disciple. In what sense then am I to hate my father, my mother, etc.? The

thing that I hate I turn away from as intolerable to me. Anything that would stand between me and my Master must be turned away from as cordially as I would turn away from the thing that I hated. I may have to do violence to all natural affections and relationships in order to follow Him.

We have a striking illustration of this kind of thing in the life of the Lord, when Peter would have come in between Him and obedience to His Father's will, recorded in Matthew xvi. 21-23. In Peter's words the Lord recognized the voice of the tempter, endeavouring to turn Him aside, and He said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." It looked as if His love for Peter had suddenly become hatred. He was turning away from one who would have prevented Him following the One He loved, with the same feelings as He would have had in turning away from one that He hated.

But not only do natural relationships often stand in the way, but self-love, and all that I possess, must also be set aside. The thing I love the best, my own life, must not be allowed to hinder my following Him.

In Luke ix. 23, the Lord speaks of our denying ourselves as well as our taking up the cross, and in the end of that chapter we read of two men that crossed His path: one was a volunteer, the other was called to follow Him, and neither of them did so.

One failed because the path involved the forsaking of all that made for comfort in his life; the other because he allowed human relationships to hinder. "*Me first,*" was his motto, and that cannot be in the path of discipleship. He loved his own life. He put his father before the Lord. Now if a man loves his own life he shall lose it. To follow Christ here all this must be faced, for the world will never change its judgment of Christ. The opposition may change its character but not its nature.

To deny self is not merely to deny certain things to self. That would only be recognizing self, though curbing it. When Peter denied the Lord he was not denying certain things to the Lord; rather he disowned Him altogether as having no sort of link with Him. To deny self is practically to put self to death, to reckon without self; when no doubt we shall have done with many a thing that hinders. Baptism is really an acknowledgement that the old self-life is at an end—"buried with Him by baptism unto death." A man had been baptized and after he came up out of the water a pipe was found in the water. They got it out and said to him, Is this yours? "No," he replied, "it belonged to the man you have just buried."

To forsake all that I have is to surrender my claim to all that I have and henceforth to hold it at the disposal of the Master. It is to say,

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"Nought that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver,
My heart, my life, my soul, my all,
Are His, and His for ever."

Discipleship does not admit of, "Some of self, and some of Thee," nor even of, "Less of self, and more of Thee." It is, "None of self, and all of Thee."

Some of us may be saying, "This hating of father and mother, this hating my own life, this bearing the cross, and forsaking all that I have, are demands too staggering to be entertained. If I can be a Christian without being a disciple, then I will be contented with that." But suppose the Master had argued that way when it was a question of our salvation, and said, "I see it is going to cost Me too much," what would have become of us? We need to know how to count the cost in the right way.

Turning again to Luke xiv., verses 28 to 32, we find that the Master is preparing His disciples for following Him in an evil day and in an enemy's country. He is not leading them into paths of glory though they may ultimately lead to glory. He speaks of building a tower, of counting the cost, and of making war.

The building of a tower is preparation for being on the defensive. A tower moreover is a conspicuous thing even if it is built for protection and defence. To be an avowed disciple of Christ is to make myself con-

spicuous in the world and an object of attack. The very stand we make incites the enemy's opposition and we need to be on the defensive. We need to be built up. It is no guerilla warfare. We have to meet an organized attack of the foe. An outward life of testimony will only provoke the enemy's animosity, and if we are not built up by an inward life of faith and communion we shall fall before the foe.

Meeting a king with his army gives the idea of taking the offensive against an organized force, and then comes the question of being able to make the attempt when we know that the odds are against us as regards numbers. We shall never make the attempt if we only consider our own limited resources.

To count the cost properly we must know where our resources really lie, and how to value things aright. We have an illustration of good and bad calculation in the history of Israel. In Numbers xiii. and xiv. we hear the ten spies saying, "We are not able." "We are well able," say Joshua and Caleb. They followed this by saying, "If the Lord delight in us then He will bring us into this land," and this was the solution to everything. We have to remember that word, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." So if we ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" our answer must be, "Our sufficiency is of God."

Many a time men have to make a loss in order to make a superior gain. Paul was like that. He suffered the loss of all things, but then he had Christ for his gain. What an infinite gainer he was too! Do we feel like that? The fullest compensation, it is true, will only be received in the kingdom. When the Lord gave the three disciples a sight of the glory of the kingdom on the Mount of Transfiguration He was showing them the end of the path of discipleship for their encouragement, and ours.

Still it is not all loss in this world. Luke xviii. 30 tells us we are to receive, "manifold more in this present time," as well as "in the world to come life everlasting." Paul measured things accurately when he spoke of loss and suffering for Christ as "light affliction," and the compensation as "an eternal weight of glory."

We are all desirous of serving Christ and it is well to see the close relation there is between true service and true discipleship. "If any man serve Me let him follow Me" (John xii. 26). Though discipleship is not exactly service yet it gives character and colour to service.

"Teach us Master how to give
All we have and are to Thee.
Grant us Saviour, while we live,
Wholly, only Thine to be."

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Hebrews ii).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

SEEING that God has addressed Himself to us in Christ, who is far superior, not only to Moses but also to those angels through whose hands Moses received the law, we ought to give more abundant heed to all that has been said. With this the second chapter opens, and it is impossible to evade the solemn force of it. God's word spoken by angels was by no means to be trifled with, as Israel discovered before they had gone very far on their wilderness journey; what then shall be said as to the word that has now reached us in and through the Son of God?

A better rendering of the first verse is perhaps, "lest at any time we should slip away." To let slip the things heard would mean forgetfulness, but to slip away oneself from them might even mean apostasy. So also in verse 3 the word "neglect" carries the thought of not caring for God's great salvation when they were inside the Christian

company as having professed faith, and not merely neglecting the Gospel when it was preached to them. In these words then we have the first of the solemn warnings against apostasy that we find repeated through the epistle; but this being so, the common use of these words in connection with the Gospel is fully justified. If the professor of Christianity who neglects the great salvation will by no means escape, even less will they escape who pay no attention to it when they hear it.

However the point in verses 2 and 3 is that it is more serious to trifle with God's salvation than to transgress His law, for there is no greater sin than that of despising the grace of God. Of old Moses had been the sent one, and had been commissioned to announce salvation out of Egypt to their fathers, and then through Moses that salvation had duly been carried out. The greatness of our salvation may be seen in the fact that He who has announced it is the Lord, whose glory has been set before us in chapter i., and from the fact that the apostles, who confirmed His message after His exaltation into the heavens, were themselves accredited by ample displays of divine power in the energy of the Holy Spirit who had been given to them. Further on we shall find that not only did the Lord Jesus act as the Apostle in announcing the great salvation, but that all is carried out through Him as Surety, Mediator and Sacrifice.

In our chapter we shall find that it is His priesthood that is emphasized. Presently a new order of things is to be established, spoken of in verse 5 as "the world to come." Every Jew expected that new order to be introduced by the advent of the Messiah. Now in that world to come angels will not be the supreme authority, though they will have certain services to render in it, as other scriptures show. It is in its entirety subject to Christ as the Son of Man, as the eighth Psalm had predicted, and when the Lord takes up His great authority "He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13).

The quotation from the eighth Psalm covers not only verse 7 but also the first sentence of verse 8. In the rest of verse 8 and in verse 9 we have an inspired explanation of how the Psalm applies at the present moment. The quotation begins at the point where David, having surveyed the wonders of the universe, asks what man is worth. He used a Hebrew word which has the sense of "frail man" or "mortal man." Well, what is he worth? Evidently he is worth nothing. What then shall be said of the Son of Man? Ah! now we have a very different story. Even in the psalm David changed the word for man, and wrote "the Son of Adam"; and this we know our Lord was, as seen in Luke iii. 38. He is worth everything. Though once made a little lower than the angels He is to be crowned with

splendour and be set in absolute dominion, with all things under His feet.

It is very noticeable that the quotation stops just at the point where, in the psalm, words are added which seem to confine the "all things" set under His feet to all things on earth and in the sea. The Old Testament view of things did not for the moment go beyond that. In our chapter however the moment we turn from the quotation to the explanation a far larger range of things comes before us. We are assured that the little word "all" is to be given its full value, without the least shadow of qualification. Search through the universe and there is to be found nothing which is not put under Him. In that world to come man, in the person of the Son of Man, is to be absolutely supreme.

This is a most wonderful and glorious fact, and it illustrates for us how God always sees the end from the beginning, and is never defeated nor turned aside from His purpose in anything to which He sets His hand. God never made angels to rule: He made them to serve. The only creature, of which we have any knowledge, that was made to rule was man. Only of man was it said, "Let us make . . . and let them have *dominion* . . . So God created *man*" (Gen. i. 26, 27). Man fell: he ceased to rule the lower creation in any proper sense; he ceased indeed to properly rule himself. What then? Has

God's purpose failed? Not only has it not failed but, when the SON OF MAN comes forth in His glory, the Divine purpose will be seen established with an extended fulness and glory undreamed of when Adam was created, by any save God Himself. Instead of failing God has triumphed most gloriously.

Some may say to themselves—That may be, but there are no very obvious signs of it in the world at the present moment. That is so. We do not yet see all things put under Christ. Even those who profess to be His followers show very little sign of being really subject to Him. The fact is that we are living in a time during which there is very little to see except we possess that kind of telescopic sight that faith gives.

Faith it is that sees. This we shall find elaborated when we come to chapter xi, especially verses 8 to 22, and verse 27. These great men of old penetrated by faith into the unseen world, yet they never saw the sight that shines before us—if we really possess faith's keen vision. We see the once humbled Jesus crowned with glory and honour in the highest heaven. Did the Hebrews possess faith's telescopic powers of sight, penetrating to the glory-crowned Jesus, and to the things which are above the sun? *Do we?* If we do we shall not be neglecting the great salvation; we shall not be letting go nor slipping into apostasy.

Looking unto Jesus we shall be running the Christian race with energy divinely given.

But what means this statement in Psalm viii., that the Son of Man is made "a little lower than the angels"? Have we not read in chapter i. that He is "made so much better than the angels"? There is an apparent contradiction here!

These passages where verbal contradictions appear upon the surface do us a good service if they cause us to pause, *and think*. Viewing them in their context and meditating upon them, we discover harmonies and teaching which otherwise we had passed over. See how it is in the case before us. In chapter i. the Deity of our Lord is the great point, connected with His Apostleship. Yet He has become a Man, so that God is His God. Seeing however that it is GOD who has become Man, He is of necessity "made so much better than the angels."

In chapter ii. the emphasis lies upon the Manhood of the Lord Jesus. He became a Man with a view to the suffering of death. Man was so created—spirit, soul and body—that he could die, by the spiritual part of him being separated from the body. In this respect man was made a little lower than the angels. Now the Son of God has become the Son of Man in so real a sense that as a Man He has taken up the death penalty

and died for men. From this standpoint He has been made a little lower than the angels, for angels never die.

In these wonderful verses one expression is repeated six times: thrice in verse 8, once in verse 9 and twice in verse 10. It is the word for all or all things, and only at the end of verse 9 is it otherwise translated. The Lord Jesus has tasted death for "all" and not merely for the Jew. At the present moment "all" is made subject to Him, and in the age to come we shall see it to be so.

In verse 10 we find a second object that was in view in the sufferings and death of Christ. Not only did He accomplish propitiation for all, but He thereby qualified Himself—if we may so put it—for the position He was to take up according to the purpose of God. God has instituted a new pilgrimage. Of old He used Moses and Joshua to bring a nation from Egypt to Canaan. Now He has set His hand to the mighty task of bringing many sons, gathered out from all the nations, to glory. He will not fail in this glorious enterprise for, firstly, He who has initiated it has all things at His disposal, and secondly, the One to whom it is entrusted as Leader is the risen Christ. He went through all possible sufferings here in order that He might have full experimental knowledge of all the sorrows under which lay those who are now the sons on the way to glory.

Is it not a wonderful thing that the Lord Jesus should have condescended to become the Leader of our salvation? Wonderful as it is, it is a fact. Having died and risen again, He has placed Himself at the head of the great redeemed family that is being gathered out of the nations and led to glory. They are the sanctified ones of whom verse 11 speaks—that is, those set apart for God—but He is the Sanctifier. They are set apart for God by virtue of their connection with Him.

Our connection with Him is of a very close and intimate order, so much so that it can be said of Sanctifier and sanctified that they are “all of one.” Of one what?—we may ask. Well, we are not told. But inasmuch as it goes on to say, “*for this cause* He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” it would seem that the thought must be that He and they are of one lineage, of one life and nature. The day is now arrived in which we know, according to the Lord’s own words in John xiv. 29, that He is in the Father, that *we are in Him*, and He in us; as also the day in which, according to John xvii. 19, He has set Himself apart in heaven in order that we may be set apart through the truth.

Three Old Testament Scriptures are quoted in verses 12 and 13 in order to show how thoroughly we are identified with Him and He with us, and also that this immense

privilege was foreseen, though not realized, in the days before His advent. The first of the three is especially remarkable. It comes from the latter part of Psalm xxii., just at that point where the prophecy passes from His death to His resurrection, and the word "congregation" is translated into "church." The church (that is, the *ecclesia*, the *called out ones*) is that to which we all belong, and here it is quite definitely identified with the "many sons" and the "sanctified" of the earlier verses.

But if we were in this marvellous way to be identified with Him, it was necessary first that He should in His grace identify Himself with us in our need, and this He did in everything, apart from sin. He did not come to save angels but men. Consequently He did not take on Him the nature of angels but of men; and in particular of the seed of Abraham, for, as we know, our Lord sprang out of Judah. The word used here means, "to take hold of," and it has been stated that, "it is constantly used for 'taking up a person to help him,' though in other senses as well." Amazing grace this, when we see that it involved His taking a part in flesh and blood, which is the common lot of mankind; and that this He took in order that He might die.

Verse 14 is as clear on this as verse 9 had been before. Only death could meet the tragic situation in which we were found.

Death is possible for man since he is a partaker of flesh and blood. His blood may be shed, his flesh go to corruption, his spirit depart to God who gave it—and all this is impossible to angels. Death is actually passed as the Divine sentence upon all men because of sin, and Satan who at the outset manœuvred man into disobedience, now wields the power of death in the consciences of men, making them afraid and thereby holding them in bondage. What could destroy (that is, annul or bring to nothing, make of no effect) the devil and the power he wields? One thing only. Nothing but DEATH could annul *death*. And it must be the death of a MAN to annul death for *men*. All this was fulfilled. The Captain of our salvation, by taking part in flesh and blood, became a true Man, and for us He died.

Flesh and blood is a term which describes the state and condition of manhood, without reference to the question of sin. When Adam came forth fresh from God's creating hands he was a partaker of flesh and blood, but his humanity was *innocent*. He fell, and he and his posterity remained partakers of flesh and blood, but theirs is a *fallen* humanity. Our blessed Lord Jesus took part in flesh and blood and His humanity is the very essence of *holiness*.

Yet in all things it befitted Him to be made like to those whose cause He had

taken up, as verse 17 declares. A very strong statement this, and the reality that it presents will be a theme of wonder and worship to us throughout eternity. Just think of how it might have pleased Him to stoop and rescue His sinful and degraded creatures without being made like them at all. That however would not have fitted His love, even if it could have been done in conformity with His righteousness. Having taken part in flesh and blood He would be made like them *in all things*. He would be tempted and suffer, as verse 18 says, and thus enter into all their experiences save those that involved sin; and this in view of becoming the High Priest of His people.

All through the latter part of this chapter the Lord is presented in the same light. Whether as Captain of our salvation, or Sanctifier, or High Priest, He is seen as standing on our behalf before God, and not as standing on God's behalf before us; as He is when His Apostleship is in question. As High Priest He acts in things relating to God, as also He is able to succour us in our temptations. Towards us He is ever merciful, while always maintaining the purposes and glory of God with the utmost faithfulness. But while this is so His personal glory and pre-eminence is fully established. He is not ashamed to call us brethren, but nowhere are we encouraged to turn round and use that same term towards Him, as sometimes is done.

Before we leave the chapter notice how everything is cast in a mould suited to Jewish minds. Each point is supported by quotations from the Old Testament, showing how that which is now established in Christ had been foreseen and indicated. This might mean nothing to a Gentile, but it would be very significant to a Jew. Moreover the truth is stated in terms which would instantly remind them of the way in which their ancient religion had foreshadowed these good things to come. The end of verse 17 is an illustration of what we mean, where the work of the Lord Jesus is spoken of as making "reconciliation" (or "propitiation," as it really is) "for the sins of the people." Why put it thus? Why not say, "for our sins," or, "for the sins of men"? Because then the truth would not have been nearly so striking to Jewish minds. As it stands it would at once turn their thoughts to the well known work of Aaron, and their subsequent high priests, on the great day of atonement; of which we read in Leviticus xvi, and which was a striking type of the work of Christ.

No New Testament book throws greater light on the Old Testament than Hebrews; and none shows more clearly how needful it is for us to read and understand the Old Testament. If we read Hebrews apart from this it is very easy to run away with mistaken notions.

FROM WRETCHEDNESS TO REJOICING.

HOW often the daily records speak of a Judge justly sentencing some guilty wretch to the punishment he deserves; but where is to be found the record of a Judge who arranged for a condemned man's punishment to be borne by another and then took him, a new man, to his happy home as one of his own family? In human annals we know of no such story; but the truth of God in the inspired Scriptures tells of this, only in a far more wonderful and glorious way; showing how the one who is condemned before God, by Him is righteously justified, accepted and brought into everlasting favour and rejoicing, able to truly know Him, and call Him "Father." No wonder the truth is termed, "Tidings of great joy!"

CONDEMNED: JUSTIFIED.

With every upright and rational person, the truth of the Word must be admitted, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This is recorded by the Holy Spirit, and proved in our experience

to be true. God, the righteous Judge of all, being holy, must necessarily condemn sin, and its righteous sentence must be borne. It was a great day, a most searching day, full of serious and eternal importance, when we were brought to face this fact, encouraged by the sense that God was merciful as well as just. The thought of banishment from His presence to the realms of eternal woe—the lake of fire—was indeed dreadful; but the thought of God's grace and goodness sustained confidence that He would bless somehow !

How could He do so righteously ? Had He some way of doing so without sacrificing His justice and holiness ? Could the condemnation be borne, and yet the condemned be brought justified into divine favour and acceptance ? Yes, Yes, Yes ; thanks be to God ; and the Spirit has recorded how, so that peace and joy might be ours through believing.

The actual, physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, after He had taken our place upon the cross in condemnation and under judgment, and after having lain in death and the grave, declares the complete settlement of these questions for the believer's blessing ; and God's own satisfaction has been gloriously made known, by His exalting the One who died for us to His right hand. We are told in Romans iv. 25 and v. 1, that Jesus our Lord " was delivered

for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then it is also said, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God" (viii. 34).

The believer can truly say, I have received my condemnation and judgment in the Person of Him who took my place; and now I am righteously cleared of all condemnation; God has justified me, and His word to any questioner is, "Who shall lay anything to charge of God's elect? It is GOD THAT JUSTIFIETH" (viii. 33). Christ took my place that I might have His place in the favour of God!

"The Lord is risen: we stand beyond the doom
Of all our sin, through Jesus' empty tomb."

FORSAKEN: ACCEPTED.

Foreseen long centuries before the actual sufferings of the cross took place, the very words uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ are recorded in Psalm xxii. 1. They disclose something of the deep depths of abandonment He had to know, when the question of our own guilt and sinfulness was righteously gone into and settled for ever; so in that awful time He cried, "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" The answer

is given prophetically in the third verse of the Psalm, "*Thou art holy.*" The holiness of God abhorred our condemned condition; but "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." No words of ours can adequately express His suffering, when He was made sin and forsaken; nor can language fully describe the result in blessing for us.

Our Saviour "bore our sins," but He was "made sin" also. He "died *for* us," but "in that He died, He died *unto* sin once" (Rom. vi. 10). So perfectly has the matter of our sins and sin been settled that we have justification from all things, and justification of life also; and it is written of the One who died for us and completed the work, "In that He liveth; He liveth *unto* God"; and it continues concerning us, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in Christ Jesus*,"—in the One who is no longer forsaken, but is alive in the eternal favour of God!

It is true that His death has secured our blessing, but it is also true it has glorified our God and Father. Holiness demanded that He should be forsaken when taking our place; but the perfection of His work, and of the One who did that work to God's entire satisfaction, ensured His resurrection, both on our behalf and for God's own

pleasure. Therefore we read that Christ has been raised up from among the dead "*by the glory of the Father.*" What peace and stability it imparts to the heart thus to view our Lord and Saviour; and what glad confidence also to honour Him in our lives and by our lips.

"God is satisfied with Jesus,
We are satisfied as well."

Moreover, long before Psalm xxii. predicted the work of the Cross, our God and Father marked us out for blessing through His Son, to the praise of the glory of His grace, "*wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*" (Ephesians i. 6). Having given Him the present place of nearness which is His with Himself, in holiness and love on high, we are righteously brought into acceptance in that same favour, both as a present and as an eternal thing; for the work of redemption was done by Christ to the settlement of eternal issues. Therefore we read, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."

When God undertook the stupendous task through His Son, of bringing sinners nigh to Himself in Christ, we can but conclude that He would do so in flawless perfection, to His eternal praise. The sinning prodigal

left his sinful ways and rags for the joys of his father's home and the best robe: but our Lord Jesus Christ knew the forsaking before we could enjoy the acceptance which is now ours. The believer can say, The forsaking is past for me, but my acceptance in the favour of God will never be past! My Saviour will never be forsaken again on account of my sins! nor will He ever forfeit the place of nearness He has brought me into! Blessed be His Name.

DEAD: ALIVE.

The fact is, our condition as well as our position, was so desperate that it was necessary for us to be quickened as well as forgiven. We had sinned, and needed God's justifying forgiveness truly, but we were also in a state of spiritual death Godward. Nevertheless He had set His heart upon us for blessing, and would not leave us in our wretchedness, but bring us alive from the dead with rejoicing into His holy presence. We are told in Ephesians ii. 4, that "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ—by grace ye are saved," and then in verse 18 we are told, through Christ we now "have access by one Spirit to the Father."

No longer are we left out in distress and darkness, and in the distance of death; but

granted the holy, happy privilege of having our place in nearness to the Father. Christ died for us, and now lives, therefore it is *through* Him this is ours. The Holy Spirit now indwells us, therefore it is *by* His living power we enter upon it; and the Father finds delight in having us near to Himself. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each engaged on our behalf, that we might know the living joys of God's presence. In accord with His own holiness, the whole question of sin has been completely settled, and He can now have us righteously near to Himself for His own pleasure.

In the tripartite parable of Luke xv. our Saviour illustrates this in a divinely wonderful way. It is the chapter of divine merry-making! The straying sheep shows us the *wandering* sinner; but the lifeless silver illustrates the *dead* sinner; then the wayward and repentant son pictures both in one—he was lost and found, dead and alive again! After the first and second it is explained that there is joy over one sinner that repenteth;—the joy in heaven begins the moment one repents! In the third however we see fulness of joy reached, when the once repentant sinner, now clothed in the best robe, is in his Father's presence, in a new way calling Him "*Father*," who says, "Let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was *dead, and is alive again*; he was lost and is found." We are then told, "They

began to be merry! " Previously it is said, "He *began* to be in want! " That beginning ended when he came to his father, but the other knows no ending. The believer on the Son has "passed from death into life." He has eternal life in the Son; and he is given to know the Father, that his joy may be full.

The epistle of Jude, which tells of most appalling departure from the truth, is addressed to those who are "Beloved in God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ," The gospel of John tells us of the Son of God, whose Word quickens the dead; also of the Father's name made known by Him; then in John's first and second Epistles we are shown that through abiding in Him, we "continue in the Son and in the Father" by the Holy Spirit's power; and thus OUR JOY REMAINS FULL, notwithstanding the downgrade of the so-called "Christian world," and the hectic pursuit of temporary lethal pleasure; carrying them further and further away from that which our risen Lord and Saviour beyond the world, has entered upon as Psalm xvi. 11 shows:—"PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE;"—PLEASURES of an abiding sort;—PLEASURES of life eternal, which are ours in Him,—the One who is alive to die no more, the Son of the Father's love.

"Now we drink the living waters.
Taste the joys that never fade."

SERVE WITH GLADNESS.

Surely our thankful hearts gladly respond to the sweet singer's stirring strains—" *Serve the Lord with gladness!* " Our wretched lost estate is left behind for ever, and it is not becoming to *serve with sadness!* The apostle Paul had plenty of trials, infirmities, persecutions and imprisonments to sadden him; but he possessed in Christ what nothing could rob him of; therefore he wrote, " Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice! " The apostle John was permitted to see defection in the assemblies, and he suffered banishment; but he wrote of the Son and of the Father, and of the present Comforter, the Spirit of truth come from the Father and the Son, that fulness of joy might be ours, as we have said;—" that your joy may be full! " are his oft repeated words.

Leaving alone therefore, all that ministers to the wretchedness which once was ours, may holy, happy liberty in serving the Lord mark us increasingly, as we draw near to that day of " exceeding joy," when we shall be " for ever with the Lord." While we are *waiting for Him*, may our eyes be wide open *watching for Him*, our ready hands outstretched *working for Him*, and our glad hearts so filled with His love and glory that we cannot help *worshipping Him!*—" SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS! "

H. J. VINE.

BE TRUE.

A YOUNG Christian solicitor in Dublin, later than usual at his office, was walking leisurely homeward one evening when he met an acquaintance.

"Hullo! how are you?" the other cried. "Whither bound?"

"I am going home, I have been late in the office," said the solicitor.

"And I am going to the theatre," said his friend.

"Well, as I am in no hurry, I'll turn and walk with you in that direction." They walked together to the theatre door.

"Good night," said the Christian; "I am off home now."

"Indeed, you are not," said his friend. "Come in with me."

"No, thank you."

"Oh, man, come along; what a shame to walk with a fellow to the door and turn. Come in."

"Indeed, I will not," said the young solicitor. "I have never been in a theatre in my life, and I am not going in now."

"You'll be in one to-night," said the other, as he gripped his arm and pulled him to the door. There were some iron railings which the young Christian laid hold of and held fast. Suddenly he jerked himself free and ran.

Some days later he met his friend, and said to him, "I say, X., you know I am a Christian, do you not?"

"Yes, I suppose you are."

"Well, if I had gone with you to the theatre the other night when you wanted me to, what would you have thought of me?"

"What would I have thought of you? To tell the honest truth, if you had gone in with me I should not have had an atom of respect for you during the whole course of your earthly existence"—*Communicated*.

POSITION AND PRACTICE.

THE grace of God has given every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ a perfect position *in Christ* before Him—a position which once given, is never withdrawn. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans xi. 29), that is, without change of mind on His part; so that, once given, they are never recalled.

This must be so, for grace is Divine favour with no condition attached thereto. Moreover this position is "in Christ," and therefore it is governed by who He is and by what He has done. So we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*" (Romans viii. 1). "If

any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature " (2 Corinthians v. 17); or "there is a new creation" (N. Tr.). In that realm there is and can be no failure nor breakdown.

If it is a question of the efficacy of the work of Christ, we read that "the righteousness of God" is "upon all them that believe" (Romans iii. 22). That is most evidently a matter of grace, for it comes upon those that *believe*. Christ is said to be made of God to the believer, "Wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians i. 30). Now if Christ is made righteousness to the believer, it is clear that this is absolute and permanent, for Christ never changes.

It is well to recognize that God can only have perfection, and this He can alone find in Christ Himself. Therefore the believer's position must be connected with Christ, and this it is in the fullest way possible. Once saved, saved for ever. Once justified, justified for ever. Faith is a wonderful thing! Faith takes God at His word, and rests there.

The reader may say, "But I am a poor, weak, frail inconsistent Christian. How can all this be true of me?" It is true of you, as of every believer, as we shall seek to show.

You may further ask, "If this is true that I, a poor inconsistent believer, have a perfect and inalienable position before God in Christ,

is God therefore not concerned about my shortcomings ? " He is indeed. The one concern of the Holy Spirit of God, given to indwell the believer, is to make the practical coincide with the positional, but the divergence between the two never impairs or alters the positional, once it is accorded by the grace of God. A professed believer, who is not exercised as to being consistent in life and ways with what he is in Christ, is in a sad and lamentable condition indeed, and one that would lead to doubt as to his being a Christian at all.

Let us furnish a Scriptural illustration. In 1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52. we read, " 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." There is a class of Bible expositors, who are not clear as to the grace of God, and who teach that only believers, who have attained to a certain fitness, will be caught up when the Lord comes, and that the unfaithful believers will be left behind. This one verse is amply sufficient to contradict this mistaken idea. Our passage says that ALL will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. Could anything be clearer than this ?

Now what kind of believers constituted the assembly at Corinth ? Chapter i. tells us of contentious believers, leading to divisions among them. Chapter iii. tells us that they

were not spiritual but carnal—stunted in their spiritual growth. Chapter v. tells us of the incestuous brother in their midst, and of the carelessness of the assembly as to this shocking sin in that they were “puffed up” and had not “mourned.” Chapter vi. tells of their shame in brother going to law with brother and that before unbelievers. Chapter xi. tells us of the degrading of the solemn occasion of the Lord’s supper, and its being turned with a mere social feast, where the rich flaunted their opulence before their poor brethren, and one was hungry and another drunken.

Surely if it were a question of a degree of saintship being the necessary qualification for translation at the second coming of the Lord, a good many of the Corinthian saints would not have been eligible. But does the inspired apostle make any distinction in this matter? No; knowing full well how he would have to deal with the serious faults in the assembly, he begins by addressing them as saints by calling, he thanks God for the grace of God given to them in Christ Jesus, he speaks of his confidence of their being confirmed unto the end, and being found blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then when he comes to chapter xv., he tells them they will *all* be changed, whether sleeping in Jesus, or alive on the earth—ALL changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

Was the apostle condoning their condition? Far from that. He instructed the assembly to put out from among themselves the incestuous brother, this discipline happily leading to true restoration, as the second chapter of the second epistle shows. He sharply rebuked divisive tendencies, and condemned strongly brother going to law with brother before unbelievers.

Finally let us see what happened as to the despising of the Lord's supper, turning it into an occasion of gluttony and drunkenness. We are told because of the sad and extreme divergence between position and practice that the discipline of the Lord came in. The way of recovery was by self-judgment for we read, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (chap. xi. 31). But if self-judgment was refused, and the saint went on in this sad way, what then? Did they lose their position in Christ? Surely not! But did God condone their backsliding and self-will? Surely not! What happened then? The holy discipline of the Lord came in. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep" (verse 30). Pretty serious discipline this! *Many* weak and sickly, *many* sleeping. Here is a brother weak and sickly, under the Lord's hand of discipline. He fails to respond to it. He refuses to judge himself. He grows worse. At last he dies—falls asleep, fit for heaven by virtue of the atoning work of Christ and by the grace of

God; not fit for earth by virtue of his lack of exercise that practice should approximate to position.

Take the case of the saints put to sleep because of their evil deeds. They would form part of the first resurrection when "ALL should be changed." But see how God by His Spirit labours to bring practice into accord with position and how eventually He will accomplish this. We are told, "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world*" (verse 32).

Put the two verses alongside each other. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Between a perfect, inalienable position and our practice there comes in the holy discipline of the Lord to our help, a discipline that in tender love will not hesitate to remove the believer from this world, if nothing short of that will effect the divine purpose in discipline.

We are in safe and blessed hands. On our part we shall be wise to walk continually in self-judgment, and seek in dependence on God's Holy Spirit to answer to what we are "in Christ" by a corresponding care-

fulness of walk, so that we may be indeed in *practice* what we are in *position* before God on the ground of what Christ is and has done. Every believer will eventually arrive at this. May we have grace to seek this blessing now.

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews* *iii.* 1—*iv.* 10).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

THE first chapter has presented to us the Lord Jesus as the Apostle, that is, as the Sent One, who came forth from God to us, bringing us the Divine revelation. The second set Him before us as the High Priest, who has gone in from us to God, representing us and maintaining our cause in His presence. Now we are bidden to consider Him very thoroughly in both these characters. We are to set our minds to it as those who aim at discovering all that is involved.

These Hebrews had taken up a new profession, or, we had better said, they had entered upon the confession of the name of Jesus, who had been rejected by their nation. The national attitude towards Him was summed up in these words, "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is" (John ix. 29). The more these converted Hebrews considered JESUS and studied Him the more certainly would they know from whence He was: they would perceive that truly "He was come from God, and went to God" (John xiii. 3).

The Jews made their boast in Moses and in Aaron. God had indeed spoken to the one and made him His spokesman, and He had established the other in the priestly office; nevertheless both were dead. The Christian, and the Christian alone, has an Apostle and High Priest who lives, to be known and contemplated and loved: One who is God and yet Man, endowed with all the attributes and glory enumerated in chapters i. and ii.

He is worthy of our eternal study. Let us consider Him well, for as we do so we shall the more clearly see how rich is the place we have as set in relation to Him, and how high is the calling in which we partake. Both these things are mentioned in the first verse. Do not pass them over lightly. They are worthy of serious attention.

We are addressed as "holy brethren." This is tremendously significant. It does not merely mean that all Christians are brethren and all set apart for God. The expression must be understood in relation to its context, that is, in relation to what has gone before, and particularly to verses 10 and 11 of chapter ii. In the latter of these two verses we have "sanctifieth" and "sanctified," and in our verse "holy." These are all different forms of the same word. We are holy inasmuch as we have come into the wonderful sanctification of being "all of one" with the great Captain of our salvation. For the same reason are we "brethren," since He is not ashamed to call us that. In addressing us as "holy brethren" the Spirit of God is reminding us of the place of extraordinary nearness and honour in which we are set.

As holy brethren we partake in the heavenly calling. We all know how God called Israel out of Egypt and into the land which He had purposed for them. Theirs was an earthly calling, though by no means to be despised. We are not called to any particular place on the earth, but to a place in the heavens.

In the gospels we see how the Lord was preparing the minds of His disciples for this immense change. At one point in the midst of His ministry He bade them not rejoice so much in the possession of mirac-

ulous powers: "but rather rejoice," He said, "because your names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20). Our names are inscribed in the records of the cities to which we belong, and in these words the Lord indicated that they were entering upon a heavenly citizenship. Later, in His farewell discourse, He spoke to them of His Father's true house which is in the heavens—that house of which the earthly temple was only the pattern and shadow—and He said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2). Our place is there. Our calling is heavenly in its character and it has heaven as its end.

