

EDIFICATION

A MONTHLY
MAGAZINE

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

VOLUME V.

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD.

THERE are occasions now and again when we pause and ask ourselves whether there is profit in the insignificant labour involved in the production of this little magazine. We remind ourselves that even the Preacher, who "sought to find out acceptable words," for the admonishing of his son, and so far succeeded that "that which was written was upright, even words of truth," had yet to say that, "of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness to the flesh" (Ecc. xii. 10-12). Such an occasion is the beginning of another year.

Yet upon reflection we recognize that in Ecclesiastes the Preacher is considering, in the main, things that are "under the sun." There are enough things under the sun, as the fruit of God's manifold creative activities, to keep mankind busy in the multiplying of books, containing observations, speculations and notions concerning them. In all these books however there is an underlying sameness and shallowness, which sooner or later does become a weariness to the flesh.

In contrast to this, there stands the closing verse of John's gospel, to which our minds have travelled. When that verse was penned the Son of God was come, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt. His wonderful life on earth had been lived out, His death accomplished. The Apostle John had recorded sufficient to convey to every reader that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," that they "might have life through His name." Yet there were many other things that He did which if recorded would simply have *filled the world with books*. And this is not the language of exaggeration.

That which has been recorded in the New Testament, though all that we need to know, is compressed into very small compass. And yet it has produced books innumerable. It is the living and fertile source whence has flowed a great river of literature—library upon library.

The secret of this is simple. The Word of God IS *living* and operative. It *fertilizes* where it flows. It is capable of an infinite variety of application. Hence the study of it, and of that which helps in the study of it, is never a weariness. Even if a certain weariness of eye or flesh be produced, it never wearies the heart, so long as the heart is in touch with God.

This is the point. To have the heart in communion with God is the secret of profit,

whether reading a magazine, or better still, that Word to which the magazine directs our thoughts.

We therefore proceed with our magazine for another year, and ask the prayers of our readers that what is printed therein may not only be "words of truth," but also *truth ministered with freshness and conscience-reaching power, to the blessing of us all.*

"LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD."

(Notes of an address on Luke xii.).

IN writing to the Thessalonians the Apostle addressed them as those that "wait for God's Son from heaven." The same apostle, writing to the Corinthians, in his first letter addressed them in similar words as, "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and that despite all that he was about to say to them in regard to their moral and spiritual condition, which was at a very low ebb. These descriptions we would, I suppose, be ready to accept as true of ourselves professedly, but that is hardly the question that the Lord would raise with us according to Luke xii. It is rather, are we "LIKE UNTO MEN *that wait for*

their lord." Certain traits mark such men, and He is anxious that we should be characterized by them. The Lord is teaching us in this chapter how He would like to find us when He does come, and that would surely appeal to the heart of the one that truly loves Him.

Teaching as to the coming of Christ is not to be found in this chapter. It was not until the very night of His betrayal, in that quiet, solemn and very touching Upper-room conversation with His disciples, that He spoke of His return in that aspect of it that appeals to us, and which gives us the special hope of the Church. And even then the features and manner of that return were not revealed till by special revelation it was made known to Paul.

In Luke xii. the Lord speaks of it in a very general and quite parabolic way, and without any explanation of prophetic details. He uses a very common event—an Eastern marriage—and one particular feature of it, that has reference to the fidelity of the servants to their lord, who is about to return from his wedding, to illustrate for us the distinctive marks that He desires should characterize those who are professedly waiting for Him. We may be quite certain that there *are* very distinctive features that mark those who wait for their Lord and distinguish them from the rest of men. The

words, “Like unto men that wait for their lord” are the pivotal words of the whole chapter, and all the warnings and exhortations are based on them.

Of this we may be certain, if it is the Lord’s desire that there should be distinctive features about us who wait for Him, then it will be the great object of the enemy to destroy all such distinctiveness. This seems to be the feature of the first part of the chapter, and occasions the warnings the Lord utters. Satan does not like his servants to be marked off as distinctively black, nor the servants of the Lord to be distinctively white, so his effort is to destroy all such distinctiveness, and tone things down to a fashionable grey. The appeal to the hearts of all who are professedly waiting for the Lord seems to be, “Are we desirous of being in the character He would like to see us wearing when He does come?” Surely to a devoted heart the *request* of love is equal to a *demand*.

Look at that statement again “LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD.” These seven words seem to embody two great facts for the one who waits for Him. *First, He is my Lord*, though absent. *Second, I am waiting for His imminent return*. The Lord’s two warnings seem to have distinct bearing on these two things, and indicate to us just the way in which the

enemy would obliterate every distinctive feature.

BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY. Am I really confessing Him as my Lord? Am I taking my stand in the midst of those who reject Him, and owing my allegiance to Him and dropping the reins of the government of my life into His hand, and owing His rights and authority over me?

We use the term hypocrite when we mean one who is professing to be a Christian when he is not one. But then the term applies also to another form of it which is quite as despicable as the first, viz., professing by my action and words, or even sometimes by my silence, that I am not a Christian when in point of fact I really am one. Have we never been in circumstances which have called for a clear and bold declaration of our allegiance to Christ, and though we may not have gone the length of positively denying that we have any links with Him, yet we have maintained a culpable silence which has led others to think that no such link existed. That is tacitly denying Him. What contemptible hypocrisy this is! We generally quote poor dear Peter as an illustration of this kind of hypocrisy, but I think if we were honest we could find an instance *a little nearer home*.

What is the root cause of hypocrisy in this case? The Lord puts His finger on

it at once, *Cowardice*. “The fear of man bringeth a snare.” The desire to stand well with my fellow men and companions leads into the snare of trying to camouflage my true identity, and I become a moral coward in the effort to obliterate the distinctiveness between me and other men, that should be made apparent by one who confesses Christ as Lord. Thus I allow the world to think that He is not *my* Lord! The reason for this cowardice is that He is disallowed of men and we desire to have the patronage of men. Instead of the identity being complete between me and my Lord it is complete between me and His enemies. Thus we become like men in general and not like men that wait for their Lord. May the gracious Lord forgive us! The fear of a joke at our expense, or a well timed snub, or a jeering laugh leads us to hide our true distinctiveness, so that we may be welcome in the companionship of men that disallow Him.

The corrective of this would be, living in the light of the judgment seat of Christ; for He reminds us in this connection, “There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” Hypocrisy cannot live in the light of that day.

BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS. The first point of warning was in connection with our confession of Christ as Lord. Now we

come to a warning in connection with whether we are in reality "waiting for the Lord." What characterizes a truly waiting servant is that he is ready to act immediately—"They may open unto Him *immediately*." It is impossible to act immediately if we are entangled. It is true according to Hebrews xii. that *sin* "doth so easily beset [or *entangle*] us." But it is equally clear that the affairs of this life may do the same. (see 2 Tim. ii. 4). Now the Lord's warning seems to apply to this side of the matter. Not now the fear of men, but the fear of circumstances. Evidently neither fear nor fetter must mark the one that is truly waiting for the Lord. He is coming suddenly and quickly and the servant must be ready to *act immediately*. I cannot do this if I am pre-occupied, and engrossed, and entangled with other things.

Here the Lord touches on the subject of covetousness, the lust of acquisition. What He wants is a heart engrossed with Himself and His things, but alas it so easily becomes engrossed with earth and its things to the exclusion of Him who is worthy of to have unrivalled and undisputed sway in our hearts and lives. Here He has to remind us of that which will rob us of our distinctiveness as His servants, and we become like the nations of the world and seek after not only what we shall eat and what we shall drink, but hold what we have got for our own enjoyment for many years as

in the case of the rich fool. Cares, anxieties as to whether we shall have enough, or how we can hold what we have got, may engross the mind and shut out of our hearts and thoughts His speedy return, for whom we wait.

Both these snares, the fear of men, and fear of circumstances, get their antidote in the loving and compassionate care of God our Father. We find this in Romans viii. 31, 32. First, “If God can be for us who can be against us?” So we need not fear man. Then, “How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.” Therefore we need not fear circumstances. The moment I lose confidence in God I shall want to do the best I can for myself and I shall want a slice of the world. The greater the stake I have in the world the less I shall want to leave it, so that instead of being like men who are leaving the world, I become like men that love the world. “All these things do the nations of the world seek after,” thus my distinctiveness has gone. I am like men in general and not like a man that waits for his lord.

I may say that I can keep my heart out of the things that my hands are grasping, but the Lord does not believe it. He says, “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” “Settle down!” cries the enemy. “Be ready to move immediately!” says the

Master. We are often singing the song of the one who is truly waiting for Christ,

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

But how far the words apply the Lord knows.

It is interesting to note that under the Mosaic economy property became reduced in value the nearer they got to the Jubilee. This is stated in Leviticus xxv. 15. If a person bought land the price would be governed by that consideration. The longer the time from the Jubilee the longer the price they would have to give, because the longer the time they would have the use of the land. The nearer the Jubilee the less time they would hold the land, and thus the less value set upon it. Would not we value things less in this world, if conscious how near we are to our Jubilee, when our Lord will usher us into the liberty of glory at His coming again.

It is not a little remarkable that these same two tests were applied at the Lord's command to Gideon's 32,000 men. He submitted them to the "fear of man" test. Gideon rang out the challenge "Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him return!" and 22,000 men melted like snow before the sun! Next Gideon brought them down to the test of earth's mercies, down to the water. The Lord said in effect "Mark

the men who *settle down* on their knees to drink *and mean to have a good time*. Set them aside, and send them back." And 9,700 went to the rear. These could not act *immediately*. They would have to find their feet before they could face the foe. Thus their very mercies would act as an entanglement and they would be detained. The men God used that day were the men that could move without *fear* or *fetter*.

All these things we have been considering are what we may call the negative side of the question. Now we must turn to what the Lord marks out more positively as what He would like to see in us when He does return. Surely there is not one of us who would not like to be at that supreme moment just what He desires.

A girded servant. "Let your loins be girded." The girdle is the insignia of service. Peter says, "Gird up the loins of your mind," and this in view of the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Strength and gladness are also connected with the girdle. "Thou hast girded me with strength" (2 Sam. xxii. 40). Thou hast "girded me with gladness" (Psa. xxx. 11). The joy of the Lord is our strength, and thus we have the combination of joy and strength with service, and that in view of the return of Christ. This does not give the idea of a cringing coward who is half apolo-

getic for being a Christian at all, but of a downright gladness that makes one strong in the Lord.

Then, "lights burning." A bright warm testimony rendered to the fact that we are waiting for the Lord. By saying that I am just waiting for the Lord I render testimony to the fact that His return is imminent. If you saw me standing by the station gate and should ask why I am there, and I tell you that I am *just waiting for a friend*, I give you at once the thought that the coming of this friend is near, that indeed his arrival may be the next thing that will happen. If you saw me at the station at eight in the morning and I were to tell you that I was just waiting for a friend but that he is not expected till twelve o'clock at night then my words, "just waiting" would have no real meaning.

A watching servant. This shews more energy of action and of affection. I cannot sleep and watch. The tendency is to become overpowered with sleep as the night wears on to the morning. Here again I may lose my distinctiveness. I might fall asleep while waiting. "While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." My waiting room becomes a dormitory. A sleeping Christian has nothing outwardly to distinguish him from a dead person, as far as activity is concerned, and thus all distinctiveness between him and those that sleep in the night (the children of the night) is

gone. The cry of the Spirit to an insensible and indifferent church is “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” “Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.”

A working servant. By serving we may use up the time in seeking to minister to others, to give meat in due season to the household. Thus we may turn the waiting room into a refreshment room. “Blessed is the servant, whom His Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing.”

ART. CUTTING.

THE RED SEA.

Or, the Way of Peace.

GEOGRAPHICALLY, as we know, the Red Sea lies between Egypt and the wilderness of Sin and Sinai; and God, who made this world in order to demonstrate the conflict between good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of good, has described wonderful lessons for us in the circumstances and happenings in connection with His people of ancient days, who dwelt in those parts. We who are familiar with the Bible, can see that Egypt has been a place always hostile to the best interests of God's people, and the history of the chil-

dren of Israel has branded that country as a place of slavery and bondage, from which only the power and intervention of God could deliver them.

If we apply the story, like a parable, to the history of our souls, we find that Satan (of whom the King of Egypt is a type, and who is the god of this world) hates God's people, because he hates Christ. He ever seeks to keep them from leaving the world and coming to Christ and from worshipping God; he aims at keeping them in bondage to sin. We all have sinned, and Satan uses that fact to make us afraid of God, and thus sin becomes our master. When, however, we feel the sinfulness of sin as the children of Israel felt the rigour of the taskmasters, we cry to God, even as they did. He heard their cry, and sent a deliverer and brought them out of Egypt. Moses, who wielded the rod of God's power, visited judgment on the gods of Egypt and by the power of death, in the slaying of the first-born, forced Pharaoh to abandon his claims on the people of Israel. He let them go to serve God.

Though going out from Pharaoh's dominions, yet Pharaoh's enmity and power had still to be met, and the judgment of death alone could meet this. The children of Israel were led three days journey into the wilderness, far enough away to know that they were out of Egypt, but not far enough

as yet to find Pharaoh's power broken. So it is with newly converted souls. Having believed in Christ, the Lamb of God, they know they are forgiven and rejoice that they are safe, but find the power of Satan and the world against them. The power of sin within them distresses them, so they are not sure they are saved !

Moses however led them to the Red Sea where the battle was to be fought between God and Pharaoh. The people encamped at Pi-hahiroth, with the wilderness on either hand, the sea in front, and Pharaoh's army behind them to destroy them if he could ; but the God of glory was on their behalf, and the cloud of the glory of God came in between Pharaoh and them like a wall, for He had pledged His word, and it was His glory to deliver them. Then God opened the Red Sea and made walls of waters so that a way through was made, and the Israelites, their children and cattle marched safely through on dry ground. But when the Egyptians followed them, God told Moses to lift up his rod, and before the Egyptian army could get across, they were all engulfed in the mighty waters, which rolled them in dead on the shore.