If these early Hebrew converts really took in these mighty facts by faith, they would without doubt have realized how greatly they had been elevated. It was truly no mean thing to have been the people of Abraham and Moses, called to a land flowing with milk and honey; but all that shrinks into comparative insignificance besides such things as being among the "many sons" who are being brought to glory, owned as "holy brethren" by the Lord Jesus, and thus called to heaven. But again, if so great an elevation for them how much greater an elevation for us, who with neither part nor lot in Israel's privileges were just sinners of the Gentiles? Only let us take time to ponder the matter and we shall find abundant cause to bend our hearts in worship of Him from whose heart of love such designs have proceeded.

Holiness and heavenliness characterize our calling, but the great thing for us is that we turn the eyes of our mind upon Jesus and earnestly consider Him. He is both Apostle and High Priest and in His greatness we may read the greatness of our calling. Verses 2 to 6 give us a glimpse of His greatness as contrasted with Moses. When, as recorded in Numbers xii., Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, they said, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?" That is, they questioned his office as the prophet, or apostle, of that day. Then the Lord bore of him this remarkable testimony, "My servant Moses... is faithful in all Mine house." In this he was a type of Christ, who is faithful to Him that appointed Him in a supreme degree.

Yet even so we find that the relation here between type and Antitype is contrast rather than comparison. First, Moses was faithful in God's house as being part of the house himself; whereas Christ is the builder of the house. Second, the house in which Moses ministered was just Israel; he bore the burden of that nation but of that nation alone. The Lord Jesus acts on behalf of "all things." He that built all things is God, and the Lord Jesus is He by whom God built them. Third, in the small and restricted sphere of Israel Moses ministered as a faithful servant; but in the vast sphere of all things Christ ministers to the glory

of God. Let us meditate on these points and we shall begin to have large thoughts of Christ.

Still we must not lose ourselves in the immensity of God's mighty universe, so we find that Christ has His own house over which He is Son, and we, the believers of to-day, are that house. We are His building, and He faithfully administers all that concerns us to God's glory, as Apostle and High Priest.

But, as it says here, we are His house, "IF . . ." That *if* mightily disturbs a good many people. It is intended to disturb, not the true believer, but the mere professor of the Christian religion. And here let us draw an important distinction. When in Scripture we are viewed as those born of God, or indeed viewed in any way as the subjects of God's work by His Spirit, then no *if* is introduced. How can there be?—for perfection marks all God's work. On the other hand when we are viewed from the human standpoint as those who have taken upon us the profession of Christianity, then an *if* may be introduced—indeed it must be.

Here are some who professed conversion years ago, yet to-day they are far from being Christian in their behaviour. What can we say as to them? Well, we aim at being charitable in our thoughts, so we give them the benefit of the doubt and accept them as believers, until conclusively proved not to be

so. Still *there is a doubt*: an *if* comes in. The Hebrews, to whom our epistle was written, were many as to numbers and very varied as to their spiritual state. Some of them made the writer of the epistle feel very anxious. The mass doubtless were really converted people of whom it could be said, "But beloved we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation" (vi. 9). Still in writing to them all indiscriminately what could be said except that all Christian privileges were theirs, *if* indeed they were *real* in their profession.

Now it is just this that the second part of verse 6 says, for it is time that tests reality. There is no more certain guarantee of reality than *continuance*. The false sooner or later let things slip, and turn away; the true hold fast to the finish. But then if any do let slip and turn away the real root of the trouble with them is, in one word, *unbelief*.

You notice of course that a parenthesis stretches from the second word of verse 7 to the end of verse 11. To get the sense we read, "Wherefore take heed, brethren, etc." It is an evil heart of *unbelief*, and not of coldness or indifference or worldliness, that we are warned against; bad as these things are for the spiritual health of believers. It was just unbelief that was the root of all the troubles of Israel in their wilderness journey, as the last verse of our

chapter says. So the Israel of the days of Moses was in this a beacon of warning to the Hebrews of the Apostolic age.

In the parenthesis we have a quotation from Psalm xcv. It is introduced to our notice not as a saying of David but as a saying of the Holy Ghost, who inspired David in his utterance. In the last five verses of our chapter we have the Spirit's comment upon His earlier utterance in the Psalm, and here we have made abundantly plain what we have just stated above. Caleb and Joshua entered the land of promise because they believed; the rest did not because they did not believe. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness.

A further word of explanation is necessary at this point lest we become confused in our thoughts. The history of Israel may be looked at in two ways: firstly from a national standpoint, then from a standpoint more personal and individual. It has a typical value for us whichever way we look at it.

If we take the first standpoint then we consider them as nationally a redeemed people, and that nationally they entered into the land God purposed for them, with the exception of the two and a half tribes, who became typical of earthly-minded believers, who fail to enter into that which is God's purposed blessing for them. From that point of view we do not concern ourselves with the fact that the individuals who actually

entered into the land were, with two exceptions, entirely different from those that came out of Egypt. From the second standpoint we *do* concern ourselves with the actual state of the people and of individuals amongst them. Only two of those who left Egypt so believed as to actually enter Canaan. This latter point of view is the one taken in Hebrews, as also in 1 Corinthians xi. 1-13, where we are told that they are also in all this types or ensamples to us. They warn us very clearly of the awful end that awaits those who, though by profession and to all outward appearance the people of God, are really without that true and vital faith which is the mainspring of all godliness.

We are warned therefore against an evil heart of unbelief which departs from the living God, and bidden to exhort one another daily for sin is very deceitful. If believers are to exhort one another daily it means that daily they seek one another's company. This verse then takes for granted that, like the Apostles who, "being let go . . . went to their own company" (Acts iv. 23), we also find our society and companionships amongst the people of God. It also infers that we watch for one another's souls and care for one another's spiritual prosperity. But is this true of us all? The general spiritual health of Christians would be much better if it were. We are far more influenced by the company that we keep than many of us like to admit.

If however any of us have professed the name of Christ without reality, then there is still in us the evil heart of unbelief, whatever we may have said with our lips; and the downward course that lies before us, except we be awakened to realities, is plainly set before us. The evil heart of unbelief is easily deceived by sin; and sin itself by reason of its deceitfulness hardens us, so that we become impervious to reproof. Then instead of holding "the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," we let go and give up. But only the real, who do remain stedfast unto the end, are made partakers, or companions, of Christ.

No wonder then that chapter iv. opens with the words, "Let us therefore fear." This does not for one moment mean that we should always be filled with slavish dread, always doubting whether, enduring to the end, we shall be saved. It does mean that we should accept the warning which Israel's history affords, that we should remember the deceitfulness of sin and the weakness of our own hearts, and have a wholesome fear of in any way following in their steps.

The beginning of the second verse might more accurately be translated, "For indeed we have had glad tidings presented to us, even as they also." It is not "*the* gospel" as though both Israel of old and ourselves to-day had had exactly the same message presented to us. The glad tidings of deliverance from Egypt and entrance into

Canaan was preached to them: the glad tidings of deliverance from sin and entrance into heavenly blessing has been preached to us. But in both cases the word preached does not profit apart from its being received in faith. The gospel is wonderful medicine for the broken heart, but it comes to us in a bottle bearing these directions—To be mixed with faith in those that hear. If those directions be not observed no cure is effected, and the rest of God is not reached.

The believer, and the believer only, enters into the rest of God. This is true whether we think of the typical rest of God in Canaan, which only Caleb and Joshua entered, or whether of the true rest of God which will be reached in a future day; and this is the simple meaning of the opening words of the third verse. The point is not that we, believers, are now entering into rest, are now in the enjoyment of peace with God—though that of course is delightfully true, and emphasized elsewhere in Scripture—but that it is believers, always and only believers, who enter into the rest of God; that rest which was purposed from the time of creation, but which has yet to be realized.

Verses 4 to 9 are occupied with an argument designed to prove that in no sense had the promise of God's rest been realized in connection with Israel's entrance into Canaan under Joshua. (The Jesus of verse 8 means Joshua, as the margin of a reference Bible

shows). This argument was necessary for Hebrew readers since they might readily have taken it for granted that everything in connection with the rest had been realized in connection with their forefathers and that there was nothing more to come.

The argument might be summarized as follows:—

1. There is to be a rest, as indicated when God ceased from His works at creation.

2. Israel did not enter into the rest under Joshua, as proved by the fact that God had said, "If they shall enter into My rest" (which is a Hebrew idiom meaning, "They shall *not* enter"); and also by the fact that so long after Joshua as the time of David an offer was again made them as to entering. Such an offer would not have been made subsequently, if all had been settled under Joshua.

3. But God's promise is not going to fail of its effect; consequently a rest for the people of God—i.e., for believers—is still awaiting them.

The word used for "rest" in verse 9 means "a keeping of a sabbath." This connects the thought with what we have earlier in the chapter as to God's rest in creation, and also with what we have in verse 10. We shall only enter into the rest of God when our days of work and labour here are over for ever.

F. B. HOLE.

“DISCIPLES INDEED.”

(From notes of an Address).

WE begin of necessity by looking at discipleship from its negative side. Certain things there are which must be taken up, and certain things which must be forsaken, if ever we are to become disciples of the Lord Jesus: as is set before us in such a passage as Luke xiv. 25-25. We must not however make the mistake of overlooking the positive side of this great matter.

The positive side is brought before us in the gospel of John. In his eighth chapter we read of those who are “disciples indeed,” and of what marks them. Such are *graduates*, if we may so put it, in this great school which is under such a Master.

Let us follow out the illustration. There is a *matriculation* test which we must pass before we can enter the school, and this is brought before us in the gospel of Luke. Then in John’s gospel, chapter vi., we get examples of those who *failed* to matriculate and of those who *passed*, together with the how and why of it all, before we come to the marks of the *graduate* in John viii.

In John vi. we find the Lord announcing to His disciples His approaching death. His flesh, He said, He was going to give for the

life of the world. Then He intimated that they too would have to accept death, for they would have to eat His flesh and drink His blood. They however had followed Him as King and expected that He would at any time take His kingdom. He now speaks not of the kingdom but of the cross, whilst they were prepared for a place in the kingdom without a cross. Ascending the throne of David in Jerusalem was one thing: ascending "up where He was before," and that practically from a cross, was quite another.

Many had accepted the path of followers in view of His kingdom, but now they discover it is going to lead to death and the cross. They could not take up the cross. They could not stand sharing the reproach of Christ. "This is an hard saying," they said, "who can hear it?" The result was that, "from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." In this we see the "cross" test and its result. The crowd melts like snow before the sun! They failed in the matriculation and did not reach the list of those who are disciples indeed!

Yet there were those who did pass the matriculation. "Will ye also go away?" said the Lord to the rest. Peter was foremost with the answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that

Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” The one company was charmed by the attractions of *the kingdom*; the other was charmed by the attractions of *the King*. One company was affected by *what* they could have; the other by *Whom* they could have. Only the latter stood. It indicates to us at once, that only those, who follow Christ *for His own sake*, can successfully take the path of discipleship.

Bartimæus furnishes us with a shining example of one who passed the test. We have the record of how he got his sight at the end of Mark x., and he illustrates for us the power of personal attraction over all other considerations. He had heard the voice of Jesus as He called him to Him: now his eyes were open, and for the first time a new Object struck his sight. He saw the One who had saved him from dying in physical darkness. Their eyes met and Jesus said to him, “Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.” His reply was in effect, “Thy way is my way.” This he said by his action rather than by his words, for he “followed Jesus in the way;” the way that led Him to the cross, for Jericho was only about twenty miles from Jerusalem and Calvary.

Home and friends were but little to Bartimæus compared with Christ. The sights of Jericho had no interest for him. He could well have sung with us,

“I have heard the voice of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside.
I have seen the face of Jesus,
All my heart is satisfied.”

He not only passed his matriculation at the first attempt but he passed *with distinction*, and it is easy to see how it came about. The grace that had brought him sight and salvation so effectually touched his heart that his love and devotion found a natural outlet and expression in taking the path with Christ. Constrained by love he became a “disciple indeed,” a graduate in the school of a new Master.

Who asked him to take that path? No one. Did he say,—I will follow Thee after I have said farewell to them at home? No. He might have argued,—If this person were really God-sent, surely more people would be following. But he did not; and as a matter of fact the Lord Himself always distrusted the crowd. The disciple is not compelled into the path, but rather constrained, and only that constraint will keep him in that path. He is not hedged about by *musts* and *mustn'ts*, nor by *oughts* and *oughtn'ts*, but he is charmed, lured into the path; and his reason could be given in four sweet and telling lines,

“But ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware,
Can never rest on earth again.”

It was said that the personal charm of Prince Charlie, of historic renown, was such that when one, who thought he could influence him to pursue a different course, sought an interview with him, he was dissuaded from it by friends. They said to him, "Don't you go and see him, for instead of persuading him you will find that the moment you see him you will do all that he asks you." Happy it is for us when we come under the sweet constraint of Christ.

Having entered the school of Christ we go through it in order that we may become graduates or "disciples indeed." What are the characteristics of true disciples? We may sum these up under three heads.

In John viii. 31 we read, how Jesus said, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed." Notice that here it is not, "My commands" nor, "My words" but, "My word." His *words* are His communications; His *word* is His testimony. We may note the same difference in the way the Lord used these terms in John xvii. There He says, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (verse 8), and also, "I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them" (verse 14). All the communications which He had received of His Father He had handed on to His disciples, all the details of the privileges

which were to be theirs He communicated to them. But then He gave them also the whole testimony which He had received of His Father, and this carried with it great responsibility. The word was the testimony for which He stood, and both it and He were rejected by the world. The disciples having accepted that testimony, and continuing in it, would get the world's hatred too.

We are to continue in Christ's word or testimony. That which He stood for must be continued in us if we are to be truly His disciples. What the Master stood for the scholar must stand for. Like Master, like pupil! The ideals and methods and spirit of the Master must be pursued and perpetuated by the scholar.

We are to "hold fast" His word, as the Lord says to Philadelphia in Revelation iii., and we must not shirk the responsibilities connected with it. People will crowd your meetings and nod their heads approvingly and smile, while you discourse to them on Christian privileges and yet make no hint at the responsibilities that attach to every privilege. If you bring them face to face with their responsibilities you may find them absenting themselves and complaining that the meeting is too long, or the seats are too hard, or the weather is too cold or wet, or something of that sort!

In John xiii. 35 we find another word which says, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." That is the great feature which evidences our discipleship without question. It is not to be seen so much in what *we know* of the testimony, but in what *we show* of the Master's spirit. The public witness lies here, and so we find it recorded of the apostles in the Acts, for even their bitterest enemies "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Men may approve your Christian life and love even if they don't exactly love you. Love displaying itself in action is what men can see, and is the external proof of true discipleship.

Lastly, in John xv. 8 we read, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." The fruit that we can bear is given to us in all its details in Galatians v. 22, 23, and we find the details to be just those features which in all perfection characterized the Lord Jesus Christ. Fruit therefore is exactly the reproducing of the features of the Master by the scholars. Thus there is not only testimony to men but fruit to God.

These things marking a believer he has not only passed the matriculation test but he has become a graduate—a disciple indeed. May this be the aim of every one of us!

“GODLINESS WITH CONTENT- MENT.”

WE are not surprised at the unrest and discontent which are more than ever manifest in the lives of those that know not God. We are not surprised that the poor, who are not rich in faith, should cast envious and covetous eyes upon the possessions of those who seem more fortunately placed than themselves. But it is surpassingly strange if this spirit of discontent and covetousness should break out in the lives of those who have God as their Father. It is strange because it means that a rebellious will is at work, and that confidence in One who cannot make a mistake has grown feeble, and these are conditions which indicate ill health in the children of God. Yet undoubtedly this discontent is prevalent and is sapping the spiritual vitality of thousands who otherwise might be strong in the grace that is in Christ.

What is the remedy for this unhealthy spiritual condition? We know of only one. Confidence in God must be restored, and this can only be as we dwell afresh upon His great love and infinite wisdom. How wonderful are those words of the Lord, “Even the very hairs of your head are ALL numbered.” Those small details of our lives that are too insignificant to be noticed by

us, like a simple hair of our head, are matters of interest to God. It is wonderful that He who upholds the universe should be so minute in His care for those whom He loves. The knowledge of this and of the fact that His will is never against us but for us, should encourage us to wholly trust in Him.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." To depend in simple trust upon God alone, and be satisfied with what He gives, must be great gain indeed; and yet—"Well," says one, "if I only had an income like Mr. — I should be quite contented, and I could do a lot of good with it; and why should I be denied that which he has so abundantly?"

Hear a parable. A little child is attracted by the sight of a highly polished knife; it is so pretty to look at, it must be nice to possess, and he attempts to grasp it. But a watchful mother places it beyond his reach and under lock and key. But he whines and complains and asks, "Why can't I have the knife?" He is told that he would certainly hurt himself with it if it were given to him. But he persists in his complaint which is now very real to him, for he sees one in the hand of an elder sister, and why should he be denied what she is allowed to have? "My child," says the patient mother, "that which would be a dangerous weapon in your small and unskilled hands is a very useful thing

in sister's hands, for see, she is cutting the loaf for your tea with it."

Earthly possessions are like that polished knife; if another has them, it is to use them to the glory of God, and if they are put beyond your reach it is because they would hurt you if you had them. Let your heart be happy and contented then, for God, who is your Father, knows what is best for you. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not *with Him* also freely give us all things?" Yes, everything that He can give to us "with Him" He will, and that without a grudge.

But, say you, "Some Christians have wealth that they do not use for others' good, and it seems to hinder the progress of their souls." That is so; and do you desire to handle the weapon that is injuring them? Distrust of self would lead you to thank God that in the wisdom of a perfect love He has made it impossible for you to hurt your soul as others seem to be hurting theirs.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE."

His company is better than broad acres and a large income. And if He *hath said* that He is with us, *we may boldly say,*

"THE LORD IS MY HELPER, AND I WILL NOT FEAR WHAT MAN SHALL DO UNTO ME" (Heb. xiii. 6).

J. T. MAWSON.

IN HIS NAME.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you, Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—*John xvi. 23, 24.*

HERE is a passage that grows in wonderfulness the longer we look at it. There are some things in nature just like that. When first seen we do not discern how great and grand they are, but as we keep on looking they grow upon us, and then they excite our wonder and admiration.

It is so with our text. When our eyes are first fastened upon the gracious words we do not apprehend the fulness of their meaning, but as we meditate upon them and realize the greatness of the privilege which they confer, we are amazed. And then in the wonderment of our souls we exclaim, Can it be possible that we are allowed to attach the name of the Lord Jesus to our petitions? May we ask *in His name*? Is this sober fact? Then we read the glowing words again, and find it to be even so.

Suppose we had one friend who was dearer to us than all others—one to whom

we owed everything. If some one were authorized to ask us, in his name, to do a certain thing, how gladly would we do it, even if the one who asked were a stranger, unknown and unloved. Thank God, it is not exactly so with us, for "the Father Himself loveth you," our Lord says in verse 27 of this same chapter. But to us it is given—think of it, my soul—to ask in that name which is sweeter in the Father's ear than every other. What strong confidence this gives that anything we ask the Father *in His name* will be granted unto us!

At the same time how careful it should make us as to how and for what we pray. Not to any random request would we attach the holy name of the Lord Jesus. Will the thing we pray for be for His glory, for the furtherance of His kingdom? If so, then we may affix His name to it without reserve.

If we gave any one leave to use our name, we should expect it to be used in no unworthy way, not loosely, but with care and discrimination. And so, in the intensest degree, should we make use of His name. If thus used the Father will give us whatsoever we shall ask. There is no room for doubt.

There are things which we may take to God in prayer to which we might hesitate to attach His name. We are not quite sure about them, and perhaps they more concern

us and our comfort and happiness than the direct glory and interest of Christ. The fourth chapter of Philippians comes in here. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We are thus graciously encouraged to be frank, open, unreserved in speaking to God about *everything* that would make us anxious, no matter what. And this indeed is no little privilege. No burden need we carry alone, no grief need be hid in our bosom, no carking care. We may tell all to God, and having told it, we may leave the issue to His perfect love and wisdom. Our requests in this case do not take the form of definite prayer in Christ's name. They may or may not be answered according to our wishes. We leave that to Him. Meanwhile "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. This is very sweet. God's own peace, profound and utterly beyond all our poor limited thoughts, keeps us in peace. The rest is in His hands.

And with this agree the words of Psalm lxii. 8: "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us." Precious words these, and full of comfort and encouragement. They are balm for wounded hearts and rest for anxious ones. In every lot there are burdens and cares—thorns that pierce and inward griefs that fill the eyes

with tears. Then Someone silently draws near, and we hear a voice that is not unknown, bidding us to trust and fear not, directing us to empty out before our God and Father all that is in our heart, and to make Him our refuge. And thus we find that word fulfilled which says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3).

Let us once more recall the wonderful words of our Lord Jesus when He said: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." May they never be forgotten, and let us make use of this great privilege more than ever as the days go by.

W. B.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews iv. 11—v. 14*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

THE early part of chapter iv. has established the fact that God's rest lies at the end of the believer's pathway. At the present time we are in the position

of pilgrims on our way to that rest, just as formerly Israel were pilgrims on their way to the land of promise. When the rest is reached we shall cease our working, but on the way there we should "labour" or rather "be diligent" to enter in, taking warning by the fate which of old overtook so many unbelieving Israelites.

The latter part of the chapter sets before us three great sources of help and guidance which are available for us on our pilgrim way. They are first, the word of God; second, the priesthood of Christ; third, the throne of grace.

The features of the Word of God are brought before us in verses 12 and 13. It is quick (i.e., *living*) and *powerful*. Like all living things it possesses amazing energy. Further it has extraordinary powers of penetration, for it can pierce its way between things most intimately connected—whether in things spiritual or things material—in a way impossible to the sharpest two-edged sword. Again, it is a discerner of the deepest thoughts and motives of men.

It is a remarkable fact that the word translated discerner is the one from which we get our word *critic*. Multitudes there are to-day who pose as critics of the Word of God, and their foolish criticism only betrays the fact that far from being living

they are in spiritual death; that far from being powerful they are very weak, and that their supposed powers of penetration are practically non-existent. They have no real understanding of the Word which they criticise, and the phantom "authors" and "editors" etc., which they conjure up are the result, not of their powers of *penetration* but of a very undiscerning and disorderly *imagination*.

It is not man's business to criticise the Word of God, but to let the Word criticise him. Nothing tests us more than criticism. If we are proud and self-sufficient we bitterly resent it. Only if humble and walking in the fear of the Lord do we welcome the penetrating criticisms of the Word, and they are of the greatest possible help to us in pursuing our pilgrim way. Thereby we are enabled to see ourselves and scrutinize our own motives, and thus avoid a thousand snares.

The Word of God reaches us in the Holy Scriptures. Should someone ask us why we accept the Bible as the Word of God, we might well reply:—Is not that word, which lives and is powerful, which penetrates and discerns the hidden and secret things, the Word of God? It is indeed. Is not the Bible marked by exactly those features? Without any question it is. Then what further need of proof have we, that the Bible is the Word of God?

Notice too how almost insensibly we pass from the Word of God in verse 12 to God Himself in verse 13. All is manifest in HIS sight. It is an all-seeing God with whom we have to do.

If the Word of God has full play in our understandings and consciences we shall become very conscious of our own insufficiency, and our weakness in the pilgrim way. How delightful then to turn to the second thing brought before us here—the priesthood of Christ.

In verse 14 we have the greatness of our High Priest emphasized, both as to His position and His Person. He has passed into (or, more accurately, *through*) the heavens. He did not stop in the first heaven nor in the second heaven when on His upward way, but into the third and highest heaven He went. Indeed, as another Scripture puts it, He “ascended up far above all heavens” (Eph. iv. 10). Still, the position of our High Priest is expressed here in this way so that Jewish readers might be reminded of Aaron going into the holiest of all. In the tabernacle the court, in which stood the altar of burnt sacrifice, was typical of the first heaven. The holy place typified the second heaven, and the holiest the third heaven in which God dwells. In entering the holiest Aaron passed through the heavens as far as the type was concerned. Our blessed Saviour and High Priest has passed

through the heavens, not in type but in glorious reality. He is now in a place of infinite greatness and glory.

As to His Person our great High Priest is no less than the Son of God. This great fact settles everything in the most decisive way. There is no room for failure here. A mere man like Aaron might fail. He did as a matter of fact fail immediately, and the whole system of things which depended upon him failed likewise. Our High Priest will never fail, and all that hangs upon Him will stand for ever. We shall certainly "hold fast our profession" if we really believe this.

Then in verse 15 the graciousness of our High Priest is set before us. Having become truly Man, He passed through all human experiences and temptations, apart from sin. The rendering of our Authorized Version, "without sin," might mislead us by making us think it merely means that He went through all temptations without sinning. It means more than this. He faced all human temptations "apart from sin." He was perfectly and intrinsically holy. "In Him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5), and hence temptations proceeding from the flesh within were necessarily unknown to Him. He had no flesh within. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. i. 14). But this could not be said of Him.

Hence while He is said to be touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*, He is not said to be touched with the feeling of our *sins*. Infirmities are not sins but rather those weaknesses which are connected with human condition. In us they may of course lead to sin; in fact they will almost inevitably do so except we seek and obtain help from on high—the help of which verse 16 speaks.

But do not let us leave verse 15 until we have extracted therefrom the sweetness contained in two words. First, that word *touched*. A man of power and wealth may hand out much help and succour to needy folk, and yet never have time nor inclination to so enter into their sorrowful experiences as to have his heart really touched by them. We in our weakness and need may look to our High Priest in His glory and be sure that His heart is touched on our behalf. Then again that word, *feeling*. The wealthy man of many charities might go as far as being touched with the *knowledge* of the needs of the people he helps, but if he has no experimental understanding of their infirmities and struggles he cannot be touched with the feeling of their needs. Now the Lord Jesus has so qualified Himself by all He has passed through that He actually *feels*. He entered so truly into human life and human conditions, apart from sin, that He now knows from the human standpoint what He always knew from the divine stand-

point. He possessed Himself of human feelings about human needs and human sorrows, and though now glorified on high He is still Man in heaven with all the feelings of a Man on behalf of men.

Oh, then, let us come boldly to the throne of grace! That throne is the third of the great helps which our chapter mentions. It is a "throne of grace" because graced by our great High Priest being seated there. Thence is dispensed mercy and grace for seasonable or opportune help, only we must come to the throne in order that we may get it.

What Israelite of old dared approach with any boldness the awful throne of the Almighty God? What Israelite indeed dared approach at all? When Ezekiel saw it in vision there was "the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it" (i. 26), yet he had no boldness but rather fell upon his face. At the best his vision only pointed on to that which was to be realized in our day. Thank God, it is now realized, but do we realize it? The Son of God sits on the throne, but it is the Son of God in true and tender and sympathetic Manhood. Realizing this all fear vanishes and we draw near with boldness.

The whole period of our lives down here is the time of need to us, and coming boldly

all opportune mercy and grace is ours. We have but to approach in prayer and supplication. It is guaranteed to us by the character of the One to whom we come—His greatness on the one hand and His grace on the other. How rarely do we find these two things united amongst men. Here, for instance, is a very great man, with much power and ability to help others. But he cannot afford to adopt a very kindly attitude and make himself easily accessible lest he be overwhelmed by applicants. So he hedges himself about with secretaries and porters and other officials. He could do much for you if only you could approach him, but you cannot get at him. Here is another, and a kindlier, more accessible, more sympathetic person it would be impossible to imagine, but when you get at him he has no power to do anything for you. Thus it generally is amongst men; but thus it is *not* with our Lord. Both power and grace are combined in Him.

The early part of chapter v. continues this subject. The high priests of old represented men and acted for them in things relating to God. But then acting for men they had to be compassionate and sympathetic towards men. Hence they were taken from amongst men, being of the family of Aaron. Had God instituted an holy angel to act as high priest on Israel's behalf there might have been great gain Godward, as

regards the accuracy and fidelity with which all priestly functions were carried out; but there would have been great loss manward, as regards such a matter as compassion on the ignorant. He who acts for men must understand mankind in an experimental way; and this is a thing pre-eminently true of Christ as we have just seen.

In Aaron's case he had, "as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins." In this we again find contrast and not comparison. Christ is indeed an offering priest, for it says later on, "it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer" (viii. 3). But when we read on yet further in the Epistle we shall discover that Christ, "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (ix. 14). There is all the difference in the world between Aaron offering *FOR himself* and Christ offering *HIMSELF*.

Aaron was also typical of Christ in the fact that he was called into the priestly office by God. Yet though Christ was called of God like Aaron He has not been called after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedec. He who said in Psalm ii., "Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee" (and this was quoted in verse 5 of chapter i.), said also in Psalm cx., "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec." If at this point you refer to the psalm you will see that this was said in

connection with Christ coming forth from death in resurrection, and being exalted to the right hand of God.

In verses 7 to 9 however we go back to "the days of His flesh"; that is, the days when He was upon earth before He died. Then was the great moment in the garden of Gethsemane, when He came face to face with the sorrows of death, and His cries were heard. He was heard "in that He feared," or, "for His piety." His personal perfections as Man demanded that He be heard. His cry was that He should be saved out of death—for the force of the word here is "out of" rather than "from." He was not saved from death but He was heard and saved out of it by resurrection and by Jehovah saying to Him, "Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

Going into death and being saved out of it, two great things were achieved, as presented to us in verses 8 and 9. First, He learned obedience. Let us understand what this means. Far be the thought that there was ever the smallest taint of disobedience with Him. The fact is, that previous to His incarnation He had ever been in the place of supreme glory, where it was His to command. Having become Man He experienced what it was to obey. We believe we are right in saying that King George V. was in early life a sailor. Going through that naval

training, he learned the obedience which is necessary for the smooth running of the whole naval machine. When we speak of King George learning naval obedience we do not for one moment mean to infer that he started with an insubordinate and disobedient spirit, when as a young prince he became a midshipman. We mean rather to emphasize that he has acquired his naval knowledge not by the study of books but by actual experience. In just that way the Lord Jesus, though the Son of God, has learned obedience by human suffering.

The second thing achieved was on our behalf. His time of suffering and testing came to its close. He was obedient even to death—the death of the cross. Death was the supreme test and there He was perfected: that is, being ever perfect Himself, there His course of obedience came to its glorious finish and climax. But then it was exactly at that point that He effected propitiation, and thereby became the Author of eternal salvation. Not now a deliverance such as that of Israel out of Egypt, which though very wonderful was only for a time, but a deliverance for eternity.

And that eternal salvation is received by those that obey Him. The value of faith was so strongly stressed in chapter iii., and the beginning of chapter iv., that we might have supposed that it would have read,

“them that believe.” Why does it say, “them that *obey* Him”? The obedience is of course the obedience of faith, but the point is that we should realize that the One who asks obedience from us is the One who has learned obedience Himself. In obedience the Son of God worked out eternal salvation, and that salvation is ours when we come under obedience to Him. Can we not see how divinely fitting this is? He only asks from us that obedience which He has perfectly rendered Himself.

In verse 10 we revert to the great fact established in verse 6. The verses that come between are evidently intended to impress us with the qualifications of our High Priest. Melchizedec is a mysterious personage who appears for one moment in Genesis xiv. and then vanishes. Yet he was priest of the Most High God. The One whom he typified is infinitely greater than he—the Son of God, who assumed Manhood, endured suffering, learned obedience, and by death itself became the Author of an eternal salvation to all that obey Him. To ALL that obey HIM—notice! If you obey Him and I obey Him, then we are included. Salvation is ours!

At this point the writer calls a halt to his flow of thought, and a lengthy digression ensues. Melchizedec was so important a type of Christ that there were many things to be said on the subject, and the theme was

not an easy one. It required some depth of spiritual understanding if it was to be intelligently received. The thought of this fact very definitely raised the question of the spiritual state of these Hebrew believers, and of ourselves.

In the closing verses of our chapter the writer gently yet firmly upbraids his Hebrew readers because they were still but babes as to their understandings when they ought to have been like full-grown men. If we make spiritual growth our spiritual senses are exercised, we acquire spiritual habits, and we become able to assimilate the "strong meat," or, "solid food," of the truth in its wider and deeper aspects. If we do not grow, though we may have received "the word of righteousness" yet we become unskilled in it. We may even slip so far back that we need to be taught over again the simplest elements concerning foundation truth.

Thus it was with these early Hebrew believers. They doubtless were hindered by their old Jewish associations. Their tendency was to cling to the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism, and this made it very difficult for them to enter upon the simplest elements of the gospel. This may not be exactly our trouble, but we are very likely to be hindered by the elements of the world, and more particularly by the elements of that particular form of **WORLDLY RE-**

LIGION in which we may have been brought up. Let us search and see if this be so; for if it is we too shall be like stunted trees in the garden of the Lord.

Let us also accept the warning of these verses to the effect that if we do not *go on*, the tendency for us is to *go back*. If we are not on the *up grade*, we shall get on the *down grade*. If we do not *advance*, we shall *decline*. We are in a scene of motion, and we shall not succeed in standing still.

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

I have often read the fifteenth verse of 1 Timothy iii. and have asked myself, What are the things that we are to know in order that we may know how to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth? You will oblige by inserting an answer to this in your pages—GATESHEAD.

“THESE things write I unto thee,” says the Apostle in the previous verse. So evidently the things he wrote were the things that Timothy was to know. From beginning to end the epistle is full of the most important instructions relating to Christian life and conduct, and there is nothing to hinder us from taking these words in the broadest sense as applying to the whole body of instruction conveyed in the epistle.

Reading those words however with careful reference to their immediate context, we believe that they specially refer to the instructions just written as to the qualifications which must mark the bishops and deacons who

hold office in the church of God.

There is nothing in Scripture to show that Timothy was a bishop, though he was a man of great spiritual gift. But there was a very simple reason why these instructions as to the behaviour which was befitting to bishops and deacons should be guidance to him as to his own conduct—and equally guidance to any and every believer, whether in his day or in ours. It is this, that bishops and deacons held their office as “being ensamples to the flock” (1 Peter v. 3). The bishop should display in an exceptional degree *the things that should mark every Christian*.

Bearing this in mind we can go back and read again the first thirteen verses of 1 Timothy iii., and apply to ourselves every exhortation we find, whether to bishop or to deacon, or to the wives. As we read we can say to ourselves,—if these things are to mark the examples, then they are God’s will for all who are of His household, or in His house.

Having answered your question may we say how glad we are to note that when you read the Scriptures you ask yourself questions as to what you have read. This is a most valuable habit to form. It may not mean that we immediately arrive at an answer to the questions which we mentally raise; yet arrive at an answer we shall sooner or latter. And once arrived at we shall not forget it! By this method our knowledge of God’s mind will be greatly enlarged, and our appreciation of the Bible greatly increased.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS.