Then the children of Israel began to sing ! They saw that Pharaoh's power to reclaim them was shattered. God's judgment had fallen in death upon the Pass-over lamb which had sheltered Israel, and

now the judgment of death had broken Pharaoh's power for ever. They were free for ever, and God had kept His promised word ! In the relief of deliverance, Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord.

Now this is exactly what happens when a soul who has been under the burden of sin and Satan's power gets set free. Let us translate the allegory and see its application to our case. God has given His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Passover lamb whose Blood "cleanseth from all sin." Just as the blood of the lamb was put on the lintel and door-posts of the Israelites' houses, and under the shelter of that blood they were safe from the sword of the destroying angel and escaped death, so those who trust in the blood of Christ are safe from the judgment of God. Christ, God's Lamb, having been sacrificed for us, we have "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephes. i. 7). But we still have an evil principle of sin in our nature, and there is still the power of Satan and of the world which he rules. So Christ became flesh, that He might take our place and die to free us from these powers.

God sees the believer as having died with Christ. His death was our death, to free us from sin's dominion, as Romans vi. 3-5 shows us. So also we are told in Hebrews

ii. 14, 15, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." In dying, therefore, He broke the power of our great adversary and thus we are set free.

Thus it is we have peace with God and know that there is no condemnation for us who are in Christ Jesus. Now we are His purchased possession, and as Israel sang so can we. We triumph in His triumph. He is going to take care of us all the journey through, and bring us into the place He has made for Himself to dwell with His people, even His Sanctuary in the heavenly Canaan. What a God is ours!

A. E. WALKER.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION

(*Galatians i*).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

IN his epistle to the Galatians the Apostle Paul is not so much concerned with expounding his Gospel as with defending it. The mischief-makers were evidently certain

Jews who professed conversion to Christianity, and yet were more zealous of the law than they were of Christ; men of the same stamp as those we have mentioned in Acts xv. 1 and 5.

We find allusions to their mischievous activities in some of the other epistles. They had gained a certain measure of success amongst the Corinthians, for instance. There are faint allusions to them in the first epistle, but in the second, chapter xi., the Apostle denounces them in no uncertain terms. They were Jews right enough, as verse 22, of that chapter shows, but he does not admit their being truly Christian, as we may see by reading verses 13 and 14. The Colossian Christians were warned against their beguilings in the epistle addressed to them, (ii. 14-23), and even the faithful Philippians had a word thrown in about them in, "Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (iii. 2).

Evidently however their greatest success was with the Galatians, who were a people of fickle temperament. The "churches of Galatia" had very largely embraced the ideas they pressed, hardly realizing how they cut at the root of that Gospel which they had first heard from the lips of Paul himself. This the Apostle shows them in the epistle. Consequently he stresses just those features of the Gospel which exposed the falsity of these newer ideas. He shows them

moreover what a fall from grace, as regards their own thoughts and spiritual state, it had involved them in. The seriousness of this fall accounts for the restraint and even severity of language which characterizes this epistle.

In opening his letter Paul not only announced his apostleship but emphasized the fact that he held this place directly from God. It had reached him from no man, not even the twelve who were chosen before him. Men were not the source of it, nor had he received it by means of them as channels. God was the source of it, and it had reached him by Jesus Christ. Hence he had a fullness of authority not possessed by the Judaising teachers who were troubling them, for they at best could only pretend to be the emissaries of brethren in Jerusalem. Moreover, as he points out, all the brethren in his company at the moment of his writing associated themselves with what he said in the epistle. There was ample weight behind his utterances !

He writes, you notice, not to one assembly of Christians only, but to the assemblies of the province of Galatia, who all had evidently been affected in the same way. Now the Gospel had reached them through Paul's labours, as is intimated in chapter iv. verses 11-15. They had given him a wonderful reception and had seemed to be most devoted to him. Miracles were wrought amongst

them (iii. 5), and it was a most enthusiastic time. There is no record of any opposition. Nobody appears to have hurled stones at Paul's head! Yet in the Acts all this is ignored. We are only told that they went "through . . . the region of Galatia" (xvi. 6). preaching the Gospel, and that later they "went over all the country of Galatia . . . strengthening all the disciples" (xviii. 23).

This is significant! Evidently it was one of those times when there was too much surface work—too much of the stony ground element. We must not disparage the Apostle's work because of this, for the Lord assumed that this shallow work would be found even when He Himself was the sower. It all looked so wonderful and yet the Holy Spirit knew from the outset what lay beneath the surface, and when Luke was inspired to write his second treatise this apparently wonderful time in Galatia is dismissed with the barest mention.

In the opening salutations (verses 3-5) the Lord Jesus is presented in a very significant way. He truly gave Himself for our sins, but the purpose in view was our being delivered from "this present evil world." As we proceed with the epistle we shall see how the law, the flesh and the world go together; inasmuch as the law was given to put a curb on the flesh and thus to make the world what it should be. In effect it did neither, though it revealed both

in their true character. We shall find on the other hand, that the grace of the Gospel brings in faith and the Spirit, and delivers from the world, which is treated as under condemnation.

The "world" here has the sense of "age" or "course of this world." It is the *world system* rather than the people in the world. It is a *very present* system to-day, and it is a *judged and condemned* system; hence it is the will of God that we be delivered from it, and to this end the Lord Jesus died for us.

With verse 6, Paul plunges straight into the main burden of his letter. The Gospel which he had preached to them had called them into the grace of Christ, and now they had turned aside to a different message which was no true gospel at all. He was filled with wonder at their folly, indeed as we read these solemn words we can feel the hot indignation which lay behind them. They were following "a *different* gospel, which is not *another*,"—as it should read. They may have imagined that they were receiving a new and improved version of the old message. They were not. It was a radically different message, and a false one at that.

In verse 8, Paul contemplates himself perverting God's Gospel in this way, or even an angel from heaven doing so; not a fall-

en angel, but an angel hitherto unfallen and coming from the presence of God. Upon either or both he solemnly pronounces the curse of God. Having done so it seems as though he anticipates that some will regard him as extreme in his denunciation and wish to remonstrate with him. He anticipates this by repeating the curse, only this time making its force even plainer. As a matter of fact neither he nor an angel from heaven would so pervert the Gospel, but certain men had been doing so amongst the Galatians, so now he says, "*If any man*"

If any are inclined to think that this was just a petulant outburst against a set of rival preachers, let them consider what was involved in the matter, and they will soon see that the curse was the curse of God, with all the weight of His might behind it.

What then was involved? Let us answer by asking a question by way of illustration. Do you think that a person who surreptitiously tips a dose of poison into somebody's tea-pot is worthy of condemnation? You most certainly do. What then do you think he is worthy of, who should in the dead of night shoot a whole cartload of virulent poison into the water-works supplying a town? You have no language in which to express your abhorrence of such an awful deed. But here were men who were perverting the message which

is the only river of salvation and spiritual life for a fallen world. In what language can the Spirit of God express His abhorrence of a deed like that? Only in pronouncing upon them the solemn curse of God.

You will notice that these men did not contradict the Gospel, but *perverted* it. For one who utterly denies the Gospel you will find many who pervert it. They dexterously give it just that subtle twist which completely falsifies its true character. Let us be on our guard against them.

The real motive which underlay the teachings of these men was the desire of pleasing man. This is exposed for us in verse 10. Later on in the epistle we shall see that they desired to glory in the flesh, and to capture the Galatians as followers of themselves. They wished to please men in order that, being pleased, the men might run after them and become their followers. Thus at the back of everything lay the desire for self-exaltation.

In contrast to this the Apostle Paul was the true servant of Christ. It was Christ he aimed at pleasing and not men. Men might censure or they might praise, it was no great matter to him. This was specially true if he thought of men at large, yet it was true even when it was a question of the judgment of his fellow-apostles, as we see in the next chapter. The Gospel that he

preached he had received directly from the Lord Himself, and this lifted him far above all human opinion.

As to this matter no preacher of to-day can possibly be in Paul's position. It would therefore ill become us to adopt his tone of authority. We have all been taught the Gospel through men. The Word of God has not come out from us, but unto us only (see 1 Cor. xiv. 36): and hence we do well if we listen with deference to what our brethren have to say, should they feel it right to take us to task as to any matter. Even so the final court of appeal is of course the Word of God.

Still we do well when we do not set before us as an object the pleasing of men. The very Gospel which we have believed, and which perhaps we preach, should preserve us from that; inasmuch as it is "not after man," as stated in verse 11. If the Gospel has reached us in a defective or mutilated form, then doubtless we may not have realized this, but it was the case with the Gospel that Paul preached. Man was not the source of it, nor had he received it through man, as a channel of communication. He received it by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus. It came to him first-hand from God, as did his apostleship, as we saw in considering verse 1. Consequently it had upon it the stamp of God, and not the stamp of man.

The characteristic feature of the Gospel therefore is "*after God*" and "*not after man.*" What is after man honours man, flatters man, glorifies man. The Gospel tells man the humbling truth about himself, but glorifies God and accomplishes His ends.

This fact alone provides us with a very pertinent test as whether what we hear as gospel is really Gospel. "I like hearing Mr. So-and-so," is the cry, "He speaks so reasonably. There is such common sense. He has such faith in humanity, and makes you feel so much more hopeful and content in this rather discontented world." Quite so! The fact is it is all so thoroughly *after man*. Consequently it is all so pleasing to the natural man. Yet it is false. It is not the Gospel of God.

At first sight it might appear as though what Paul says, in the last verse of 1 Corinthians x, is a contradiction of this. If however the whole of the chapter be read, and the previous chapter also, it will be seen that his point there is that the Christians should have the greatest possible consideration and care for their weaker brethren, and indeed for all men. Hence they should avoid all occasions of offence and seek the profit of all. Here, on the other hand, it is a question of the truth of the Gospel. The tendency to alter it, or whittle it down in order to please men, must be resisted at all costs. There cannot be a moment's compromise here.

From verse 13 to the end of the chapter the Apostle recounts a little of his history; evidently in order to support what he had just stated in verse 12.

First he recalls what marked him while unconverted. In his life he united great zeal for Jewish tradition, and a progress in Judaism which outstripped his contemporaries, with great persecution of the church of God. Twice in verses 13 and 14 he speaks of "the Jews' religion." This is significant, for the Galatians had fallen into the snare of trying to bring the very essence of that religion into the Gospel. He would have them realize—and us also—that far from being supplementary to the Gospel it is antagonistic to it. He had been brought clean out of it by his conversion.

Three steps in Paul's history are plainly marked for us. First he was set apart by God even before his birth. Then he was called by the grace of the Gospel. Thirdly God revealed His Son in him that He might be the theme of his testimony among the nations. Though Paul was born of the purest Hebrew stock he needed to be set apart as much as if he had been a heathen, and was set apart from his Judaism—a point of much moment to the Galatians. Moreover he was set apart for God's service, the character of which was determined for him by the nature of the revelation which reached him.

It was the revelation of the Son of God, and not merely of Israel's Messiah. The Lord Jesus was both of course, but it was in the former character that He appeared to Paul and, as we know from other Scriptures, He appeared to him thus from glory. From that great moment on the road to Damascus Paul knew that the Jesus of Nazareth, whom he had despised, was the Son of God. And this was revealed not only *to* him but *in* him.

The use of the preposition, "in" would indicate that the revelation was made thoroughly effective in Paul. If you went to an observatory you might be permitted to view the moon through a large telescope. You would perceive the wonders of its surface, its mountains, its craters. Yet though revealed to your eye they would not be in your eye, for the moment you remove your eye from the telescope everything vanishes. But let the astronomer attach a camera to the eyepiece of the telescope and expose therein a sensitized plate for the necessary time. Now under suitable chemical treatment something appears in the plate. That which was only revealed *to* your eye has now been revealed *in* the plate, and permanently so. It was like this with Paul. The Son of God who was in glory had produced a permanent impression in Paul, and so he was able to preach Him as One whom he *knew* and not merely knew *about*.

It was this that characterized the Apostle's

unique ministry and service, and from the outset lifted him above reliance upon other men, even the best of them. Consequently he did not need to make his way to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion. Three years elapsed before he saw any of those who had been apostles before him, and then he only saw Peter and James for a short period.

There is no mention of this visit to Arabia in Acts ix. and hence one can only surmise where it comes in. Very possibly it comes in between verses 22 and 23 of that chapter, and the episode of his escape from Damascus, by being let down over the wall in a basket, occurred when he had returned there from Arabia. If so, it was just after that happening that his visit to Peter took place. At all events the Apostle is very emphatic as to the correctness of that which he writes to the Galatians, and that the churches of Judæa only knew of his conversion by report; while glorifying God for the grace and power, which had transformed the raging persecutor, under whom they had suffered, into a servant of Christ.

And all these historical details, be it remembered, are given in order to impress us with the fact that the Gospel of which he was the herald, had reached him direct from the Lord Himself.

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD.

A WELCOME calm followed the bitter storm ! Certain religious leaders questioned a poor man regarding his life-long blindness, and how he was saved from it. Born blind, he now stood before them with good eye-sight. How was this to be explained ?

The blind bigotry of these men made them despisers of the Lord Himself. Hearing that it was JESUS who had given him sight, their unreasonable opposition arose immediately, and when the happy man spoke well of his Benefactor, the pitiless storm broke forth; and "they cast him out" (John ix. 34).

He lost some temporary advantages truly, but he now possessed sight ! Another such case was unknown in the world's history. He might reflect, "I know His power to save; but, *oh, if only I knew Himself!*" For this great gain the past advantages would be a welcome loss.

His omniscient Saviour found him, and kindly discovered to him who He was. He

saw Him. He talked with Him,—*the Son of God* ! And he said, "LORD. I believe. And he worshipped Him." What a haven of rest and joy after the cruel tempest ! This actually took place. He now knew His Saviour as THE SON OF GOD.