THE writer got into conversation in the train with a gentleman. He turned out to be an infidel. Testimony was adduced for the great fact of the resurrection of Christ. With a shudder the infidel replied in these exact words, "If you can prove the resurrection of Christ, I am bound to be some sort of a Christian."

We can well understand his reply. The resurrection of Christ was miraculous and perfectly unique. That proved, Christianity is proved and infidelity disproved. It was God's answer to all that He had claimed to be and to have done. It put the coping stone on His life and death. It was God's great AMEN to every word that He had said on earth, every claim that He made, and above all it was the proof that the death of the Lord was accepted as sufficient atonement for sin.

The resurrection is one of the great pillars of the Christian faith. We might almost describe Christianity as resting upon a tripod, consisting of the Person of Christ, His death and His resurrection. If His Person was not all that the Scriptures claim

it to be, His death must have been an immense failure and His resurrection an absolute impossibility. If His death had not satisfied God about the whole question of sin, then again, the resurrection was an impossibility. On the other hand if His Person was all the Scriptures claim it to be, and His work that which satisfied God about the sin question, then the resurrection was a glorious necessity, the insistent demand of righteousness.

A remarkable letter was recently published in *The Times* from the pen of Lord Daryngton, known formerly as Mr. Pike Pease, at one time Postmaster General. It runs as follows :—

“ Sir—Having been very much impressed by the two remarkable articles published in *The Times* relating to the evidence of the Resurrection of Our Lord. I should like to mention the reply given by the late Lord Salisbury to someone who wrote to him asking him for his reason for his faith in Christianity. It should be remembered that he was not only a statesman, but a scientist of no mean capacity. He said that the central point of his faith was the Resurrection of Christ, in which he believed:—

First, because it was testified to by men who had every opportunity of seeing and knowing, and whose veracity was tested by the most tremendous trials both of energy and endurance during long lives.

Secondly, because of the marvellous effects

it had upon the world. He said that as a moral phenomenon the spread and mastery of Christianity were without a parallel, and added that he could no more believe that colossal moral effects lasting for 2,000 years could be without a cause than he could believe that various motions of the magnet were without a cause though he could not wholly explain them. He thought that anyone who believed in the Resurrection of Christ found little difficulty in believing in the rest of the story in the Gospels, and that no one who believed that would doubt that St. Matthew, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mark and St. John carried a Divine message.

If you can find space for this letter I shall be grateful, believing that testimony such as this is of special value at the present time.

Your obedient servant,

DARYNGTON."

It has been often pointed out that no event in history has ampler proof than the resurrection of Christ. We write under date of 1930—that is 1930 years ago since Christ appeared. Is it not astounding that every day Christians and Infidels, Jews and Turks, Roman Catholics and Protestants, should all date their letters and business correspondence by the appearing of (as the world would say) an obscure carpenter's son in an obscure village in an obscure country?

Yet so it is.

We, who are Christians, can understand the marvel; for marvel it is. How is it that the impact of the Christian testimony by a handful of apostles, mostly "ignorant and unlearned," has overridden the heathen pagan world and overcome the Jewish bigotry to this extent? Can we not read the secret in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit in this world? When Paul and Silas, two men with no organization behind them, with no committee of welcome, with no introductions to powerful prelates, entered pagan Thessalonica with a message that stirred the hatred of nearly all the inhabitants whether Jew or Gentile, it was said of them, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." (Acts xvii. 6.)

The Christian may well be an optimist. He may well be content that his faith is resting on settled facts, that he is on the winning side.

A. J. POLLOCK.

FOLLOWING THE LORD.

Notes of an Address on John i. 1-5, 14-18, 29-51.

IF there is one thing more than another that is wanted to-day, it is men and women, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who are seeking simply, quietly, without any pretension to follow the Lord in the way, wherein He has been pleased to place them.

The earlier verses of the chapter bring before us so very beautifully the greatness, the worthiness, of the Person whom you and I are called upon and honoured to follow. We see the majesty and the glory of His Person as the One who is God, who is the perfect expression of all that God is.

Then we have Him as the One who came into this world: not exactly "was made flesh," but who in the infinite grace of His heart "became flesh." In this world of contrariety and opposition, we find Him very God, yet very Man, that He might be the perfect expression amongst men of all that God is. We want to note that carefully. The One who is very God becoming very Man was in this world, where every man was doing that which was right in his own eyes, the perfect expression of all that God is. You and I are called upon to follow Him, and in measure as we are enabled to do so, we will be the expression in this world, (and it is just the same world to-day as it was when it crucified the Lord of glory) of what Christ was when He was here, and that is the expression of God.

Then we find how there were those who were attracted to Him. Here He was, this lowly, heavenly Stranger, who had come into the world, the like of whom had never been in the world before; and He was going to be the point of attraction, to gather others

around Himself, and become their Centre. He was here a Man, a lowly Man, a real Man, sin apart, and yet there was that glory which could not be hid, so that those whose eyes were opened, who were numbered amongst the few spoken of in verse 12, who received Him and became the children of God, could say "we beheld His glory." They saw in that lowly Man the complete expression of all that God is.

In the 18th verse we have a further statement of His glory. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Note that it is not the only begotten Son who "was"—we sometimes speak of Him as the One who left the Father's bosom, that is not strictly accurate; the only begotten Son who "is" in the bosom of the Father. There never was a moment when He, as the Son, was not in the Father's bosom. The babe in Bethlehem's manger was the only begotten Son which *is* in the bosom of the Father; the lowly Stranger at Sychar's well was the only begotten Son which *is* in the bosom of the Father; and He who *is* the only begotten Son came down here to disclose all the secrets of that bosom to you and to me. Is it not wonderful? And that is the One who calls upon us this afternoon saying "follow Me." God help us to do so!

Having got the testimony of the apostle as to who He is, we read in verse 29 of

the object of His mission into the world. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto Him, and saith, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." His work is here presented in its most comprehensive character. Not simply the One who has taken away our sins--blessed be His name. He has done that--but the One who in a day yet to come, on the ground of redemption, is going to take away "the sin of the world." Then we have the testimony of the Baptist, that "this is the Son of God." So that the One whom we are called upon to follow is the One who was in the beginning with God; who became flesh; in whom the glory of God is set forth; by whom all the love of God is revealed; by whom the great work of atonement has been accomplished; who is yet going to clear this universe of every trace of sin and bring in something altogether new, where everything will be in perfect accord with the mind and the heart of God, where the whole scene will be vocal with His praise, and where God Himself shall be all in all; that is the One, and no less than that, who asks us to follow Him.

But what is so beautiful is that there were those who apart from His direct call to follow Him, were attracted to Him. He became the Centre around whom were gathered those whose affections were captured by Him. We find in the close of the 35th verse, "John stood, and two of his disciples,

and looking upon Jesus as He walked He saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' "

I wonder, my dear fellow Christians, if you and I know something of the joy of looking upon Jesus as He walked. We shall never really follow the Lord until we know what it is to look upon Him as He walked. O what a walk was His! Every thought, every action, every word, every step of that walk, from the moment He came into the world, until that moment that He left it, brought joy, delight, satisfaction, and pleasure to the heart of God, so that once and again He opened the heavens over Him, and said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I have found My delight." Even in Isaiah He called attention to Him saying, "Behold my Servant whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth." At the end of His pathway our precious Lord could lift His eyes to heaven, and say to His Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Let me urge every one of you whether old or young to look and look again upon Jesus as He walked. Read the Gospels and read them again and again. It would help us in a great many ways if we did this, in our home life, in our business life, and in our assembly life too. Don't you see? The more we look upon Jesus as He walked, the more, though unconsciously to ourselves, shall we become like Him, and thus the

more joy we bring to the heart of God, and the greater glory will be brought to the name of our Lord.

When John exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God," his soul was simply lost in the delightful contemplation of that all-glorious Person, he was, so to speak, thinking aloud—"Look at Him!—Behold the Lamb of God!" What was the result? This, that his two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. *Following Jesus*, they left John. The Spirit of God does not emphasize the fact that they left John, but He does emphasize the fact that they *followed Jesus*.

They were attracted by Him though up to that moment they had not heard His voice. He had not said a word to them, they had simply been drawn to Him by the testimony of their master, John. There was that about Jesus which so filled the vision of their souls and so won their hearts, that John was left behind, and it was Jesus, and JESUS *only*. Then seeking to draw them out a little, He turned and said, "What seek ye?" I dare say you have noticed in this gospel that the first time we hear the Lord Jesus speaking in incarnation He asked "What seek ye?" And His first word after His resurrection was "Whom seek ye?"

If we want to follow Jesus, we must

realize firstly how great a Person He is, and how well worthy to be followed. The second thing is, we want to look upon Jesus as He walked, and in that way we shall become increasingly like Him. The third thing is, we want to know Him, and if we want to know the Lord Jesus we must live with Him. We know Him as the One who has put our sins away, but to know Himself is something more; and let me repeat it, to know Him we have got to live with Him. These two disciples followed Him to where He lived, and they *abode with Him* that day for it was about the tenth hour.

Inside that closed door what wonderful things must have fallen from His lips upon their ears; and not only upon their ears but right down into their hearts! The result was that their feet were set in motion, and this is what will happen to everyone in like circumstances. We are not told that He asked Andrew to do it, but off he went and he got hold of his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."

Now see what we have got—here was the small beginning of what was to form the nucleus of the great Christian company yet to be—Andrew and his brother disciple whose name is not given to us, only two. Andrew went and got Simon, that was three. Not a very imposing number. By and by

we find the Lord Jesus goes forth, and, I take it, these three disciples with Him, and He finds Philip, and says, "Follow Me."

I want you to notice this; to my mind it is most delightful. We hear a great deal to-day about the smallness of numbers, and we talk about being poor and feeble, and about the great weakness until we sometimes almost wonder whether all Christians are vanishing away. Now do not let us run away with the idea that numbers are necessarily a manifestation of power, or the evidence of strength and that the work of God is prospering. Only three men! I suppose nobody would trouble to take any notice of them, but do not forget there were three men—*and the Son of God*. Would you rather form part of three with the Son of God, or be part of three hundred without the Son of God? To ask the question is to answer it.

Why should the Lord say to Philip, "follow Me." Supposing a distinguished Rabbi had come along and said to Philip, "follow me." I do not suppose Philip would have taken any notice. But here comes One, whom Philip, as far as we know, had never heard about up to that moment. He simply utters these two words "follow Me," and what happened? A response was produced, and Philip followed Him. Now we have, Andrew, his brother disciple, Simon and Philip, the number is growing! Philip was

so charmed with His company, that we are told, "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, we have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Observe, the Lord had stirred the affections of these men to their very depths, so that they wanted everybody else to know Him. I think we can see the joy in their faces as they go saying one to another, "We have found Him, we have found Jesus, and we want you to find Him too." That is how the work of God is going to be carried out. It is all very good to have a lot of conversions at meetings—and we have to hang our heads as we own how few they are—but I tell you how the Church of God is being formed, and how God's purpose is going to be fulfilled:—by you and I just having our heart filled with Christ, and with a shining face and heart bubbling over with enthusiasm saying to the men and women with whom we work, "We have found Jesus, and He is the most wonderful Saviour, we wish you knew Him."

Thus Nathanael was brought to Jesus, and Jesus gave a fine testimony to him. So now we have got Andrew, his brother disciple, Simon, Philip, and Nathanael, they were just five in number, which I suppose was an indication of human weakness. They were still an insignificant little company, of a sort that nobody would be likely to notice.

The synagogue worshippers would look down upon them—poor unknown men, why pay any attention to them?

But they were five men who had the Son of God as their Centre, as their Object, as the One who had gained their hearts and affections, and to whom He was everything: five men who had set out on this grand adventure of following the Lord. They were divinely taught men, and they learned that the One of whom they had first heard as the Lamb of God, was the King of Israel, that the King of Israel was the Son of God, that the Son of God was the Son of Man, who is going to have universal dominion in the day of His glory.

What do you think of Christ my dear brethren? That is a question not only to be asked in gospel meetings. I know what you are saying, "There is nobody like Him." You are saying like the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Tell me, is He worthy to be followed? He is! If He is worthy to be followed, then let me close with the very practical question, "*Are you and I going to follow Him?*"

That is the question! My brethren, you and I have been left here and we have had conferred upon us the priceless privilege of following the Lord. That is a privilege that will not be ours when we get to glory; it is a privilege and honour which, thank God,

is ours to-day. The Lord is coming quickly : our day of privilege and opportunity will soon be over. The Lord in His grace direct our hearts to Himself, and make Himself so unspeakably precious to each one of us that we shall by His grace simply and whole-heartedly follow Him until we see Him in His glory.

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Hebrews vi.)

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

LET us go on," is the opening exhortation of our chapter. Movement in the right direction is to mark us. We are to leave "the word of the beginning of Christ," as the marginal reading is, and go on unto "perfection." If we glance back over the last four verses of chapter v. we shall see that the point here is that we ought to grow in our understanding of the faith of Christ. We ought not to be like children staying year after year in the kindergarten, but advance until we assimilate the instruction provided for the scholars in the sixth form.

John the Baptist had brought "the word of the beginning of Christ." He laid "the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God." He put baptism in the forefront of His preaching, and spoke plainly as to eternal judgement. But things had moved on since his day. Great light shone when Jesus came forth in His ministry; and then, just as his earthly service closed, in His discourse in the upper chamber He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit. He told His disciples that He had "yet many things to say" unto them, but that they could not bear them then. He added, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13). By the time the Epistle to the Hebrews was written ALL truth had been revealed, for it was given to Paul by his ministry to "fulfil the Word of God." (Col. i. 25). To "fulfil" in that verse means to "fill out full," or to "complete."

The whole circle of revealed truth then had been completed. Yet here were these Hebrews still inclined to dwell in their minds amongst these preliminary things, quite ignoring the fuller light which was now shining. Are we at all like them in this? In their case it is not difficult to see where the trouble lay. The special place of privilege, which belonged to the Jew nationally under the Old Covenant, had disappeared under the New. True, it only disappeared because a higher order of blessing had been

introduced, so that, when converted, both Jew and Gentile are brought into privileges quite unknown before. Yet their hearts clung to the old and exclusive national position, and consequently they became dull of hearing as regards the fuller truth of Christianity. In our case we have no national position to maintain, but there is many a thing which we naturally love and cling to, which is dispossessed by the light of full and proper Christianity; and there is very real danger that we may close our eyes against that light in order to retain the things we love.

Oh, then may we heed this exhortation ! May we allow it to repeat itself over and over again in our hearts—Let us go on ! *Let us go on !* LET US GO ON ! And then let us join the writer of the Epistle in saying, “ This will we do, if God permit.”

After this very encouraging word in verse 3, we drop abruptly into a very dark passage extending from verse 4 to verse 8. Though the transition is very abrupt it is not without very good reason. If Christians do not go on they invariably go back ; and if it almost seems as though they *will* not go on, grave fears are aroused lest their unwillingness springs from the unreality of their profession ; in which case their going back might proceed to the length of open apostasy. In the case of a Jew it would do so without

fail.

It is apostasy that is contemplated in these verses, not just ordinary back-sliding—not the true believer growing cold and falling into sin; not persons, who have once professed conversion without reality, dropping their false profession and going back into the world—but that total falling away from, and repudiation of Christianity root and branch, which is APOSTASY.

No true child of God ever apostatizes, though not a few professors of the Christian religion have done so. If an Hebrew threw up his Christian profession and wished to get reinstated in the synagogue and amongst his own people, what would happen? He would find that as the price of readmission he would have to call down a curse upon Jesus as an impostor. He would have in effect to crucify to himself “the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” Now to go to such lengths as that is to bring oneself under the governmental judgment of God, just as Pharaoh did in the days of old when God hardened his heart, so that it is impossible to be renewed unto repentance.

In verses 4 and 5 it is contemplated that those liable to fall away may have shared in privileges common to believers in those times, and that in no less than five ways.

We may well ask if it is possible for anyone to share in this way without being truly converted; and this question may well be specially urgent as regards the third of the five. Can it be possible to be a "partaker of the Holy Ghost" without being born again?

The answer to that question is, that it is quite possible. Only a true believer can be *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit, but all within the circle of Christian profession, whether truly converted or not, *partake* or *share* in the benefits of the presence of the Spirit. A man may be enlightened without being saved. He may taste the heavenly gift without receiving it. He may taste the good word of God without digesting it in his inward parts. He may share in "the powers of the world to come," (i.e. miraculous powers) without experiencing the real power of the world to come.

The terrible case of Judas Iscariot furnishes us with an illustration of this very thing. He walked for over three years in the company of the Son of God. What floods of light fell upon his path! What tastes he had of the heavenly gift and of the good Word of God! It could not be said of course that he was a partaker of the Holy Ghost, but he was a partaker of the benefits of the presence of Christ upon earth: and he shared, in common with the other apostles, in those miraculous powers which

are here called "the powers of the world to come." He was one of the twelve to whom the Lord gave power over unclean spirits, and of whom it is said, "They cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." (Mark vi. 13). Yet the miracle-working Judas was all the while a "son of perdition" and not a saved man at all. He fell away and it proved impossible to renew him unto repentance.

You will notice that the word here, is "*impossible*" and not "*improbable*." This one word is quite sufficient to show that there is no support in this scripture for the idea of a true believer falling away and being lost for ever. ALL those who "fall away" in the sense spoken of in this passage are for ever lost. It is not that they *may* be, but that they *must* be; and there would not be a single ray of hope for any backslider, did it refer to such.

It refers then to the sin of apostasy—a sin to which the Jew, who embraced the Christian religion without being really converted, was peculiarly liable. By turning back to his ancient and worn out religion, thereby utterly condemning and disowning the Lord Jesus, he proved himself to be utterly bad and worthless ground. The contrast in verses 7 and 8 is not, you notice, between ground which this season is fruitful and the same ground which another

season is unfruitful, but between ground which is essentially good and another piece which is essentially bad. The very form of this illustration supports the explanation just given of verses 4 to 6. Judas enjoyed "the rain that cometh oft," yet he only brought forth thorns and briars and was rejected.

In verse 9 the writer hastens to assure the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, that in saying these things he was not throwing doubt upon the reality of all them, nor even upon the most of them. The opposite to this was the fact. He stood in doubt of a minority evidently, but he was assured of the reality of the mass. He discerned in them features which gave him this assurance. He calls them "things which accompany salvation."

There are then certain things which act as a kind of hallmark upon our Christianity. The hallmark upon a silver article does not make it silver, but it gives us an official guarantee that it is silver. It assures us of its genuineness. What then are these things which assure us of the genuineness of Christians—things which so definitely accompany salvation that if they be present we know that salvation also is present? This question is answered in verse 10. And the answer is—they are many little acts which reveal genuine love for the saints.

Some of us may feel inclined to exclaim :—
"How extraordinary! I should have thought

that great acts of faith, great exploits of devotion to God would better have revealed reality than that." In so saying, or thinking we should be wrong. Under stress of emotion or sudden enthusiasm great acts are sometimes accomplished which are no true index to the heart. It is in these little things that we reveal our true selves far more truly. Ministering to the saints, who are the people of God, they showed their love toward God Himself.

It is one thing to minister to a saint because I happen to like him or her, and quite another to minister to a saint just as a saint; and it is this latter which is spoken about here. The former is a thing which might be done by an unconverted person; the latter is only possible to one who possesses the divine nature. Now this is just the point here. The things that accompany salvation are the things which manifest the divine nature; and things which therefore prove the reality of faith, in a way that the possession of miraculous powers or the outward privileges of Christianity never can.

Being thus assured of the salvation of the mass of those to whom he wrote, there is but one word of exhortation at this point. The writer urges them to go on doing as they had done—to continue diligently in this good way to the end, in the full assurance that their hope was not misplaced.

Hope has a very large place in connection

with the faith of Christ, just as it had in the bygone dispensation. *Then*, whether patriarchs or prophets or just the people of God, they all had their eyes directed forward to the good things to come at the advent of the Messiah. *Now* the good things have been manifested in Christ—full atonement has been made, our consciences have been purged, we have received the gift of the Spirit. Yet even so we are not in the full enjoyment of the good things. For that we await the second coming of the Lord. What we actually have at the present moment we have in faith, and we enjoy by the power of the Spirit, for He is the Earnest of all we shall inherit. We are saved, in hope of all that is to come.

It is very important for us to be clear as to this, and even more important it was for these converted Hebrews to be clear as to it. How often did they get reproached by their unconverted relations ! How often taunted with their folly in giving up all the outward glories of the Mosaic system with its temple, its altar, its sacrifices, its priesthood—and for what ? For a Master whom they could not see, for He had left them, and for a whole range of things as invisible as He ! What fools they appeared to be ! But were they really fools ?

They were not. And if instructed in that which our chapter says they would be able to give very good reason for what they had

done. They would be able to say, "It is really we and not you who are following in the footsteps of our father Abraham. Promises were made to him and you seem to have forgotten them, settling down as though contented with the shadow system of the law, which was given through Moses as a provisional thing. We have received Christ, and in Him we have the pledge of the fulfilment of every promise which ever was given, and we have fresh, and even brighter, promises besides."

We need to have a hope which is resting upon a very well established basis if we are to hold it with full assurance. It is this thought which leads to verses 13-18. Abraham stands before us as a great example not only of faith but of hope also. It was when he had offered up Isaac, as recorded in Genesis xxii., that the promise of blessing was given, which culminated in "the Seed," which is Christ, according to Galatians iii. 16. That great promise had behind it not only the authority which always accompanies the bare Word of God, but also the added sanction of His solemn Oath.

How beautiful is this glimpse which we have of God, stooping to consider the feebleness and infirmities which mark even the best of His creatures ! Here are Abraham and the later heirs of the promises. How easily their faith may waver ! How

full of uncertainties is the world in which they find themselves ! Then God will condescend to their weakness and reinforce His Word by His Oath, saying, "By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD."

His Word and His Oath. These are two immutable things—things that never change, never shift, never shake. They establish for us the immutability of His counsel. Never, *never*, NEVER, will He fail in any promise He has given, in anything which He has said that He will do.

And all this, you notice, is valid for us to-day. Verse 18 makes this very clear. What God was for Abraham He is for us. This is the beauty of these Old Testament unfoldings of God. What He is. He is in all times and places, and to all. The strong consolation flowing from these two immutable things is to be enjoyed by us who have embraced the Christian hope.

The Hebrews are said to have "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope." Why put it thus ? Because it would at once carry their minds back to the regulations given concerning the cities of refuge, in Numbers xxxv. Those regulations had a typical significance which was exactly fulfilled in the case of the converted Jew. He was just like the manslayer who had fled to the nearest city of refuge.

Had Israel's national sin, in crucifying

their Messiah, been reckoned as murder by God there would have been absolutely no hope. All must have fallen before the avenger of blood. The prayer of Jesus on the cross was however, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That was just as if He had said, "Father, account this sin of theirs to be manslaughter and not murder." God heard that prayer, so there was hope even for those who encompassed His death. Consequently on the Day of Pentecost Peter preached forgiveness for those who would turn in faith to the risen and exalted Jesus. That day the heavenly city of refuge was opened and there fled to it three thousand souls.

Multitudes of course did not believe, and consequently did not flee for safety, and they fell before the avenging Romans when Jerusalem was destroyed. Their unbelieving descendants in a future day have to face the great tribulation, and the judgment of God. But those who have entered the city of refuge have a hope set before them. It is connected with the moment when Jesus shall come in His glory; when He will cease to exercise His priestly functions after the pattern of Aaron and do so after the pattern of Melchisdec. Thus will be fulfilled the type as to the change of the priest (See Numbers xxxv. 25). When that takes place our hopes will be realized with Him in glory, and on earth it will be the time of jubilee, when every man will go back to his own

proper inheritance.

The Christian's hope is heavenly; therefore it is said to enter into "that within the veil." *Within the veil* was the holiest of all, typical of the third heaven; that is, the immediate presence of God. *That* within the veil was the ark of the covenant, typical of Christ. Now Christ is entered into the immediate presence of God, and that on our behalf. He is entered as Forerunner and as High Priest. Our hope being centred in Him acts as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. Our hope has anchored itself already in the glorified Lord Jesus. We are already anchored to the Person and the place, to whom and to which we are going. It is as though an outgoing Atlantic liner found herself securely attached to New York by an anchor pitched in New York harbour, before ever she had got clear of the English Channel !

The fact that Christ has become our Fore-runner guarantees that we who are the after-runners shall reach the place where He is. And as High Priest He ever lives to carry us through. That He should be our Fore-runner is amazing grace; for in the East where these customs prevail the forerunner is a person of no consequence who clears the way for the important personage who follows after. Think of the Lord Jesus taking a place like that on our account !

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Is the work of Christ, making purgation for sins, connected with the Passover, Brazen Altar or Mercy Seat? If all are taken in, what is the distinct teaching of each? A little help on this would be appreciated.—NORTH SHIELDS

EACH of the three is typical of the work of Christ, without any doubt; and each has its own special significance.

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the Passover. The shed blood of the lamb pointed forward to the value of the precious blood of Christ. But the point here is not so much the blood *shed* as the blood applied, not the blood *presented before God* but rather the blood *sprinkled on the houses of the Israelites*, sheltering thereby the firstborn from the stroke of judgment. That is to say, the Passover presents to us in type the death of Christ in its substitutionary aspect, rather than in its propitiatory aspect; how it covers and protects the believer, rather than how it meets and satisfies all the righteous claims of God.

The Brazen Altar was the place of sacrifice in connection with the tabernacle and the temple. Again and again it is spoken of as "the altar of burnt offering." Evidently that was the main thought connected with it though the other sacrifices were also offered there. Moreover if we examine the chapters in Exodus, in which we have the instructions for the making of the tabernacle, we shall find that first, in chapter xxv., come those details which typify the way in which *God has approached us* by way of revelation, and then, in chapter xxvii., we come

to the details which have to do with *our approach to God*. Now the first item in chapter xxvii. is the brazen altar.

We believe therefore that the special point typified in it is the death of Christ as the ground of our approach to God. He must of course make expiation for our sins, as the sin offering; but we draw near in all the fragrance of His work as the burnt offering.

The Mercy Seat was typical of Christ, as is so plainly indicated in Romans iii. 25. The word for "propitiation" in this verse is literally "mercy seat." The ancient mercy seat was the golden lid of the ark of the covenant, and on it was sprinkled the blood on the great day of atonement. That blood, as we may easily perceive, was *exclusively for the eye of God*. Once sprinkled, and the high priest having withdrawn, no eye but His saw it for a whole year. When we consider the work of Christ as a propitiation, we think of it as meeting the divine claims and satisfying the divine glory in respect of sin. Of all aspects of the work of Christ this is the most fundamental, and stands first.

Have we made the matter plain? What we have said as to the distinction between the three, may be summed up as follows:—

The Passover is His death as a Substitute for believers.

The Brazen Altar is His death as the basis of our approach to God.

The Mercy Seat is His death as a Propitiation, meeting the divine claims in regard to sin.

CONVERSION AND ITS NECESSITY.

(From Notes of an Address).

CONVERSION is a term used in connection with science, politics, commerce and religion. We speak, for instance, of

1. Converting iron into steel:
2. A man being converted as to his political principles:
3. Converting stocks and shares:
4. A man being converted in turning to God.

It is with this last use of the term that we have to do. Conversion is not merely a change of religion—though the word may be used in that sense sometimes: conversion according to God is infinitely more than that. Man has often been termed “a religious animal,” and there are nearly as many religions as nations. If the Word of God has to speak of a “pure religion” there is an impure one somewhere! God’s Word speaks of “love unfeigned,” and of “faith unfeigned,” and thus it infers that a spurious love and a spurious faith are in existence. Satan always imitates what God introduces.

The question that is worthy of our consideration is, What did our Lord mean when He attached such vital importance to conversion? "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). Depend upon it, when He says, "*ye shall not*" He means an absolute prohibition. It is not, "perhaps ye shall not," nor, "ye may not," nor, "ye must not." Who is going to twist the "*shall not*" of the Son of God and bring it within the bounds of a possibility? Whatever it may mean, it indicates the one absolute necessity for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, without which there is total exclusion. When in another place He said, "How hardly shall they . . . enter," His disciples immediately took the expression to mean absolute exclusion, for they cried, "Who then can be saved?" Here He does not say, "how hardly shall," but, "ye shall not" positively.

To plead ignorance as to the meaning of these words of the Son of God, and manifest no concern about them, merely shows complete unbelief and a serious indifference. A government order exists that except persons can show a passport they shall not be allowed to board a certain passenger steamship. What folly it would be to expect that a plea of ignorance of the meaning of a passport would be accepted, and thus you would be allowed on board. It would be an equal folly to imagine that a railway

ticket, a steamboat ticket, or even a bank pass-book would admit you, however satisfactory it might be to yourself. "Except you show your passport, you cannot board the ship," would be the word. How much greater the folly to expect to enter the kingdom of heaven neglecting CONVERSION, which is not merely a desirable thing but imperatively indispensable.

Let us be quite clear *what conversion is NOT*. It is not merely a change from Judaism to Christianity, or from Romanism to Protestantism—that is, a change of outward religion. We have often asked the question, "Are you converted?" Once we got the reply, "Oh, yes! I was converted when I was fourteen years old. I was confirmed by Bishop —." But confirmation is *not* conversion, though a curate once told us that conversion is only the non-conformist way of speaking of confirmation, and that it all really means the same thing.

Conversion is not an outward reformation of character, a subtraction of bad habits and an addition of good ones. That would be *diversion* and not conversion—a diversion from the dirty side of the broad road to the clean raised-up causeway of respectability—clean and uplifted, but on *the same broad road*.

What then IS conversion? If we turn up a dictionary we may find it defined as "a change of state." That is good so far.

We may see the outward effect of that by a change of habits and behaviour. It is a moral and inward change resulting doubtless in an outward change of life. It is a moral revolution that takes place in a person. Satan too knows how vital it all is. "Except ye be converted," says Christ in Matthew xviii. "Lest they . . . should be converted," is Satan's objective, as stated in Acts xxviii. 27.

Man in his unconverted state is described in Romans iii. He does not seek after God. There is no fear of God before his eyes. This is the result of being "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18). "Alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (Col. i. 21). Not one pulsation of our moral being toward God; enemies too in our mind; no desire to look in His direction; no seeking after God; no fear or regard for God before us. Conversion is the turning round that takes place within us. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. At one time we turned away from God and any mention of Him: now we have turned to Him. That is conversion.

Luke viii. gives us a sample of a man under the power of Satan. "What have I to do with Thee?" he cries to Jesus. He did not want to have anything to do with Jesus; he wanted to be left alone. Within a few hours he is sitting at the feet of Jesus, and his cry is virtually, "Let me be

with Thee! " A moral revolution had taken place, and all his state and feelings had been reversed.

Alienation is the word that describes our *natural* state. *Conversion* is the word that marks the beginning of our *spiritual* state.

Naturally we have no affinity for God but the very opposite. The poles of a magnet could not be more opposite. Bring the south pole of a magnet to the south pole of a compass needle, and you see how the nearer the magnet approaches the needle the further the needle flies away from the magnet. The nearer a sinner gets to God the more miserable he becomes. Bring a warm-hearted, soul-loving servant of God near to a sinner and he soon finds a reason for getting out of his way. There is such a moral difference between the two that, until it is overcome, you will not get them together.

Look at that hen with a brood of ducklings! They rush to the very thing that she avoids. They find their delight in that which would mean her death. They naturally turn from the hen to the water. How can you alter that? Suppose some power could instantly impart the nature of a chicken to the ducklings. Then suddenly they want to get out of the thing they once loved. They once saw nothing but pleasure in it: now they see nothing but

danger and death in it, and how readily they respond to the cluck of the hen. They now as readily run to her as once they ran from her. They are converted. Their state is changed by the introduction of a new nature. The change in their habits is due to a change in their nature.

An external change is not sufficient. No mere change of environment will meet the case. A sow that is washed may turn to wallowing in the mud. You may see it at one moment in the filth at the edge of a mud pool, and then at another rooting up the grass that grows at the margin in order to feed upon the roots of the plants. But if you could perform the miracle of imparting the nature of a sheep to that sow, how quickly it would seek other surroundings and a new kind of food.

Just as a sheep hates the mud so would the pig now hate it. It would shew it by seeking the green pastures, not to root up the grass but to feed on its tender blades. What a change! What a conversion! It was not done by driving it from its filthy surroundings into the green paddock, but by the impartation of a new nature.

In the light of these things it is not difficult to see the connection between "new birth" and "conversion." In John iii. we have the Lord saying, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom." In Matthew xviii. He

says, "Except ye be converted . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom." The one is the underlying cause; the other is the effect. But both are divine operations and not by any effort of man, as is intimated in John i. 13.

"Not of blood," that is, not as the result of hereditary advantages, obtained by natural descent.

"Nor the will of the flesh,"—not that I make up my mind to do it.

"Nor of the will of man,"—not what others are determined to do.

"But of God,"—it is a divine operation from the beginning. We are born of Him. No work of man can bring it about. No ordinance of man can substitute it.

This is why we have prayer meetings before we preach the Gospel—and should have them far more frequently, and marked by far greater fervency, than we do. We know that God alone can do the work. A great preacher of a bygone century used to give the following advice:—Preach as though all the work depended on you. Pray as knowing that all the work depends upon God.

The manufacture of iron and steel furnishes us with a striking illustration, in the way that the changes are labelled. When the work of smelting is done, pig-iron is

produced, but it is altogether useless in that form. To make it workable the pig-iron is put into puddling furnaces and when molten the puddler churns it with an iron rod until he sees particles separating from the mass. In due course other particles separate and it is his business to roll them all into one mass of soft iron, which is ultimately taken out to the steam hammer and the rolling mills. This change, that takes place under chemical action, is called in the iron trade, "coming to nature."

There is another process gone through in manufacturing iron into steel. It is called in the steel trade, "conversion."

It is not a little striking that when these changes have once taken place the metal can never go back to its original state, any more than, when the farmer's wife has finished the churning, she could turn the butter back to cream.

In the case of new birth and conversion it is a spiritual change, but never can it be undone.

Let us be careful how we use these great terms. Conversion, salvation, forgiveness, peace with God, eternal life, mean all the same thing to many people, and thereby they lose much helpful instruction.

The prodigal's conversion, as we take it, took place at the pig trough, but his for-

giveness when he met his father. "I will arise and go," is the language of a heart turning in God's direction. "He arose and came," is but the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual turning which has taken place. He turned in the far country, but he was kissed and forgiven at home.

ART. C.

"THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST."

1 *Peter i.* 19.

I WANT all our young friends to note and think over carefully how very much depends upon "*The blood of Jesus.*"

The day in which we live, is a terrible one as regards the number and variety of deceits and snares which are abroad. The great "adversary, the devil" (1 Peter v. 8), is engaging the young with any and everything except the "one thing needful" (Luke x. 42) and when too late, I fear many will find out they have been duped by him, and that they are lost for ever.

But what a great mercy if you, my reader, have already, in your youth, been awakened to your sinnership, and have fled to Jesus the only Saviour. He was ready, waiting, and has gladly received you, has He not? And now He will keep you, as one of His

own, for all eternity. Meanwhile He would have you to be "growing in grace and in the knowledge of [Him,] our Lord and Saviour." (2. Peter 3. 18.) You can gain this knowledge by loving, reading and learning all you can from *the Holy Scriptures*. In the Old Testament we read "Buy the truth and sell it not." (Proverbs xxiii. 23.); this means that it will cost you something to obtain this knowledge; but without it you can never be devoted, prayerful, or useful.

The knowledge of the Lord and Saviour will give you real joy and make your heart burn, so that you will use every opportunity of passing on the blessed news to others, who as yet know Him not.

Now ponder prayerfully the six following very precious Scriptures. Find them in your own Bible, and let it be your delight to render our beloved Saviour and Lord true thanksgiving, that is, not only of the lips, but of your life.

These are only a few of the passages concerning this momentous subject; I hope you will be encouraged to search the Scriptures for many more.

With His blood He "purchased" us.

Acts xx. 28.

With His blood He "justified" us.

Rom. v. 9.

With His blood He "redeemed" us.

Eph. i. 7.

With His blood He "sanctified" us.

Heb. xiii. 12.

With His blood He "cleansed" us from
all sin.

1 John i. 7.

With His blood He made us nigh.

Eph. ii. 13.

J. R.

THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT ON ITS TRIAL.

A TOURIST approached the curator of the Uffizi gallery in Florence, Italy, with the remark, "Are these your masterpieces? I certainly do not see much in them."

The curator replied, "Sir, these masterpieces are not on their trial. It is the visitors that are on their trial." In other words the opinion of the visitors would not decide whether the pictures were masterpieces, but their opinion of the masterpieces would prove whether they could appreciate true art. Their opinions proved what **THEY** were, and did not affect the pictures.

The remark of the tourist only showed to the curator his utter lack of appreciation of form and colour, of the genius of the old masters represented in the gallery, whose

works had delighted real connoisseurs for many years. His remark only betrayed the impudence of a conceited ignorance. He was on HIS trial, and failed miserably.

It is so with the Bible, though in a far higher sense. The pictures were the produce of genius. The Bible is the work of God. It is not on its trial. It tests man according to his attitude towards it.

We need not elaborate how the Bible has proved itself—in the fulfilment of prophecy, in the delineation of such a person as Christ, in the changed lives of those, who have come under its power. There are plenty of books that will furnish these proofs in abundant measure.

The great trouble to-day lies in the fact that men are ignorant of the Bible. An atheistical colonel at a dinner party declared that the Koran, the sacred book of the Mohammedans, was superior to the Bible. A Christian officer in the company asked him if he had ever read the Bible through. He had to admit that he had not. He then enquired if he had ever seen the Koran let alone read it. He had to admit that he had never even seen the Koran. "Then said the officer, "to say that the Koran is superior to the Bible when you have never read the Bible through, and you have never even seen the Koran, is an opinion not founded on knowledge. It is the remark of an arrant humbug."

This may be an extreme case, but it is a sample of nine tenths of the adverse comments on the Bible. What is badly needed to-day is the knowledge of the Bible. The Bible tests everyone of us. The Bible is not on its trial. Indeed the Bible is the universal judge for we read that "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." (Galatians iii. 22).

It is well when the Word of God puts us in our true place, for then we are ready to accept God's way of blessing.

Then again how many men attack the inconsistencies of Christians as if they were the inconsistencies of the Bible. They think that the excrescences of Christian belief, that have no foundation in the Bible, are the excrescences of that venerable book. We plead for fair play for the Bible.

I was speaking to a man a few moments ago, who denied that the Bible was the Word of God. I pressed upon him that his opinion was not formed by a true and accurate knowledge of the Bible. I said to him that if the Bible was not what it purported to be, it was the very worst of books. I then asked him, "if a man really governs his actions by the Bible, is he not a man you can absolutely trust for honesty, truthfulness, virtue, morality, kindness, consideration?" He had to admit that this was so. I then said, "A bad book will not produce lives like that. It has produced

thousands and tens of thousands of such lives."

The book lives. It produces life. The claim that it lives is seen in that it produces life in those, who come under its power. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). Here we get the claim that the Word of God lives, and that it produces life. It is the only ancient book that rings true to the reality of things at the present time.

May we ask in conclusion, have you allowed this book to put you on your trial? Whether an unsaved person, or a Christian, true life and living is tested by the Book.

A. J. POLLOCK.

FOUR TRUE INCIDENTS.

IF a friend to whom you are greatly indebted should ask you to speak a word to your acquaintances in favour of some cause in which he was interested you would do it readily enough.

Your Saviour, who has done so much for you, asks you to preach His gospel wherever you can. Do you comply as readily with His wish as with that of an earthly friend? It requires little effort to speak if your heart is warm with love for Him, and no one can

estimate the good you may do to souls that are perishing for want of a friendly word of warning.

I.

Two young men stopped at a wayside brook to water their horses. They were strangers, travelling in different directions in more senses than one. As they paused a moment, one addressed a kindly word to the other about the interests of his soul. Then they both passed, never to meet again.

But the young man addressed could not shake off the impression of those words, but turned them over and over during his solitary ride. This circumstance led to his conversion, and, though a young man of great wealth and brilliant prospects, he renounced all in order to preach the gospel in a foreign land. Not till some one sent him *The Life of James Brainerd Taylor*, with a portrait, did he learn who it was to whom he was so much indebted.

II.

Just try the experiment of speaking a word for the Saviour to the acquaintances whom you meet so often who have no hope in Christ. They expect it of you.

A young lady at a boarding-school seemed so utterly indifferent, so studiously cold, that though it was a time of awakening among the girls, no one felt willing to address her.

At length one who had long mourned over her case determined to make at least one direct appeal. That appeal brought a gush of tears from that seemingly haughty girl.

"I thought no one cared for my soul," she said, with deep feeling. She was soon rejoicing in the knowledge of forgiveness, and her case taught me a lesson I can never forget.

"If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezek. xxxiii. 8).

III.

On one occasion the late Charles Simeon was summoned to the dying bed of a brother. Entering the room, his relative extended his hand, and, with deep emotion, said, "I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed through neglecting the salvation of my soul!"

"Nay, my brother," replied Mr. Simeon, "I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters."

"Yes," exclaimed the dying man, "you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat and told me that I was unconverted, and that if I died in that state I should be lost. And now I am

dying, and but for God's mercy I might have been for ever undone! "

No wonder that this affecting scene made a lasting impression on Mr. Simeon's mind.

IV.

A young lady at school was urged to attend to her soul's salvation. "I was much interested in this subject a few months ago," she replied. "Miss L—— was to spend a night with me, and I was very glad. I had often heard her voice in the girls' prayer-meeting, praying for the conversion of the scholars, and I felt sure she would talk with me about my soul. But she said not a word about it. All her conversation was about some new dresses we had, and about the merry evening she had spent. I tried to introduce the subject once by saying that I had been laughed at for being so sober, and that some one had said they believed I should get converted if I stayed in Miss S——'s school, and that I had answered I hoped I might. Miss L—— only remarked, 'I hope you will too, Julia,' and then she returned to the dresses again. To tell you the truth, I have not troubled myself much about the matter since that evening."

And I fear the poor girl has given no further thought to it. When last I saw her, she seemed as insensible as a rock. Even a sister's dying in all the agonies of remorse for a godless life was not sufficient to arouse

her. At whose hand will her blood be required?

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews vii.*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

IN the last verse of chapter vi. the Lord Jesus has been presented to us in two characters. First, as the Forerunner; His arrival in heaven being the preliminary to the arrival there of the children whom God has given Him. Second, as an High Priest after Melchizedec's order; whose ministry ensures the safe arrival of the children, and the fulness of their blessing. This last verse also has completed the digression which began with verse 11 of chapter v., and has brought us back to the exact point we had reached in verse 10 of that chapter.

Consequently in the first verse of chapter vii. we resume the interrupted flow of thought, and the whole chapter is occupied with the contrast between the Priesthood of

Christ and that of Aaron. We are made to see the immeasurable superiority of Christ as a Priest of Melchizedec's order; and we hear at least of some of those things, which were hard to be uttered to a people who were dull of hearing. We, being Gentiles, may not have our minds so filled with the faded glories of the Aaronic priesthood, and hence we may not find the theme so difficult.

In the first three verses of our chapter we are given a most graphic summary of all that is recorded of Melchizedec in the latter part of Genesis xiv. We learn that he is introduced there with the design of furnishing us with a type of the Son of God. His very name had a meaning, as is so often the case with Biblical names, and interpreted, it means, King of righteousness. He is presented as King of Salem, which interpreted means, peace. In the coming millennial age the Lord Jesus will be manifested in just that double character.

Moreover, in the Old Testament story Melchizedec is introduced abruptly; no genealogy is given, no mention is made of his birth, his death, nor of the number of his years, no hint is given of another arising to succeed him in his priestly office. This is the more remarkable inasmuch as Genesis is exactly the book which does furnish us with just those details in regard to the other striking characters that pass across its pages. Why then were these details

omitted as regards Melchizedec? Just that he might be a more accurate type of the Son of God. We believe this to be the meaning of the third verse, and not, as some have imagined, that he was some kind of supernatural personage.

Having then this condensed summary in our minds we are bidden in verse 4 to consider in detail his greatness as contrasted with Aaron or even Abraham; and that firstly, as shown in connection with *the law as to tithes*. This occupies verses 4 to 10.

Aaron and his descendants, who came out of the tribe of Levi, were supported by the tithes which they received from the rest of the children of Israel. Yet the patriarch Abraham, out of whom came Levi and Aaron and all his descendants, paid tithes to Melchizedec. Hence it is argued, Levi and Aaron, who were in this way acknowledged as superiors by the rest of Israel, themselves acknowledged Melchizedec as their superior, by Abraham their father.

And further, Abraham, who paid tithes to Melchizedec, also received blessing from him; and it is said, "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." So in this way also the superiority of Melchizedec to Abraham and his descendants is established. The point here, be it remembered, is not that Melchizedec was a greater man than Abraham as to his

character, or that he knew more of God—as to that we have no information, one way or the other—but simply that he must be acknowledged as holding from God a higher position; and in that higher position or order he was typical of Christ.

Verses 11 to 14 are occupied with another point of the argument, based upon the fact that our Lord sprang out of Juda, and hence had no link with the priests of Aaron's order. He was an altogether *different* priest and of *a different order*. What did this show? It showed that perfection had not been reached by the Levitical order of things, and it indicated that a change had come in as regards the whole law-system of which the Levitical priesthood was a part. We shall find rather more detail as to that change when we read the next chapter.

In verses 14 to 19 the argument is enforced by another consideration. Aaron's priesthood was instituted in connection with the law. Christ's priesthood is sustained in the power of *endless life*. The law is here spoken of as, "the law of a carnal commandment," inasmuch as its commands were all aimed either at curbing and suppressing the evil tendencies of the flesh, or at bringing out of it the good that pleases God. But then, as we are told in the epistle to the Romans, the flesh is not subject to the law of God, and in it no good dwells.

Hence the commandment going before Christ has been set aside, as verse 18 informs us. Though in itself holy and just and good, it was rendered weak and unprofitable by reason of the bad and impossible nature of the flesh with which it had to deal. Verse 18 does not for one moment mean that the holy demands of God have been abated, or that they have been set aside so that now men may just act as they please. But it does mean that the whole law system has been set aside in favour of something much higher and better.

In order that this may be plainly seen we quote the passage as rendered in the New Translation by J. N. Darby, "For there is a setting aside of the commandment going before for its weakness and unprofitableness, (for the law perfected nothing,) and the introduction of a better hope by which we draw nigh to God." As in chapter vi., so here, Christianity is described as "a hope." Only it is "a better hope." When Israel entered the land of promise, they took it as a foretaste of better and larger things to come with the advent of their Messiah. We Christians have entered into good things of a spiritual sort. We have the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and the gift of the Spirit; yet they are but foretastes of the fulness of heavenly blessing which is to come. A better hope has been introduced, and by that hope—since it centres in Christ, who as High Priest has gone for

us within the veil—we *draw nigh to God*, instead of being kept at a distance as was the case with the most eminent saint under the law. This thought we shall find greatly amplified when we come to chapter x.

The law, as we are reminded here, made nothing perfect. God was not perfectly made known in connection with it, nor was redemption perfectly accomplished, nor were believers perfected as regards their consciences. It came in by the way as a provisional measure, filling up the time until Christ came. Now, Christ being come, it is superseded by something which goes far beyond it, both in the standard it sets, and in what it gives and accomplishes.

In verses 20 to 22 we go a step further. Our attention is drawn to the fact that the Lord Jesus was instituted as Priest for ever *by the oath of God*. There was no such impressive and solemn word when Aaron was instituted in the priest's office. This indicates that there is a better testament, or covenant, connected with Jesus. Moreover He stands related to that covenant in a way that neither Moses nor Aaron ever were to the old covenant. He has become the Surety of it; that is, He has accepted full responsibility in regard to it, has become bail for it, so that should anything go wrong the cost of it would fall upon Him. This is of course full guarantee that nothing will go wrong with it to all eternity. All that is

established in connection with the new covenant will abide.

Another contrast is brought before us in verses 23 and 24. Aaron and his descendants exercised their office one after the other and died. The Lord Jesus abides for ever and consequently His priesthood is *unchangeable*, that is, *it never has to be transmitted to another*. The happy result which flows from this is stated in verse 25. Those that avail themselves of His priestly services, coming to God by Him, are saved "to the uttermost," or, "completely," because He always lives to make intercession for them. The salvation here spoken of is that daily, momentary salvation from every adverse power, which every believer needs all the way home to glory.

This verse is often quoted to show that the Lord is able to save the worst of sinners. That is most happily true, and the verse that states it is 1 Timothy i. 15. Had that been the point here our verse would doubtless have ended, "seeing He died for them and rose again." But the word is, "seeing He ever liveth." The salvation therefore is that which flows to us by His life of unbroken priestly intercession.

Suppose a distressed Jew had applied to the high priest of his day for that compassion and help which he should be ready

to give him, according to the second verse of chapter v. He finds him perhaps a most kindly and helpful man. But on going a little later, just when the crisis of his case has arrived, he learns that he has that very day died! You can easily imagine the Jew's distress. Another man who knows nothing of his case, and possibly of an entirely different disposition, becomes high priest. There was no salvation to the uttermost for him in the former high priest, and if he now gets any salvation at all he can only get it by beginning all over again with the new man. Thanks be to God, no experience at all akin to this can ever befall us. Our High Priest lives eternally.

Let us not leave verse 25 without noticing that in it believers are described as those "that come unto God by Him." It is a very prominent thought in this epistle that the Christian has boldness and liberty to come to God, whereas in the former dispensation all true access to God was forbidden. These words also indicate that the great objective in all Christ's priestly service is to bring us to God, and to maintain us there. On the one hand there is no access to God save BY HIM. On the other, all His compassionate service on our behalf, sympathizing, succouring, saving, is a means to an end. The end being this, that thereby lifted above the things that otherwise would overwhelm us, we might be maintained in the presence of God.

The last three verses of our chapter seem to clinch the whole argument and to sum up the situation, and we find that everything hinges upon *the greatness of the ONE* who is our High Priest.

What an extraordinary statement is made in verse 26! We should certainly have reversed it, and stated that seeing our High Priest was so wonderful a rather remarkable people were suited to Him. But no, the statement here is, that an High Priest of this remarkable character was suited to us! As the Holy Ghost views things, the many sons being led to glory, the Christian company, bear such a character that no less an High Priest becomes them.

The character of our High Priest is presented to us in a seven-fold way; and each item gives us a point of contrast with the priests of old. The first three items, holy, harmless, undefiled, present no difficulty. It is obvious that none of these three things characterized in an absolute way any priest of Aaron's race.

The fourth is, "separate from sinners," or, more accurately, "separated from sinners." It refers not only to the fact that He was ever wholly separate to God in His spirit and ways, even while eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, but to the fact that now in resurrection He is apart altogether from the whole scene where

sinner's move. "In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 10). We may quote also the Lord's own words in John xvii. 19., "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." The root meaning of "sanctify" is *to set apart*, and the Lord was alluding to the place He was about to take up in resurrection and in glory. In our verse, the thought of His glory comes in the fifth item which closes it, "Made higher than the heavens." Our High Priest is not merely a risen Man, but exalted above all. The heavens and all that they contain are beneath His feet. If we consider these five items alone, we can see that no high priest constituted under the law is worthy of mention beside Him.

But there is more. A sixth contrast fills verse 27. They offered up daily sacrifices, not only for the sins of the people but for their own sins as well. He offered one sacrifice, and He offered it once for all. It was for the people truly, but it was not for Himself. It was "HIMSELF," instead of being *for* Himself. He was the Sacrifice as well as the Offerer! Here we have the great truth alluded to, which we shall find expanded in all its glorious details when we come to chapters ix. and x.

Seventhly, and lastly, there comes the contrast between the persons who held priestly office under the law, and the Person who

is our High Priest to-day. They were just men, with the usual infirmities of men. He is the Son Himself. This of course is the bed-rock fact upon which all stands. WHO HE IS, settles everything. It carries with it all the contrasts which have been dwelt upon in the chapter. Let us dwell upon it—He is the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

The word “consecrated” is really “perfected,” as the margin of a reference Bible will show. Here we get that word, *perfect* again, which we had in verse 9 of chapter v. There it was stated that His whole course of testing and obedience on earth having been brought to completion in death and resurrection, He became the Author of eternal salvation. Here we find that in the same way He became High Priest. The Son was eternally with the Father. He was Creator and Sustainer of all things. But it was not then that He assumed this office. It was when He had become Man, tasted all possible sorrows, endured all possible testings, suffered death and reached perfection in His risen glory, that He was constituted High Priest by the oath of God.

Now let us just meditate upon these things, giving them time to sink into mind and heart, and surely we shall be filled with confidence in His ability to save to the uttermost, and have our hearts filled with praise and thanksgiving to God.

F. B. HOLE.

“STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN.”

THIS was to be Peter's mission when he was restored after his denial of the Lord. He must be recovered himself if he was to help others in the Christian course. So it was that when brought back to communion and service the Lord said, “Feed my lambs . . . Shepherd my sheep . . . Feed my sheep.” Fulfilling our Lord's behest by his life and letters, by his practice and preaching, Peter strengthened his brethren in Christ.

And if ever there was a day when the saints of God needed strengthening, it is to-day. The word to us all therefore is, “Be strong in the Lord and in the might of His strength.” There is no weakness with Him. He is as enough for the last lap of the race as He was for the first. He is sufficient for His own until the journey is over and the goal is reached.

For our encouragement it has been pointed out that the power—the exceeding greatness of God's power *towards us* which wrought in Christ in raising Him from the dead and in quickening believers—is now working *in us* and is able to do “*above* all that we ask or think”—“*abundantly* above all that we ask or think,” “*exceeding* abundantly above all that we ask or think. It works *in us* so that we may enter into the

thoughts and purposes of our God and Father. And that same power operates *through us* to maintain the interests of our Lord Jesus here. It is in *that* power we are to be strong. It is an almighty power.

Every question concerning our blessing has been settled. Our sins are gone for ever. All that we were in the flesh has been judged. The Holy Spirit dwells in us to enable us to refuse the flesh and its lusts. Yes! all is settled for our individual blessing, and we are set up in His power to be a blessing to others, to "strengthen our brethren." Strengthen them for the service of the Lord—for the proclamation of the gospel, for "the work of the ministry" and for the succour of the saints—in order that they may stand, and having done all to stand; never yielding an inch of ground or an iota of truth to the enemy.

"Comfort the feeble minded, support the weak." "make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but rather let it be healed." There are the feeble minded; comfort them. There are the weak; support them. There are the lame; go in a straight path—be a good example to them lest they stumble.

It was the saying of one concerning a large meeting of Christians that that assembly "was like an old four post bedstead. There were four brothers who did the work

of the maintenance of the meetings, and the rest went to sleep inside."

The four sought to strengthen their brethren—the others needed the strengthening. Which was the more honourable position?

Every one of us contributes power or weakness to the whole assembly of God, and to any company of the children of God with whom we may be found. If we come to meet others while we are walking in the Spirit we take a measure of spiritual health and strength to all, for "if one member is honoured all the members rejoice with it." On the other hand if "one member suffer all the members suffer with it."

A solemn thought this! And we cannot alter the truth—we must carry power or weakness with us wherever we are found. Each of us is a help or a hindrance to those about us.

Our privilege is to be a help—to be power for others, and as we are this we shall strengthen our brethren.

"There are many passengers on board the ship, but not many who work the ship," was the way it was put by another old Christian.

This is true of the church at large and it is all too largely true of each meeting of

Christians. A few are the workers and the others are borne along by their aid. And this has ever been the case in the history of the church on earth. There have been the strong and there have been the weak.

Surely the more honourable place should be coveted by us. We should earnestly desire to be strength and not weakness to our fellow-believers. *And every one of us may be* in the power of *His* might. A privilege indeed to be for His pleasure in the help of His loved ones!

And as we look around and see so many of the Lord's loved ones without peace and assurance, and so many needing to be fed and nourished up in the words of faith and of sound doctrine, we may well be stirred to activity of service for their blessing. Our Lord is at hand and His reward is with Him.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

INGLIS FLEMING.

Even our prayers bear witness to our feebleness, yet with crippled Jacob we may have power with God and prevail.

When did the answer come from God, "You have counted too much on Me. You have imagined a mercy in Me, that I have not"?

“FALLEN FROM GRACE.”

(*From notes of an address*).

THERE is no salvation at all apart from the Grace of God. This being so, grace is a thing to which we all are indebted, and yet so few of us seem to really understand its wonderful character.

The word, *grace*, is used with at least two shades of meaning in Scripture. It signifies, firstly, a principle of blessing opposed to law: secondly, a position of favour before God, into which we are introduced by the Lord Jesus on the ground of His work, when we believe.

There are a number of contrasts found in Scripture, such as Christ and Satan, who are always opposed the one to the other; as also the Spirit and the flesh. Law and grace furnish us with a contrast of this sort, and it is the confounding of these two which plunges so many into distress. So let us point out some of the differences between them.

Law makes *demands* upon us, whereas grace *gives* to us.

Law aims at *producing* goodness *from* us; grace *brings* goodness *to* us.

Law says, *love God*: grace says, *God loves us*.

Law says, *do and live*: grace says, *live and do*.

Law *condemns*: grace *justifies*.

Law entails *bondage*: grace leads to *liberty*.

Law was definitely imposed upon *Israel*: grace address itself to *all mankind*.

"Fallen from grace," is an expression which occurs in Galatians v. 4, and it is usually taken to mean that we may fall out of the grace of God altogether, that we may utterly lose His favour. Now there is a very vital question to be raised and answered. It is this, How can we be brought into God's favour at all, and how can we be kept in it? If it can be shown how we get into His favour we may then see how we can be kept in it, and whether it is possible for us ever to fall out of it. One thing is certain, one day or another everyone will be anxious to be in the favour of God, for to die under His frown will mean banishment from His presence for ever.

We are not left in any doubt as to what the answer to this important question is. God has "made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). He has taken us into His favour in that way and upon that ground alone. So it is what God sees in Christ that is the measure of our acceptance before Him.

We do not stand in the favour of God on account of our love towards Him, but on account of His love towards us. It is not because we have done something for Him, but because Christ has done something for us. In other words, God acts towards us on the ground of what He finds in Himself, and not on the ground of what He finds in us. Otherwise it would be our merits, our deserts,—could He find any merit at all in us, or were our deserts anything else than His unsparing judgment—and not grace at all. Nothing can be plainer than that merit and grace are contrary the one to the other. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," and again, "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. iv. 4; xi. 6).

It was the law that supposed there might be some merit in us to be rewarded. Grace supposes no merit in us at all. What we get we have no title to in ourselves, it is only ours as being in Christ. Alas! the idea of merit is so deeply ingrained into us that it is most difficult for us to get away from it. We may even think that our good conduct as Christians is necessary if God is to continue to smile upon us and keep us in His favour.

Now these Galatian believers had fallen from grace. This does not mean that they had turned away from Christ, or that they had fallen from salvation, but that they had

descended to the lower ground of *doing* instead of *believing*. The Apostle did not charge them with committing gross sins. But he did say that if they thought to increase their place in the favour of God, or increase their own holiness by adopting the legal rite of circumcision, they put themselves under the liability to do the whole law. That meant that they would even have to be justified by law, and *that* meant that in their thoughts they had fallen from the high place in which grace sets the believer. Read verses 3 and 4 of Galatians v., and you will see this.

To be, or seek to be, justified on the principle of law, or in any way to seek blessing from God on the ground of our being what we ought to be, is to drop from the lofty standard of God blessing according to what He finds in Himself, to His blessing according to what He finds in those He blesses. So it comes to this, that the moment we begin to think that God will be toward us according to what we are toward Him, we have fallen on to the ground of law. If we think we have got out of God's favour because we have not been what we should be, we have in our minds fallen from grace. How easy for us to begin by grace and yet get before long on to the ground of law!

It is grace to start with, and grace to go on with, and God will never deal with us on any other ground; if He did we should

soon lose our blessing. The idea, that so many have, is that bad conduct upon our part will make us fall out of God's favour, so that no longer will He smile upon us. Then of course we have to suppose that something must be done by us to re-instate ourselves in His favour. Some even go so far as to imagine that in such a case we need to be converted over again.

God however never deviates from grace in His dealings with His people. Once having taken them up in grace, He holds them fast in grace; and thoughts such as these only show that those who entertain them have *in their minds* dropped from grace to the far lower level of law. Many a man has fallen from grace who has not fallen into positive sin.

One thing however we must always remember. There is such a thing as the smile of complacency and approval as well as the smile of favour. It should be our ardent desire so to live to His glory that we may be always conscious of having the smile of His approval resting upon us. If our ways please Him He can give us a sense of it. Then it will be with us as with Enoch, of whom it is said that, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. xi. 5).

Yet even so, it is of the utmost importance that we have it ingrained into us that we are not brought into God's favour by

anything that we can do, nor are we kept in it by anything that we can do. That would be to make our acceptance, or our being held in favour, depend upon ourselves and upon our works, which is the very principle of law, and a tremendous fall from grace. It would mean that our conduct determined our blessing, either getting it or keeping it, and thus we should have whereof to boast, though not before God.

Everything however reaches us through the merits of Another. Our conduct good or bad adds nothing to, and detracts nothing from, the perfections of Christ in whom we are brought into favour. We are in Him, and it is on His account that we stand in God's favour, so when He gets out of favour, we shall get out of favour. Only then, and not before!

Someone perhaps still would like to ask—Will not security and certainty such as this have a tendency to make us careless about our life and service?

We will answer by asking another question. Here is a young woman who has just obtained a situation as a nurse. She knows very well that if she wishes to retain the favour of her mistress she must nurse the child well. Her situation depends upon her devotedness to her charge. Now who will nurse the child with greater tenderness and love—this nursemaid or the child's own mother, who nurses it from another motive

altogether and with no such fear hanging over her head?

Anyone of us can supply the answer to that question for ourselves!

ART. C.

WHAT SHALL WE WEAR?

AT first sight this may seem too trivial a question for the pages of *Edification*, but if we consider a little we shall find there is more in it than appears on the surface. The Scriptures have many references to clothing.

When our first parents sinned and forfeited their garment of light, they endeavoured to make a covering for themselves, and God, taking pity on their ruined state, made for them coats of skins, and clothed them. We shall remember Joseph's coat of many colours, and the garments of glory and beauty which God appointed for His priests; also the little coat, brought by the pious Hannah when she paid her yearly visit to the son whom she had lent to the Lord.

In Psalm xlv. 8, 13, 14, we read of bridal garments, fragrant with myrrh, and aloes and cassia, of clothing of wrought gold and raiment of needlework. In Job xxix. 14, we have a garment of righteousness; in Psalm civ. 2, "Thou coverest Thyself with

light as with a garment"; and in Isaiah lxi. 3, the garment of praise. The Holy Spirit has recorded for us what were the garments the Lord wore when here on earth, and has described the vesture that shall clothe Him when He comes as the Conqueror on the white horse in Revelation xix. 13-16. Again, bridal garments are mentioned in Revelation xix. 8—fine linen, clean and white—the righteousnesses of saints.

These are only a few of very many scriptures on the subject, but they are sufficient to shew how important it is.

It is generally accepted that clothing has a typical significance, it implies condition, or character; the clothing a person wears gives an indication of the mind within.

The clothing of Adam and Eve, "coats of skins" (Gen. iii. 21), witnessed that the blood of a victim—a substitute—had been shed. God Himself had provided the means by which their sin could be covered and by which they might be found before Him, suitable to His presence.

Joseph's "coat of many colours" (Gen. xxxvii. 3) is thought to have been the sign of his father's faith in his son's high destiny; it was the robe of a king's son, because Jacob treated him as his heir, and he was a striking type of "the Shepherd and Stone of Israel" to whom royal robes pre-eminently belonged.

Again, the robes of the high priest (Ex. xxviii.) were evidently symbolical of the characteristics of one who should draw near to God. The Holy Spirit seems to delight to delineate every detail of these garments. The coat of fine linen, speaking of spotless holiness; the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen with cunning work telling us of kingly glories; the robe of the ephod all of blue, the heavenly colour, shewing that the wearer should be here in the beauty of a heavenly man; the bells and pomegranates—golden bells of holy witness, golden pomegranates of holy fruit; the fair mitre with the golden crown engraved "Holiness to the Lord," all unfolding to us God's thoughts of what His priest should be, and unveiling beforehand a little of the glory of the Great High Priest to come. The priests, the sons of Aaron were appointed white robes, teaching them that only holy men might worship and serve God.

Bearing this in mind, and remembering the exhortations of the New Testament, "Modest apparel with shamefacedness [modesty] and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but . . . with good works," (1 Tim. ii. 9) and "Not outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart . . . a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. iii. 3, 4), is it not evident that the clothing of

the children of God in this world is an important matter ?

It should also be noted that the woman who prays or prophesies is to be covered, "Her hair is given her for a covering"—or veil (1 Cor. xi. 15).

So I venture to press this upon your earnest consideration. Is the dress of to-day really an indication of the mind within ? Do we, as saints, wish to be like those who with a godless mind clothe themselves in a way that the word of God forbids ? It is not that the outworn mode of yesterday is any more Christian than the fashion of to-day, nor that the particularly immodest mode of to-day is more than a passing phase, but what one pleads for is, that always, whatever may be the vogue of the moment, the Christian mind within may choose the clothing that shall be in accord with the mind of the Lord. It is written that "the Spirit of the Lord clothed Himself with Gideon" (Judges vi. 34, *margin*). Can it be thought that He could do so to-day with a man or woman whose outward appearance was entirely conformed to this world ?

There is no need to multiply words ; but dear young Christians, will you take this to heart seriously and prayerfully ? The gracious Lord Himself will teach you how you may please Him. How well He knew

our hearts when He put "wherewithal shall we be clothed" among the subjects of anxious care.

He said, "Consider the lilies" (Luke xii. 27), and this at once does away with the idea which has been put forth, that sad colours and unlovely forms commend themselves to Him. Nay rather, all that is fair and beautiful is alone suited to Him. The flowers that deck our gardens, the tiny things, each in its season, in the hedge-rows, the golden glory of the gorse by the wayside, and the little creatures of fur and feathers at our feet are all vocal with the praise of Him, who "hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Ecc. iii. 11). May our praise ascend to Him, and our prayer be "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" (Psa. xc. 17).

L. R.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews viii. 1—ix. 14*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

CHAPTER vii. having set before us in full detail the contrast between the temporary priesthood of Aaron and the abiding priesthood of Christ, chapter

viii. opens with a summary of the whole matter. In this summary, occupying verses 1 and 2 there are four things which we shall do well to note.

Firstly, the Lord Jesus is "*such* an High Priest," that is *such an One* as chapter vii. has shown Him to be. We need therefore to refresh our minds as to all those points of contrast which show forth the infinite superiority of Christ, as expounded in that chapter.

Secondly, being *such* He has taken His seat at the highest point of glory. The supreme Majesty has His throne in the heavens, and on the right hand of that throne He is seated—that is, in the place which signifies that all its executive functions are vested in Him. There is no weakness, no infirmity, in Him. The place He fills indicates that He wields all power. We learned that this exalted place is His when we had only read so far as verse 3 of chapter i.; but there we saw Him seated in glory as the answer to His finished work in the purging of sins. Here it is as the Priest that He is crowned with glory.

Thirdly, His priestly ministry concerns itself, not with the holy places on earth, constructed and pitched by Moses, which were the scenes of Aaron's ministry, but with that real sanctuary and tabernacle which came from the hand of God. The real sanctuary is the heaven of God's im-

mediate presence: the true tabernacle is that mighty universe of created things, wherein the third heaven of God's presence lies. Christ's priestly service has to do with God and His presence, as its centre; whilst within its circumference it embraces the whole creation of God. What a stupendous thought is this! How paltry do Aaron's glories look beside it!

Fourthly, such an High Priest as this is *ours*. "*WE have* such an High Priest"; while Israel had priests of Aaron's order. This one fact, apart from all other considerations, indicates how far in advance of Judaism is Christianity. These Hebrews, as we have seen, were inclined to slackness; some of them showed signs of going back. Let them lay hold of this, and how it would encourage them to hold fast, and keep on in the path of faith. Let us lay hold of it and we too shall feel its encouraging power.

Our thoughts turn from the High Priest Himself to His service and ministry when we read verses 3 to 6. It is helpful to notice that verse 5 is really a parenthesis; the whole verse might well be printed within brackets. The sense follows straight on from verse 4 to verse 6.

Though the Lord Jesus is not a priest of Aaron's order yet in many a way He exercises His ministry after the pattern set forth in Aaron. So it is necessary that He should have something to offer in the presence of

God; and that something cannot be a gift of the kind that was customary in connection with the law, for had He been on earth He would have been no priest at all, for He did not spring out of Levi or Aaron. His priesthood is of an heavenly order. Only as risen and glorified has He formally assumed His priestly office.