There are numbers to-day, thank God, who are saved by grace ; but, do we sufficiently value the knowledge of the One who has saved us ? By His own Word ten men were once saved from leprosy ; yet only one of them returned to the Lord Himself, giving glory to God and thanksgiving to Jesus. "*Where are the nine?*" He enquired.

From His place of exaltation above, our Lord Jesus Christ gives gift for ministry to-day, "till we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the *knowledge of the Son of God.*" Peter wrote, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Paul said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." John says, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that *Jesus is the Son of God?*" When doubting Thomas found himself in the presence of our risen Lord, he said unto Him, "*My Lord and my God.*" "That I may know Him," may well be the deep desire of each of His redeemed ones.

His disciples, who heard His words and observed His works, remarked what specially distinguished Him; and it is written, "We have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14. N.Tr). No wonder they clung to Him through all His trials, and bore witness, after His death and ascension, producing the greatest results ever seen in the world; though they themselves suffered privations, persecutions, imprisonments and martyrdom for His beloved Name.

Who else could make God known? None but the Son who is in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Who else could reveal the Father? No one but the Son of the Father could do this. And He could also disclose the counsels of the Father's heart, for He is the Son of the Father's love. But He must redeem us by His blood first, and give us the Holy Spirit, before we could take in the disclosures which are made in Him. We had to be saved by Him, and be reconciled to God through Him, before we could rejoice in the Father seen in the Son. Down under our sins and our judgment His love for us took Him, and rising from death and the grave He presents us now to the Father, saying, "Here am I and the children Thou hast given Me," and to us He says, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." Everlasting praise and glory to His holy name!

The gospel of John shows Him to us as the Word who "*was* GOD," become flesh, tabernacling amongst us. Yet He was truly Man, and spake of Himself as "A MAN that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God" (John viii. 40). He is the Son of God and He is the Son of man. He is the Son,—both God and Man. Personally and officially He is the long foretold King of Israel, come on the promised line of King David; the Christ of God, the anointed Head over all; the Lamb of God, the taker away of the sin of the world; the Lord of all; the Lord of lords and King of kings. To the Son it is said, "Thy throne, O God, is to the age of the age" (Heb. i. 8). What a glorious Saviour is ours. We have good reason to look forward to His return; "awaiting the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us."

Isaiah saw the Lord, and His train filled the temple (vi. 1), while the seraphim veiled themselves, saying, "Holy, holy, holy." Then the prophet said, "Woe is me... for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." But we are told in John xii. 41, that this was the Lord Jesus; for "he saw His glory, and spake of Him." Again in chapter xix. 37, "Another scripture saith, They shall look on HIM whom they pierced;" and on turning to Zechariah xii. 10, we find Jehovah says "ME, whom they

pierced." John the Baptist, His cousin after the flesh, nevertheless said twice in regard to His divine glory, "I knew Him not;" but when the Spirit as a dove came upon Him, he "*bare record that THIS IS THE SON OF GOD.*"

Those who are saved by Him, separated to Him, and know Him in this way, have the honour just before He returns of witnessing to His glory; while the so-called Christian world ignores it or disowns it so largely. He builds His assembly upon what His Father reveals, and we confess Himself as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Against this hades' counsels and campaigns cannot prevail. Maintaining this truth John's gospel is written, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (xx. 31).

Wild winds of opposition may arise, the turbulent waters may run high, and the waves dash into our little boat, but greater is He that is for us, than all that can be against us! He allows the faith of His loved ones to be tested, so that their faith in Him and their knowledge of Himself may be increased. As of old, when His disciples crossed the troubled sea, He draws near, and He brings us to our desired haven.

When they saw Him at first they were troubled, but Jesus said unto them, "*Be of good cheer; IT IS I; be not afraid!*"

His holy presence was welcome in the ship. The wind ceased. Peace and calm and joy filled their hearts. Jesus with them was enough; they "*worshipped Him, saying, OF A TRUTH THOU ART THE SON OF GOD*" (Matt. xiv. 33).

And we also worship Him, as we often sing gladly together in faith,

"Son of God, our souls adore Thee,
While upon Thy face we gaze,
There the Father's love and glory
Shine in all their brightest rays."

Linking up with himself those he called "the brethren;" and thus embracing all those who are born of God—"the children of God;" John writes, "We know that *the Son of God* is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, *even in His Son* Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John v. 20).

H. J. VINE.

WHERE DO YOU FIND THE POWER ?

HEATHEN religious bodies have their sacred books, that answer to them as the Bible answers to the Christians. It is often claimed that they are as good in their way as the Bible. However the Bible need not fear comparison.

The Mohammedans have their Koran, the Hindus their Vedas, the Parsees their Zend Avesta, the Buddhists their Tripitaka, and Confucian Texts.

Sir Monier Williams, who, it is claimed, knew more about the so-called sacred books of the East than any man, who has ever lived, contrasted them with the Bible as follows :—

“These non-Christian ‘Bibles’ are all developed in the wrong direction. They all begin with some flashes of true light and end in utter darkness. Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table, but place your own Holy Bible on the right side—all by itself—all alone—with a big gap between. It takes some courage to appear intolerant in this day of flabby compromise; but I contend...there is a *gulf* between the Bible and the sacred books of the East, which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and for ever—not a mere *rift*, which may be easily closed, across which the Christian and the non-Christian may shake hands and interchange similar ideas in regard to essential truths, but a *veritable gulf*, which cannot be bridged over by any science of religious thought—yes, a *bridgeless chasm*, which no theory of evolution can ever span.”

These are weighty words and well worth

pondering over. We can confirm them by the following testimony of a missionary in China. He met a cultured Chinese gentleman, an ardent follower of Confucius. This Chinese gentleman said, "I know nothing about Christianity, but I would like to know."

The missionary, instead of condemning the sacred books of the Buddhists, wisely began by saying, "The teachings of Confucius are very high, and the Moslem's Koran teaches some excellent things."

"Yes, indeed," assented the Chinese gentleman.

"But then the Zend Avesta, and the Vedas and the precepts of Gautama Buddha all contain beautiful counsels," said the missionary, "and even *you* would confess that Jesus Christ is at least *not inferior* to all these as a Great Teacher."

"Yes," replied the Chinese gentleman, "I've read the Sermon on the Mount—it is truly beautiful."

"Then," said the missionary, "I suppose you would suggest that each of us ought to follow his own religion—you should be a Confucianist—I a Christian—the Singhalese a Buddhist and so on."

"Yes," was the reply, "that is what we think in China."

Then the missionary came to the vital point, the crux of the whole matter. "Now

tell me," he said, "where do you find the *power* to carry out what your prophet Confucius teaches?"

He leaned back in his chair and laughed aloud. "Oh! I have no power. We admire the teaching, but *we have no power to carry it out.*"

The missionary made no remark. He had evidently touched the Chinese gentleman on the weak spot in his armour. If conduct is going to take us to eternal bliss, and we have no power to follow the precepts given, the situation is despairing, hopeless—it ends in a frightful leap in the dark, and a fearful awakening when too late.

The Chinese gentleman leaned forward, and touching the missionary on the knee, asked earnestly, "Where do *you* find the power to do what Jesus Christ commands?"

The missionary replied, "This is just where Christianity differs from every other religion. Our Lord told us, 'Without Me ye can do nothing,' but He sends His Holy Spirit into the hearts of His followers, those, who trust Him as Saviour, and His Holy Spirit gives them both the desire and *power* to carry that desire into practice."

A smile of joy spread over the Chinese gentleman's face: "Why, that is wonderful! Wonderful! tell me about it."

The missionary, nothing loth, told the old old story out of a full heart. The truth laid

hold of the Chinese gentleman. Heathen beliefs vanished like mists before the rising sun, and the missionary had the joy of baptising his friend.

A young Oriental student at Cambridge after long and cautious enquiry into the truth of Christianity said, "I have been reading your sacred Book; and the difference between it and our sacred books of the East is not altogether in its precepts; for there are wonderful precepts, high and great, also in our books; but your Book and *yours alone*, contains I see, the secret of how they may be done."

Turn from the lofty precepts of these Eastern sacred books, and look at the practices of their adherents. Look at the frightful immorality of the priests and the vestal virgins of the temples. And mark you, that is carried on as part of their religion. Look at the backward condition of the nations over whom these religions hold sway. Look at the wickedness that goes on unrebuked.

Turn from that to the Bible. It is a life-giving book. It proclaims pardon and peace through the atoning work of the Son of God. It transforms lives. It uplifts men and women. It delivers them from sin. Read it, read it till that life is yours, till pardon and peace are yours. They are there on the sacred page for YOU. Miss these blessings, and you had better never have been born.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts xvi. 31). He is the only Saviour—not Mohammed, not Buddha, not Confucius. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12).

A. J. POLLOCK.

HOW MUCH ?

(Luke xix. 1-27.)

SHORT but weighty words ! Important in their significance and in their setting.

Verses 1-10 tell of the salvation the Lord Jesus brought at His first coming ; and what a great salvation it is, that could put the despised publican into the place of a son of Abraham, and which still puts “as many as receive Him” into the place of “sons of God.”

How necessary it is for each saved one to be deepening in the knowledge of “the grace of Christ”!

But we read that our Lord added and spake a parable for those who thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear, and the teaching of this parable **should** greatly affect our hearts. The Lord Himself is the nobleman who has gone away into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and He will presently return. Before He went He called unto Him

His ten servants and entrusted them with ten pounds, saying to them, "Occupy till I come," or, "make use of them for My service."

Have you, reader, ever asked yourself for what purpose God saved you, gave you eternal life, sealed you with His Spirit, and filled you with joy and peace in believing? Surely it is that you may serve the Lord now in His absence. It has been thought that the pounds in our chapters and the talents in Matthew xxv. represent the gifts of the Spirit, with which each saint is graced in his measure. In Matthew the point would seem to be that some are, by the sovereignty of the Master, more richly endowed than others, while in Luke all the servants are gifted alike, and their responsibility is more in view.

It is a decisive day in your christian life when you own, with joy, the Lord's claim on you, and when, yielding yourself to Him, you say, "I am not only a dear child of God, but He has given me the great privilege of being His servant." Henceforth, by His gracious help your one object and interest in this world, whether in His service, or in life's daily round, will be to occupy till He come, and to use whatever gift He has given you, with a fervent and holy zeal; knowing that very soon your Lord will return, and that then He will take account with His servants.

Before He sets up His kingdom in this world, He will ask each one, *How much* has been gained by trading with His pound? How blessed then to hear from His lips "Well done thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful [not successful] in a very little"—in Luke the reward is, authority over cities, and in Matthew, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Be encouraged dear brother or sister to use His pound faithfully. Remember *grace alone* will put you in heaven, but for faithfulness in His service He will confer a reward in His kingdom.

"OF WHAT SORT."
(1 Cor. iii. 13.)

This is another matter and a very serious one. Some earnest servants apparently mistake *quantity*, "how much," for *quality* "of what sort;" but *both* must be considered. We read of builders who use wood, hay, stubble, instead of gold, silver and precious stones.

Without going deeply into it, we may say that gold typifies Divine righteousness, silver the truth of redemption, and precious stones have each their significance of that which is beautiful in the sight of the Lord. We need to be constantly in His presence in order to receive His direction in all the service we attempt for Him, so that it may be

such as shall abide when tried by fire, for "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

May our service be, as the Apostle Peter tells us the trying of our faith shall be, "found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 7). J.R.

POWER IN SERVICE.

FOR the young Christian, to-day is a day of unprecedented scope in service. In many circles there is a far readier ear for the vitality of Youth than for the better sense and experience of Age.

To-day, on the other hand, is a day of apathy and self-complacency in the world (not to speak of the Church) and a veritable spiritual volcano is needed to stir the men and women, with whom we are brought in contact, to a sense of their need. Men and women do not believe that they are sinners these days, and they can find a vast weight of scholarship and even religion to back them up.

Perhaps the open-air is the best place to discover the general opinions of the great mass of people that fill our crowded streets. A great diversity of unbelief is found in every crowd that gathers round a speaker

in the open air, but underlying most attacks is the rebellious will that condescendingly tolerates God as long as He does not interfere too drastically with the smooth-running of a self-centered life.

It is in this state of things that the young Christian, after running his head once or twice against a stone wall of unbelief, whether cultured or crude, may give up all his glowing day-dreams, and turn aside to seek gratification in some service a bit more showy. Thus he is lost to God's work, and he loses the glorious privilege of standing in the gap, of making up the hedge in the place where God had placed him.

It is so easy. Young blood is welcomed to-day; mistakes are tolerated, and even swelled-head is overlooked.

What a temptation there is to lose the keen God-given desire to do His will, come what may, and to be found in the line of His purpose, however menial, unromantic, or even heart-breaking it may seem !

“ I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me . . . but I found NONE ” (Ezek. xxii. 30). To-day the Church is broken, torn with the dissensions of party strife that nothing but the coming of the Lord from heaven will heal. God is looking for men—not strong men, nor talented men, nor

those upon whom nature has bestowed her most lavish gifts; but those, who having been forgiven much, love much; those who are ready to present their bodies a living sacrifice so as to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. xii. 2), and that Christ may live in them.

How can we learn the secret of victory? How can we tap the resources of almighty power? For we are no paupers. All things are ours, and we have but to draw upon His riches in glory.

Of course, to begin with we do not know our Bibles as we ought. Our Lord Himself was content to use the Sword of the Spirit and it is little wonder that our lack of dexterity in wielding this mighty weapon against the powers of darkness is the cause of a great deal of failure. There is only one remedy for this, and that is to read our Bibles more often and with keener concentration, in dependence upon the teaching of the Spirit. There are many helps to the reading and remembering of the Scriptures, such as various systems of marking. It is impossible to lay down any laws, as some are better without any such system, and others find one more helpful than another.

But assuming that I know the Bible from end to end, there may be still something lacking that will paralyse my hand, and

leave me powerless. When the Midianites were put to flight in Judges, the cry was not "The Sword of the Lord," nor yet "The sword of Gideon," for unless the Sword of the Lord was Gideon's sword too, it would be useless to him; and on the other hand if it were merely Gideon's sword it would be powerless against the hosts of the Midianites. No, it must be "The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon," and then it will put the stoutest foe to rout. So too, with you and me, the Bible may be but a cold dead archaic thing if I try to use it before it has become part of my own being, moulding my life day by day, transforming my heart into a palace by its effect, cutting like a two-edged sword, breaking like a hammer the adamant rock of self; warning, encouraging, feeding, comforting, till at last by a subtle alchemy it has transmuted the base metal of my mind into the gold which alone will stand the test of the fire of God.

Within these bare thousand pages of Scripture lies the secret of every problem, the answer to every question of the heart of man. Within this body of mine dwells the Spirit of God, the Book's Interpreter. What more can the mind conceive to ask for?

Let us just open our hearts to the influence of the Word, and ask God by His Holy Spirit to make the Book live to us. In the open air we shout at the top of our voices that "God so loved the world that

He gave His only-begotten Son . . .”—we put pathos into our voices, and we are a little stirred to think that the people are unmoved by such overwhelming love. We cycle away home in the dusk, and say to each other—“What a dreadfully hard, indifferent place that is !” And God looks down upon our hearts and He says, “Will-ing hearts, but oh, how blind.”

It is *our* hearts that are hard. We preach the Love of God, but it has never melted us. We preach of Judgment to come, but our hearts are not filled with praise to God for having brought us from the horrible pit, nor yet with anguish and tears for our own fellows who are spurning God’s mercy, and are in mortal danger of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

Yes, it is our hearts that are hard. They are dry like the heather of the hill-side, and cold like the granite rocks. Nothing but the dynamite of God’s love can break them, and nothing but the dew of Hermon can soften them.

Do you preach love ? Then preach it from a heart in which His love has been shed abroad by the Spirit. Pray for the sense of it to overshadow your whole being. Do you preach the Cross ? Then preach it as being crucified with Christ. Do you preach Sin ? Preach it with fear, remembering that it was your sins that nailed Him

to Calvary—that it is your daily sins that grieve His heart.

Oh, let us not think that the Gospel is only for the unsaved. Let it work in us cutting relentlessly at the apathy, sin, selfishness, irritation, and passion that so easily beset us—daily fashioning us in the likeness of Him, whom not having seen, we love. So shall we learn the secret of Power.

A. F. S. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION

(*Galatians ii. 1-18*).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

OUR chapter falls quite simply into two parts. First, verses 1 to 10, in which the Apostle recounts what happened on the occasion of his second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. Second, verses 11 to 21, in which he tells of an incident that happened at Antioch not long after his second visit to Jerusalem, and which had a very definite bearing upon the point at issue with the Galatians.

The first visit was about three years after his conversion (i. 18), so the second, being fourteen years later, was about seventeen years after that time, and is evidently the

occasion as to which we have much information in Acts xv. That passage therefore, may profitably be read before proceeding further. From a careful reading several interesting details appear.

Acts xv. begins with mentioning "certain *men* who came down from Judæa," who taught circumcision as essential to salvation. They are not termed "brethren," we notice. In our chapter Paul unhesitatingly labels them "false brethren unawares brought in." Thus early do we find unconverted men getting amongst the saints of God, in spite of apostolic vigilance and care! It is sad when they are brought in *unawares* in spite of care. Sadder still when such principles are professed and practised as leave the door *open for them to enter*.

In Acts we read that "they determined" that a visit to Jerusalem was needful. But here Paul gives us a view behind the scenes of activity and travel, and shows us that it was "by revelation" that he went up. The temptation might have been strong upon him to meet these false brethren and vanquish them at Antioch, but it was revealed to him by the Lord that he should stop disputation and carry the discussion up to Jerusalem, where the views his opponents pressed were most strongly held. It was a bold move; but it was one which in the wisdom of God preserved unity in the church. As a result of his obedience to the

revelation the question was settled against the contentions of these false brethren in the very place where most of their sympathizers were. To have so settled it amongst the Gentiles at Antioch might easily have provoked a rupture.

Further, in Acts xv. it is just stated that "certain other of them" went up with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. Our chapter reveals that amongst these "certain other" was Titus, a Greek. This of course raised the point at issue in its acutest form. The apostle gave no quarter to his opponents. He did not submit to them for an hour, and in result Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.

This being so, Paul's action in regard to Timothy, related in Acts xvi. 1-3, is the more remarkable. It is an illustration of how that which has to be strenuously resisted under certain circumstances may be conceded under other circumstances. In the case of Titus circumcision was demanded in order to establish a principle which cut at the very root of the Gospel. In the case of Timothy no such principle was at stake, the whole question having been authoritatively settled, and Paul did it that Timothy might have liberty of service amongst Jews as well as Gentiles. By birth Timothy was half a Jew and the Apostle made him completely a Jew, as it were, that he might "gain the Jews" (1 Cor. ix. 20). To Paul

himself and to the Corinthians, and so to us, both circumcision and uncircumcision are "nothing" (1 Cor. vii. 19).

It is possible that you might observe some servant of Christ acting after this fashion to-day. Pause a moment before you roundly accuse him of gross inconsistency. It may after all be that he is acting with divinely-given discernment in cases where you have as yet perceived no difference. The apostle speaks of "Our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." It was liberty to refuse circumcision where legal bondage was involved, and yet a year or so later to practice it when nothing of principle was involved.

Then again during this visit to Jerusalem Paul took opportunity to convey formally to the other apostles the Gospel which he had preached among the Gentiles. Though he had received it directly from the Lord he was not above conceiving that possibly error might have crept into his understanding of the revelation. This is indicated in the latter part of verse 2. In effect however it was far otherwise. The most instructed amongst the apostles and elders at Jerusalem had nothing to add to Paul's gospel when they conferred upon the point. The rather they recognized that Paul was clearly called of God to carry the Gospel into the Gentile world, while Peter had a similar commission in regard to the Jew. Hence the three apostolic leaders, perceiving the

grace given to Paul, expressed the fullest fellowship and sympathy with him in his work.

This fact had a very definite bearing on the point at issue with the Galatians. If the men who had been at work in Galatia attacked Paul as being an unauthorized upstart, he was able to counter this by showing that he had received his message from the Lord by first-hand revelation. This established his authority. If on the other hand they attacked him as a man proceeding thus on his own authority and so being in opposition to those who were apostles before him, he countered this lie by the fact that James, Peter and John had shown fullest confidence in him and fellowship with him after thorough conference had taken place.

It remained for him to show that there had been a time when even Peter had yielded somewhat to the influence of men similar to those now opposing Paul, and to relate how he had opposed him then, and the grounds on which he had done so.

There is no mention in the Acts of this visit of Peter to Antioch, but it evidently happened after the decision of the council in Jerusalem as narrated in Acts xv. In that council Peter had argued in favour of the acceptance of Gentile converts without the law of Moses being imposed upon them. He had then spoken of the law as "a yoke

... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." At Antioch however when certain came down from James holding strict views as to the value of circumcision he no longer would eat with the Gentile believers but withdrew himself. His example had great weight and others followed it—even Barnabas who had formerly stood with Paul, as recorded in Acts xv. 2, and 12.

To many doubtless such action would have seemed a very small matter—just a little prejudice to be condoned, a fad to be smiled at. To Paul it was far otherwise. He perceived that under this apparently small question of how Peter took his food, grave principles were at stake, and that Peter's action was not upright "according to the truth of the Gospel."

Oh, that we may all seize the point so strongly enforced here! Departure from the truth, even of the gravest kind, is generally presented to us under cover of seemingly trifling and innocent circumstances. Most of us would have been tempted to exclaim, "Oh, Paul, what an exacting man you are! How difficult to please! Why make such a fuss over a small detail? If Peter wants now to eat only with Jews, why not let him? Why disturb our peace at Antioch and make things unhappy?" We are so often ignorant of Satan's devices. He sees to it that we shall be diverted from truth over something of an apparently harmless

nature. The railway engine runs from the main line into a siding *over very fine points*.

Incidentally let us at this point take note that the idea that church in the apostolic age was the abode of peace and free of all contention has no support from Scripture. From the outset the truth had to be won and maintained through conflict—a great deal of it *internal*, and not merely with the world without. We have no right to expect absence of conflict and trouble to-day. Occasions are sure to arise when peace can only be purchased by compromise, and he who sees most, and hence is constrained to raise his voice in protest, must be prepared to be accused of uncharitableness. Failing such protest peace is maintained, but it is the peace of stagnation and spiritual death. The quietest spot in the throbbing heart of London is the city mortuary! So beware!

If we find ourselves in a position where we feel morally bound to raise our voices, let us pray earnestly that we may be able to do it in a way similar to Paul. "When I saw . . . *I said unto Peter . . .*" Our tendency always is to launch our complaints into the ear of someone other than the culprit himself. Notice, for instance, in Mark ii., that when the Pharisees object to the action of Jesus they complain to His disciples (ver. 16), and when to the action of His disciples, they complain to the Lord (vers. 23, 24). We shall do well to make

it a rule, when remonstrance is needed, to make our remonstrance directly to the person concerned, rather than behind his back.

Paul however did this "*before them all.*" The reason for this is that Peter's defection had already affected many others and so become a public matter. It would be a mistake in a multitude of cases to make *public* remonstrance. Many a defection or difficulty has not become public, and if met faithfully and graciously in a private way with the person concerned it may never become public at all, and thus much trouble and possible scandal be avoided. Public defection however must be met publicly.

Paul began his protest by asking Peter a question based upon his earlier mode of life, before the sudden alteration. Peter had abandoned the strict Jewish customs in favour of the freer life of the Gentiles, as he himself had stated in Acts x. 28. How then could he now consistently retreat from this position in a way that was tantamount to saying that after all Gentiles should live after the customs of the Jews? This question we have recorded in verse 14.

In verses 15 and 16 we have the apostle's assertion which succeeded his question. In this assertion Paul could link Peter with himself and Peter could not deny it. "WE," he says. "We, who are Jews by nature" have recognized that justification is not reached by "the works of the law, but by

the faith of Jesus Christ," and hence have turned from law to Christ and been justified by Him. Thank God, that was so!

Now comes a second question. If it were true, as Peter's action seemed to suggest, that even when standing in all the virtue of Christ's work we still need something, in the way of law-keeping or the observance of Jewish customs, to complete our justification, is not Christ then discredited? He puts the proposition with extreme vigour of language,—is He not even "the Minister of sin" instead of the Minister of justification? To ask such a question is to answer it. It is impossible! Hence he adds, "Away with the thought," or "God forbid."

This was followed by a second assertion in verse 18, a statement which must have fallen as a sledge-hammer on Peter's conscience. Peter's action had inferred that Christ might be the Minister of sin; but it also was without a doubt of the nature of building up again the wall of partition, between Jew and Gentile who are in Christ, that the Gospel had thrown down, and which Peter himself had destroyed by his former action in the house of Cornelius. Whichever was right, Peter was wrong somewhere. If he was right now, he was wrong formerly. If right formerly, he was wrong now. He stood convicted as a transgressor.

As a matter of fact he was wrong now. Formerly he had acted as instructed of God

in a vision. Now he was acting impulsively under the influence of the fear of man.

In these few words from the lips of Paul the Spirit of God had revealed the true inwardness of Peter's action, however innocent it may have appeared to most. Only two questions and two statements, but how effective they were! They quite destroyed Peter's *false* position.

Not content with this however the Spirit of God led Paul to forthwith proclaim the *true* position. He had perceived at the outset that Peter and his followers "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel," so now he very plainly, yet in fewest possible words, states *the truth of the Gospel*. He states it moreover not as a matter of doctrine but as a matter of experience—his own experience. He does not now say "we," but "I," which occurs no less than seven times in verses 19 and 20.

In the Acts we have striking examples of *the preaching of the Gospel* through the lips of Paul. In Romans i.-viii. we have the *exposition of the Gospel* from his pen. In Galatians i. we have *the defence of the Gospel*—by setting forth its characteristic features, which hall-mark it, as it were. Now we are to consider *the truth of the Gospel*.

But we must take up verses 19 to 21, on the next occasion.

F. B. HOLE.

FRIENDS OF CHRIST.

HONOURS conferred by His Majesty seem to be much coveted and highly prized by men of the world. It is said that some are prepared to contribute in almost prodigal fashion to party funds if that will secure recommendation for a peerage, a baronetcy, or other distinction. Others are able to write three letters after their name as a result of having somehow or other secured royal favour. Then there are University graduates who as the result of hard grinding, burning midnight oil, and, in some instances denying themselves many luxuries, have captured the degree upon which their heart was set. "Honour to whom honour is due" we ungrudgingly say.

At the head of this paper we indicate an honour of a very unique sort. Happy they who can truthfully add the letters F.O.C. to their name. It is an honour given not by any person or corporation on earth; conferred not by any monarch of this world, but heavenly in its origin, and bestowed by Him who is "King of kings and Lord of lords,"—our precious, adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Shall we open our Bibles at the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John, and in the first place, try to visualize the scene. The Lord Jesus was journeying from the Upper Room, where the passover had just been eaten, to the garden of Gethsemane. He was accompanied by eleven simple, humble, devoted men. He had been making some marvellous communications to them, but surely none more wonderful than this:—

“*YE ARE MY FRIENDS!*”

The “ye” comprised those eleven men. The “My” was “the mighty God, the everlasting Father,” “the Creator of the ends of the earth,” walking amongst them in the form of a Servant. The world was against Him. That very night He would suffer Himself to be delivered into the hands of His enemies, and the next day they would kill Him. In circumstances such as these He said to His few broken-hearted followers: “Ye are My friends.”

Alas ! they showed themselves not worthy of that place, for that very night one who claimed to be most friendly, denied Him, and the other ten forsook Him. Still He did not withdraw what He had said, nor did He remove their names from Heaven’s Roll of Honour. As a matter of fact He had told them the unique position that would be theirs *after His death* and during His absence from them.