What the Lord has to offer in His priestly capacity we are not told at this point; but we believe that the reference is, not to the fact that He offered up Himself, as stated in verse 27 of the previous chapter, but to what we find when we reach the last chapter of the epistle, verse 15. It is "by Him" that we offer the praise of our lips to God. He it is, who offers up to God as the great High Priest all the praises springing from those who have been constituted priests by the grace of God. What we *are* told is that His ministry is more excellent than any that was entrusted to Aaron; and that its superiority is exactly proportioned to the superiority of the promises and the covenant of which He is the Mediator.

Before considering this, however, let us make note of two things. First, that the last clause of verse 4 shows us that this epistle was penned before Jerusalem was destroyed, when the Jewish offerings ceased. "There *are* priests," it says, not, "there *used to be*." This same fact confronts us

when we come to the last chapter; and the importance of it is made manifest there.

In the second place notice that in the parenthesis (verse 5) it is made quite plain that the tabernacle and all its appointments were only a shadowy representation of heavenly things; and *not the things themselves*. This no doubt was a hard saying to a Jew, for he was very apt to think of these visible things in which he boasted as though they were the great end, beyond which nothing was needed. He should not have thought of them in this way, for from the outset they were declared to be but a representation of the things God had before Him. Moses was not to deviate one hair's breadth from the pattern shown to him in the mount. Had he deviated he would have misrepresented instead of representing the great realities which had to be shadowed forth.

This fact being digested we at once see that the Old Testament types, connected with tabernacle and offerings, are worthy of our earnest consideration. The study of them is not, as some may think, an intellectual pastime giving scope to a lively imagination, but a pursuit in which there is much instruction and profit. They must be interpreted of course in the light of the heavenly things themselves, which are revealed in the New Testament.

The ministry of Christ as Priest, the new covenant, of which He is the Mediator, and the promises on which that covenant is founded, are all brought together in verse 6.

It could hardly be said that the old covenant of law was established upon promises at all, though there were certain promises connected with it. It was established rather upon a bargain, in which Israel undertook in all things to obey, and God guaranteed certain blessings conditional upon their obedience. The bargain was hardly concluded before it was broken by Israel making the golden calf. The fact that the new covenant is established upon *promises*, that those promises are *God's*, and that they are *better* than anything proposed under the law, at once differentiates it sharply from the old. To gain some idea of these better promises you must read the latter part of our chapter, which is quoted from the passage in Jeremiah xxxi.—where the new covenant itself is promised—verses 31 to 34. God's "I will," is the characteristic feature of it. All is a question of what God is going to do, and of what consequently Israel is going to be and have.

Now of this better covenant Christ is the Mediator. We might well ask, On what ground can God thus scatter blessings upon unworthy men without infringing the claims

of righteousness? The only possible answer to this is found in the mediatorial work of Christ. As Mediator He has given Himself "a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). As Mediator too He administers the covenant which has been established in His blood.

The Lord Jesus is presented to us in this epistle in a variety of characters. We sometimes sing,

"How rich the character He bears,
And all the form of love He wears,
Exalted on the throne."

but do we stop sufficiently to consider the richness of His character in all its variety? We have already had Him brought before us as Apostle, High Priest, Forerunner, Surety, Victim, and now as Mediator. All these offices He holds in connection with the new covenant and those who come into new covenant blessing. As Apostle He announces it. As Surety He assumes full responsibility for it. As Victim He shed the blood that ratifies it. As High Priest He sustains it. As Mediator He administers it. As Forerunner He guarantees the arrival in glory of all those blessed under it in the present dispensation.

What flaw can be discovered in this? None whatever! Where is the loophole through which evil or failure may creep? No such loophole exists! All new covenant

blessing is rooted and grounded in the mighty Son of God and is as flawless and perfect as He. Is not this magnificent? Does it not fill our souls with assurance and triumph?

The first covenant of law was not faultless as verse 7 indicates. There was no fault in the law, but the covenant was faulty inasmuch as all was conditioned upon faulty man. Hence it is set aside in favour of the second, which is based upon God's purpose and God's work. As the last verse of the chapter puts it, the very fact that He speaks of a *new* covenant shows that the first has grown *old* and is ready to disappear.

Jeremiah's prophecy, which is quoted here, shows us that the new covenant is to be formally established with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; that is, with restored and reunited Israel. Under it they will enter upon the blessings of the millennial reign. By the new birth the law will be written on their hearts, so that it will be as natural to them to fulfil it as now it is natural to them to infringe it. Moreover their sins will be forgiven; they will have the knowledge of God, and be His people. But the gospel to-day brings us just these blessings upon an exactly similar basis.

The fact is that everyone converted to-day, no matter from what nation they come,

is blessed upon new covenant principles, though as yet the new covenant is not formally established at all; and when it is established it will be with Israel, and not with the nations, nor even with the church. We have it, in the spirit of it, and thus we anticipate what is to come. At the same time we must carefully note that Christian blessings are by no means confined to those promised to Israel under the new covenant. On the contrary we enjoy blessings which go far beyond them. Such, for instance, are the blessings spoken of in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Chapter viii. ends with the ominous words, "ready to vanish away." Thus it was that the Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, prepared the minds of the Jewish disciples for the disappearance of their venerated religious system, which came to pass within a very few years by the destruction of Jerusalem. The temple being destroyed, the priesthood slain, the sacrifices stopped, Judaism has become but the pale and bloodless shadow of its former self. And in itself, and at its best, it was only a shadow of good things to come.

Yet we must not underestimate the value of the shadows connected with the law. They had very great value *until the moment came in which the realities typified were revealed*; just as the moon is of much value

until the sun rises. At the heart of this typical system lay the tabernacle and its furniture, and the first five verses of chapter ix. summarize the details connected with this. It was the sanctuary, where God placed the cloud which signifies His presence, but it was a worldly one. So also were all the ordinances of the divine service connected with it. Hence it was not the object of the writer to speak particularly of these details.

His object was rather to point out that the tabernacle was in two parts, the holy place, and then the holiest of all, and that while the priests of Aaron's line had full liberty to enter the former the latter was forbidden to them; into it they had no admittance at all. When once the divine glory had taken possession of the holiest no human foot trod there, with one exception. One man alone might enter, and he only once every year, and that under one stringent condition; he must approach, "not without blood." If we turn to Leviticus xvi. and read it, we shall get all the details of that solemn occasion.

What did it all mean? It doubtless foreshadowed the fact that the blood of Christ is the only ground of approach to God, yet what the Holy Ghost was really saying in the whole arrangement was that in the old dispensation there was no real approach to God at all. The way in was

not yet made manifest. We shall find the wonderful contrast to this when we reach the nineteenth verse of chapter x. But as long as the first tabernacle had a standing before God the rule was *no admittance*.

We might say then that the law instituted *the religion of the holy place*, whereas the *holiest of all* characterizes Christianity. It was not that all Israelites had access to the holy place. We know they did not, as the sad case of Uzziah, king of Judah, recorded in 2 Chronicles xxvi., shows. But the priests, who were the representatives of all Israel, had free access there. Still, even so, the real value of the whole thing lay in its typical significance, as we have seen.

This fact is again emphasized in verses 9 and 10, where the tabernacle is "a figure for the time then present," and the gifts and sacrifices are but meats and drinks and divers washings; all of which were but ordinances of a fleshly type as opposed to anything of a spiritual nature. Out of this there flow, as a result, two things.

The first thing is, that these sacrifices could not make perfect the one who approached by their means. Here again we meet with that word *perfect*; and this time not referring to Christ but to ourselves. The Jewish sacrifices, by reason of their very nature, could not make us perfect; and this fact we shall find repeated in the

first verse of chapter x. Then passing on to the fourteenth verse of that chapter we find stated, by way of contrast, the glorious fact that, "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The law not merely *did not* accomplish it, but *could not*; whereas Christ *has done* it.

But what is this perfection which has to do with ourselves? That question is answered for us here. It is a remarkable fact that the first time the word is used in this connection it is carefully defined for us by the Holy Spirit. The perfection has to do with our consciences. As we read on into chapter x. we shall see more clearly what this signifies. It means having the whole weight of sin as an accusing load completely lifted off, so that the conscience is *perfectly* cleared in the presence of God.

Now this was something quite unknown under the law. If a Jew sinned it was his duty to bring to the tabernacle the appropriate sacrifice; and having done so he was clearly entitled to enjoy the relief afforded by the words, "it shall be forgiven him" (Lev. iv. 31). That one particular sin was forgiven when once the prescribed sacrifice was offered; but that was all. If he sinned again, again he had to bring a sacrifice: and so on and on, all through life. There was no such thought as a sacrifice being offered which could settle once and for ever the whole question of sin, and so perfect the sinner's conscience.

The second thing is that the law with all its ordinances was only imposed upon Israel "until the time of reformation," that is, until the time of "setting things right." The law was after all a provisional measure. It proved beyond dispute that things needed setting right, by proving how wrong they were; but it did not put them right. When presently God blesses Israel under the new covenant the time of setting things right will have arrived. Meanwhile, as we have just seen, we have been blessed upon new covenant principles, as the result of the sacrifice of Christ; and there is no setting things right upon any other basis than that.

Verses 11 to 14 furnish us with the contrast to that which we have in verses 6 to 10. If we analyze the verses with a little care we shall see how complete and far-reaching the contrast is.

In the first place CHRIST is set before us, in contrast to the high priest of Aaron's order.

Then, the Aaronic priest just had to administer the things that existed under his hand. Christ is an High Priest of *good things to come*.

Christ has entered into the *true* holiest in the heavens, a greater and more perfect tabernacle than that made with hands in the wilderness; and He entered in *once*, instead of every year, as with the high priest of old.

Not by the blood of goats and calves, which can never really put away sins, did He enter; but by *His own blood* which obtains redemption.

The blood of the sacrificial animals did sanctify to the purifying of the flesh: the blood of Christ alone can *purify the conscience*.

The purifying of the flesh which was accomplished by the Jewish sacrifices was but temporal: the redemption obtained by Christ is *eternal*.

Notice, moreover, the majesty which characterizes the one offering of Christ. All three Persons of the Godhead stand related to it. The spotless Son of God offered Himself. It was to God that He offered Himself; and it was by the eternal Spirit He did it. No wonder that all sin comes within its scope, and that its results abide for eternity.

The immediate effect of it, as far as we are concerned, is the "purging" or "cleansing" of our consciences. By that cleansing they are perfected and we turn from the dead works of law—dead, because done with the object of *getting* life—to serve the living God. If our consciences need cleansing from *dead* works, how much more do they need cleansing from *wicked* works!

F. B. HOLE.

"I WENT INTO THE SANCTUARY OF GOD."

WHEN Asaph went into the sanctuary of God it was as though he got a pair of new eyes. His whole outlook was changed, and better still he himself was the subject of a moral revolution. Before he went in he was a miserable and restless man, and as ignorant as a beast, as he afterwards confessed. He understood nothing, and everything appeared wrong. His whole soul was in rebellion against the state of things, and consequently against God who is behind all. And this is the subtle and serious thing about judging things by the natural powers. The man who does so, be he Christian or infidel, becomes a discontented man and a murmurer, and nothing offends against God like those two things, for they indicate a soul at war with the will of God.

But Asaph was no infidel. He was a man whose God was the Lord, and he had a deep sense in his born-again soul of what was right, but he was most desperately perplexed because that sense was outraged

whichever way he looked. And yet he said nothing about these inward conflicts in case he should stumble some of God's children. He was a good man but troubled, as we may learn from Psalm lxxiii.

He was the type of a vast multitude of people in these days. They cannot understand why the good things of life should be poured into the lap of the wicked and why trouble should dog the steps of the honest and good. They see unrighteousness ride triumphantly in a gilded coach, or perhaps in a luxurious motor car, while goodness goes afoot on the dusty high way, sometimes shoeless. It is a strange world ! And these are great problems ; and does God see and know ? And if so—!

One hour in the sanctuary of God changed everything for Asaph.

Is there anything in the New Testament that answers to the sanctuary in which Asaph found the key to all his difficulties ? Yes there is, we have a sanctuary in the New Testament and the Minister of it. Hebrews x. tells us that we have boldness to enter into the Holiest—that is, into the very presence of God,—and it tells us of Jesus who is there, our great High Priest who delights to lead us in, and maintain us in that place of light and blessing.

It is wonderful how things change as we sit in the presence of God. It is more wonderful how we ourselves are changed. If any of us have not experienced this we should lose no time in testing it. 2 Corinthians iii. speaks of beholding the glory of the Lord and being changed into the same image. It is this that takes place when we sit in the presence of the Lord. The world's tinsel glitters just as brightly, but it loses its attraction for us. The wicked still prosper but we envy them not. Even our brethren who have deeply offended us appear in a different light, and we are glad not to meet them as enemies but to greet them as brethren beloved for God's sake. The little storms that have shaken us are calmed; our difficulties that towered up like mountains, hiding the sunshine of God's countenance from us, sink into their due insignificance, and our souls are rested, wonderfully rested and filled with peace. There is more than this, as we shall see, if we consider the effect upon Asaph of being in the sanctuary of God.

In the presence of God he saw how transient were all worldly things, and he saw also the end of them; and the end of a thing is the great test of it. The Christian, who can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and who knows that he is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ Jesus, will not covet the worldly goods of a man who is without Christ, without God and without hope in the world. But it is in the

presence of God that these things become real. As Asaph saw things as they really were he was greatly humbled, and rightly so. He had misjudged God in his blind ignorance, he had been as a beast and yet he learnt that God had been patient with him, and had waited to shew him things as they were. In spite of his foolishness, God had upheld him. Even though his faith had been shaken and his foot had well nigh slipped, yet God had held him up with His right hand. And he learnt more, even that God would not abandon him, but that He would guide him with His counsel through all the maze of life and afterwards receive him into glory.

What more could he desire than that? To be the object of God's special care; to be guided through every difficulty in life by God's counsel, not blindly nor by bit and bridle as a horse or a mule, but instructed step by step, and led as being instructed, and growing in intelligence and in the knowledge of God as each difficulty is overcome; and at last of all to be received into God's glory! Surely every question was settled and quietness and confidence must have taken the place of distress and distrust in the heart of Asaph!

And it was even so, for he breaks out into worship, the worship of a mind at rest and a heart satisfied. "Whom have I in

heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." God became his present and everlasting portion.

Shall we be behind Asaph in our knowledge of God? Greater light shines for us than shone for him, yet if it is to shine into us, illuminating us, and filling us with the knowledge of God, we must draw near to Him. It is in His presence in the sanctuary that we see everything clearly. How good it is for us that the light shines in the face of Jesus, the sinners' Friend and Saviour. Men do not commit themselves and their lives to God because they do not trust Him, and they do not trust Him because they doubt His justice. They see the wicked prosper and they ask, Can God be just? Some calamity befalls them and they blame God for their trouble. Even Christians have been known to question God's dealings with them. But we cannot judge what is right by the sight of our eyes; we need faith, and it is in the presence of God that our faith grows and is strengthened and our fears disappear. We learn that God's way is perfect. He is a just God and a Saviour. He cares for us, and will bring every trial to a right issue. Yes, in the presence of God our outlook is changed, and what is greater, we are changed.

Was not Hannah changed in 1 Samuel i. when having knelt in the sanctuary and poured out her grief before God, she arose

and went her way and her countenance was no more sad ?

Was not Thomas changed when in the presence of his Lord, having seen the wounds in His hands and side, he cast his depression and unbelief to the winds and confessed, "My Lord and my God ?"

Was not Mary changed when she bent in adoration at the feet of Jesus, and arose to carry about in her person the fragrance of the spikenard that she had poured upon Him, unmoved by the criticism of her brethren ?

Was not Paul changed, when having three times sought the presence of the Lord about the thorn that galled him, he cried, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities ?"

Yes, and we shall be changed as we behold the glory of the Lord in His sanctuary. The burdens and buffetings of life may remain, and circumstances be unchanged, but we shall be changed, and become rich in faith, and they will become the opportunities for us to shew how great is our God. No longer shall we murmur at the inequalities of life but refreshed in the sanctuary we shall joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

J. T. MAWSON.

SERVING A SAVIOUR.

WHEN soundly converted the language of the soul is, "Now I am saved I would like to serve the One who has saved me!" That is right! Only, find out first what is "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. xii. 2); and then serve Him accordingly.

We have been saved to serve truly; but we are also saved daily that we might serve rightly; and we shall be saved finally and fully when the Lord comes again. Then He will "transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory"; consequently it is said of those who have been saved by grace, and are now being saved by a living Saviour, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Then, without weariness, in realms of eternal glory and joy, "*His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face.*" The salvation which is ours in Christ Jesus is an eternal salvation, and covers past, present and future, so we serve *from* salvation *through* salvation and *to* salvation. We serve a Saviour, who is our Lord.

"Let My son go, that he may serve Me!" were the Lord's words to Pharaoh, who oppressed Israel. The blood of the lamb was shed and sprinkled; the people were

brought out of Egyptian bondage; and "thus the Lord saved Israel that day" (Ex. xiv. 30). Then they began to serve by singing TO HIM who had saved them; and they sang, "*The Lord is my Strength and Song, and He is become my Salvation!*" Like a refrain, these words resounded again and again from psalmist and prophet afterwards (Ps. cxviii. 14; Isa. xii. 2), but Jehovah soon had to say concerning the national "son" He had liberated from Egypt, "Thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things" (Deut. xxviii. 47). Their singing gave place to murmuring and backsliding; but they were under the law.

It is said of us to-day, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"; and grace reigns now that the One who died for our sins is upon the throne above; and, being blessed in Him according to the riches of God's grace, we may serve in liberty, as we look unto the day, when the exceeding riches of that grace will be displayed in glory. Israel soon lost their blessing: not one who is blessed in Christ Jesus can lose his; and abundance of grace is given, so that we may serve our living Saviour acceptably in communion, being preserved in the sense of His favour, and of the glory soon to come; for the Holy Spirit given to us is the earnest of our inheritance,

The two epistles, written to the bright young Thessalonians, speak much of their Saviour's coming again; and are the only two which address the assembly as "*in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Grace had set them in that known position and relationship; and at once the apostle desires for them the necessary favours of "grace and peace," to keep them continually for God's praise and pleasure. Israel was placed before Jehovah under law; we are set before the Father under grace.

The salvation which is ours in Christ Jesus brings us into this holy freedom, for even the babes in God's family know the Father. When the Lord rose from the dead, having secured eternal redemption for us, He said, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." How glorious it is to serve a living Saviour, who has brought us into such a near relationship along with Himself.

"Through Him we know a Father's love,
And serve in liberty."

Doubtless the fervent Thessalonians had much still to learn, which would enrich their valued service for the Lord; but from the start they turned to God from idols "*to serve the living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens, JESUS, OUR DELIVERER from the coming wrath*" (N. Tr.).

Service is varied, it is not just one thing. If you had asked an Israelite in the wilderness what all the order and detail of their life meant, he would have told you they served Jehovah. Romans xii. shows us the beautiful variety of our service for a Saviour-God; and how our bodies as living sacrifices are to be presented to Him, in intelligent service, for the particular thing given to each one to do, which we prove to be "good, perfect and acceptable," as it says. All are not preachers, or teachers, but all are given their suited place to fill, and grace is given to do so. We are to prove what that is, and do it. True to his post, a solitary sentry serves his king. An officer does no more. The former might be specially honoured, and the latter not.

It is a Saviour-God we serve, made known in Christ. Even the wrath to come upon this world will not touch the saved; for we read, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," who is coming soon, and is "*our Deliverer from the coming wrath.*" The grace of salvation (past, present and future) in Him gives a spring of freshness to our service of love for Him. We cannot go through the great tribulation, but we may serve Him faithfully now, during the present time of His rejection below and His acceptance above.

"Though earth disowns His lowly Name,
God honours it in heaven."

At any moment His shout may summon us to meet Him in the air. It is as Saviour from the heavens He is coming to give us bodies of glory like His own. He will do this according to the power which He has to subdue all things to Himself. What a mighty Saviour Jesus is!

Those who have fallen asleep will be raised from their graves first. Then, along with the living, all will be caught up together to meet the Lord, and so we shall be for ever with the Lord.

Viewing the sure and certain hope, shining ahead of our path of service, the apostle of the Gentiles exhorted and encouraged with these words, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." And our Saviour Himself said, "*If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, HIM WILL MY FATHER HONOUR.*"

H. J. VINE.

There is progress in a Christian's life when he may not *seem* to be going ahead—like a canal boat in a lock, when it stands still but is rising all the time.

“WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION.”

CHRISTIANITY was a new thing in the world when these words of inspiration were penned. The gospel had gained its peaceful triumphs even amidst the idolatrous wickedness of the pagan cities of Greece and Italy.

Philippi had seen the establishment of a Christian assembly. The Apostle Paul had brought them the glad news of the gospel, which had been the means of gathering them to the Lord, and out to His name. His sojourn in their midst was of the greatest possible help to these young converts.

But the time had come when he was held fast in prison and they were left without the help of his spiritual energy and experience. They were to be thrown upon their own resources. Thus the Apostle wrote,

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians ii. 12, 13).

Is there not a voice to young Christians, who have been brought up in Christian homes, to-day in this? I write to such. You have been brought up under Christian instruction. You have been taught the character of what the Scripture calls the flesh, that is the principle of sin within, whose tastes answer all too well to the allurements of the world. You have been taught the meaning of the world, as a system away from God, that found its full expression when it crucified the Lord of glory.

You have been instructed from holy writ to yield your members—that is, the actual component parts of your bodies—as instruments of righteousness unto God, unto holiness. (Romans vi. 13). You have been exhorted to mortify—that is, put to death, a very practical matter—your members which are upon the earth. These are not the component parts of your body, but the moral members of a sinful fallen nature, even the ungoverned lusts and passions of the body, which, given rein to, lead to the dishonouring of the material members of the body. They are such things as fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection—that is infatuation of such a nature as to throw the right relations of life out of gear—evil concupiscence, covetousness which is idolatry. In passing, it is remarkable how again and again these evil passions are condemned in the same breath as covetousness. William Jennings Bryan once described a man, who had toiled night

and day to amass wealth, never heeding the awful strain he submitted his body to, nor the fearful mental excitement entailed in his mad pursuit after wealth, as being *kicked to death by the golden calf*.

Further, having been sheltered in a Christian home, it may be you have had to leave home, and go to a distance, it may be to London, or some continental city, in the pursuit of your calling. You are possibly in lodgings. You can go in and out, and there is no one to ask where you go and what you do.

It is just in these circumstances that the Scripture quoted has its special voice to you. Just as Paul worked out the practical day-by-day salvation of the young inexperienced Philippian believers, so your salvation has been worked out, hitherto, under the care and influence of your godly parents. Their influence had a restraining effect upon you, not always relished, sometimes resented. Now you are free from this restraint. Are you going to places, and doing things that you would not like your godly parents to know about? If so, it is time to pull up. If your godly parents would be grieved, and rightly grieved, at some things you do, and some places that you frequent, what about your loving Lord?

I have known young Christians in these circumstances go by choice to theatres, pic-

ture palaces, restaurants, where things were to be seen that were calculated to stir up the flesh within them. Expensive wines have been partaken of, and conduct indulged in for the moment, that was anything but working out their own salvation.

Young Christians, do you know what it is to mortify your members which are upon earth? We are not Christians worth the name if we have not to say, “NO” to ourselves many a time. It is well to really face matters, and once and for all decide to seek by the grace and help of the Lord to be true to Christ in all things, and to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

This, of course, is not the salvation we get through the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, but the daily salvation or deliverance from the world, the flesh and the devil, which is so necessary as we go through this world.

Do you know what “fear and trembling” mean in this connection? We may well fear, knowing that we carry the traitor within our breasts, even the flesh; knowing too how the world is decked out to catch the eye, to appeal to the flesh and the pride of life. Behind all this is the subtilty and craft of the enemy. If he cannot rob us of the grace of God, he can rob us of its joy, and mar our testimony for the Lord. For

remember that every yielding to the flesh, every time we put ourselves in questionable surroundings, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Further we have God on our side. We are told that He works IN what we should work OUT. He works in to will and to do of His good pleasure; in other words, He gives us the desire and the power to do His good pleasure. We can confidently appeal to young Christians, for God works in you these desires. Now it lies with you to work OUT what God works IN. What a blessed partnership.

We need plain speaking now-a-days. There is everywhere a loosening of things that are right. The apostasy is well on the way. We need to be on our guard.

May the Lord use these few lines to give some young Christians fresh exercise as to working out their own salvation. For you to do it yourself is a thousand times better than for your godly parents to seek to do it for you, though when you were young and growing up it was necessary and right for them so to do. But when you launched forth on the sea of life for yourselves they followed you with their prayers, and wistfully watched for the results they have worked for and prayed for ever since you came to gladden their homes at birth.

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews ix. 14—x. 14*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

THE argument of the opening verses of chapter ix. reaches a climax in verse 14, but the Spirit of God does not immediately carry us on to the results which flow from it. Instead of that He elaborates with great wealth of detail the point He had just been making; so that when we reach chapter x. 14, we find that we are back again at the point we had started from in ix. 14. And only then do we proceed to the consideration of its results.

From this we may learn the very great importance that attaches to the truth concerning the sacrifice of Christ. It lies at the foundation of everything, and until it is thoroughly apprehended by us we are not able to appreciate what follows from it. Let us pray for the understanding heart as we consider these verses, in which the main point of the Holy Spirit is so fully developed and supported.

The main point, then, is that the blood of Christ completely purges the believer's

conscience so that he is enabled to serve and worship the living God. Now this was an end utterly unattainable under the old covenant; hence it follows, as verse 15 tells us, that the Lord Jesus became the Mediator not of the old but of the new. And hence, too, His death had a twofold bearing: bringing in redemption as regards the transgressions under the old covenant, and becoming the basis whereon is fulfilled the promise connected with the new. Something had to be done for the removing of the mighty mountain of transgressions which had accumulated under the law: and equally something was needed if God was to call people with an eternal inheritance in view. Both these great ends are reached "by means of death," and that the death of Christ.

Verses 16 and 17 are a parenthesis. The word translated *testament* here, and *covenant* in chapter viii., has both those meanings. Used in relation to God it is "a disposition which He has made, on the ground of which man is to be in relationship with Him." In this short parenthesis the writer uses the word in the sense of a testament or will, which only is of force when the testator is dead. If viewed in this way, again we see the absolute necessity of the death of Christ.

There was no "death of the testator" under the old covenant, yet the necessity

for death to take place was acknowledged in a typical way. If we turn to Exodus xxiv. 7 and 8., we shall find the incident referred to in verses 19 and 20., and we may note a remarkable fact. Exodus records only the sprinkling of the people with blood; Hebrews adds that the book of the law was also sprinkled.

The significance of the sprinkling of the people would seem to be that they were thereby reminded that death was the penalty of disobedience. Any breach of its demands meant the death penalty *on them*. The significance of the sprinkling of the book would indicate, on the other hand, that death was necessary as the basis of everything. Hence even the law system was not dedicated without blood; and this fact is added here by the inspired writer since it is just the point of the argument in this epistle.

Moreover at different times in connection with the sacrifices the tabernacle vessels, and indeed "almost all things," were purged with blood; and all this was intended to drive home into men's hearts the all-important lesson, that, "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

In our twentieth century we might almost call this great statement—*the most hated fact of Holy Scripture*. Nothing so moves to wrath and contempt and ridicule the soul

of the "modern" theologian as this. And why? Not because his delicate sensibilities are shocked by the idea of blood being shed, for the average modernist enjoys his slice of roast beef as much as other average people. But because he knows what this fact really signifies. It means that the death-sentence lies on mankind as creatures hopelessly lost; and that only *death* can lift this death-sentence so that remission can reach the fallen creature. The solemn witness borne to the modernist, that as a sinful creature he is under the death-sentence before God, is what his soul loathes with an intensity that amounts to hate. The prouder he is the more he hates it.

Do we not all understand this quite well? Did we not all share those feelings until grace subdued our pride and brought us into an honest frame of mind before God? The modernist, of course, deludes himself into thinking that his aversion to this truth arises from his superior æsthetic or moral sense, and we may never have victimized ourselves with that particular little piece of vain conceit. If so, we may well thank God! The moment we were brought to honesty and humility of mind we grasped the absolute necessity of *the death of Christ*.

Of that necessity verse 23 speaks. The blood of goats and calves sufficed to purify the tabernacle and its furniture, which were but patterns; the heavenly things themselves

needed a better sacrifice. We might be surprised that *heavenly* things should need a sacrifice at all, did we not remember that Satan and the fallen angels have had their seat in the heavens, and have introduced the taint of sin there; and also that we, who are sinners and had our seat here, are destined as the fruit of redemption to take our seat in the heavens. As the fruit of the work of Christ not only shall there be purification wrought on earth but in the heavens also.

Consequently, in verses 24 to 26 we are introduced to the work of Christ from a most exalted view-point. He appeared once at the consummation of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and now, in virtue of His blood shed, has gone into the very heaven of God's presence on our behalf. Let us mark that word, "to put away sin." How comprehensive it is! The expiation of our sins is of course included, but it is not limited to that. The judgment of sin is included, but it is not limited to that. It includes sin in all its ramifications and bearings. Sin, the root, and all the sins which are the fruit; sin as it has affected man and the earth, and sin as it has affected the heavens; sin, in its totality; all put away by His sacrifice. And His sacrifice was the sacrifice of *Himself*!

In these verses again, the work of Christ comes before us as contrasted with the

service of the high priests of old, and this it is which accounts for the way things are put in the last verse of our chapter. When the Jewish high priest had entered the holy place made with hands on the yearly day of atonement, carrying the blood of the goat, the people stood outside waiting for his re-appearance. Very possibly they waited with a certain amount of trepidation for they knew that to enter wrongfully into the presence of God meant death. For him they were waiting, and they hailed his appearance with a sigh of relief. Now we, Christians—and this specially applies to the converted remnant of Jews, who were addressed in this epistle—are waiting for the re-appearance of our great High Priest. We “look for” or “await” Him, and when He comes it will be “without sin” or “apart from sin.” He so effectually dealt with sin at His first coming that He will have no need to touch that question at His second coming. He will appear unto the salvation of His people, and the deliverance of a groaning creation.

Thus we can see what a striking analogy exists between the actions of Aaron on the day of atonement and the great work of Christ; only with this complete contrast, that whereas Aaron's actions were typical and confined to the patterns of heavenly things, and oft repeated, Christ has to do with the heavenly realities and His work in offering for sin has been accomplished once and for

ever. It is the lot of sinful men once to die, and then to face the judgment of God. In keeping with that, Christ has once been offered to bear the sins of many, and therefore those that await Him look forward not to judgment but to salvation.

You notice that here it speaks of Christ bearing the sins of *many*, not of *all*. It is true that He died *for* all, as far as the scope and intention of His work is concerned. When however the actual effect of His work is in question, then He bore the sins *of* many, that is, of those who believe. You will notice also that the words, "look for Him," have not really got the meaning so often imported into them, by which they are made to support the idea that only certain believers who are watchful are going to find salvation when the Lord comes again. The force of the whole passage the rather is, that sin has been so perfectly put away, and believers so perfectly cleared as to their consciences, and as to all liability to judgment, that they are left awaiting the coming forth of their High Priest from the heavenly sanctuary to their salvation from every adverse power.

With this thought before us, the opening words of chapter x. carry us back to the days of the law, that once more we may realize the glory of the gospel as contrasted with it. Twice already that contrast has been laid open before us; first in verses

6. to 14. of chapter ix., and then again in verses 23 to 28. In the earlier of these two passages the great point of the contrast seems to be as regards the *nature* and *character* of the law sacrifices contrasted with the sacrifice of Christ. In the later passage the contrast seems more to lie in the *absolute sufficiency* of Christ's sacrifice, which is therefore *one*, and not a repeated thing like the sacrifices of old.

In the passage now before us (chapter x. 1-14.) both these contrasts reappear, but coupled with them is a third—the *supreme glory of Him who became the sacrifice*, as contrasted with both priests and offerings of old. We see Him stepping out of eternity that He might accomplish the will of God in the work that He did. The passage starts with the reminder that the law with its shadow sacrifices could NEVER make the worshippers perfect. It ends with the glorious statement that the offering of Christ *has* perfected them FOR EVER.

It is not that the law sacrifices *did not* perfect anyone as to the conscience, but that they *could not*. Their very repetition showed this. Could they have availed to cleanse the conscience, so that the offerer got complete relief as to the whole question of sin, they would have ceased to be offered; inasmuch as we never go on *doing* what is *done*. In point of fact their effect was in just the opposite direction. In-

stead of removing sins from the conscience as no longer to be remembered, they were formally brought to remembrance at least once every year. The blood of sacrificial animals had no efficacy to take away sins. The thing was impossible, as verse 4 says.

The statement of that verse is clear enough. Some of us, however, remembering what is said as to the forgiveness of various sins, or as to cleaving from sin, in Leviticus iv. v. and xvi. may feel that there is apparently a contradiction, and that a further word of explanation is needed. The solution of the difficulty is not far to seek, and we may reply by way of an illustration.

Here is a trader hard pressed by a creditor. He is short of cash in these hard times, though he knows well that in three months time he will have ample funds. What does he do? He offers his creditor a three months promissory note for £500, and his creditor well satisfied with his integrity, gladly accepts it. Now our question is this—What really has the creditor got?

That question may with equal truth be answered in two ways, apparently contradictory. Thinking of it as regards its intrinsic value, we should reply:— He has got a small piece of paper, whereon certain words are traced in ink, and in the corner of which is embossed a red government stamp, and the total value of the whole thing would

be *less than a penny*. Thinking of it in its relative value—that is, of what it will be worth at its due date in view of the character of the man who drew it, we should be quite right in replying, *Five hundred pounds*.

The sacrifices of old were like that promissory note. They had value, but it lay in that to which they pointed. They were but paper; the sacrifice of Christ alone is like fine gold. In Leviticus their relative value is pointed out. In Hebrews we find that their value is only relative and not intrinsic. They can never take away sins. Hence in them God had no pleasure, and the coming of Christ was a necessity.

Hence in verses 5. to 9. we have the quotation from Psalm xl. and its application. It is quoted as the very voice of the Son of God, as He enters into the world. The Psalm mentions, "Sacrifice and offering . . . burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin;" that is, offerings of four kinds, just as there are four kinds of offerings mentioned in the early chapters of Leviticus. There was no pleasure for God in any of them, and when the Son of God came forth to do the will of God they were supplanted and taken away. In the body He took, the whole will of God was done, and by the offering of it up in sacrifice we have been set apart for God once for all.

The thing being accomplished what further need is there of the ineffectual shadows? The fine gold having appeared what use have we for the scrap of paper? That great word, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second," might almost be taken as the whole drift of the epistle to the Hebrews, stated in few words—put into a nutshell, as we speak.

Once more are we brought face to face with the contrast in verses 11. to 14. On the one hand, there are all the priests of Aaron's race. On the other, "this Man" in His solitary dignity as the Son of God. There, the daily ministering, and the constant offering of the ineffectual sacrifices that can never take away sins. Here, the one perfect offering, which is perfectly efficacious, and the Offerer seated at the right hand of God. There, the priests were always standing. No chair or seat of any kind was provided amongst the furniture of the tabernacle. It was not needed for their work was never done. Here, the Offerer has by His one offering perfected for ever the sanctified ones, and consequently He has taken His seat for ever at God's right hand.

The words, "for ever," occur in verses 12. and 14. In both cases they have the significance of, "as a perpetual thing," or, more briefly, "in perpetuity." Those set apart for God having been perfected as to their consciences in perpetuity, He has taken His seat at God's right hand in perpetuity.

For one thing only is He waiting, and that is for His enemies to be made His footstool.

We would like to think that all our readers have entered into the tremendous significance of all this. Oh, the blessing and establishment of soul that comes when we really lay hold of it! Its surpassing importance may be seen in the way that the Spirit of God dwells upon the subject, and elaborates it in its details. Note too, how again and again it is stated that the sacrifice of Christ is one, and offered once and for ever. Six times over is this fact brought before us, in the passage beginning with ix. 12., and ending with x. 14. Search that passage and see for yourselves.

And then may the truth contained in that passage enter all our hearts in its soul-subduing, conscience-cleansing power!

F. B. HOLE.

May many be led to see that a repeated sacrifice and a seated Christ are in positive antagonism. If the sacrifice must be repeated, Christ has no right to His seat and to His crown—God pardon the very penning of the words! If Christ has a divine right to His seat and to His crown, then to repeat a sacrifice is simply a blasphemy against His cross, His Name, His glory. . . . A repeated sacrifice and perfect remission are an absolute contradiction in terms.

THE LIFE BOUGHT AND SURRENDERED.

THE well-known servant of Christ, G. V. Wigram, once asked Richard Hill, a retired judge, five questions.

I. *Is Christ between you and the coming judgment of God?* Mr. Hill was able to reply, "Christ has borne on the Cross all the judgment for me. I shall never come into judgment for I am passed from death unto life." It was well that Mr. Hill had Scripture to rest upon, even the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ;—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24). Words could not be plainer nor more assuring. Has the reader got the same answer to the question as Judge Hill? If not, as you read these lines trust the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, and you will be happily able to give the same answer by God's grace.

II. *Is Christ between you and your sins?* "Yes," was the answer, "Christ died for our sins" (I. Corinthians xv. 3);

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1. Peter ii. 24): "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah liii. 6). Again Mr. Hill could take up the clear assurance of Scripture as a simple believer on the Lord Jesus. This was the language of faith. Can our readers give the same answer as Judge Hill? If not, trust the Saviour at this moment and the same answer will be yours.

III. *Is Christ between you and the law of God?* This question was not so readily answered. "Well," said Judge Hill, "it seems to be so according to Scripture, though I pray every week, 'Lord, incline our hearts to keep this law.' Still Paul said, 'Ye . . . are become dead to the law by the body of Christ' (Romans viii. 2); and again he says, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death' (Romans viii. 2); 'Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.' (Acts xv. 10). I think I heard some one say at your meetings, 'The law is neither the ground of life, nor the rule of life—Christ is both.'"

Seeing that none has kept the law, evidently life cannot be procured that way. How sweet to realise that the Lord of glory died under the curse of a broken law that the believer might be free from it either as a ground or rule of life, Christ is both. How

that lifts the matter up to a wonderfully higher standard. Christ is the believer's life, and as he walks in the Spirit he will fulfill the righteous requirements of the law. (see Romans viii. 4). Surely a believer will not steal, commit adultery, bear false witness, kill, if he is walking in the Spirit.

4. *Is Christ between you and the world?* With great hesitation Judge Hill answered "I hope so—it ought to be so. Is it not written 'Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world' (Galatians i. 4)? Paul could say, 'The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' (Galatians vi. 14). He said of His disciples, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' (John xvii. 16)." It is all very well for the believer to thankfully acknowledge that he is delivered from the approaching doom of the world, but is it not just as important to be separate from the ways of the world—ways which will result in that doom—ways which only bring deadness of soul, corruption and ultimately doom?

In a motor bus in the North of England an earnest Christian got into conversation about eternal matters. The interest widened till all in the bus were listening. The conductor got uneasy. At last he went to the Christian, and told him that if he did not stop he would throw him out of the bus. The Christian replied, "If I had been giving

these passengers the latest tips in the horse racing, you would not have threatened to throw me out. What you say only proves how far you are from God." Could not this incident be reproduced many times in every direction. The world that rejected Christ will reject His followers. Can the reader answer the question, *Is Christ between you and the world?*

5. *Is Christ between you and Richard Hill?* Judge Hill was more hesitating than ever. At length he replied, "I fear I cannot go that far. Thank you, I will think about it, pray about it, and answer God." I wonder what answer he gave to God.

Notice in all the first four questions Judge Hill was able to quote Scripture very happily, but in answer to the last question he quoted no Scripture. At least his answer was honest, and led to exercise in the presence of God.

It is a great matter when Christ is enthroned instead of self. How happy it was for Paul to be able to say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians ii. 20.)

Really we have no moral right to anything but the life surrendered to the will of God. Nor is the claim legal in any way. It can

only come by the constraint of love, as we read, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but UNTO HIM which died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians v. 14, 15).

Has that constraint reached me? Has it reached you? The claim is made, the claim of love, not for your spare time, spare money, or for spare anything, but for YOU, *spirit, soul and body*. Then all will be held as from the Giver. Till this point is reached, we have not reached the divine obligation of love. With this surrender, we shall be available for the pleasure of the One, to whom we owe everything in time and for eternity.

A. J. POLLOCK.

HINTS FOR YOUNG CONVERTS.

(*From Notes of an Address*).

WHEN first converted, we often suppose that the only difficulties we shall have to meet are those which may come from our old worldly companions; but this is not so. The coldest blast from outside, that ever blew upon a young convert, came from those who profess to be the Lord's, but who yet want to go on with the world. Such people find that their ways are rebuked

by the faithfulness of an ardent heart, whose first love causes it to diligently follow Christ, and refuse things that worldly Christians can go on with.

The difficulties which we may have to face, whether from worldly companions or from Christians of a worldly mind, we may speak of as hindrances *from without*, yet neither of them can be compared with the difficulties and hindrances that proceed *from within*.

Ideals of what a Christian should be, and of what he should experience, are often entertained by the young, and yet they are unrealized ! Perhaps they read biographies of excellent saints and servants of God, whose course has been run and finished, and then they compare their own experience with what they read. The result is very painful ! Their lives seem to come woefully short of these dear saints, and so odious is the comparison that they are sometimes led to despair and tempted to doubt if they are Christians at all ! Their trouble does not spring so much from what they have done in the way of sins, but from what they are, and from the heart-sickening disappointment they feel when they discover that their conversion has not improved nor mended their old evil nature.

The young convert has to make three discoveries before he proceeds very far.

1. He has committed sins against God.
2. He is thoroughly sinful in himself.

3. He is powerless in himself to do the right, and seems to do worst when aiming at the best.

The first discovery is very easily made: indeed he made it at the outset when he turned to God. The second and third are discoveries that we make much more slowly. However, he turns his eyes in two directions: first, outward, to what he ought to be for God as he sees it in the Scriptures; second, inward, to what he actually is in himself and in his practice. Then it is that these discoveries become real to him.

He started with the idea that conversion is a great inward change, whereby the old nature would be greatly improved; hence his trouble. He compares his experience with God's Word, and—poor wearied soul—he comes to the conclusion that he cannot be converted, for they do not at all tally.

There are three facts concerning the one that is born of God, very plainly stated in Scripture.

1. He "doth not . . . and he *cannot sin*" (1 John iii. 9).
2. He "overcometh the world" (1 John v. 4).
3. He "keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18).

Now, with 1 John iii. 9. compare Romans viii. 7 and 8., where we read of that which

cannot be subject to the law of God, which *cannot please* God, which, in fact, *cannot do anything but sin*. Is there any contradiction here? There is not. But there is a tremendous contrast. What is the explanation of it?

The explanation lies in the fact that there are two distinct natures in the believer. They can be seen very clearly in such a verse as Romans vii. 25., where we read,

1. "With *the mind* I myself serve the law of God;"
2. "With *the flesh* the law of sin."

Here the mind stands for the new nature, and the flesh for the old nature. And the real "myself" he identifies with the new nature and not the old.

It is most important that we should lay hold of the fact that *the old nature is not improved but condemned*. Sin, the evil principle controlling the old nature, is not affected by the forgiveness of sins, any more than the nature of a crab-apple tree is altered by knocking off the crab-apples. Our sins are forgiven, but "sin in the flesh" has been "condemned" (Rom. viii. 3).

The old order of man, born of Adam the first, has been condemned, just as the Lord condemned and cursed the barren fig tree, as recorded in Matthew xxi. 16., and Mark xi. 20. A new order, connected with

Adam the Last, has been commenced, as is indicated in 1 Corinthians xv. 45. Now we no longer stand *in Adam* but *in Christ*.

What troubles many a new-born soul is that he cannot make the flesh in him to be what he knows a new-born soul ought to be. He is like an unhappy schoolboy struggling to write a copper-plate hand with an old pen that is hopelessly cross-nibbed and corroded. He tries, and tries, and the more he tries the more the pen scratches and sticks in the paper and drops blots ! The only thing is to throw away the old pen as a condemned thing and write with a new one. What a comfort it is to know that God has condemned the flesh, and is no more expecting any good to come from it. We should no more expect any good from it than He does.

Thus it is we learn that we are bankrupt, not only as regards *goodness* but as regards *power* also. Where then is power to be found ?—we may ask. The answer is—We have a new power, and it is ours in the Holy Ghost.

Before conversion sin was our master. It is looked at in this way in Romans vi. In that chapter we read such things as,

“That henceforth we should not *serve* sin.”

“Let not sin therefore *reign* . . . that ye should *obey* it.”

“Sin shall not have *dominion* over you,”

"Ye were the *servants* of sin."

"The *wages* of sin."

And again in chapter vii. verse 14., we read,

"I am carnal, *sold under sin*."

Sold under sin, just as a slave is sold, and thereby passes under a master. Well, how do we get free from the tyrant, SIN?

Romans v. shows us the way of freedom when it says,

"He that is dead is freed from sin."

Death liberates from the master, no matter how firmly his fetters were rivetted on. This has always been true, hence Job speaks of death as a place where, "the prisoners . . . hear not the voice of the oppressor . . . and the servant is free from his master" (iii. 18, 19).

Here, however, a further difficulty may occur. How is it, we may say, that I am spoken of by God as dead, when I am not actually dead? It is because you have died *as identified with Christ*, and on this account you are to reckon yourself as dead to sin and alive to God. Were it an actual fact that you had died there would be no call to reckon yourself dead. When a person *reckons* himself deaf to the call of his old master, it is because he is not actually deaf. He does not however respond to the call of his old master, and we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin in all its demands,

Power does not come from death but life. It is necessary that we should reckon ourselves dead to sin, but the joy and power are found in reckoning ourselves alive unto God in Christ Jesus. And the Holy Ghost has been given to us to be the power of that life. Then it is that we can joyfully say,

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. viii. 2).

ART. C.

EGYPT.

THE countries mentioned in the Old Testament show forth many valuable lessons, according to what is described in them. This is especially true of those which play a considerable part in carrying out God's purpose and ways in connection with His people Israel. Egypt is conspicuous in this, as it portrays a character of the world, showing its direct bearing upon the spiritual history of the people of God. In Egypt we have a picture of the world in its moral character, and the way in which the spiritual welfare of God's people are hindered by contact with it.

The great system of the world began geographically at Babel, its inception being complete ignoring of God; and we know

from the New Testament that the god of this world is Satan. We must therefore expect that its principles, course, and maxims are of an order entirely opposed to faith, and the realm of Christianity which is governed by the Spirit. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The King is absent, but He came to establish a kingdom, and the principles of that kingdom He inaugurated in His sermon on the Mount. He has gone away to receive the kingdom and to return, and has delivered His goods to His servants, saying to them, "Occupy till I come." The actings therefore, and history of God's people from the days of Abraham to the coming of Christ are a kind of allegory, and they form a picture book to those who want to maintain faithfully the kingdom of God in its moral character.

As the first principle of that kingdom is *faith*, so Israel's history begins with Abraham who was called to go out of the land of Ur of the Chaldees, not knowing whither he went, and God brought him into the land which was afterwards to be his possession. This figures what God does when He calls a soul to Himself. He brings him out of the world into peace and rest where he is guided and comforted by His word, and His Spirit.

The first connection of Egypt with God's people was Abraham's visit there, and we

find an element of the world strangely marked. Hitherto Abraham had had an altar and worshipped his God, but when he went into Egypt, we find that he had none, and his first action was *to conform to Egypt's ways*. Fear led him to deny his wife, and act inconsistently, and so it is with all who try to mix with the world for present advantage. God graciously preserved him and led him back, but we find that though he had wealth and cattle, and apparently God overruled his error, yet he brought back with him an influence that was like a spiritual weight and which was a cause of sorrow in his household ever after. Hagar came with him, and formed a bone of contention never overcome until ultimately, after Isaac was born, she was cast out of the house.

Many a Christian has had to learn what this means to their sorrow. Isaac, the child of promise and resurrection, is a type of the risen Christ and it is only when He becomes everything to them that sin in the flesh is judged, and the Holy Spirit becomes free to lead us into the pathway of faith. Then Hagar and her son, so to speak, are "cast out" (Gal. iv. 30).

If we go on further into the history of the children of Israel, Egypt becomes a land of slavery, for the King who knew not Joseph and did not fear the God of Israel, enslaved His people. It was from this place of bondage, God sent Moses to deliver them. In this connection we see Egypt's king as a

picture of Satan, God's enemy, trying to hinder His people from acknowledging the just claims of God.

When God says, "Let My people go that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness" (Exod. v. 1), and the children of Israel desire to respond, serving the Lord in freedom from idolatry, Pharaoh at once says, "Who is the Lord?" We learn in this another phase of the world, *opposition to God*. Man's sin and disobedience to God originally brought on him death, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. Now this sentence rests upon all flesh, and Satan having the power of death, it is always his effort to intimidate and hinder anyone from coming to Christ. But as we read elsewhere, "God . . . doth devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14), so it was in Egypt and so it has been with us, God has raised up a Saviour even Jesus, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Moses' intervention therefore on behalf of God's people, is a picture of this, and he comes with the authority of God to Pharaoh. Pharaoh's refusal was met by judgment, and we here have a wonderful picture of the way in which God's deliverance was to be effected.

In the first place, it was to be by blood, as the first plague showed, and in the second

place, by death, as the slaying of the first-born proved. We see both these illustrated in the final proceedings of redemption in the provision of the passover lamb. Pharaoh's stubbornness could not resist the power of death, and we are told that when the first-born was slain, there was not a house in the land of Egypt where there was not one dead.

In spite, however, of God's judgments, there was not real repentance, though they rose up in the night and thrust the people out. The people borrowed such things as they needed and spoiled the Egyptians thus they were free to follow the Lord. The world can do nothing but *thrust us out*. In the last book of the Bible, Egypt is mentioned in its moral character as a picture of the world. It is where also our Lord was crucified (Rev. xi. 8). To serve the Lord, the people had to go out from Egypt and dwell three days march in the wilderness, where they encamped.

As to the people of Egypt and the people of Israel, there was no difference in their character as sinners, but what was death to the Egyptians, was deliverance to the Israelites. The sentence of death carried out on the Egyptians was averted for Israel because God had sent a message through Moses to say they were to take a lamb and hold it for four days—beautiful type of the coming Lamb of God. They were to kill it in the

evening on the 14th day of the month, and put the blood upon the lintel and two door posts of their houses. Then within their homes, under the shelter of that blood upon which God's eye rested, they feasted on the rich provision for their coming journey, namely, the roast lamb. So while Christ is our Deliverer from death and judgment, because the sentence was carried out upon Him, we feed on Him as the One who has borne the judgment. He gives us life for the journey and we step forth in faith to go out to God as worshippers. Thus we can walk through the world completely delivered and defended, and dependent upon God ; until He brings us into the promised land, the heavenly Canaan, where sin and sorrow cease.

A. E. WALKER.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews x. 15—39*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned ; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

IT has often been pointed out that in the early part of Hebrews x. we have mention of, firstly, the will of God ; secondly the work of Christ ; thirdly, the witness of

the Holy Ghost. The work of Christ *for* us has laid the basis for the accomplishment of the will of God *about* us, and in order that we may have the assurance of both there is the witness of the Spirit *to* us. In verse 15 of our chapter this last is brought before us.

How may we know that, as believers who have been set apart for God, we have been perfected in perpetuity? Only by relying upon an unimpeachable witness. And where is such a witness to be found? Suppose we put our feelings in the witness box, and subject them to a little cross-examination on the point. Can we arrive at anything like assurance? By no means, for they hardly tell the same story twice running. If on certain occasions they would seem to testify to our being right with God, on other occasions their witness would be in exactly the opposite direction. We must dismiss them from the witness box as utterly unreliable.

But the Holy Spirit condescends to take the place of Witness, and He is utterly reliable. It is not here His witness *in* us as in Romans viii. 16. In our passage He is viewed as testifying from without *to* us, and we are immediately referred to that which is written in Jeremiah xxxi. The words of Jeremiah were the words of the Spirit; his writings the writings of the Spirit, The witness of the Spirit to us is found in the written Word of God. The burden of His witness in favour of the believer is,

"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Is there some reader of these lines who lacks assurance? Are you a prey to doubts and fears as to your salvation? What you need is to receive the witness of the Spirit in "full assurance of faith," as verse 22. puts it. Could more reliable witness be presented to you than that of God, the Holy Ghost? No! Could His witness be presented to you in a more stable or more satisfactory form than in the Scriptures of truth, which He has inspired? We venture to say, *it could not*.

Supposing God dispatched an angel to you with tidings of your forgiveness. Would that settle everything? For a short time perhaps. Angels however appear for a moment and then they are gone, and you see them no more. The memory of his visit would soon grow faint, and doubt enter your mind as to what exactly he *did* say. If you were granted a wonderful inrush of joyful feeling; would that do? It would soon pass and be succeeded by a corresponding depression, for when waves run high you cannot always ride upon their crests. Bring forward any alternative you please, and our reply will be, that though more spectacular than the Scriptures they cannot be compared with them for reliability. If you cannot or will not receive the witness of the Holy Ghost in that form, you would not receive it in any form whatsoever.

The witness of the Spirit to us is, then, that our sins are completely remitted, and being forgiven there is no more offering for sin. In verse 2. the question was asked, "Would they not have ceased to be offered?"—that is, had the Jewish sacrifices been able to make the worshippers perfect. In verse 18 we learn that Christ's one sacrifice having perfected us, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness to it, there is no further offering for sin. When these words were penned Jewish sacrifices were still proceeding at Jerusalem but they were valueless as offerings for sin, and very shortly they were all swept away. The Roman armies under Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem and utterly scattered the Jews, were really God's armies (see, Matt. xxii. 7) used by Him in judgment to make their sacrifices impossible any longer. And yet a very large part of Christendom is continually bowing down before what they call, "the sacrifice of the mass." How great the sin of this! Worse really than the sin of perpetuating the Jewish sacrifices, had that been possible.

Verse 19 brings before us the great result that follows from the one perfect sacrifice of Christ. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest." No Jew, not even the high priest, had boldness to enter the holiest made with hands: we have boldness to enter the holiest not made with hands; in spirit now, and in actual presence when the Lord comes. The converted Hebrew reading this would

at once say to himself—This must mean that we are constituted priests in a far higher sense than ever Aaron's family were priests of old. He would be right ! Though in this epistle we are not told that we are priests in so many words, the truth enunciated plainly infers it. In the first epistle of Peter, chapter ii., the truth of Christian priesthood is plainly stated, and that epistle is also addressed to converted Hebrews.

Our boldness is based upon the blood of Jesus, since through His flesh, by means of death, He has opened up for us a new and living way into God's presence ; but then we also have Himself as High Priest living in the presence of God. Verse 21 mentions this, but He is there really called, not an High Priest, but a "*Great* Priest over the house of God." Earlier in the epistle we read of Him as both Priest and Son, and then it added, "Whose house are we" (iii. 6). We are God's house, God's priestly family, and over us is this Great Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have full access to God. Verse 22 exhorts us to avail ourselves of our great privilege and draw near.

We are to draw near, "with a true heart in full assurance of faith." These two things are what we may call the necessary moral qualifications *which we ought to have*. Converted we may be, but if there be not that simplicity of faith in the work of Christ,

and in the witness of the Holy Ghost as to the complete settlement of the question of our sins, which produces full assurance in our minds, we cannot enjoy the presence of God, Nor can we, except our hearts be true; that is, marked by sincerity under the influence of the truth, and without guile.

The latter part of verse 22 reverts again to that which *we have* as the fruit of the grace of God—and not to that which we ought to have. We have boldness by the blood of Jesus: we have a Great Priest over the house of God: we have hearts sprinkled and bodies washed, as verse 22 says.

These two things may present a little difficulty to our minds, but doubtless to the original Hebrew readers the allusions would have been quite clear. Aaron and his sons had their bodies completely washed with pure water, and they were also sprinkled with blood before they took up their priestly office and duties. Now we have the realities which were typified in this way. The truth of the death of Christ has been applied to our hearts, giving us a purged conscience, which is the opposite of an evil conscience. Also we have come under the cleansing action of the Word of God, which has renewed us in the deepest springs of our being. It was to this that the Lord Jesus alluded just before He instituted His supper in the upper chamber, when He said, "He

that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The word He used signifies *to bathe all over*, as the priests were bathed at their consecration. But even so they needed to wash hands and feet every time they entered the sanctuary.

We, thank God, have received that new birth which corresponds to the bathing with pure water. The "true heart" spoken of earlier in the verse would correspond pretty closely with the washing of hands and feet which was needed every time the priest entered the holy place.

But, having all, let us draw near. Let us take up and use and enjoy our great privilege of access to God. It is the great feature that should characterize us. We are people put into this nearness, having unrestricted liberty in approach to God, and that at all times; though doubtless there are occasions when we may specially enjoy the privilege, as for instance when we gather in assembly for the Lord's supper or for worship. Still it is by no means restricted to such occasions, as is plain when we remember that this epistle is silent as to the assembly and its functions; to find instruction as to that we must turn to the first epistle to the Corinthians.

The presence of God should really be the home of our hearts, the place to which in spirit we continually resort. The point here

is not that we resort there with our needs and present our prayers; that came before us at the end of chapter iv. It is rather that we draw near in the enjoyment of all that God is, as revealed to us in Jesus, in communion with Him, and in the spirit of worship. We draw near not to get any benefit out of Him, but because we find attraction in Himself.

The three exhortations of verses 22--25, are very closely connected. We are to hold fast the profession of our faith, (or, our *hope*, as it really is), without wavering, since it hangs upon One who is wholly faithful. We shall most certainly do this if we enter into our privilege and draw near. We shall also find there is much practical help in the companionship of our fellow-Christians, and in the exhortation and encouragement they give. When believers begin to waver and draw back, their failure is so frequently connected with these two things. They neglect the twofold privilege of drawing near to God on the one hand, and of drawing near to their fellow-believers on the other.

It is a sad fact that to-day there are thousands of dear Christian folk attached to denominations in which the great truths we have been considering are very little mentioned. How could they be when things are so organized as to altogether obscure the truth in question? Services are so conducted that the individual saint is put at a

distance, and he can only think of drawing near by proxy, as though he were a Jewish worshipper. Or perhaps the case is that he finds all the service conducted for him by a minister, and this of necessity tends to divert his thoughts from the supreme importance of his drawing near for himself, in the secret of his own soul.

Others of us have the inestimable privilege of gathering together according to the Scriptural form prescribed in 1 Corinthians xi-xiv. This is indeed calculated to impress us with the necessity of drawing near to God in our hearts. But let us watch lest we lose our spiritual exercises and lapse into a frame of mind which would take us listlessly to the meetings, expecting to have everything done for us by "ministering brothers." And perhaps we get quite annoyed with them because they do not perform their part as well as we think they ought to do! Then it is that, instead of holding fast, we begin to let go; the first symptom of it being very probably, that we begin to forsake the meetings and the society of our fellow-believers generally. We become very critical of both meetings and people, and consider we have very good grounds for our criticism!

If instead of holding fast we begin to let go, who can tell whereunto our drawing back will take us? Who indeed, but God Himself! He alone knows the heart. All

too often this drawing back, which commenced, as far as human eye can see, with forsaking Christian company, never stops until utter apostasy is reached. This terrible sin was much before the mind of the writer of this epistle, as we saw when considering chapters iii. and vi. He greatly feared that some of the Hebrews to whom he wrote might fall into it. Hence he again refers to it here. The rest of our chapter is taken up with it. In verse 26 he speaks of sinning "wilfully." In the last verse he speaks of drawing back "unto perdition."

To "sin wilfully" is evidently to forsake the faith of Christ, with one's eyes open. No *true* believer does this, but a professed believer may do so, and it is just this fact, that we have reached perfection and finality in Christ, which makes it so serious. There is no more sacrifice for sins. This fact which seemed so unspeakably blessed in verse 18, is seen in the light of verse 26, to have a side to it which is unspeakably serious. There is beyond nothing but judgment. And that judgment will be of a very fearful character, hot with indignation.

Some of us might feel inclined to remark, that such judgment seems to be rather inconsistent with the fact that we live in a day when the glad tidings of the grace of God is being preached. So we do, but it is just that fact that increases the severity of the judgment. Verses 28. to 31. emphasize this.

Grace makes known to us things of such infinite magnitude that to despise them is a sin of infinite magnitude, a sin far graver than that of despising the law of Moses with its holy demands.

In the gospel there is presented to us, first, the Son of God; second, His precious blood, as the blood of the new covenant; third, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of grace. Now what is it that the apostate does—especially the Jew, who having professed Christianity, abandons it, and reverts to Judaism. He treads under foot the first. The second he counts an unholy thing. The third he utterly despises. He treats with the utmost scorn and contempt the very things that bring salvation. There is nothing beyond them, nothing but judgment. He will deserve every bit of judgment he gets. All this, be it noted, is a vastly different thing from a true believer growing cold and unwatchful and consequently falling into sin.

In verse 32, we again see that, though for the sake of some these warnings were uttered, yet the writer had every confidence that the mass of those to whom he wrote were true believers. He remembered, and he called on them to remember, the earlier days when they suffered much persecution for their faith, and he appealed to them not to cast away their confidence at this late hour in their history. An abundant recompense

was coming for any loss they had suffered here.

One thing only was necessary, that they should continue with endurance doing the will of God. Then without fail all that had been promised would be fulfilled to them. Their very position was that they had "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us," (vi. 18). That hope was abundantly sure, but its fulfilment can only be at the coming of the Lord, as is indicated in verse 37.

For the third time in the New Testament that striking word from Habakkuk ii. is quoted. That "the just shall live by faith," is quoted both in Romans i. and in Galatians iii. But only here is the preceding verse quoted. Take note of the alteration in the words made by the Spirit of God. In Habbakuk we read, "IT will surely come IT will not tarry;" the "it" referring to the vision. But in our days things have become far clearer, and we have the definite knowledge of the Person to whom the indefinite vision pointed. Hence here it is, "HE that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

It is a striking fact that the word *faith* only occurs twice in the Old Testament. Once in Deuteronomy Moses uses the word negatively, complaining of the people that

they were "children in whom is no faith." In Habakkuk alone does the word occur, used in a positive way. It is equally striking that the New Testament seizes upon that one positive use of the word, and quotes it no less than three times. How this emphasizes the fact that we have now left behind the system of sight for the system of faith. Judaism is supplanted by Christianity.

The point of the quotation here is, however, not that we are justified by faith, but that by faith we LIVE. Faith is, as we may say, *the motive force* for Christian living. We either go on to the glorious recompense or we draw back to perdition. No middle ground is contemplated.

Do not miss the contrast presented in the last verse of our chapter. It lies between drawing back to perdition and believing to soul-salvation. This furnishes additional proof, were it needed, that the contrast in Hebrews is not between believers who do well and believers who do ill, and who consequently (as it is supposed) may perish; but between those who really do believe unto salvation, and those, who being mere professors, draw back to their eternal ruin.

Thanks be to God for that living faith which carries the soul forward with patience to the glorious recompence which awaits us !

F. B. HOLE.

THE BIBLE.

"Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name" (Psalm cxxxviii. 2).

THIS remarkable statement shows the wonderful position the Bible has in the mind of God. God's Word is the declaration of God Himself, and that is above His name, His renown. We can have no knowledge of God apart from revelation, and for this we must have God's Word either spoken or written.

In the Old Testament times God spoke; when the Lord Jesus was here upon earth God spoke. Now we have the whole revealed will of God in the Scriptures. It is remarkable that the word, Bible, means in the original THE book, as if there were not another book in the world, just as the word, Scriptures, means THE writings, as if they were the only writings in the world. How is it that the Bible thus in its very titles arrogates claims to itself as the only source of divine information? Surely it is that the Book fills the place it claims. A cursory examination will serve to prove this statement.

"The One who made me made this Book," said a Chinese translator of the Scriptures.

Impressed into this service by the missionaries, the dark heathen was so struck by the intimate knowledge the Bible had of men, their thoughts and feelings, that he came to the conclusion that the One who made him made the Bible. How true this is.

“The Bible is a bad immoral book,” the infidel says. How is it then that good people are the ones who study the Bible? If the Bible were a bad book, bad people would read it with avidity; if it were immoral, immoral people would gloat over its contents. But is this so? We know that it is not. You know that if a man or woman is really living according to the Bible, you will find that person truthful, virtuous, honest, kind, gracious, in every way to be trusted. Would a bad book accomplish this?

The Bible is the only book written by Easterns that has influenced Westerns to any appreciable extent. Where one Western has read the Koran, the bible of the Mohammedans, or the sacred books of the Buddhists and Brahmins, millions have read the Bible. How is this? We answer because it is God's book, and though He employed Easterns to write it, it contains a UNIVERSAL message. That is why it is so well known in Western lands.

The Bible is a LIVING Book. This is proved by two things. Most books have

their vogue, and after an edition or two pass out of print. The majority of books are found only in the language in which they are written, and none other. The Bible was completed over eighteen centuries ago, and is as vigorous to-day as it ever was. It has been translated into something like seven hundred languages. Why? Because it has a living message of a universal nature. The Bible to-day is far and away the world's best seller, though it goes against the natural man and is resented by him.

It is also proved to be living by the way it changes lives. No other book in the world does that. An infidel lecturer challenged a Christian to a debate on the truth of Christianity. The Christian accepted the challenge on one condition. He would bring on the platform one hundred persons, who would testify to the way that the gospel had changed their lives, drunkards saved from intemperance, thieves saved from their sin; lives changed, and changed for the better. The infidel lecturer was to bring on to the platform one hundred persons, whose lives had been changed for the better through embracing the negations of infidelity. The challenge was not accepted. The reason was obvious. The Bible is indeed a living Book.

The Bible's influence is uplifting. It inculcates care for the weak, the suffering, the ignorant. This was grasped by a little

chap, who was erecting a Christian village amongst the heathen with his box of bricks. The father suggested that he should build a heathen village. The little lad was silent for a while, then, taking away what he had erected for a mission station, he said, rather sadly, "We shall not want that, nor the hospital, nor the school." Does not this let the light into matters? The place where the gospel would be preached, the place where the sick would be cared for, the place where the ignorant would be educated, so that they might read the Word of God, were not required. Nor was there anything to answer to these things in the heathen religion for the heathen temples, gorgeous as they are, are places of vile sin and dark superstition. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Psalm lxxiv. 20). What a glorious day will that be when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk ii. 14).

We are told that the heathen religions of India, China, Japan, Mexico, etc. have much in common with the Bible as to details. We are told there were virgin births, sacrificial deaths, and the like, before ever the Bible story was known, that the heathen have stories about our first parents, about the flood, etc. We are not surprised at this. As to stories of our first parents and the flood, seeing those were events in the early history of the world, we should

expect that the account of them would be handed down from earliest times. We should be surprised if it were not so. Nor are we surprised at the garbled way they come down to us, as they are only the traditions of men. The reason why they have come to us in the Bible so vividly, so full of detail in their verisimilitude, in so great contrast to the stories of the heathen, where fable is plainly mixed up with fact, is because the account the Bible gives is *God-inspired*. And as to the virgin births and sacrificial deaths before the Bible story came, we know that the devil is a great imitator, and doubtless originated these things so as to bring into discredit the gospel story. They were foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures, and Satan could anticipate them for his own evil ends.

But one word clears the mind. If the heathen stories and the Bible have, as infidels aver, a common origin, how is it that the followers of heathen teaching are sunk in a state of wickedness, misery and superstition. Look at the condition of heathen lands and then at what prevails where Christ is really owned. Look at lands where they are throwing off the little Christianity that they had, as for instance Russia. As irreligion gets a foothold among the masses so we get a growth of sin, immorality, violence, wickedness of all sorts. Indeed infidels like Huxley, though disbelieving in the Bible, have urged Bible instruction in

the schools, recognizing the good results that the fear of God has upon the rising generation. The Bible is the only book that gives that.

The Bible is the only book that reveals the beginning and the end of things. It is the only book that tells us what sin is, that gives us a standard, and the only book that explains what death is and what comes after death. The Christian Scientist tells us that death does not exist. Yet Christian Scientists die like other people. Not even their leader, Mrs. Eddy, who invented this hare-brained travesty of religion, developed the imagination that kept her from death. The Spiritists say that death is a new birth. The man in the street says that it is the debt of nature. The Bible solemnly tells us that it is "THE WAGES OF SIN" (Romans vi. 23).

The Bible is the only book that gives us a remedy for sin. It sets before us a blessed Saviour, who died a redemptive death upon the cross for our salvation. The Bible tells us how a sinner through repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ can come assuredly into the blessing of the knowledge of sins forgiven and salvation and eternal life.

There never has been a disputed point where the Scriptures and the scientist have

been at variance, and where fresh discoveries have been made through unearthing the archives of history, etc., but in *every* case without exception the Bible has been vindicated. The higher critics at one time averred that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, as writing, they said, was completely unknown in those days. Those who believed, in spite of their assertion to the contrary, that Moses did write the Pentateuch were voted as back numbers, they were not scholars, they were literalists, obscurantists, etc. Then came the discovery of tablets in their thousands at Tel-el-Amarna, where writing was seen to be in full vogue in the very time of Abraham, long before the day of Moses. The critics were completely routed, but did not learn their lesson, and are dogmatic about their negations till some fresh proof of their folly comes along.