Let us see how they got this. He had been assuring them of His love. He had been telling them of the immensity of it. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for His friends;" (v. 13); and immediately He added "ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (v. 14). He, so to speak, said, "I have shown the greatness of My love by laying down My life for you, I want you to show your love by doing that which is pleasing to Me, and thus shall you be 'My friends.'" But that is not all, for He adds: "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (v. 15). He had told them that which He could not tell to the world. Divine secrets, which no others had heard, had fallen upon their ears. He had made known everything to them, had revealed what was in the Father's heart, and thus had demonstrated that they were His friends.

We might be justified in concluding that this referred only to these eleven disciples were it not for John's third epistle. It may be that when, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he penned that letter, he was the only one of the eleven that remained, but his last words are: "The friends greet thee. Greet the friends by name" (v. 14. N. Tr.). If any inquire "Who are 'the friends'?" there can be but one answer, they are those

to whom the Lord Jesus says: "Ye are My friends."

Let us see now how this may be reached. In the Old Testament we read of one man, and only one, who was called "the friend of God." James lets us into that secret in the second chapter of his epistle and verse 23. It was however a matter of history, for centuries after Abraham's day, when King Jehoshaphat was pleading with God for the deliverance of Israel, he spoke of the land that God gave to "the seed of Abraham Thy friend" (2 Chron. xx. 7). While still later God spoke of "Abraham My friend" (Isa. xli. 8). What characterized Abraham? Faith, confidence, obedience, separation, devotedness to the interests of God. In the same way may we have this. Unquestioning faith; implicit confidence; willing obedience; uncompromising separation; and whole-hearted devotedness.

It is noticeable that when the Lord told the disciples that they were His friends, He warned them that they must be prepared for the enmity of the world. We cannot have the friendship of Christ and that of the world, therefore the Apostle James with characteristic plainness writes: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." (Jas. iv. 4). The man of whom we read in John ix. was a friend of Christ, and got the enmity of the world. The dying thief

was a friend of Christ. That timorous person, who, it may be, with a catch in the throat and a blush in the cheek, confesses the Saviour, is a friend of Christ. Those who are His friends are near Him; they cultivate His company; they enjoy intimacy with Him; they hear those secrets that He delights to communicate; they unconsciously shed the fragrance of His Name, His Person, His love, wherever they go; and it is apparent to all that they belong to Him. They will not require to write the three letters on their note paper, or put them on a brass plate on their house door, or in any way advertise them; for in comporting themselves as His friends they will "set forth the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness to His wonderful light" (1 Pet. ii. 9. N. Tr.) .

Shall we go in for it, and pray that we may be known as

FRIENDS OF CHRIST ?

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

THE MAN WITH ONE TALENT.

WE all remember the parable the Lord spoke concerning the man travelling into a far country, who, before setting out, called his servants, committing to them his goods, so that they might trade with

them in his absence. It is found in Matthew xxv. 14-30.

Let us focus our attention on the man who had *one* talent committed to him. He hid his lord's money in the earth, and did nothing with it. The way in which he was addressed is significant. The accusing finger is put upon the spot in the use of two adjectives. "Thou wicked and slothful servant." He was *wicked*, that is, his heart was away from his lord; he misrepresented his character; he was *slothful*, that is, he was lazy.

Then further the fate that overtook him is given as a warning that his fault might not be perpetuated.

There is a special use for the man of the one talent. If his talent is rightly used he is the backbone of all effort. The men with one talent are to be numbered by the tens of thousands. The temple would never have been reared at Jerusalem by Solomon had he not had 70,000 men that bare burdens and 80,000 hewers in the mountains. (See 1 Kings v. 15.) The men with five talents can be numbered on the fingers of one hand. The men with two talents are not a numerous class.

The man with the one talent, we repeat, is the backbone of all effort. The Great Western Railway many years ago determined to change their main lines from broad

to narrow gauge. One or two men with five talents organized the alteration in a masterly fashion. A few subordinates with two talents as managers and foreman, were placed over the men. Men of one talent to the number of 200,000 were found at their appointed places at the appointed hour, and did the work appointed to them. Without the men of one talent the work would never have been accomplished in the wonderfully small space of time in which it was carried out.

A war is not waged by generals alone. Without the thousands of privates in the ranks all the skill and strategy of the generals would be of no avail.

The government of the country is not carried out by the prime minister alone. There are thousands of unknown officials each doing his work, without which the government of the country could not be carried on.

Our object, however, is to speak to Christians, and especially to young Christians, of one talent, and to encourage them in the use of it. We mean a talent in a spiritual sense, and its use in the Lord's work.

All have not five talents. One brother has a great gift as an evangelist. His zeal is burning, like John the Baptist. He can attract crowds. His work for the Lord makes great demands upon him spiritually, mentally, physically. How wonderfully

helpful to him are the brothers and sisters of the one talent. They cannot preach, but they can help the preacher. They can pray for him, make the meetings known, bring their friends, help to seat the people, do a thousand and one things that will help. Little things they may be, yet necessary, without which the work would not go smoothly and prosper. For one evangelist with five talents we need scores of consecrated men and women with one talent.

The great Apostle Paul could write, "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel" (Philippians iv. 3). Their reward is assured. Their names are known above.

Further, reward is not apportioned according to the number of talents that a man has, but according to his FAITHFULNESS. To describe the man with one talent, who hid it in the earth, two adjectives are used, "WICKED AND SLOTHFUL." To describe the man with the ten talents, and the man with the two talents, who were EQUALLY diligent in doubling their stock in trade, two adjectives are used, "GOOD AND FAITHFUL." What a contrast! Doubtless if the man with the one talent had been diligent, he would have been described in the same way. In the case of each "good and faithful" servant, the reward is couched exactly in the same language. There is no difference in the reward, though there was a differ-

ence in the number of talents committed to them.

The number of the talents entrusted to each by the lord of the servants was regulated according to the ability of each. None of us have made ourselves. "Which of you with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?" (Luke xii. 25). Such as we are, gifted or otherwise, our part is to use what God has entrusted us with, to be faithful and devoted; not to wish to be someone else or to do somebody else's work.

We must again emphasise the fact that the man with one talent is the backbone of all effort. A brother or sister goes forth to serve the Lord in foreign lands. A distinct call to this arduous but blessed service has been responded to. The missionary is one, but how many are needed in the home lands to pray for such, to follow the work with intelligent interest, to minister to him out of their substance. The man with the one talent may go to his humble task day by day, and out of a meagre wage spare something to help the work. Shall we count that as a small matter? Without such interest and practical care the Lord's interests would languish.

We need the men with one talent. In our time we have met such, who are heroes indeed, men and women, who made us ashamed of ourselves, men and women, the very salt of the earth.

A striking story is told of that remarkable man, Abraham Lincoln. At some public function in which he was to take part were two ladies, who had never seen the President, and were very excited at the prospect of doing so. At length he arrived. The ladies looked at him with keen interest. One said to the other in a loud excited whisper, which Lincoln overheard, "What a common-looking man." "Yes ma'am," he at once said to her confusion, "the Lord must like common-looking people, or else He would not have made so many of them."

But it is well for the one talent man to realize what is his talent, and use *that*. For instance the man with the five talents can fill the hall with eager listeners. The man with the one talent, if he mistakes his talent, and insists upon taking his turn behind the preaching desk will *empty* the room. Well for him if he realises he has but one talent, and seeks to use *that* talent, and not try to do things he was never intended to do. The very fact, that he cannot do the things the man with the five talents is called to do, fits him to do the work that the Lord has called him to.

If every man in the army insisted upon being an officer, there would be no army. There would be a mob, a rabble. If every politician insisted upon being a prime minister there would be no government. All honour to the men with the one talent,

We cannot do without them, and when they fill their niche we profoundly respect them.

In the parable the man with the one talent might have been chagrined that he was not awarded five talents, or at least two, and because he did not get what he thought he ought to get, he would do *nothing*. Thus he earned the adjectives, "*Wicked and slothful.*"

May the lesson to be learned from our Lord's parable be laid to heart, and may each one, whether entrusted with five talents, or two, or one, seek to earn the two adjectives, "*Good and Faithful.*"

A. J. POLLOCK.

MARAH.

(See, *Exodus xv. 23-27*).

MARAH was a memorable place, for the first wilderness lesson for Israel had to be learned there. It was not the first encampment. That took place a little later at Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and seventy palm trees. They encamped by the waters; that is, they learned God was their resource and could refresh His people who were weary in the way. Marah seems to have been just a kind of halting place.

They had been brought through the Red Sea, and had sung the happy song of deliverance from Pharaoh, and all his host, and Miriam had led the young women in the dance and song of joy. So Moses led them on, and for three days they seem to have been supported by this joy of the Lord. But they had to learn a truer joy and a deeper lesson, which faith in the power of God alone gives.

Like many a young convert to-day, the joy of first knowing forgiveness of our sins, and deliverance by the death of Christ, from our enemy—Satan, the king of terrors—is very real, but we find as soon as we begin to tread the path of a Christian—that is, the path of faith—that there is an enemy of a different kind, yet whose power springs from the same source. At first the Israelites were so buoyed up that they felt no weariness, but at length nature asserted itself, and they thirsted. Now, of course, this is an allegory (see, 1 Cor. x. 11) of our own experience.

Thirst, in Scripture, indicates the natural desires of the unregenerate heart, and the moment the soul starts on the path of faith, Satan seeks to impede our progress by acting on the flesh to make us find our separation from the world irksome, and we complain of the roughness of the way. Then comes in sight, water—just what we want naturally to gratify our desires—and we

think earthly things will just satisfy us and make this world less of a wilderness. But, alas! it makes us, like sea-water, more thirsty still, and our thirst is not quenched. Many a young convert is betrayed that way. Finding no satisfaction at first, they drink again and again—but lo, the waters are bitter. Yes, the world's pleasures are very bitter: they leave a nasty taste. The world does not give us anything except we pay for it, and the Christian has to pay very dearly for what it gives him.

But the people said, "What *shall* we drink?" and Moses cried unto the Lord. In every dilemma, it is well to cry unto the Lord, for He always comes to our rescue. He had not, as *they* alleged, brought them out from their hard taskmasters and the bondage of Egypt, to leave them to perish in the wilderness, for, as He told Moses at first, He was come down to deliver them and to bring them out of bondage, and unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Though that land had not yet appeared, if they trusted God, all would be well. So God shows them at once in answer to their cry, a Tree which, when Moses had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

God knew where to find a remedy for all this disappointment, and His plan is ever to bring to faith's vision an object that will

so fill and absorb our affections that it will meet our craving and our hearts' desire. The journey of wilderness life is always beset by trials and temptations, and if we try to meet these alone we shall famish and faint by the way, but when we think of what that tree implies, the very suffering becomes sweet for our Lord Jesus is nigh.

I have no doubt that God showed Moses a living tree, and that Moses cut down the tree. God is the living God, and always presents to the soul what is positive and life giving. To us He shows His Christ; the living Christ who was cut down for us; a tree of life, now risen from the dead. This is the power which enables the Christian to trust in God and to triumph under all circumstances, and so be lifted above the power of sin.

But the tree had to be cut down and applied to the waters in order to be operative. Does this not bring us to the One who was "cut off in the midst of His days"? It is the Cross that has taken away all the bitterness of death. It is the story of the love of Jesus in dying for us which appeals to our affections and enables us to "hate the garment spotted by the flesh" and suffer for Him; as it says, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil... Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm xxiii. 4). It is only in this way

the wilderness can be trodden. Many, like the Israelites, begin in faith, but fall short of God's purpose for them.

Let us press forward therefore by faith, for it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Let us accept it that only Christ and His cross can make sweet for us the bitter waters of the wilderness journey. Then, walking by faith we shall be blessed ourselves, escape from many a pitfall, and live to the praise and honour of the Lord.

A. E. WALKER.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION

(*Galatians ii. 19—iii. 9*).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

IN the closing verses of this second chapter, Paul speaks for himself alone. Previously (verses 15 to 17) he had said, "we," since he spoke of truth generally acknowledged by Christians, Peter included. But now he comes to truth which Peter's action had challenged, and so he could not assume that Peter acknowledged it. However *truth* it was, and Paul standing in the enjoyment and power of it could set it forth in this personal and experimental way.

At that moment Peter had the law before his soul: he was living to the law. "For myself," says Paul, in effect, "I have God, and not law before my soul, and am living to Him." How much greater is God, who gave the law—God, now revealed in Christ—than the law He gave. But what set Paul free from the law, under which once he had been, as well as Peter? Death had set him free. He had died to the law, and that by the law's own act! This is stated in verse 19.

Nevertheless, here he was very much alive, and boldly confronting Peter! *How* then had he died to the law? And in what sense was it true that he had died *through* the law? Both these questions are answered in that great statement, "I am crucified with Christ."

In those words we have Paul seizing upon the truth of the Gospel, and giving it an intensely personal application to himself. The Lord Jesus, in His death, not only was the believer's Substitute, bearing his sins, but also thoroughly identified Himself with us in our sinful state, being made sin for us, though knowing no sin Himself. So really and truly did this take place that one of the things we are to know, as a matter of Christian doctrine, is that "our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). The crucifixion of Christ is therefore the crucifixion of all that we were as fallen

children of Adam. But here we have Paul's personal appropriation of this. As crucified with Christ he had died *to* the law.

Then again the crucifixion of Christ was not merely the act of evil men. Viewed from the divine standpoint, the very essence of it is seen to be that act of God whereby He was made sin for us, and wherein was borne for us the curse of the law (see, iii. 13). As dying under the curse of the law, Christ died *through* the law, and as crucified with Christ Paul was able to say that he had died to the law *through* the law, in order that he might live unto God.

The force of this great passage may perhaps become clearer to us if we consider the five prepositions used.

1. *Unto*, which indicates the *end in view*. To live unto God is to live with God as the End of one's existence.