The fulfilled prophecies of the Bible lift the book into a category by itself. Its teaching, its moral sublimity, the wonderful character of the Lord Jesus, so unlike every other man, the way it satisfies the spiritual desires of the heart, the way it enables the believer to welcome and rejoice in death when it is the Lord's time for the end to come, all show what the Bible is. It is indeed a Book of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

The study of the Bible affords the best proof of its origin, its authority, its power

to give life and to bless the believing sinner.
 "The entrance of Thy Words giveth light"
 (Psalm cxix. 130). Study it ! Study it ! !
STUDY IT ! ! !

A. J. POLLOCK.

BIBLE READING.

WE do not neglect the Scriptures or our
 consciences would blame;

We keep the Bible handy, and look
 daily in the same:

But the question presses on us and 'tis need-
 ful we should face—

Do we use the daily portion as God's special
means of Grace?

We can read it as a duty, and scarce think of
 what we read;

We may read for future service, for the sow-
 ing of the seed;

But do we stay to listen to the Voice which
 in it speaks,

And search His Message for us, as one hidden
 treasure seeks ?

Oh the weakness of believers ! Oh the Church's
 fruitless toils !

Oh the worldly inconsistencies which our pro-
 fession spoils !

There is blest revival waiting for the Church—
 our hearts, our work,

If Faith seeks the Heavenly riches, which in
 the dear Page lurk.

W. OLNEY,

SOME WONDERFUL WORDS.

“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”—*Eph. ii. 10.*

CONSIDER them well, O my Soul!
View the Worker. It is God Himself who has wrought. He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. He has counselled for the glory of His Son and is carrying out in His excellent working all that which He has planned. He chose to work in creation, and we do well to “consider the wondrous works of God” in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. Now He has chosen to work in a New Creation for His own glory and for the honour of His beloved Son.

View the material. “We” are His workmanship. All that we are as Christians is the result of His operation. He has quickened us out of death—the spiritual death in our sins, in which we were. He has made us to live in His sight. Verses 1 and 2 of the chapter show the awful evil in which we were found under the power of the prince of the air—the devil—and being swept along on the world’s tide down, down, down to the judgment. “BUT GOD” has acted with us—He has taken up the most unlikely material, to new create us that we might be according to His own gracious thought, the good pleasure of His goodness.

View the result of His work. It is "very good." We who were dead in sins, afar off, without hope, without God—even we are now "in Christ Jesus." "Created in Christ Jesus." All that we were in our natural condition is a thing of the past. To that we have died. Our "in Adam" history has been closed for ever, never to be re-opened. Our "in Christ" history is begun, never to be finished. "In Christ Jesus," it speaks of assurance (ii. 13), of acceptance (i. 6), of access (ii. 18), of adoption (i. 5) and of abundance of blessing (i. 3), heavenly and eternal. "In Christ Jesus," we are near in His nearness, and dear in His dearness to God our Father.

View one of the objects He had in view in His work. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Our salvation is "not of ourselves" and "not of works" lest any man should boast. But it is of God and "*unto good works.*" Works before salvation are "dead works" which cannot please a living God. From all such we need to have our consciences purged before we can serve the living God. All our works until we are created in Christ Jesus are soiled with self and sin. They are done with a view to our own good or gain or in an attempt to establish our own righteousness, while we do not submit ourselves to

the righteousness of God. They who are in the flesh in their natural unconverted condition, cannot, *cannot*, CANNOT please God. They need a new life, a new nature, a new power before that which is well pleasing to God can be produced. Now as new created by the Holy Spirit given to us, we can bear fruit for His acceptance.

Not law-works, but love-works are those which suit Him. It is to the works of glad hearts knowing Him that He has created us. These are the works for which He empowers us by the Holy Spirit. Following Christ—walking as He walked, seeking the glory of God—going about doing good in seeking the salvation of sinners and the well being of saints, while the heart rises in thanksgiving and praise and worship to Him who is the Source of all our good. May such works be wrought by us for His glory.

INGLIS FLEMING.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD'S DAY.

THERE is in the world a steady and rapid drift toward making the Lord's Day a day of selfish pleasure, and an occasion for making money. Amongst believers there is a danger of losing sight of its true significance.

What then is its true significance? Let Scripture supply the answer. In Mark xvi. i. 2. we read, "And when *the sabbath* was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning, *the first day of the week*, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." Again we read in Acts xx. 7., "And upon *the first day of the week* when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."

These quotations shew us two things:--
First, The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Second, His followers met together on that day to break bread and to enjoy the ministry of the Word.

From that day to this the First Day of the week has been essentially the LORD'S DAY, the Christian's day. Sunday, the popular name for the first day of the week is a name of pagan origin, and it was officially recognised and established by Constantine as a day of rest and religious observances.

The Sabbath was *past* when Christ arose. It was the seventh day and was essentially Jewish, setting forth the rest of God. The Lord's Day therefore is a *memorial of the resurrection* of Christ and it signifies complete deliverance from the whole Jewish system, for He died *to* it, once and for ever.

Rising from the dead He became the beginning of the creation of God—new creation—and if any man be in Christ there is a new creation. Liberty, freedom, and eternal salvation are associated with the first day of the week, for Christ has broken death's power and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.

The great enemy of souls has ever sought to destroy this witness and is doing so to-day with all his power.

He would give it a Jewish character and bring souls into bondage, robbing them of the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, or, failing in this he would go to the other extreme and turn liberty into licence for the flesh. Alas ! in the *latter* he is succeeding, perhaps more than in the former; for men are becoming increasingly lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

What is the meaning of the modern attitude towards the Lord's Day—the mad rush for change and excitement entailing wasteful expenditure of money and hard and unnecessary work for many who are entitled to rest and quietude. It means the masses are throwing off allegiance to God and asserting their own will. To them it is no longer the *Lord's Day* but *their day*, "Will a man rob God?" (Mal. iii. 8). Yes; they are doing it, openly and unabashed. They

say, with ever increasing defiance, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice."

The tide has set in and nothing can stop it. The religious leaders can see it and are alarmed, but in many cases they do not see the end, owing to their erroneous systems of theology. What will the end be? The One whose day it is, and to whom it gives testimony, is coming again to assert His rights and establish His power in the earth. What an awakening it will be; but too late, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (2 Thess. i. 7).

Should any read these few lines who are on pleasure bent and who take to themselves the sacred hours of the Lord's Day, shutting God out of their thoughts, let them beware—"The Judge standeth before the door." "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

To the Lord's dear people I would affectionately address myself. It is the Lord's Day—fill it for Him. Own His claims in connection with it. "Ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) For-sake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. Seek to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.

Avail yourselves of the holy privilege of assembling together to break bread. Listen with attentive ears to the ministry of the Word. Edify one another. Be in the Spirit; the Lord can then speak to you and you in turn can speak to others. Wait on the Lord for your service. He will direct you and fit and qualify you for it. Redeem the time for the days are evil.

May we, one and all, be found as each Lord's Day comes round, answering to our Master's will until He Himself shall come.

J. H. EVANS.

Distrust of God was the cause of the creatures fall; how fitting it is, then, that faith in God should be the turning point of his repentance! It is this very element indeed that makes the Gospel "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." With nothing to look back to but sin, and nothing to look forward to but wrath, the sinner, with facts and feelings and experience and logic all against him, accepts God's Word of pardon and peace. And he receives the blessing, not because he has mastered a syllogism, but because, like Abraham, he believes God. And he becomes a changed man, not because he has learned the shibboleths of a right creed, but because, by the truth of God, received in the power of the Spirit of God, he has been made "partaker of the Divine nature." He has been "born again, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Hebrews xi.)

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

WE now arrive at the passage which is pre-eminently the *faith* chapter of the Bible, and it is easy to see how thoroughly it fits into its place in the whole scheme of this Epistle. Judaism as a religious system largely appealed to sight, whereas the great realities of Christianity are unseen and only appeal to faith. The object of the Epistle being to deliver the converted Hebrews from the grave-clothes of Judaism which clung to them, and to establish them in the liberty of Christianity, the Holy Spirit naturally dwells long upon *faith*.

How fitting all this is! We do well to dwell long upon it, that the wonder of Divine inspiration may more and more appear to us. We may notice also how the great *love* chapter of the Bible is 1 Corinthians xiii., and the great *hope* passage is 1 Thessalonians iv. 13—v. 11. Now 1 Corinthians is as we may term it, the Epistle of the local assembly, and it is just in the local assembly that all the friction is created amongst

believers, and the trying disagreements and disagreeables take place, and consequently *love* is so much needed. So also 1 Thessalonians is the Epistle where the saints are seen suffering at the hands of the world. and in these circumstances nothing sustains the heart more than *hope*.

The whole of our chapter is like a commentary on that little sentence from Habakkuk—"The just shall live by faith." We are shown that from the very outset of the world's history that which pleased God in His people was the outcome of faith. This may seem very obvious to us, but it doubtless was a rather revolutionary idea to the average Jew, for he had accustomed himself to consider that what pleased God was the ceremonials and sacrifices of Judaism, and the works of the law connected therewith. But here the Spirit of God goes behind the activities of these Old Testament believers to bring to light the faith that moved and inspired them. Their works were not the works of the law, but the works of faith. In this connection you might do well to refresh your memories as to the contents of Romans iv. and James ii., noticing well how Paul excludes the works of the law from our justification, and how James insists on the works of faith as evidencing the vitality of the faith we profess.

The first verse defines, not what faith *is* in the abstract, but what it *does* in practice.

It is "the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The *New Translation* gives this rendering together with a footnote saying that the words "assurance," or "firm conviction," might be substituted for "substantiating." Faith then is the telescope that brings into our view the unseen verities of which God speaks ; making them real to us, giving us assurance of them, and turning them into solid substance in our hearts.

Before however we are led to review how faith wrought in "the elders," we find one word is to *ourselves*. Verse 3 begins, "Through faith WE understand . . ." and the things seen in creation are brought before us. This is a very significant statement ! In apostolic days it was evidently the common faith of Christians that "the worlds were framed by the Word of God." Is it the faith of all Christians to-day ? We have just seen that faith is "the conviction of things *not* seen." We now discover that only faith can give us a proper understanding of the things that we *do* see. Nineteen centuries ago the philosophic world was full of weird theories as to the origin of creation. Equally weird theories fill philosophic minds to-day. All these theories, both ancient and modern, take it for granted that things that are seen *were* made of things that do appear ; and the process, by which they think they were made, has received the name of *evolution*. The philosophers are

very clever men, and they have provided themselves—especially in these modern days—with a really wonderful equipment for their researches. They only lack *one* thing. But that one thing is the *only* thing that counts! They lack the faith that enables anyone to understand. Through faith we understand the origin of creation. Without faith we do not understand it at all.

All the readers of this little paper have, we trust, the faith that understands creation, and so we are prepared to understand the faith which actuated the elders, the recital of which begins with verse 4.

The story seems naturally to fall into three parts. First, we have in verses 4 to 7 the three great worthies of the antediluvian world, and in them faith is seen as that which sets in right relation with God, and consequently *saves*. Second, we have the patriarchs of the postdiluvian world before the law was given. They illustrate faith as that which brings into view unseen things—the faith that *sees*. Third, beginning with Moses, the law-giver, we find the faith that gives energy in spite of all obstacles—the faith that is prepared to *suffer*. In so saying we merely allude to that which seems to be the prominent thought of the Spirit in each section, for of course no one can have faith at all without its effects being known in all three ways.

Abel's faith led to the "more excellent sacrifice" and to the knowledge that he was righteous before God; which knowledge he got by faith in God's testimony. He offered his sacrifice, not by chance nor by some happy inspiration, but by faith. Faith in what? we may ask. Doubtless in that which God had already shown as to the value of the death of a sacrifice by the coats of *skins*, about which we read in Genesis iii. 21. God testified to the value of his gift by accepting his sacrifice; and Abel knew that in accepting his sacrifice God declared him righteous. Many a professing Christian to-day is saying that it is impossible in this life to have the knowledge of sins forgiven; but lo! here is a man living some four thousand years before Christ, and he possessed this very thing. And may not we possess it who live nearly two thousand years after the great atoning work has been done?

Abel died; but in the case of Enoch, the next on the list, translation took place and he never saw death. And further he had the testimony, not merely of being right with God, but of pleasing God. In this connection we are reminded that without faith we cannot please God at all. Faith is the root out of which spring all those fruits that delight Him: just as in 1 Timothy vi. 10, by way of contrast, money is said to be a root out of which every kind of evil springs.

In the case of Noah we see faith which

saved from judgment and condemned the world. When warned of coming judgment he took God at His word. When instructed to build the ark he yielded the obedience of faith. Thereby he was separated from the world. He received righteousness and reached God through sacrifice in the renewed earth, while the world was cut off in judgment.

The case of Abraham occupies verses 8 to 19, with the exception of one verse which is occupied with Sarah, for 'had she not been a woman of faith Isaac, the promised seed, had never been born. Abraham's faith was so exceptional that the Apostle Paul speaks of him as "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11); so it is not surprising that in this chapter more is said as to him than of any other individual. What is said seems to fall under three heads. First, the faith that led him to respond to the call of God at the outset. He started forth from a city of civilization and culture without knowing where he was going. When he did know it proved to be a land of less culture than the one he had left. Yet all this mattered not. Canaan was the inheritance God had chosen for him, and he moved at the call of God. GOD was before his soul. That is faith !

Second, when in the land of promise he had no actual possession therein. He sojourned there as a stranger and pilgrim,

content to dwell in tents. Finally he died in the faith of the promises without ever receiving them. His course was indeed a most remarkable one ; and what accounted for it ? *Faith*—the faith that endows a man with spiritual eyesight. He not only desired a better and heavenly country, but he “*looked for*” a heavenly city far more enduring than Ur of the Chaldees. Verse 13 tells us that he *saw* the promises, though they were *far off* as we count time.

Third, his faith seemed to reach a climax and express itself most fully when he “offered up his only begotten son.” Isaac was a child of resurrection even as to his natural birth: he became doubly so after this event. Yet the faith was the faith of Abraham, who reasoned that the God who could bring into the world a living child from parents who were physically dead, could and would raise him from the dead. When Abraham believed in the Lord and He counted it to him as righteousness, as Genesis xv. 6 tells us, he believed in a God who could raise the dead, as the end of Romans iv. shows. The offering up of Isaac demonstrated this faith of his in the clearest fashion. It was the special work in which his faith wrought, as the latter part of James ii. declares.

After Abraham we find Isaac, Jacob and Joseph mentioned. In each case of the three only one detail in their lives is mentioned, and in two cases out of the three that detail

is the closing one. Reading Genesis we should hardly recognize any faith at all in the blessing that Isaac bestowed upon his sons, and we might not see much in the way Jacob blessed his grandsons; yet the keen eye of the Spirit of God discerned it, and He notes it for our encouragement. If He had not a keen eye like this, would He discern faith in the details of our lives? We may well ask ourselves this.

The case of Joseph is more distinct. Egypt was the land of his glory, but he knew by faith that Canaan was to be the land of Messiah's glory, so he commanded that ultimately his bones were to rest not in Egypt but in Canaan.

Verse 23 speaks of the faith of Moses' parents rather than of Moses himself. The faith of Moses occupies verses 24 to 28. The first great display of it was when he refused to continue any longer in the splendid circumstances into which the providence of God had brought him. Faced with the alternative of suffering along with the people of God or enjoying the temporary pleasures of sin, he deliberately chose the former. He cast in his lot with the people of God, though he knew that, being at that moment just down-trodden slaves, it meant reproach for him. Indeed he esteemed that reproach as treasure, even greater than the treasures of Egypt, and how great those treasures were recent discoveries have reminded us. The

reproach Moses endured was in character the reproach of Christ, inasmuch as it was a faint foreshadowing of the infinitely greater stoop of Christ when He came down from heaven and identified Himself with a poor and repentant people on earth, as we see for instance in Matthew iii. 13-27.

We saw that in the case of Abraham faith acted like a telescope, bringing into his view things that otherwise he had never seen. We now discover that in the case of Moses it acted like an X-ray apparatus, bringing to light things that lay beneath the surface and enabling him to see through the tinsel glory of Egypt. In this way he got down to the real root of things, and he found that "the recompense of the reward" was the only thing worth considering. It was evidently this that governed him in the whole of his remarkable career.

Having a view of the divine recompense he was able to form a correct estimate of Egypt's treasures and he ranked them far below the reproach of Christ. If Egypt's glory is not to be compared to the *reproach* of Christ, how will it look in comparison with the *glory* of Christ? Faith's penetrating sight led to faith's estimation, and this in its turn led to faith's choice and faith's refusal.

From Moses we pass on to the people of Israel in verse 29 and to Joshua—though he

is not named—in verse 30, and we reach Rahab, a Gentile, one of an accursed race, in verse 31. Had it not been for this verse we might never have discerned that faith was the root of her actions and words. Reading Joshua ii. we might have supposed that she was a woman of poor morals and no principle, who was anxious to escape her doom. But the fact was that her eyes had been opened to see *God*. The Canaanites merely saw Israel. “*Your* terror is fallen upon us,” said she, “all the inhabitants of the land faint because of *you*.” (Josh. ii. 9). Her attitude however was this:—“I know that *the Lord* hath given you the land.” This was faith; and her actions expressed the fact that she dared to side with the God of Israel. This courageous faith did not mean suffering for her since God was at once intervening in power.

Usually, however, God does not intervene at once and then suffering is entailed. So after the mention of Rahab we have a list of names in verse 32. and a further recital of the triumphs of faith and then especially of the sufferings of faith. Multitudes of saints, of whom the world was not worthy, have been through every conceivable form of persecution and suffering. They endured, not accepting deliverance which might have reached them had they recanted or compromised. Faith suffered, but it carried them through.

Verse 39 brings us back to the point from which in verse 2 we started. They obtained a good report when their "term time" was over. They emerged "the finished article," from God's school. An intimation of the recompense that awaits them in the great "prize-giving day" is furnished by the statement that although they suffered at the world's hands, the world was not worthy of them. They were infinitely its superior.

And yet they, one and all, did not receive the things promised. In due time, according to God's wise plan, another company was to be gathered and constituted, spoken of as "us" in the last verse of our chapter. Note the contrast between the "they" and the "us"—between Old Testament and New Testament saints. The saints of old days had much, but "some better thing" is provided for Christians, and we shall all reach final perfection in glory together. The perfecting in glory of Old Testament believers waits for the completion of the church and the coming of the Lord.

This verse makes it abundantly plain that God's people are found in more families than one. The saints of Old Testament times form one family; Christians form another. Saints of the coming age, when the church has been removed, will form a third. We find different companies distinguished in such passages as Revelation iv. 4; vii. 3-8; vii. 9-17; xiv. 1-5; xix. 7, 9. Much depends

upon the revelation of God, in the light of which we live, and upon the purpose of God in regard to us, according to which is the calling wherewith we are called. Here however, the contrast is between that which God purposed for the saints who lived *before* Christ came, and for those whose great privilege is it to live *after*.

In Christianity the "better thing" has come to light. Indeed the word "better" is characteristic of this epistle, since, as we have seen, the great point of it is to show that proper Christianity wholly transcends Judaism. Already we have had before us, a *BETTER* Apostle, Priest, hope, covenant, promises, sacrifice, substance, country and resurrection. Run over the chapters and note these things for yourselves.

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

What is it that gives *capacity* to the believer? Is it new birth, or is it the possession of the Holy Spirit? —
GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE.

YOUR question is a trifle difficult to answer inasmuch as the word *capacity* may mean somewhat different things to different minds.

It is very evident from 1 Corinthians ii. 14, that man in his natural condition has no capacity at all to entertain the things of God. He cannot receive them.

In Romans vii. we find the struggles of a new-born soul. We can see that a capacity exists for recognising and approving what is good, though the power to execute it is lacking. There does not appear to be as yet a capacity for understanding, though there are divinely-implanted instincts.

In 1 John ii. 20-27, we read of the "unction" or "anointing,"—referring to the Spirit; by it we "know." The same anointing "teacheth you of all things." Capacity for the understanding of the things of God, the power by which we consciously possess them, is by the Spirit.

This is illustrated in the history of the disciples. Born again as they were, they had divinely-given instincts, and hence they recognized in Jesus the Christ of God and clung to Him. Yet they did not understand in any proper way the wonderful teaching that He gave them until He was gone and the Spirit was given. Again and again He had to comment on their lack of understanding, for "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him" (John xii. 16). Speaking of this the Lord said, "At that day ye shall know . . ." (John xiv. 20).

In short, therefore, we should answer the question you raise by saying that, while as a result of new birth we possess what we may call an instinctive capacity—a capacity of divinely given desires and feelings, our capacity for an intelligent reception of the things of God lies in our having received the Holy Spirit—and in our walking so as not to grieve Him.

FROM GLORY TO GLORY.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28).

THIS wonderful verse bears us from glory to glory giving us in its brief statements an epitome of the whole course of our Lord Jesus.

"I came forth from the Father." From the glory which He had with the Father, He came forth to fulfil all the Father's pleasure. "Lo I come to do Thy will O my God," were His words when on His glorious, gracious mission He became incarnate. One with the Father eternally, He came to make Him known, to declare His name. Freighted with His love He would visit a world of sinners to bring back His fallen creature from under the dominion of evil. So He says again, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

"And am come into the world." His holy manhood is thus before us. He was

here in a world gone far from God. He came unto His own belongings and His own, His earthly people, Israel, received Him not. In the world which was made by Him He was unknown, and so it was that His path was one of rejection and refusal from the outset; despised and dishonoured of the men He had made for His glory.

Grace upon grace was manifested by Him. Heaps of grace for the weakest and for the worst as He trod His way. Fairer than the children of men, grace was poured into His lips, but men in their lost, Satan-blinded condition, saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him.

"Again I leave the world." By the way of the cross He was about to depart. The path of life led through the valley of death and judgment. At Calvary He was to finish the work which He had come to do. In view of it He could in His holy perfection cry, "Father, save Me from this hour!" But in His holy perfection He answered His own cry as He added, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify Thy Name." At every cost to Himself He would glorify the Father and accomplish His pleasure to the full.

Nothing could deflect Him from that course and so we hear at last the cry, "It

is finished." All was perfected which He came to perform.

"And go unto the Father." From the enmity and antagonism of the world He would return unto the Father from whom He had come forth. From triumph to triumph we may trace His way through the Gospel's pages. What joy was His when, atonement being effected, He could say to His disciples by the mouth of Mary Magdalene, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God." They were given unto Him by the Father to bring home to the Father's heart now and to the Father's home before long. His own promise being, "In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you."

His glorious mission, His glorious pathway, His glorious work, His glorious return. All glories are before us here.

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

INGLIS FLEMING.

"How reading straight through the Old Testament makes one understand and enjoy better the New, and recognize it is the same Holy Ghost who inspired both."

What a loss it is to people who only read a daily portion, notes, or tit-bits here and there!"

X.

THE PASSOVER.

*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.
Exod. xii. 13.*

THIS simple Institution marked off God's people in ancient days from the nation around them in Egypt. They were all equally sinful, no doubt, and all of one blood, born of Adam's race, and so all were amenable to the holy judgment of a just God, even as we all are to-day. God, however, wanted, and was calling out for Himself, a people among whom He could dwell—as He is to-day from the world around us, for Egypt was a type of this world, “where . . . our Lord was crucified” (Rev. xi. 8). He interposed by grace, to create a way by which the Israelites could be saved from the wrath which hung over the people of Egypt around them. But it must be a way suited to the holiness of God, and conformable with His glory.

This way was by *blood*, for the reason that the life was in the blood, and where blood is shed the life is taken. Our lives are forfeited because we have sinned, “for the wages of sin is death.” When God therefore would deliver His people Israel from death, He had to “put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel” (Exod. xi. 7). That difference was by blood. On the night, in which God was going by His angel to destroy all the firstborn in Egypt,

blood was sprinkled on the door of every house in which the Israelites dwelt. Consequently in every house there was life and safety and no death, for the lamb had died, so death had already taken place. The first-born were safe.

The incident as recorded in Exodus xii. is very interesting and simple. A lamb had to be chosen by every household, or two households if one were too small. The lamb was to be without blemish, and a lamb of the first year. Then it had to be kept up from the 10th day to the 14th day of the 1st month in the year and then killed between the two evenings of the 13th and 14th days. The blood of the lamb was to be poured into a basin, and a bunch of hyssop—a type of faith—gathered and dipped in the blood. With this the blood was sprinkled on the side posts and the lintel of their doorways, but none on the threshold of the door, to be trodden on. Then the lamb was roast with fire and eaten by the inmates. Nothing was to be left in Egypt but ashes, i.e., anything over from what was eaten had to be burnt with fire, before the morning.

Now nothing is plainer from this than that Israel was saved by the shedding of blood, and the death of a victim without blemish. And Gods' ways do not change, because *He* does not change, He being holy, can only

associate Himself with those that are holy. Alas! we have all sinned and come short of His glory—short of His standard of holiness, truth and righteousness; hence One, capable of meeting our need and God's claims, has come down to stand in the breach. Just as the blood shed from the Passover lamb screened the children of Israel from death and the judgment of the destroying angel in Egypt, so God has given to us His only Son; a spotless Victim to bear the judgment that was due to us. He has been accepted for *us*, as a Lamb without blemish, to atone for our guilt, and bear the punishment of our sins, "in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter i. 19; ii. 24). Our life was forfeited and so He gave His for us. "None can by any means redeem his brother" (Psl. xlix. 7), but God's grace has supplied a substitute and Christ died for us.

All the inmates of that Jewish house or tent were equally safe. God had said, "when I see the blood I will pass over you." So God's Word and His gift both give assurance of safety. The children inside the house could not see the blood, but they had within the roast lamb, whose blood was sprinkled outside, and it was a witness to them of what God *saw*, namely, the blood. One child may have been full of fear, another may have said, "Father sprinkled the blood to-day, and God has said 'when I see the

blood I will pass over'—so we are safe"—but both were safe equally. So it is with the believer to-day. The Lamb, God's substitute for the sinner, was offered up as a sacrifice for sins 1900 years ago. We did not see it, but the Word of God tells us, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities . . . and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5). Believing, we rejoice to see the curse removed. For, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6).

When I was a boy I was taken to see the illuminations in London that celebrated the peace made after the Crimean War. It was a wonderful sight to my youthful eyes, and I have never seen greater expressions of joy and exultation, but I did not see the Peace Treaty signed by the representatives of Queen Victoria and the French and Turkish and Russian Sovereigns of those days. Still I was able to rejoice in the fact that peace was made. So Christ has made peace by the blood of His Cross. Accept Him as your Substitute and Saviour, as God has accepted His full payment of your debt, and you will rejoice in the peace made, for the Lord Jesus "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 52). Now, "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

FEAR NOT!

"Fear not! Fear not!" the voice divine
 To storm-tossed rowers clearly calls!
 The word of cheer, like melody
 Sounds sweetly o'er the angry sea,
 As music on the ear it falls.

"Be of good courage! **It is I!**
 Be not afraid!" The Saviour says;
 He sees the darkening of the deep,
 His eyes are laden not with sleep,
 The joy He brings excels all praise.

"Fear not!" thy toiling well He knows,
 Distress and peril call Him nigh,
 Thy crossing stayed by boisterous winds
 And raging waves His coming finds;
 With peace He greets thee,—"**It is I!**"

"Be not afraid!" above the wave
 He walks, and thou may'st with Him be;
 Take not thine eyes from Christ, nor gaze
 Upon the storm, for He doth raise
 Faith's sight His quiet mien to see.

"Fear not! Fear not!" thy tiny ship
 With calm He fills from heaven's abode;
 And 'neath the peaceful smiling skies
 Worship to Him, the Lord, doth rise,
 "**Truly, Thou art the Son of God!**"

BACKSLIDING.

(From Notes of Addresses).

THIS is one of the most solemn subjects that could possibly engage our attention. It is alas! far too common a thing for us to allow it to pass unnoticed.

The actual word, *backsliding*, is only to be found in the Old Testament. Its first mention appears to be in Proverbs xiv. 14., and it is much to be noted that it is there spoken of as taking place *in the heart*. It is just there that all backsliding begins, however open and public it may become before it is finished. What is in the heart sooner or later comes to the surface, for, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7).

It seems as though Jeremiah might be called, the prophet of backsliding Israel, for the word occurs twelve times in his book, out of the sixteen times it occurs in Scripture. But if the term is an Old Testament one the *decline* that it indicates is by no means limited to Israel. Look where we will, Eden to Sinai; Sinai to Solomon; Solomon to Pentecost; Pentecost to the present moment; upon every page of man's history you see it. And the serious thing is that taking place, as it does, in the heart it may often be unnoticed even by the person himself: as it says in Hosea vii. 9. "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it

not: yea. grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not."

The outward appearance may be kept up. Externally all may be in order, as was the case with the church in Ephesus, about which we read in Revelation ii., and yet things may be wrong. A more jealous and scrutinizing eye notes the decline, "Thou hast left thy first love." "Thou art fallen. . . repent."

There are three kinds of backsliders. 1. Apostate backsliders, in whose case repentance is impossible. 2. Unconverted backsliders, in whose case repentance is possible, though by no means certain. 3. Converted backsliders, in whose case repentance and restoration is certain, since He who has begun the good work in them will complete it.

The first kind. Those who make a profession of Christianity, and then totally abandon it. Hebrews vi. and x. bring such cases before us. The former chapter describes the *height* of their privilege: the latter, the *depth* of their fall. These Scriptures primarily refer to Jews who had embraced the Christian religion, yet it is but too true that Gentiles also may be guilty of the same thing. Nothing is said in these cases as to any kind of moral breakdown. There is no charge of bad ways or behaviour.

The position as to these backsliders may be summed up under three heads:—

(a) They had embraced all the outward privileges of Christianity, without being born again. Hebrews vi. is very definite as to this. They were,

“Once enlightened.” Brought up in the light of Christianity. Had enough knowledge to even teach the plan of salvation, and yet not saved themselves.

“Tasted of the heavenly gift.” Christianity is heavenly in its origin, in contrast to Judaism which is earthly. They had sampled these heavenly things and had a certain appreciation of them. Perhaps like Balaam they desired an end like the death of the righteous.

“Were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.” They shared in the benefits of the presence of the Holy Ghost on the earth, just as we share with others the light and heat of the sun. They were made to feel His power in the meetings.

“Tasted the good Word of God.” Just as the stony ground hearers, of whom we read in Matthew xiv. and Luke viii., received the word with joy and yet fell away.

“And the powers of the world to come.” The miracle-working power of the Spirit will be felt in the coming age, and it was displayed in the early days of Christianity. The same power can be felt and resisted to-day.

(b) Having tasted all these privileges, they turned away from them. They felt their power and yet they ended by deliberately throwing away the very kernel of Christianity:—the Son of God Himself, the blood of the covenant that He shed, the Spirit of grace, all were repudiated with scorn, as the tenth chapter shows.

(c) They thereby shut themselves up to doom. The tenth chapter tells us that there is no more sacrifice for sins. The sixth tells us that it is impossible to renew them to repentance. It is evident that there can be no remission without sacrifice, and there can be no recovery without repentance. Consequently their case is hopeless.

Profession can go a long way, as we have just seen, but verse 9. of chapter vi. shows us that there are better things than these and things that accompany salvation, which evidently these other things did not necessarily do.

The second kind. An unbeliever who makes profession of being converted, but in whom there is no real work of the Spirit of God. Such slide back sooner or later from the position they have taken. They immediately and with joy receive the word, but the joy and excitement wear off in the course of time. The constant effort that is necessary if they are to live at all like a Christian, the constant saying of *no* to the desires of the flesh and mind—and all this without

the corresponding compensation that a true Christian has in a personal knowledge of Christ and His love—become utterly irksome to them. At last their old tastes assert themselves, old companions and habits are taken up, and back they slide.

There are plenty of illustrations of this in the Bible. The case of Orpah furnishes us with one. She started out of the land of Moab with Naomi just as Ruth did. Yet her heart was in Moab, and before long her feet carried her back in that direction, and there she was just as before. Lot's wife is another illustration. Her heart was all the time in Sodom, and to her the Lord points back as to a solemn monument saying. Remember! Orpah's position, Lot's wife's doom are sufficiently serious to warn a sham professor. In 2 Peter ii. 22. also we read solemn words about a case of this kind.

The third kind. Of this class Naomi is a representative. This is the class to whom the term "fallen from grace" is generally applied. It is supposed that they *fall out* of the *favour of God* by becoming backsliders.

It is important to remember that our acceptance before God—our being in His favour, or standing in grace—is not in any way dependent upon our conduct. Our conduct had *nothing* to do with our acceptance and relationship before God, though it has

everything to do with our enjoyment of it. Abel was not brought into favour because of his personal excellence nor because of his good behaviour, but because his excellent sacrifice was accepted. Just so, we are brought into favour "in the Beloved." We are in God's favour so long as He is.

Moreover our standing is in God's *grace*; He Himself is well disposed towards us. Joseph's brethren knew very well that neither their past conduct nor their present behaviour had anything to do with the favour in which they stood before Joseph. They reckoned that Jacob was the one that kept them in favour, so when he passed off the scene they were at once distressed. Jacob being gone they thought that they could no longer expect to be viewed with favour, seeing they could find no reason in themselves why they should be. What was their surprise to find that Jacob's influence had no more to do with it than their own conduct! All depended upon Joseph's love and grace. They had been standing in his grace, and did not know it. Joseph had acted on his own initiative and from the grace in his own heart, rather than under any influence which his father brought to bear upon him.

How is backsliding brought about? Here Job xv. will help us. Verse 11 furnishes the great test question:—"Are the consolations of God small with thee?" It is as though the Great Physician lays His finger

upon our spiritual pulse! Heavenly comforts are small with us because the heavenly Comforter is grieved.

Then come further questions which lead us back to the cause of it all. "Is there any secret thing with thee?" These secret things are often little things, yet they divert our souls from Christ; they dim His glory before our eyes. These little things *must go*. It may be said that, "There is no harm in them." Yet they may do the mischief. George Whitfield used to hold up his finger and thumb and show how effectually they shut out all view of the sun from his eye—and there is no harm in the finger or the thumb. Rightly used they are highly useful members of our bodies.

Again comes the enquiry, "Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at?" Here we get back to the real seat of the trouble. We find ourselves at the very point indicated in Revelation ii. 5., "Thou hast left thy first love." This traces things back to their source.

How is the backslider restored? God will certainly restore the backslider who is truly converted. It may be under the drawings of His own sufficiency; or it may be under the pressure of His chastening hand, of which Psalm xxxii. speaks.