2. *With*, indicates *indentification*, or *association*. We are crucified with Christ by reason of that complete identification which He effected in His death for us. Consequently His death was our death. We died with Him.

3. *In*, which here signifies *character*. Though crucified we live. We are still living people on earth, yet we no longer live the old character of life. We live a life

of a new order, a life, the character of which, summed up in one word, is CHRIST. Saul of Tarsus had been crucified with Christ. Yet the individual known as Saul of Tarsus was still living. Still living, yet in another character entirely. As you observed him you saw not the Saul-of-Tarsus character coming into expression, but Christ. In keeping with this he did not retain his old name, but soon after his conversion he became known as Paul, which means, "Little one." He must be little if Christ is to live in him.

4. *By*, which introduces us to the *Object* that controlled Paul's soul, and made this new character of life possible. Presently, when the life we now live in the flesh—that is, in our present mortal bodies—is over, we shall live by the *sight* of the Son of God. Meanwhile we live by the *faith* of Him. If faith is in activity with us He is made a living bright reality before our souls. The more He is thus before us objectively, that is, as

“... the object bright and fair,
To fill and satisfy the heart.”

the more will He be seen in us subjectively.

The Lord Chancellor's "Great seal" is a remarkable *object*. If you wished to see it however, you would probably find it impossible to get access to it. Possibly they would say, "No, we cannot let you see the

seal itself, but look at this large spot of wax affixed to this state document. Here you virtually see the seal, for it has been impressed into it." The wax has been *subject* to the pressure of the seal. You see the seal *subjectively* expressed, though you could not see it *objectively*. This may illustrate our point, and show how others may see Christ living in us, if as Object He is before our souls.

5. *For*, which here is the preposition of *substitution*. It introduces us to that which was the constraining power and motive of Paul's wonderful life. The love of the Son of God constrained him, and that love had expressed itself in His sacrificial and substitutionary death.

We may sum up the matter thus :—Paul's heart was filled with the love of the Son of God who had died for him. He not only understood his identification with Christ in His death, but he heartily accepted it, in all that it implied, and he found his satisfying Object in the Son of God in glory. Consequently the sentence of death lay upon all that he was by nature, and Christ lived in him and characterized his life, and thus God Himself, as revealed in Christ, had become the full End of his existence.

Thus it was with Paul, but is it thus with us? That our old man has been crucified is as true for us as for Paul. We have died with Christ even as he had, if indeed

we are really and truly believers. But have we taken it up in our experience as Paul did, so that it is to us not only a matter of Christian doctrine (highly important as that is in its place) but also a matter of rich spiritual experience, which transforms and ennobles our lives? The plain truth is that most of us have only done so in a measure which is pitifully small. And the secret of this? The secret clearly is that we have been so little captivated by the sense of His great love. Our realization of the wonder of His sacrifice for us is so feeble. Our convictions as to the horror of our sinfulness were not very deep, and hence our conversions were comparatively of a shallow nature. If we track things back to their source, the explanation lies just here, we believe. Let us all sing with far more earnestness,

“Revive Thy work, O Lord!
Exalt Thy precious Name;
*And may Thy love in every heart,
Be kindled to a flame!*”

If in each of our hearts love is kindled to a flame, we shall make progress in the right direction.

The Apostle's closing words, in the last verse of our chapter, plainly implied that the position Peter had taken was of such a nature as to lead to the “frustration” or “setting aside” of the grace of God. It would imply that after all righteousness could come by the law, and lead to the

supposition that Christ had died "in vain," or, "for nothing." What a calamitous conclusion!

Yet it was the *logical* conclusion. And, having reached it, the moment had arrived for a very pointed appeal to the Galatians. This appeal we have in the opening verses of chapter iii. The Apostle calls them "foolish" or "senseless," for they had not themselves had the spiritual sense to see whither these false teachers had been leading them. They had been like men bewitched, and under a spell of evil, and they had been led to the brink of the awful conclusion that Christ had died for nothing—that His death had been in fact a huge mistake! On the edge of this precipice they were standing, and the Apostle's pungent reasoning had come as a flash of light amidst their darkness, revealing their danger!

What made their folly so pronounced was the fact that formerly there had been such a faithful preaching among them of Christ crucified. Paul himself had evangelized them, and as with the Corinthians so with the Galatians, the cross had been his great theme. It was as though Christ had been crucified before their very eyes.

Moreover, as a result of receiving the word of the cross, which Paul brought, they had received the Holy Spirit, as verse 2 implies. Well, in what way and on what principle had they received the Spirit? By the

works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? There was but one answer to this question. For the Galatians to reply, "We received the Spirit by the works of the law," was an absolute impossibility, as Paul knew right well.

Hence he does not pause to answer his own question, but at once passes, in verse 3, to further questions based upon it. Having received the Spirit by the hearing of faith were they going to be made perfect by the flesh? Does God begin with us on one principle and then carry things to completion on another and opposing principle? Men are erratic enough. They change about in this fashion when their earlier plans miscarry. But is God erratic? Do His plans ever miscarry so that He needs to change? The Galatians were senseless, but were they SO senseless as to imagine that? And were they themselves prepared to change, and to throw away as worthless all they had previously held and done; so that their earlier sufferings for Christ had all to be treated as in vain, as null and void? What questions these were! As we read them are we not conscious of their crushing force?

But why did the Apostle speak of our being made perfect *by the flesh*? Firstly, because it is that which is particularly opposed to the Spirit; and secondly, because it is closely related to the law. It com-

pletes the quartette contained in verses 3 and 4. Faith and the Spirit are linked together. The Spirit is received as the result of the hearing of faith, and He is the power of that new life which we have in Christ. The law and the flesh are linked together. The law was given that the flesh might fulfil it, *if* it could do so. In result it could *not*. Nor could the law put an effectual curb on the propensities of the flesh; for the flesh "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7). Yet here were the Galatians inclined to turn from the all-powerful Spirit to the flesh, which though powerful for evil was wholly impotent for good. It was folly indeed!

In verse 5 the Apostle repeats his question of verse 2, only in another form. In verse 2 it concerned the Galatians. How did they receive the Spirit? Here it concerns himself. In what way and on what principle did he labour when he came amongst them with the Gospel message? Miracles were wrought amongst them and when the Gospel was believed the Spirit of God was received. Was it all on the ground of works, or of faith. Once more he does not pause for a reply, knowing right well that only one answer could be given by the Galatians. Instead he at once appeals to the case of Abraham, that they might realize that before ever the law was

instituted God had established faith as the way of blessing for man.

From the very outset faith was the way of man's blessing, as Hebrews xi. reveals so clearly. With Abraham, however, the fact came clearly to light even in Old Testament times. Genesis xv. 6 plainly declared it, and that verse is quoted here, as also in Romans iv. 3 and James ii. 23. Abraham was the father of the Jewish race, who had circumcision as their outward sign, but he was also, in a deeper and spiritual sense, "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11).

The Judaising teachers had been trying to persuade the Galatians to adopt circumcision, that thereby they might put themselves into a kind of Jewish position, becoming children of Abraham in an outward way. It would have been a poor imitation thing, if compared only with the true-born Israelite. And all the while, if they were "of faith," that is, believers, they *were* children of Abraham, and that in the deepest possible sense, as verse 7 makes manifest.

Every believer is a child of Abraham in a spiritual sense; and not only so, but as verse 9 shows us, every believer enters into the blessing of Abraham. Verse 8 indicates what it is that is referred to as the blessing of Abraham. It was not merely his own personal blessing, but that in him all nations should be blessed. Not only was he to be

accounted righteous before God and to stand in the blessings connected with righteousness, but myriads from all nations were to enjoy similar favour, which was to reach them in him.

But why in Abraham? How could this be? It will be worth while reading the passages in Genesis which refer to this matter. The promise of the blessing was first given when God's call first reached him. This is in chapter xii. 3. Then in xviii. 18 it is confirmed to him. Again, in xxii. 16-18 the promise is amplified, and we discover that the accomplishment is to be through "the Seed" who is Christ, as verse 16 of our chapter in Galatians tells us. Then further, the promise is confirmed to Isaac and Jacob respectively, in xxvi. 4, and xxviii. 14; and in both these cases "the Seed" is mentioned. Once introduced, the Seed is never omitted, for in truth everything in the way of fulfilment is dependent upon Him.

The blessing then was only in Abraham inasmuch as, according to the flesh, Christ sprang out of Abraham. The Jews boasted themselves in Abraham as though he were of all-importance in himself. The Galatians had been tempted to ally themselves with Abraham by adopting his covenant of circumcision. But the real virtue lay not in Abraham, but in Christ. And the very circumcision which would outwardly ally them with Abraham, would virtually cut them off

from Christ (see, verse 2) in whom everything was found, not outwardly, but inwardly and vitally.

From the outset God intended to bless the heathen (or, the nations) through faith. It was no after-thought with Him. How gracious was His design! And how comforting it is to us to know it! He called Abraham out from the nations that had fallen into corruption, that He might, in spite of all the defection that marked His people, preserve a godly seed out of whom might spring in due season, *the Seed*, in whom all the nations should be blessed, and Abraham as well. Hence the nations are to be blessed by faith, as Abraham was, and not by the works of the law.

God is omniscient. He can foresee what He will do, in spite of all eventualities. But here this omniscience is attributed to the Scripture! A remarkable fact surely! God's Word is of Himself, and from Himself, and is therefore to be very closely identified with Him. Let men beware how they handle it. There are those who utterly deny and deride the Scripture; and there are those who honour it in theory, and yet corrupt it. Both will ultimately have to reckon in judgment with the God whose Word it is. And, woe betide them!

The Scripture itself foresees, and it foresees their doom!

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

In reference to that wonderful verse, Revelation xxi. 3, could you tell us in what sense God will dwell with men? Is it in or by Christ and the church? Or is it God in His Deity, or the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit? I quite understand the kingdom is delivered up to God, after the reign of a thousand years . . . Some say we shall see God.—GATESHEAD.

IT is quite clear from the verse to which you refer, that when God dwells with men in the eternal state it will be in His tabernacle that He does so. "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." But what is His tabernacle? The previous verse shows us that it is, "The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The question now arises in our minds, What then is this holy city, which yet is as a bride, and also furnishes God with the tabernacle in which He will dwell with men in the eternal state? We have no hesitation in saying that we have the church of God presented to us under this three-fold figure. Amongst men a city is a centre of influence and administration. In the eternal state the church will be the centre whence heavenly administration will extend, without any rival or challenge, over the earth. It will be this because it is the dwelling-place of God. Then further it will be the object of Christ's affections, and thus as a bride towards Him.

This we think furnishes in part an answer to your question. But further we note that in these

verses (2-4) it is uniformly "God." The Persons of the Godhead are not distinguished. This is quite in keeping with what we read in 1 Corinthians xv. 28. In that day God will be everything, and He will be "in all." Of old, when He dwelt amongst His people brought out of Egypt, though amongst them all, yet more specially and immediately He dwelt in His tabernacle of curtains and skins. In the eternal state He will be in all, and yet more intimately and immediately in His tabernacle the church. Nevertheless we are assured by the fact that the tabernacle is still the bride, that the Lord Jesus still has His distinctive place.

We shall certainly see God. Job's confident expectation will not be disappointed (See, xix. 26). Yet two Scriptures in 1 Timothy (i. 17; vi. 16) indicate that in His essential Being—in His Essence, as we speak—He is above all human sight. Though in that day we shall be wholly men of a new order, men in Christ, in bodies of glory like unto Christ's, we shall still be *men*. It is possible of course that in both these verses the Apostle has in his thought man in this world, just as we know him to be, and that therefore when he said, "no man . . . *can* see," he did not mean us to understand from it that no man *ever would be able* to see, not even man in Christ, clothed with a body of glory. Therefore we would not dogmatize on the point. We are very satisfied however with the assurance that we shall see the great "I AM" in Jesus.

"Thou hast made known the Father, whom we've seen,
In Thy blest Person, infinite delight!"

THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY PATHWAY.

(From notes of an address.)

CHRISTIANITY is not a spasmodic and casual thing, as many people appear to think. It is not something to put on in the meetings of Christians, and put off in the office and workshop, or to be donned on Sunday and doffed on Monday.

The newly converted American Indian felt the incompatibility of such a thing, and prayed that his Christianity might not be like his cloak which he could put on and off at his pleasure, but that it might be like the tattoo on his face that could be seen every day and all the day.

In 2 Corinthians xi. 23-28, the apostle Paul refers to things he had been called to pass through in his career of service; but besides these he speaks of "that which comes upon me daily," which in his case was "the care of all the churches." We have not got his responsibilities, nevertheless there are things that will come daily upon every person who lives the true, practical, Christian life. They may be roughly summed up under two heads—

THE DAILY DEMAND and THE DAILY
SUPPLY.

It is a good thing that there is the latter as well as the former. If the wherewithal were not forthcoming to meet the demand there would come certain bankruptcy. The daily demand has to be faced, so let us look at it in more detail. It is this everyday business that tries and tests us. When things come upon us now and again we more easily bear them, but when they come every day they are likely to be galling to our spirits. A pin prick is trying enough, but a continual sore is worse. To find that we are constantly against the stream calls for "enduring constancy of hope" (1 Thess. i. 3. N. Tr.).

First, THE DAILY TEST. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23). We are beginning with the most serious and constant demand. It is the call to discipleship, which is just the full and practical expression of Christianity. To be a disciple we must have a Master; to be a servant we must have a Lord; and Christ is both. The pathway of discipleship is very closely connected with service in John xii. 26: "If any man *serve Me*, let him *follow Me*." If we follow our Master it is useless to expect that our path will lie among beds of roses, since His did not. If the cross was in his path it will certainly be in ours. Some one has said the most natural way for a Christian to die is at the stake.

Discipleship is the way in which we may return His love; and it is love alone that will sustain us in the daily demand that is made upon us.