Of this Naomi is an illustration. She slipped away easily enough. It was not difficult to leave the land of promise for the

land of Moab; but once there her troubles began. She lost her husband and then her sons. This was great pressure. The light and hope of her life was extinguished, and then just at that time she heard of the Lord visiting His people in giving them bread. This turned her feet once more toward Canaan, and she got back at the beginning of the barley harvest. The whole city was moved at her return: there was joy at the recovery of the backslider!

If the backslider is to be thoroughly recovered all must be bottomed. The barrier must be removed: the place of departure must be reached. If a railway train has been run on to sidings it must go back to the points where it got off, if it is to get on to the main line again. That was how the Lord dealt with backslidden Peter as recorded in John xxi. By His skilful questioning He led him back in his thoughts to his boastful assertions of his love, and to the shameful denials that followed. Three times did Peter deny his Lord, and three times did the Lord ask Peter His searching question.

Peter was like a soldier who through fear had temporarily deserted. What he needed and got was discipline and recovery and not re-enlistment. A wayward lad may need the punishment of the father's hand, but no bad conduct of his can sever the bond of relationship that exists. For every truly con-

verted backslider the chastening of the Father's hand is the way that leads to recovery.

ART. CUTTING.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews xii.*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned: and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

THE opening words of chapter xii. bring us face to face with the application to ourselves of all that has preceded in chapter xi. All these Old Testament heroes of faith are so many witnesses to us of its virtue and energy. They urge us on that we may run the race of faith in our day, even as they did in days before ours.

In 1 Corinthians ix. Christian service is spoken of under the figure of a race; here Christian life is the point in question. It is a figure very much to the point since a race requires energy, concentration, endurance. So here the exhortation is, "let us run with patience," and patience has the sense of *endurance*. The normal Christian life is not like a brief sprint of 100 yards,

but rather like a long distance race in which endurance is the decisive factor.

In this matter of endurance there were disquieting symptoms manifested amongst these Hebrew believers, as the latter part of chapter x. has shown us. Verse 36 of that chapter begins, "For ye have need of patience." Then faith is mentioned as the energizing principle of Christian life, and this is followed by the long dissertation on faith in chapter xi. Thus chapter xi. is a kind of parenthesis, and in the words we are considering in the first verse of chapter xii. we are back again on what we may call the main line of the exhortation.

We can only run the race with patience if we lay aside every weight and the sin which entangles. Sin is a very effectual hindrance. It is likened to an obstacle which entangles our feet so that we fall. In the first place however weights are mentioned, as though they were after all the greater hindrance. Many things which could by no means be classified as sins prove themselves to be weights to an earnest Christian; just as there are many things quite right, and allowable to the ordinary individual, which are wholly discarded by the athlete. He strips himself of everything which would impede his progress to the goal. And every Christian should consider himself a spiritual athlete, as 2 Timothy ii. 5 also shows.

We have heard chapter xi. spoken of as "the picture gallery of faith," and the opening words of the second verse of our chapter as setting before us "the great Master-piece which we find at the end of it." As we walk down the gallery we can well admire the portraits that we see, but the Master-piece puts all the others into the background. No other than JESUS is the Author—i.e., the beginner, originator, leader—and Finisher of faith. The others displayed certain features of faith; flashes of it were seen at different points of their career. In Him a full-orbed faith was seen, and seen all the time from start to finish. The little word "our" in the A.V. is in italics you notice, since there is no such word in the original, and here it only obscures the sense.

The One who was the perfect exemplification of faith is set before us as our goal, and as the Object commanding our faith. In this we have an immense advantage over all the worthies mentioned in chapter xi., for they lived in a day when no such Object could be known. We have noticed that faith is the eye, or the telescope, of the soul; that it is faith that *sees*. Well, here faith looks to Jesus. If He fills the vision of our souls we shall find in Him the motive energy that we need for the running of the race.

Moreover He is our Example. Every

kind of obstacle confronted Him when He trod on earth the path of faith. There was not only the contradiction of sinners to be faced but also the cross, with all the shame that it entailed. The shame of the cross was a small thing to Him: He despised it. But who shall tell what was involved in the cross itself? Some of us used to sing,

The depth of all Thy suffering
No heart could e'er conceive,
The cup of wrath o'erflowing
For us thou didst receive:
And oh! of God forsaken
On the accursed tree:
With grateful hearts, Lord Jesus,
We now remember Thee.

Yet though we cannot conceive all that the cross meant to Him, this we know, that He *endured* it.

In the enduring of these sufferings for sin the Lord Jesus stands absolutely alone, and it is impossible to speak of Him as an Example. In the lesser sufferings which came upon Him through men He is an Example to us, for in one way or another we suffer as following Him. He went to the extreme limit, resisting unto blood rather than turning aside from the will of God. The Hebrews had not been called to martyrdom up to the time of the writing of this epistle, nor have we been up to to-day; still we need to consider Him.

In this connection another thing has to be taken into account. We are so apt to

consider suffering as something in the nature of a very awkward liability—as being all loss. But it is not this. It may rather be written down on the profit side of the account, since God takes it up and weaves it into His scheme of things, using it for our training. This thought fills verses 5 to 11 of our chapter.

Three words are used in this passage:—chastening, rebuking, scourging. The last does of course mean a whipping, and the second means a reproof. But the first, though it may sometimes be used for a beating, primarily means discipline in the sense of child-training; and it is worthy of note that, whereas each of the other two words is used but once in these verses, this one is used no less than eight times. This then is the predominant thought of the passage. We ARE children of God and hence we come under His training, and must not forget the exhortation addressed to us in that capacity.

The exhortation quoted comes from the third chapter of Proverbs. Turn up the passage and you will see how Solomon addresses the reader as, “my son.” Here however it is assumed to be the voice of God Himself addressing us, just as again and again in the first chapter of our epistle we had the words, “He saith,” introducing a quotation of Old Testament Scripture. We might say perhaps that it is the voice of the

Spirit of God, for later in the Epistle we have had such expressions as, "The Holy Ghost saith," "The Holy Ghost this signifying," "The Holy Ghost is a Witness to us." The point however is this, that what looks like being but the advice of a Solomon to his son is assumed by the New Testament to be the Word of God *to us*.

We are then to take this chastening from the hand of God as being the normal thing. It is a proof to us that we are His children. Hence when we come under His chastening we are neither to despise it nor to faint under it, but to be exercised by it, as verse 11 tells us. If we are naturally light-hearted and optimistic, our tendency will be to disregard the troubles, through which God may see fit to pass us. We put a bold face on and laugh things off, and do not recognize the hand of God in them at all. In so doing we despise His chastening. If, on the other hand, we are naturally pessimistic and easily depressed, our spirits faint under quite small troubles and our faith seems to fail us. This is going to the opposite extreme, but equally with the other it means the losing of all the profit, into which our troubles were designed to lead us.

The great thing is to be *exercised* by our troubles. Chastening means trouble, for we are plainly told that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous."

And exercise means that we turn our troubles into a sort of spiritual gymnasium: for the Greek word used here is the one from which we have derived our English word, gymnasium. Gymnastics for the body have in them some profit, as 1 Timothy iv. 8 tells us. Gymnastics for our spirits have in them great spiritual profit in the direction of both holiness and righteousness. By them we become partakers of the very holiness of God Himself; and we are led into paths of righteousness. Righteousness itself bears fruit which is peaceable, even though the disciplinary process, through which we passed in order to reach it, was of a stormy nature.

The tendency with the Hebrews evidently was to faint under their troubles, hence in verse 12 comes the exhortation, in the light of these facts about God's chastening, to renewed energy in the race. Observe those runners at the start of a Marathon race. Their arms are firmly lifted by their sides: their step is elastic, and their knees strong. Now look at them as they approach the finish an hour or two later. Most of them have run themselves out. Their hands hang down and their knees tremble, as doggedly they stumble on.

"Wherefore lift up..." We are to renew our energies just because we know what God's discipline is designed to effect. We might have imagined that to talk to a poor

feeble stumbling believer about God's chastening would be just the thing to cast him down, whereas it is just the thing, if rightly understood, to lift him up. What can be more encouraging than to discover that all God's dealings have as their object the promotion of holiness and righteousness, and also our being preserved from the sin and the weights which would impede our progress in the race?

Moreover we are to consider the welfare of others and not merely our own. Verses 13 to 17 turn our thoughts in this direction; and two classes are spoken of—the lame and the profane. By the former we understand believers who are weak in faith; and by the latter those who may have made a profession and come amongst Christians, but all the while they really prefer the world. Verses 16 and 17, in fact, contemplate just that class that already has been alluded to in this Epistle—chapters vi. and x.—who cannot be renewed to repentance, and who have nothing but judgment in prospect. Esau is the great Old Testament example of such, and Judas Iscariot is the example in the New.

We need to watch against those profane people lest they damage others beside themselves, by becoming roots of bitterness. If we read John xii. 1-8, we may see how very easily Judas might have become a root of bitterness, had not the Lord at once in-

tervened. Those who are spoken of as lame need however very different treatment. We should aim at the healing of such and take every care that straight paths are set before them. We all need these straight paths, and we are to *make* them. There are some, alas! who seem to find a joy in making things as difficult and complicated as possible, whereas the path of righteousness and holiness is ever a very straight and simple one. And all this we are to do because we are come, not to the order of things connected with the law, but to that connected with grace.

The two systems are summed up for us in verses 18 to 24—Sinai on the one hand and Sion on the other. Now the forefathers of these Hebrews had come to Sinai, and the Hebrews themselves, before their conversion, had come to it in this sense; that it was to God, known according to the display of Himself at Sinai, that they came, when they drew near to Him, as far as they might do so in those days.

But now all was changed, and in drawing near to God in the wonderfully intimate way which the Gospel permits, they came upon another ground, and in connection with another order of things entirely. Mount Sion had become symbolic of grace just as Sinai had become symbolic of law; so that believing the Gospel, and standing in the

grace of God, we may be said to have come to Sion.

It is not easy to see the connection between all the things mentioned in verses 22 to 24. but it may help us to notice that the little word "and" divides the different items the one from the other. Hence for instance, it is the innumerable company of angels which is spoken of as "the general assembly," and not the church which is mentioned immediately following.

We are regarded here as being under the new covenant, and hence as having come to all that which is clearly revealed in connection with it. Eight things are mentioned, and each is stated in a way calculated to bring home their superiority, as compared with the things which the Hebrews knew in connection with the law.

The Jew could boast in the earthly Jerusalem, which was intended to be the centre of Divine rule on the earth: but we have come to the heavenly city whence God's rule will extend over heaven as well as earth. The Jew knew that angels had served in the giving of the law: but we have come to the universal gathering of the angels in their myriads, all of them the servants of God and of His saints. Israel was God's assembly in the wilderness and in the land: but we belong to His assembly of firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven. A heavenly citizenship is ours.

So too, Moses had told Israel that, "The Lord shall judge His people" (Deut. xxxii. 36): but we have come to God as the Judge of all—a vastly greater thing. The old order dealt with just men living on the earth: we have come to the same, but as made perfect in glory. Lastly, for us it is not Moses the mediator of the law covenant, and the blood of bulls and of goats, but Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and His precious blood of infinite value.

To all this have we come *in faith*, and we await the hour of manifestation which is surely drawing nigh. Israel came to Sinai in a visible way and were greatly affrighted. Our coming in faith to Sion, and all connected therewith, is no less real, and in coming we are greatly comforted and established.

Yet there is a serious side to this matter, inasmuch as it adds great emphasis and solemnity to all that God says to us to-day. He spoke in time past to the fathers through Moses and the prophets, but now He has spoken from heaven. The fact that He has now spoken in His Son, making known to us His grace, does not lessen the solemnity of His utterance but rather increases it, as we saw when reading the second and third verses of chapter ii.

If we turn away from His heavenly voice we certainly shall not escape. At Sinai He

spoke, formulating His demands upon men, and then His voice shook the earth. Now He has spoken in the riches of His mercy. But in the days between these two occasions He spoke through Haggai the prophet, announcing His determination to shake not only the earth but the heavens also. He will in fact so shake that everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Only the unshakeable things will remain. Our God—the Christian's God—is a consuming fire, and everything that is unsuited to Him will be devoured in His judgment.

Can we contemplate that day with calmness of spirit? Indeed we can. The feeblest believer is entitled to do so, for we receive, one and all, a kingdom which cannot be shaken. And just because we have an immovable kingdom we are to have grace to serve God with reverence and true piety. Let us all take it to heart that reverence becomes us in our attitude towards God, even though He has brought us into such nearness to Himself. Indeed it becomes us *because* we are brought into such nearness.

Also let us take note that we are exhorted to serve God acceptably, not in order to have the kingdom made sure to us, but because we have received it, and it never can be moved. The very certainty of it, far from making us careless, only incites us to serve.

F. B. HOLE.

“A WASTED WEEP!”

SHE was a little girl of seven years, and the proud possessor of a patch in the garden to which she devoted much attention.

One day she went to purchase seed in order that she might have some pretty flowers. The kindly seedsman said to her, “Do not put in the seed at present. We have had so much rain that the soil is very wet, and if you sow now your seed will rot, and it will be lost.”

When she returned home she told her mother, who said, “That was good advice, be sure to keep the seed until the ground is in better condition, and do not put it in for some time.”

The little girl however became impatient and one day she dug up the earth and put in the seed. No sooner had she done so than her conscience smote her. She told her mother, and she reproved her, saying she had disregarded the advice of the seedsman; had disobeyed mother; and that the seed would simply be lost. Feeling sore at heart the poor little girl wept.

Some weeks after, mother happened to be in the garden, passed this corner, and, to her delight, saw flowers peeping through. Calling her little girl she exclaimed, “ See dearie! You are going to have pretty flowers after all! ” Miss Seven-years-old surveyed the ground, saw that what mother had told her was true, and then said: “ *A WASTED WEEP!* ”

As her mother told us this we thought how many “ Wasted Weeps ” we Christians have in our life! That which saps the juice out of our life; increases grey hairs; adds to the furrows; and, it may be, shortens the life of many is just—Wasted Weeps. It is said that we worry most about the things that *never* happen. This is not a new disease. It evidently obtained when Christ was upon earth. He said:—

“ Take no thought for your life,”

“ Consider the ravens,”

“ How much more are ye better than the fowls? ”

“ Consider the lilies,”

“ O ye of little faith ” (Luke xii. 22-30).

and the Holy Spirit has caused to be written,

“ Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds

through Christ Jesus" (Philippians iv. 6, 7).

"The peace of God" is to be preferred rather than worry, and is the sure preventive of "Wasted Weeps." Worry and weeping, care and anxiety are God-dishonouring, peace-robbing, misery-producing, and are the work of the enemy. Confidence, obedience, quiet waiting, unquestioning trust, are grateful to our God, and produce that peace in our hearts that nothing can disturb.

We know there are some people so constituted that it seems impossible for them to do other than worry. The Lord is very gracious, kind and considerate:—"For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm. ciii. 14). Yet He would seek so to comfort us, to assure us and to encourage us, that His grace triumphing in us, we might be rendered superior to all this, and that His peace might fill our heart. Shall we ask Him so to take us in hand, and so to work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians ii. 13), that instead of having constantly to lament "*A WASTED WEEP*," we shall go happily on our way singing:—

"Trusting as the moments fly,
Trusting as the days go by,
Trusting Him whate'er befall,
TRUSTING JESUS, THAT IS ALL."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

WHAT a mighty wonder is the cross!
What a place it has in the Scrip-
tures! Well might the Apostle Paul
cry out, "God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom the world is crucified unto me,
and I unto the world" (Galatians vi. 14).
Well might Sir John Bowring sing,

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

It is the spirit of Paul's outburst, the spirit of Bowring's hymn, that is the irresistible motive force of Christianity. It is that motive force that has led men and women by the thousands to forsake the amenities and luxuries of life in order to devote themselves to the spread of the Gospel. No cross, no Christ. No cross, no Christianity. No cross, no crown. Without the cross there is nothing but cold, blank Unitarianism, and that comes from the bottomless pit, and leads to it.

We need to raise a warning note to-day. The enemy seeks to empty the cross of its true meaning. Turn the rugged cross into the crucifix, cover it with gold, adorn it with gems and pearls, and it has lost its

power. The cross is never the emblem of what is worldly and fashionable.

We are told to-day that the cross is not atoning, propitiatory, sacrificial. If it is not that, we have nothing; we have no cross at all. Any person, who can aver that the cross is not atoning, and limits it to the setting forth of an example, is an apostate from the faith. A school boy reading the Bible can see that the Scriptures, from one end to the other, present the cross in its atoning value.

Let us put the subject under the seven heads suggested by a gospel preacher, long since departed.

The cross of Christ is

THE MAXIMUM OF MAN'S GUILT.

Men have committed terrible crimes in the history of this world, but wickedness rose to its utmost height, when the Lord of glory was gibbeted upon a cross, and put to death. Perfect love was answered by terrible hate. Divine light came in all its splendour, and the darkness could not endure it.

The blessed Lord went about "doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and—*they crucified Him.*

The leaders of the nation were clamorous for His death. The Roman Governor knowingly and grossly perverted justice, and condemned the Innocent. There never was in the history of the world a crime of such magnitude. The world is verily guilty of the murder of the Son of God, and the day of reckoning will assuredly come for every member of the human race, who having heard the gospel has refused it. Woe betide the man or woman, who takes side with a world, whose hands are stained with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we have another side to the cross of Christ. What constituted man's greatest sin has become the occasion of untold blessing. The cross of Christ is

THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE.

Human love is the one thing that keeps any measure of sweetness in the relationships of life. But what shall be said of divine love; love that would not shrink from expressing itself, even at the cost of the death of the Son of God under the wrath of God? What a message to give to poor fallen man that "GOD IS LOVE!" (1 John iv. 16). Search the writings of the ancients, and you will find that none of them in their searching after God rose to the height of the fisherman John from the shores of Galilee's lake, when he penned these sublime words. Surely it was the revelation

of God in Christ that brought him to this knowledge.

There was man's side of the cross, a crime of the greatest magnitude; there was God's side of the cross, the manifestation of His love. If the cross had been an example of devotedness, which we are called to follow, *simply that and nothing more*, what then was the meaning of the bitter cry wrung from the depths of the heart of the Son of God, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Surely God would not have forsaken His faithful Servant in the hour of His supremest need. The martyrs have ever testified to wonderful, upholding, sustaining grace in the hour of their need.

The truth is that Christ suffered to manifest God's love in bearing our judgment. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10).

Why then was the cross necessary as the expression of God's love to men? Why could He not express His love without it? There is a school of theologians to-day, which teaches that God being love, He can never put any creature of His into an everlasting hell; that somehow or other all will be eventually blessed, some going so far as to deny the very existence of hell, though

the Son of God solemnly affirmed its existence again and again. This school teaches a maudlin sort of love that is derogatory to God. It is an evidence of the advance of the apostasy that is prophesied of in the Scriptures.

This brings us to our third head, that the cross of Christ is

THE MAINTENANCE OF GOD'S GLORY.

God in His wisdom passed the sentence of death upon the sinner. It is evident therefore, that nothing short of death can expiate the sinner's guilt. Further it is evident that the One, who atones for sin, must Himself be sinless, or else He would be under the penalty of death on His own account, and therefore incapable of dying an atoning death for others.

The Lord Jesus was the Holy One who died as a propitiation, and thereby God declared His righteousness "for the remission of sins that are past [*this referring to the sins of the Old Testament believers*] through the forbearance of God; to declare . . . at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans iii. 25, 26). Could anything be clearer than this? When our Lord Jesus uttered on the cross the words, "IT IS FINISHED," divine justice

was satisfied, atonement was made, God's righteousness was vindicated, and grace now reigns "THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans v. 21).

Now we go on to the truth that the cross of Christ is

THE MEANS OF THE SINNER'S SALVATION.

Not by our efforts, or striving, or religiousness, or church membership can we be saved, but only and altogether through the atoning death of Christ. So the message comes, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Many more passages could be quoted, but let these suffice.

The cross of Christ is

THE MEASURE OF THE BELIEVER'S SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

We get this in the text that began this article. It is possible for a believer to rest content in receiving the blessings of the gospel, rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven, and the assurance that heaven is his ultimate abode, and yet remain on friendly terms with the world that crucified

his Lord; so to hide his light under a bushel or a bed as to be a *persona grata* among worldlings. With such there can be no right testimony, no power to reach others, no sense of the danger the unbelieving world is in.

The fact is, the condemnation of Christ is really the utter condemnation of the world, and the place they gave Him is really the place the true believer should give to the world. Did they crucify my Lord, from whom all my blessings flow? Then the world is crucified to me.

Further, if they condemned the Lord of glory for all that He was and did, the world will condemn His followers, for the traits that are in them are the traits that His followers have derived from Him. If they hated those traits in Him, they will hate them in His followers, and so if they crucified Christ, they will morally crucify His followers. Thus the Apostle could say, that he was crucified to the world.

The Apostle James puts it just as strongly. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4).

Well may we sing, if the power of the cross is in our hearts,

"Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,
 With all thy boasted store :
 We'd not have joy where HE had woe,
 Be rich where HE was poor."

The cross of Christ is

THE MOTIVE FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

It is through the cross of Christ that the love of Christ is supremely manifested. So we read, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians v. 14, 15). Every fervent servant of Christ is one that is marked by a true sense of the meaning of the cross of Christ, the motive power to self-denying service in His name.

Finally* the cross of Christ is

THE MELODY OF HEAVEN.

So we get the outburst, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation i. 5). Again we read of the holy city, the church of God in the millennial administration, that "the glory of God did lighten it, and the LAMB is the light thereof" (Revelation xxi. 23). Never throughout the unending ages shall the cross of Christ be forgotten. Never shall the burst of melody die down. The

unnumbered ransomed hosts shall ever adore Him, who once hung on Calvary's cross for their redemption.

May the cross of Christ have its due place in our estimation in these latitudinarian days.

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Hebrews xiii.*).

You are asked to read this article with your Bible before you, opened at the chapter above mentioned; and further to turn up any other passages to which reference may be made. Only thus are you likely to derive much profit.

Our space being so limited we do not feel justified in using it for the printing of lengthy quotations of Scripture, when our readers have the Scriptures themselves lying by their hands.

THE first verse of our chapter is very short but very important. The word *continue* is virtually the same as the word *remain*, which closes verse 27 of the previous chapter. Only the things which cannot be shaken are going to remain when the great day of shaking arrives; then, let brotherly love remain amongst the saints of God to-day. It is one of the things which will remain unshaken in eternity.

Let us recall that in the early part of the epistle believers are spoken of as the "many sons" being brought "unto glory." Christ

was seen to be "the Captain of their salvation," who is "not ashamed to call them brethren." Hence most evidently Christians are brethren, and the love existing between them, the fruit of the new nature divinely implanted, is to be cultivated. In fostering it we shall not be like children building a sand-castle to be washed away by the next tide, but like those who build for eternity.

Verses 2 and 3 indicate two directions in which brotherly love is to express itself. First, in hospitality; that is, in the love of strangers. The world is usually prepared to receive those they esteem as important or influential, and thus to do honour to the distinguished guest. We are bidden to rise above merely worldly motives and to receive brethren unknown to us simply because they *are* brethren. This is true brotherly love in manifestation: a manifestation all too often but very little seen in our land. Second, it is to come out in the remembrance of brethren in adversity, particularly of those suffering imprisonment.

The word, remember, means to recollect in an active way; not merely to call to mind, but to do so with active sympathy. If one member suffer all the members suffer with it, we are told elsewhere; and what we find here is in keeping with that fact. True brotherly love would lead us so to remember all such sufferers as to sympa-

thetically support and succour them, as far as we are able.

In verse 4 natural love is in question, and that in the world has been sadly perverted and marred. By Christians it is to be preserved intact as a sanctified thing, which originated in God. In verse 5 another "love" comes before us—the love of money. The Christian's manner of life is to be characterized as being without this altogether, since this is a love which never originated in God at all. Only when man had become a fallen creature did he lose all love for God and enthrone in his heart earthly objects, and more particularly the money which enabled him to pursue them.

The word for us is, be content with "such things as ye have," or, "your present circumstances." A very searching word it is too! The world is filled with covetousness as much as ever, perhaps more than ever. God is not in all its thoughts, which are concentrated upon material gain. Out of this spring all the strifes. Envies, jealousies, heartburnings, quarrelings are everywhere! Oh, let us so live as to present a very definite contrast to all this! May it be manifest to all that we are actuated by another love than the love of money!

"But," it may be said, "in these days of competition we must bend all our energies to the making of money, else we shall not long retain such things as we have, but

shall sink into poverty." The answer to this thought is however immediately anticipated in these verses. We have the definite promise of His unfailing presence and support; consequently we may boldly count upon the Lord for all our needs, and have no fear of man.

There are two points of great interest about verses 5 and 6. The first concerns the way in which the Old Testament Scripture is quoted. It was to Joshua that the Lord said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." We might very properly say to ourselves, "But I am no Joshua." He was a very eminent man of faith, and I am a very insignificant and often a very feeble believer. Would it not be a rather forward and impertinent thing for me to calmly assume that a promise made to him is equally valid for me? It is delightful to discover from these verses that such an application of this ancient promise is not the boldness of presumption but the boldness of faith. The fact is, of course, that what God is, He is towards His people in all time and circumstances. There is no variableness nor shadow of turning with Him. He will not be less towards His people in this dispensation than He was in a past dispensation. We may wholly count upon Him.

The Christian poetess has said,

"They that trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true."

This of course is so, but it is well when quoting these happy words to lay the stress on the word, *find*; since it is equally a fact that He is wholly true to those who do not trust Him wholly. Their defective faith will never provoke Him to defective faithfulness. No! But their defective faith will obscure their view of His faithfulness, and possibly they may never FIND Him wholly true,—never really wake up to it, as a realized and enjoyed thing—until they discover it in glory.

The second point of interest is not so much the application of this Old Testament text but rather the reasoning which is based upon it. The skeleton outline of the reasoning runs thus, "He hath said, . . . so that we may boldly say, . . ." If God speaks we may accept what He says with all confidence. More than this, we may assert what He asserts with all boldness. And we may do even more than this. For if He asserts things concerning Himself in regard to His people, we may, since we are of His people, assert these things boldly *as applying to ourselves*. Indeed we may take it home with all confidence as applying to each individually; even as here we read, "The Lord is *MY* Helper, *I* will not fear." In our reading of Scripture let us form the happy habit of thus applying the words of God to ourselves.

Before leaving the first six verses let us

notice the *simplicity* which is here enjoined upon believers; a simplicity all too much lost in these days of civilized artificiality. How striking a testimony would be rendered if we were marked by that brotherly love which expresses itself in hospitality and practical sympathy, by natural love preserved in undefiled honour, and by a holy contentment, the fruit of the realized presence of God, and the very opposite of the mad covetousness and discontent of the world.

The seventh verse bids us remember those who are guides or leaders, having ministered the word of God. To be a leader one needs not only to minister the word but to practise it. When this is the case faith is made evident and the "end" or "issue" of their conduct can be seen, and we can safely be exhorted to imitate their faith. Their *faith*, be it observed. It is all too easy to start imitating the speech and ways and idiosyncrasies of those we look up to. But if we imitate anything let it be the faith which underlies and inspires all else about them.

In verse 8 also our thoughts are carried back to the things with which we started in chapter i. There we discovered that the words occurring in Psalm cii., "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail," were not addressed to God in a general way, but specifically to the One whom we know as

our Lord Jesus Christ. This thought is amplified in the great statement that He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Of whom could such a statement be made but of One who was and is God?

Now just because the One in whom our faith centres is the same, there must be a certain kind of sameness in all the truth that also centres in Him. He can never be the Centre and Theme of doctrines which are various and strange. There is no place for that unsatisfied restlessness of the human mind that is for ever running after notions, however contradictory they may be. Now the real knowledge of Jesus establishes the heart with grace, and mere variety and novelty cease to attract. The danger immediately threatening the Hebrews was the importation of strange doctrines from their own former religion, as is indicated by the allusion to "meats."

A certain proportion of the meats consumed by the Jews reached them through their sacrifices. Leviticus vii. shows us that not only the priests, but also in some cases those who offered were privileged to eat parts of the things offered: that is, they ate of the altar. How often must unbelieving Jews have flung the taunt at their believing brethren that they now had no altar in which to claim their share! But the fact is, "We have an altar"! And of the Christian's altar the proud orthodox Jew

had no right to eat, having shut himself out by his own unbelief.

What is the Christian altar, and where is it to be found? "Come to us," say the Romanists, "and in our high altars, ornamented with crucifix and candles, where mass is daily said, you will find it." And so also, though with slight variations, say Greek and Anglo-Catholics. But what says the Scripture? It says, "We have an altar, . . . for . . . Jesus also, . . . suffered without gate." Patriarchal and Jewish altars--the only altars made by hands that ever were sanctioned by God--were just types of the death of Christ. We eat of that Altar, inasmuch as every bit of spiritual blessing that we are able to appropriate comes to us from thence. We eat His flesh and drink His blood, according to our Lord's own words in John vi.; and in this there is no allusion to the Lord's supper, but rather to a spiritual appropriation of His death. Just as Baptism sets forth in figure our burial with Christ, so the Lord's supper sets forth in figure this spiritual appropriation: that is all.

In the death of Christ, then, we have our Altar; but in His death we have also the antitype of the sin offering. According to Leviticus iv., if the sin in question was of such a nature as to involve the whole congregation, then the blood of the offering had to be carried into the holy place and

sprinkled before the veil, and the carcase of the animal had to be burned without the camp. Our Lord Jesus has taken up the whole question of sin in all its gravity. His blood has spoken in the fulness of its virtue in the immediate presence of God, and, true to the type, He died as the rejected One outside the gate of that very city which was the crown and glory of man's religion. We are glad to be identified with the virtue of His blood before God; are we as glad to be identified with Him in His place of rejection without the camp? Except we have come powerfully under the attraction of His love, we are not!

Verse 11 gives us the type. Verse 12 gives us the fulfilment of the type, in Jesus suffering without the gate of Jerusalem. Verse 13 gives us the exhortation based upon it, but using again the language of the type. We are not exhorted to go without the city, for here we have no continuing city as verse 14 reminds us, but to go without the camp. To the believer the world has become a wilderness.

Moreover, had the exhortation been, "Go forth . . . without the city," the words might have had a merely political significance to these early Hebrews. As a matter of fact, when a few years later Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, the Christians had almost to a man fled the city; but that was not the point here. The *camp* was Israel

viewed religiously, Israel grouped around the Tabernacle according to the divine order. The call to these Hebrews was to go outside the religious system of Judaism, and thus to take up the reproach of Christ. Only one thing could induce them to obey this call, and that the love of Him. "Let us go forth therefore UNTO HIM."

If we attentively read the Acts we become aware that the mass of believing Jews by no means broke their links with Judaism. They thought now to proceed with Christ AND Judaism. With many indeed it was a case of Judaism and Christ; for the outstanding feature with them was, "they are all zealous of *the law*," rather than zealous for Christ. When this epistle was penned the hour had struck for a decisive move. It could no longer be Christ and Judaism. It had to be Christ OR Judaism. If they wanted CHRIST, then outside the camp to HIM they must go.

A few years passed and in the fall of Jerusalem the very heart of Judaism disappeared. Temple, altars, sacrifices, priests, all were swept away. The camp strictly speaking had gone. Are we to suppose that therefore this exhortation had lost all its force? By no means, for the Jews carried on some resemblance of their religion by means of Synagogues and Rabbis, and have done so to this day. They still have a camp of a sort, though not the camp

as originally instituted of God. When a Jew is converted to-day, this exhortation without a question calls him out of his Judaism unto the rejected Christ as effectively as ever.

And what of that sad travesty of primitive Christianity which to-day is called Christendom? It has almost entirely organized itself after the pattern of the Jewish camp. It boasts its priests, its worldly sanctuaries and often its sacrifices. It rests upon a worldly basis and frequently encourages alliance with the world. Has this exhortation no voice to us in connection with this? Is it likely that God would begin by calling His people out of a religious system that He had originated Himself, and then end by expecting them to remain within religious systems which He never instituted, but which were created through long ages of unfaithfulness and decay? What a reviving we should see if every Christian really heard the cry, "Unto HIM without the camp," *and obeyed it!*

Doubtless there are a thousand reasons against our obeying it. Here is one, "We should be isolating ourselves. It would be a dull and miserable business." Would it? Why then does verse 15 go on to speak of praise and thanksgiving? Those who have gone forth to Christ without the camp are filled with praise and thanksgiving! They offer it by Him, for He is their High Priest,

and they are exhorted to offer it continually. The Jewish camp had the silver trumpets and the high sounding cymbals without a doubt. But what were they worth? Christendom's camp has, without a question, magnificent organs and orchestras and lovely choirs. But what about, "the fruit of lips, confessing His name"? That is another matter, and that is the thing that counts!

Here is another objection, "We should be sacrificing all our opportunities of doing good." Should we? Why then does verse 16 speak of our doing good? The fact is that unlimited opportunities for doing real GOOD lie before those who are obedient, and instead of sacrificing their opportunities, they offer real sacrifice in doing good.

Again it may be said, "If you go outside the camp it will be all disorder and confusion." What then about verse 17? These Hebrews, though coming outside the camp, would have leaders or guides, raised up of God, who would watch over them for their souls good. To such it would be a pleasure to submit. This does not look like disorder but rather the reverse.

Yet once more, it may be said, "But we need the outward framework of organization that the camp supplies. Without hurdles the sheep will always be straying." But look at verses 20 and 21. Long before this, as recorded in John x., the Lord Jesus

had spoken of Himself as the Shepherd who had entered the Jewish fold in order that He might call His own sheep by name and *lead them out*. Now He is presented to us as the great Shepherd of the sheep, raised again from the dead by the God of peace. In going forth unto Him they were but leaving the fold finally and for ever, in order to come altogether under His authority and His shepherd care. They were coming to Him by whom they could be made perfect in every good work to do the will of God.

All this stands as true for us to-day as for the Hebrew believers of the first century. If we have gone forth to Him, who is our risen Shepherd, we have come to a place where Psalm xxiii. applies, with a fulness of meaning that David himself could never have known. Instead of knowing want we shall be like sheep who lie down in green pastures, because abundantly satisfied.

On this note the Epistle ends. The writer speaks of it as "a word of exhortation," and such indeed it is. It is also "a letter . . . in few words." Though only two epistles exceed it in length yet it is indeed "in few words" if we consider the magnitude and scope of its contents. If we have really taken in these "few words" we shall have received some knowledge of things which are so great that all eternity will not exhaust them.

F. B. HOLE.