The term "cross" is used often in the Scriptures, but always, I believe, in connection with shame and suffering and reproach. The cross was, apart from its terrible suffering, the most shameful and dishonouring of deaths. It was the shameful end to what was notoriously a shameful life. This was the death to which our beloved Master was put. But we know another side to the matter. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," or as we love to sing,

"Lord e'en to death Thy love could go
A death of shame and loss."

So there are two ways in which we may view that cross, "on which the Lord of glory died." It was at the cross of Christ that wretched man foamed out his own shame on God. It was at that same cross that God lavished His love on guilty, sinful man.

At the cross God expressed His judgment of *man in the flesh*, and there man expressed his judgment of *God manifest in flesh*. It is thus quite impossible for us to justly take sides with both.

Man in the flesh has met his judgment at the hand of God in that cross of shame.

"Our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). Christ in His deep grace identified Himself with us in our old corrupt life—the self life, or the life that has self as its centre—and in Himself has accepted God's withering judgment on it, when He was made sin for us; and by that sacrifice for sin God has "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3).

In the other aspect of the cross we find man's judgment of Christ recorded. Man has put Him to an open shame, and in effect said, "We judge Him worthy only of a death that is meted out to those who come to the end of a shameful life."

At the cross of Christ God was saying of our old self life, "I see the shameful end of a shameful life." The Christian now says, "If that is what the world thinks of my Master, then for ever that is the end of a shameful world for me." "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." For us that means that the world may give us the same shame and reproach that it gave Him, and we will gladly bear it. Nothing but love for Him will take us into such a path. But His love charms us into it.

To "*deny myself daily*" is to accept God's judgment on my old self life daily; that is, not denying certain things to self, but denying self. What is often called "self-denial" is only self-curbing. Self curbed is self

recognized: self denied is self unrecognized. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). What a daily test this is! Deny myself daily! Discipleship does not mean some of self and some of Thee, nor less of self and more of Thee, but none of self and all of Thee. I accept God's full judgment of self and I have done with it.

To take up my cross daily. This is not exactly my accepting God's judgment on myself, but rather that I accept this world's judgment on Christ. It means that I identify myself with Him in reproach and shame every day, and would do it in the spirit of the early disciples who rejoiced, "that they were counted worthy to *suffer shame for His name.*" They were not of the sort that only spoke of Christ in a whisper, or under their breath as if they apologised for being Christians, but they accepted the world's verdict against Christ as the world's verdict against them, and did it with joy. Many people speak of the trials that are the common lot of mankind, sickness, poverty, etc., as their cross. But these the unconverted get as well as the Christian. Anything that you have to suffer because you are following Christ, that is your cross. You will meet it daily, so take it up daily.

Second, there is the DAILY FOE. This is closely connected with the foregoing. The

world not only slights the Christian, but comes out into open antagonism, and that every day. "Man would swallow me up: he fighting *daily* oppresseth me...they be many that fight against me" (Psalm lvi. 1, 2).

We are in a hostile world, and are face to face with Satan, who is a vigilant and inveterate foe, and then there is the flesh within us. The foe inside is in league with the foe outside—the world—and Satan uses both; only let us remember that we should not have such foes were we not Christians. Satan's tactics aim at bringing about a spiritual demoralization and disheartenment. Daily opposition is both wearing and wearying, and he is on the look-out for a vulnerable point. He acts as did Amalek when Israel came out of Egypt—"He met thee by the way, and smote the hindermost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary" (Deut. xxv. 18).

Satan has two great weapons, *seduction* and *violence*. He will tempt us into an easier path—the path of least resistance, or he will with violence oppose us, hoping to destroy the morale and dishearten. He is the god of discouragement. He wants to see us with hands hanging down and knees become feeble, in order that we may be tempted to say, "I give it up: it is not

worth the struggle." All this is the daily effort of a daily foe.

It is sad when discouragement reaches us through our fellow-believers; but sometimes it is so. Here is someone complaining, "They always pour cold water on anything I want to do for Christ!" Well, just you get near to the Lord, so that the fires of love get well stoked up, and then you can turn their cold water into steam, so that the thing that might have hindered you only helps you! The oak tree, you know, violently shaken by the storms of winter is only the more deeply rooted in by the shaking. The bunch of keys in continual use is kept bright by the friction, when the key put away in cotton-wool will develop rust. Happy is it when we can say, "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel."

Now we can consider the brighter side of our subject—the daily supply. We are not left to proceed at our own charges. We must note however that the effect of the enemy is not only to oppose and demoralize, but also to break our lines of communication. He knows right well that if he can cut us off from the base of our supply we shall easily fall a prey. Hebrews iv. 12-16, gives us two things, the Word of God and the Throne of Grace. And be-

side these we have the present power of Christ as our High Priest.

First then as to THE WORD OF GOD. We need to be like the Bereans, who, in Acts xvii. 11, are commended because they "searched the Scriptures *daily*." The idea of searching is that there is an object to be sought for. We are really seeking something, and not just aimlessly scanning the pages.

We may seek for pictures of Christ in the various incidents, types and prophecies of the Old Testament.

We may seek for the doctrine of Christ in the epistles of the New Testament.

We may seek the company of Christ—putting ourselves in spirit into companionship with Him—in the marvellous records of the four Gospels.

The Bereans took nothing on trust, even from so great an apostle as Paul. They did not listen to Paul proving the Bible to be true, but rather they searched the Scriptures which proved to them that what Paul said was true. A person buying property does not take on trust all that is told him, whether by owner or agent, but he gets his lawyer to search the title-deeds to see if the title is as good as represented. The Bereans were truly noble, says Luke, and many of them believed.

Proverbs ii. 4, gives us the true idea of searching, we are to search for wisdom "as for hid treasure." If you had a good reason to believe that in your garden there had been hidden a priceless gem, you know the kind of digging and sifting each spadeful would get. There would be nothing casual about your searching. Is that the way we are reading our Bibles? It is not a question of how many verses you read each day, but how many you put into the sieve!

You may observe that the promoters of the various antichristian cults are reading the Bible. They look for some apparent support for their evil doctrines. There is not an evil system in the religious world to-day that has not some text of Scripture that appears to support it. If they think it important, why should not we? Are not your Bibles sometimes like a rusty looking sword hanging in the hall of a house? It is an heirloom from one of the family who long ago knew how effectually to use it when facing the foe. The present owner has it on show; but it is of little use, for he is unskilful in the use of such a weapon. How many of us are, as Hebrews v. 13, puts it, "unskilful in the word of righteousness." Don't treat the Bible as a kind of promise box, or a compendium of important precepts, or even as a book from which to get texts for preaching. This is to demean the sacred volume.

It is one thing to search for information: it is quite another to search for food, and to desire it as a babe desires milk. Only don't be like spoon-fed children, who can get nothing unless it is broken up and put into their mouths. Become more and more anxious about your souls; not for their salvation, but for their edification and spiritual growth.

Then secondly, there is PRAYER. In this matter we should be like the Psalmist who said, "O Lord, . . . I cry unto Thee *daily*" (lxxxvi. 3); and again, "Lord, I have called *daily* upon Thee, I have stretched out my hands unto Thee" (lxxxviii. 9). Heaven is the base of operations for us, and it is by this means that the line of communication, which the enemy would like to cut, is kept open. Two things that contributed to Peter's downfall, were his neglect of his Master's word, and his failure to pray.

Prayer is not only the expression of our need at any given moment. Some time ago there was a remarkable article in a newspaper by a naval officer. Looking back over his war experiences, he declared, "If I could begin again, *I would pray more.*" That was good, yet prayer to him seemed only to be a resource when he was in tight corners and needed deliverances. Now that is not enough. Prayer is the great means by which we can commune with God.

Keep clear of the habit of merely saying prayers. Have definite, positive requests to present to God. Much that passes as prayer in public might be more correctly described as "oblique sermons." They are made up of meditations, quotations, expositions and exhortations, and all these cannot for one moment take the place of *supplications*.

Above all, avoid the frequent and unnecessary repetition of the sacred Name in your prayers. So often this is in the nature of padding used to fill up the gaps caused by want of thought and desire. And don't think that asking in the name of the Lord Jesus merely means the tacking of His precious Name on to the end of our requests. It means that we are really asking as those left to represent Him on earth, who are concerned with His interests.

Thirdly, there is THE DAILY CHEER which we may get as the fruit of Christian companionship. "Exhort one another *daily*" (Heb. iii. 13). Even if we have to rebuke one another, let us do it in a way that will encourage and not depress. Encouragement is of God, just as discouragement is of the devil. We have only to read about the end of the ten spies, who discouraged the heart of Israel, to see what God thinks of the discourager.

Pessimism is no feature of Christianity, nor is the magnifying of difficulties and min-

imizing of the power and grace of God. There is plenty to discourage to-day, and it is the enemy's business to supply it. Let us see to it that as far as possible we supply encouragement. Don't think of yourself as being the person who is always to be encouraged—except that you may always encourage yourself in the Lord your God, as David did—it is the other person who is to be encouraged, and you are to do the encouraging. This we should do more and more, as we “see the day approaching” (Heb. x. 25).

Thus we may foster in each other any traits of Christ that we may see; and we shall see them if we look for them. We are in a cold heartless world, and all too easily we get under its frigid influence. Let us keep each other from taking cold by a steady flow of warm love and care.

ART. CUTTING.

“A RIBBAND OF BLUE.”

THE children of Israel were instructed in Numbers xv. 37-41 to put a ribband of blue upon the fringe of the border of their garments, so that they might continually be reminded of the commandments of the Lord, and not seek after their own hearts and their own eyes.

What a constant reminder this ribband of blue must have been. Carrying it about

with them, wherever they went, how continually must it have been before their eyes ! Cannot we learn a salutary lesson from this?

It can be applied to every circumstance of life. We, as Christians, are not called upon to wear an actual ribband of blue, but we may well constantly remind ourselves of whose we are and whom we serve, that we may maintain our true character and never let questionable associations be allowed.

There is a great need for this. For these are days of great spiritual sloppiness, of world-bordering, of accommodating oneself to the spirit of the age. We are told on every hand that the times have changed, and the Bible and Christians must accommodate themselves to the changed times. It were well if the changed times were accommodated to the Bible. We need the Word of God to govern us as much as ever.

The ribband of blue sets forth in symbolic setting the truth of the heavenly walk of the Christian. *Blue* is symbolic of what is heavenly. Blue is the colour of the sky, and the Hindu word for heaven is simply blue.

Christians belong to heaven, and need to exhibit a heavenly walk. Just as God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, so we have to remember that we are not of

the world, even as Christ is not of the world. Twice He reminded His Father of this in the memorable prayer of John xvii. Again we are reminded that "our conversation [*literally* citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians iii. 20, 21).

If we carried about with us what the ribband of blue signified—that is, our heavenly calling and character—we should be very careful where we went and what associations we allowed. We should not want the cinema, nor would the cinema want us.

It is having the spirit of this that leads to holiness, to the sowing to the Spirit, and not to the flesh. In this lies our happiness and safety.

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Galatians* iii. 10—iv. 4).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

FROM beginning to end this third chapter is filled with contrasts. On the one side we have the law and the works that it demanded, the flesh, upon which the law's demands were made, and the curse which fell when the law's demands were

broken. On the other side we find the faith of the Gospel, the Spirit given, and blessing bestowed. We have spoken of contrasts, but after all the contrast is really one, only worked out in a variety of different ways.

The Spirit and the flesh are brought into contrast in verse 3. Now in verse 10 we get the curse of the law in contrast with the blessing of believing Abraham. The curse was pronounced against *every one* that did not *continue* doing *all things* that the law demanded. No one did so continue, and hence all who were placed under the law came under the curse. It was enough to be "of the works of the law"—that is, to have to stand or fall in one's relations Godward by the response one gave to the law's demands—to be under the curse. Man being what he is, the moment any one has to stand before God on that ground he is lost.

The Jews, who had the law, hardly seem to have realized this. On the contrary they looked upon the law as being the means of their justification. Contented with a very superficial obedience to some of its demands, they were "going about to establish their own righteousness," as Paul puts it in Romans x. 3. In this of course they utterly failed, for in their own Scriptures it had been put on record that, "the just shall live by *faith*." And faith is not the principle

upon which the law is based, but rather that of works. The whole matter briefly summed up stands thus :—By law men come under the curse and die. By faith men are justified and live.

The curse which the law pronounced was a perfectly just sentence. The Jew having been placed under the law, its curse rested upon him, and it had to be righteously borne ere it could be lifted off him. In the death of Christ the curse was borne, and hence the believing Jew is redeemed from beneath it. In the days of Moses, the curse had been specially connected with the one who died as a transgressor by hanging on a tree. Many a one in ancient days, reading Deuteronomy xxi. 23, may have wondered why the curse was thus linked with death on a tree, as distinguished from death by any other means, such as stoning, or the sword. Now we know. In due season the Redeemer was to bear the curse for others, thus honouring the law, *by hanging on a tree*. It is another case of how the Scripture foresees!

The bearing of the curse was in view of the bestowal of the blessing. Verse 14 speaks to us of this, presenting the blessing in a twofold way. First, there is "the blessing of Abraham," which is righteousness. Second, there is the gift of the Spirit, a blessing beyond anything bestowed upon Abraham. The wonder of the work of

Christ is this, that righteousness now rests upon Gentiles who believe, as well as upon believers who are Abraham's children according to the flesh. All who believe are in a spiritual sense the children of Abraham, as verse 7 informed us.

In Old Testament days the Spirit was promised, as for instance in Joel ii. 28, 29. We who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, receive the Spirit to-day. Thus by faith we anticipate the blessing so fully to be enjoyed in the millennial day.

For the moment however the Apostle does not pursue the subject of the Holy Spirit. When we enter chapter iv. we learn something as to the meaning of His indwelling, and in chapter v, we have an unfolding of His operations. In our chapter is pursued the subject of the law, and the place it had in the ways of God, and this in order to lead up to the unfolding of the proper Christian position—as stated in the early verses of chapter iv.,—which is the central theme of the epistle. And first of all certain difficulties are cleared out of the way; misconceptions and objections flowing from a false view of the functions of the law, held by the Judaizing teachers and doubtless instilled by them into the minds of the Galatians.

The first of these is taken up in verses 15 to 18. In so many minds the covenant

of law had completely overshadowed the covenant of promise made with Abraham. But as we have just seen the covenant of law inevitably brings nothing but its curse. Blessing can only be reached by way of the covenant of promise which culminates in Christ. It cannot arrive partly by law and partly by promise. Verse 18 states this. The inheritance of blessing is by the law is not by promise, and this of course is true *vice versa*. The fact is, it is by promise. Thanks be unto God !

But was not the law intended as a kind of revision of the original testament, a kind of codicil, so to speak ? Not at all, for as verse 15 says, it can be neither disannulled nor added thereto. It is an old trick of dishonest men to procure the rejection of a disliked document by foisting into it an addition so contradictory of its main provisions as to stultify the whole. This is not allowed amongst men, and we must not conceive of God's covenant of promise as being less sacred than human documents. The law, which was not given until 430 years after, has not disannulled it. Nor has it been added to it in order to modify its blessed simplicity. It was never intended to do either of these things.

Verse 16 is worthy of special note, not only because it declares in such an unmistakable way that from the outset the covenant was in view of Christ and His re-

deeming work, but also because of the remarkable way in which the Apostle argues as to the Old Testament prediction. The Holy Spirit inspired him to hinge the whole point upon the word, "Seed," being in the singular and not in the plural. Thereby He indicated how fully inspired was His earlier utterance. Not merely was the word inspired, but the exact form of the word. The inspiration was not merely *verbal*, i.e. having to do with *words*, but even *literal*, i.e. having to do with *letters*.

Accepting Paul's argument, stated in the verses we have just considered, a further difficulty might well present itself to any mind. If then the law, given over 400 years after Abraham, had no effect upon the earlier covenant, neither annulling it nor modifying it, does it not seem to have lacked any definite purpose? An objector might declare that such doctrine as this leaves the law shorn of all point and meaning, and feel that he was propounding a regular poser in simply asking, Why then the law?

This is exactly the question with which verse 19 opens. The answer to this is very brief, and it appears to be twofold. In the first place, it was given in order that men's sins might become, in the breaking of it, definite transgressions. This point is more fully stated in Romans v. 13. In the second place, it served a useful purpose in connection with Israel, filling up

the time until the advent of Christ, by proving their need of Him. It was ordained through angels, and through a human mediator, in the person of Moses. But then the very fact of a mediator supposes two parties. God is one; who is the other? Man is the other. And since the whole arrangement was made to hinge upon the doings of man, the other party, it promptly failed.

In definitely convicting men of transgressions the law has done a work of extreme importance. What is right, and what is wrong? What does God require of men? Before the law was given there was some knowledge, and conscience was at work, as is indicated in Romans ii. 14, 15. But when the law came, all vagueness disappeared; for all, who were under it, the plea of ignorance totally disappeared and, when brought into judgment for their transgressions, not a shred of an excuse remained. We Gentiles were never formally placed under it, but as a matter of fact we know about it, and our very knowledge of it will make us amenable to the judgment of God in a way and degree unknown to the savage and unenlightened tribes of the earth. So let us take care.

In verse 21 another question is raised, which springs out of the foregoing. Some might jump to the conclusion that if, as shown, the law was not supplementary to

the covenant of promise it must necessarily be in opposition to it. This is not so for one moment. Had the law been intended by God to provide righteousness for man, He would have endowed it with power to give life. The law instructed, demanded, urged, threatened and, when it had been broken, it condemned the transgressor to death. Yet none of these things availed. The one thing needful was to bestow upon man a new life, in which it would be as natural to him to fulfil the law, as now it is natural to him to break it. *That* the law could not do; instead it has proved us all to be under sin, thus revealing our need of that which has been introduced through Christ.

Thus the law, instead of being in any way in opposition, fits in harmoniously with all the rest of God's great scheme. Until Christ came it has played the part of "the schoolmaster," acting as our guardian and maintaining some measure of control. In verse 24 the words, "to bring us," are in italics, there being no corresponding words in the original. They should not be there. The point is not that the law leads us to Christ, but that it exercised its control as tutor until Christ came. When Christ appeared, a new order of things was instituted, and there was justification for us on the principle of faith, and not by works.

This new order of things is spoken of

in verse 23 as the coming of faith. Again in verse 25 we have the words, "after that faith is come." Faith was found of course in all the saints of Old Testament days, as is shown by Hebrews xi., and by the passage from Habakkuk, quoted in verse 11 of our chapter. When Christ came, the faith of Christ stood revealed, and faith was publicly acknowledged as being the way, and the only way, by which man can have to do with God in blessing. In that sense "faith came," and its coming marked the inauguration of an entirely new epoch.

By faith in Christ Jesus we have been introduced into the favoured place of "sons of God." The word in verse 26 is "sons," and not "children." The saints under the law were like children in a state of infancy; under age, and hence under the schoolmaster. The believer of the present age is like a child who has reached his majority, and hence, leaving the state of tutelage behind, he takes his place as a son in his father's house. This great thought, which is the controlling thought of the epistle, is more largely developed in the early verses of chapter iv. Before reaching them however, we have three important facts stated in the three closing verses of chapter iii.

By our baptism we have, as a matter of profession, put on Christ. Had we submitted to circumeision we should have

put on Judaism, and thereby committed ourselves to the fulfilling of the law for justification. Had we been baptised to John's baptism we should have put on the robe of professed repentance and committed ourselves to believe on the One that should come after him. As it is we have, if baptized to Christ, put on Christ and committed ourselves to that practical expression of the life of Christ which in the next chapter is spoken of as "the fruit of the Spirit." As sons of God, having now the liberty of the house, we put on Christ as our fitness to be there.

Further, we are "in Christ Jesus," and consequently we are "all one," with all distinctions obliterated, whether national, social, or natural. When we get to the last chapter we shall find that in Christ Jesus there is new creation, which accounts for the removal of all the distinctions belonging to the old creation. This new creation work has reached us as to our souls already, though not yet as to our bodies. Hence we cannot as yet take up these things in an absolute way. For that we must wait until we are clothed upon with our bodies of glory at the coming of the Lord. Still even now we are in Christ Jesus, and hence can learn to view each other apart from and as lifted above these distinctions.

Let us take note that what is taught here is the abolition of these distinctions

in Christ Jesus, and not in the assembly. We say this to safeguard the point and preserve from misconceptions. In the assembly, for instance, the distinction between male and female is very definitely maintained, as is shown in 1 Corinthians xiv. 34, 35.

We have already had three things which mark the believer of to-day in contradistinction from believers before Christ came. We are "sons of God;" we have put on Christ;" we are "in Christ Jesus." The last verse of our chapter gives us a fourth thing: we are "Christ's," and belonging to Him we are in a spiritual sense Abraham's seed, and consequently heirs, not according to law, but to promise.

The opening verses of chapter iv. gather up the thoughts that have occupied the latter part of chapter iii., and summarize them in very crisp fashion. The custom that prevailed in the houses of the nobility—and that still in measure prevail in such circles—are used as an illustration. The heir to the estate, so long as he is in infancy, is placed under restraint, just as the servants are. Tutors and governors hold him in what appears to him to be bondage. He just has to do as he is told, and as yet he knows not the reason why. He cannot yet be given the full liberty of his father's house and estate, for his character and intelligence is not yet sufficiently

formed. However his father knows when the time will arrive, and the day is fixed when he will come of age and enter into the privileges and responsibilities of life.

It was just thus with God's people in the former day under the law, which was as a schoolmaster to them. Children they might be, but they were treated as servants, and rightly so. It was no question of their individual eminence as saints of God, but simply of the dispensation in which they lived. No greater man than John the Baptist was ever born, yet as the Lord has told us, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. xī. 11). In their days God had not yet been fully revealed, redemption had not been accomplished, the Spirit had not been given. Until these three great events had come to pass, the conditions were not established which permitted the "coming of age" of the people of God. All three did come to pass when on the scenes there arrived the Son of God.

When He came God's people passed from under the schoolmaster of the law, whose control was exercised according to the "elements," or "principles," of the world, and they came under the control of the Spirit of God, exercised according to the principles of grace and of God.

The trouble to-day with a good many of

us is that we have been brought up on loose and easy-going lines, and consequently we know very little of the stern dealings of the righteous old schoolmaster ! If only our consciences had been brought more fully under the righteous admonition and condemnation of the law, we should possess a far keener sense of the mighty emancipation which has reached us through the advent of the Son of God.

May God, somehow or other, yet work this sense into all our hearts.

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Would you give the difference between the devil, the flesh, the world ? Also between "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes" and "the pride of life" ? The devil is sometimes blamed as the cause of believers falling, when often it is our own unwatchfulness.—GATESHEAD.

THE devil is a person, a spiritual being of great power and influence, originally one of the highest of created beings, but now fallen into rebellion against God and personal antagonism to Christ.

The flesh is the nature of man as a fallen being. The word is of course used often of man's body, his physical frame, as for instance in 1 Corinthians xv. 39. But since man in his fallen estate is utterly disorganized morally, and hence has fallen under the power of his bodily

desires, the term "flesh" is used in Scripture to designate his fallen nature.

The "world" also has various meanings in Scripture. It may mean the sum total of humanity, as in John iii. 16. As used in many other passages—such, for instance, as John xvii. 14-18; Galatians i. 4; 1 John ii. 15-17.—it means the elaborate system of things that has been built up by fallen humanity under the leadership of the devil.

As regards the three expressions which you quote from 1 John ii. 16, we may differentiate between them thus:—

The lust of the flesh is the desire of possessing oneself of all those things which minister to our fallen nature. It is the desire of **HAVING**.

The lust of the eyes is the desire after all that diverts the senses or that informs the mind. It is the desire of **SEEING**, whether by the eyes of the head or the eyes of the mind.

The pride of life is the insatiable craving after all that exalts oneself. It is the desire of **BEING**—the desire for a self-centred greatness.

We believe you are quite right in saying that often we try to salve our consciences in view of our failures and sins by putting the blame on the devil. It is of course true that he lies behind all the evil which fills the world, as being the originator of sin. It is also true that in certain cases he personally tempts to evil, as in the case of our Lord. Yet far more frequently, we believe, the case with us

is that we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed, as the apostle James tells us (i. 14).

In looking over the metals in the Tabernacle we find mentioned, gold, silver, brass. In the Holy City (Rev. xxi.) we only read of gold. In Ezekiel's description of the earthly temple all three are omitted. Can you give any reason as to why they are not all mentioned in each case.—NORTH SHIELDS.

The answer to your question, we think, lies in the fact that while the tabernacle in the wilderness was a pattern of things in the heavens, and therefore specially designed and described with its typical significance in view, the other two can hardly be described as types at all.

In the case of the Holy City we have symbolic language; and gold, the least corruptible of metals, is the symbol of that which is divine and incorruptible. By that the Holy City is characterized. Yet the Holy City is not typical, for it symbolizes that which will be established when all need for types is over, inasmuch as the things typified have been reached.

This may also be said of the temple which Ezekiel describes by the spirit of prophecy. That millennial temple will be the final thing as far as this earth is concerned, so it is not presented as a type, and its materials are not mentioned.

The tabernacle however was typical. Its actual use was but for a very limited time. Its typical value has remained even to our day and for our instruction. Hence the minuteness of its description in Exodus.

THE BADGE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

THESSE chapters (John xiii-xvii.) form a very blessed section of Holy Scripture. And I venture to hope, and believe, that they have a special place in the hearts of God's saints. So indeed they ought, for they are some of the last words that fell from the lips of our Lord Jesus before His crucifixion. We all cherish the last words of a dear earthly friend. We often recall them, while the circumstances under which they were uttered invest them with a charm which other words do not possess. Therefore we ought to read these chapters with peculiar interest and care. Every sentence is precious.

Without further preface, let us look at these words in John xiii. The Lord says, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." That, then, was to be the distinguishing mark of the disciples of the Lord Jesus. It was by this badge that all men everywhere were to know them. Not by their great spiritual endowments, not by their power to work miracles; not by their

ability to speak to men in other tongues; not by the number of their converts, though they might count them by thousands. None of these things, great as they were, should be the distinguishing mark of discipleship. They were to be known everywhere by sweeter, simpler, lovelier and more heavenly features. All men should know them as His disciples *by their love one for the other*. He speaks of it again in the fifteenth chapter, and tells them not to be surprised if hatred, scorn, and persecution came upon them from without. But among themselves there was to be fervent charity. They were to love one another, and *this* was to be the true sign of discipleship.

Observe, it is spoken of as a new commandment. Why did the Lord Jesus call it new? It was no new commandment to love. The law enjoined as much as that. Those that were under it were to love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves. But what made this a new commandment was that they were to love one another *as the Lord Jesus had loved them*. Its newness lay there. And this commandment rests upon us to-day. It is the sweet and blessed obligation that love imposes upon all those who call themselves the disciples of the Lord Jesus. We are to love one another as our Saviour and Master has loved us. Of course, we cannot love according to His measure. In this,

as in everything else, He has the pre-eminence. But we are called upon to love after His manner. Nor would we wish the standard lowered. The Lord Jesus then sets this before us. He says, so to speak, "Now I am going away, and I leave you in the midst of a hostile world. If you are the objects of its hatred and the persecutions that spring from it, I want you among yourselves to have fervent charity. It is to be your distinctive mark. All men everywhere shall know you as My disciples if you have love one for another. Love, *as I have loved you.*"

Now some one might say, "What! am I called to love the saints as the Lord Jesus loves me?" Yes; and remember when you speak of the saints, or of the disciples, or the brethren, you are to use these terms in no narrow sense. Use them in the biblical sense as including all who really and truly belong to Christ. Use them in their large and broad and blessed meaning.

How much, then, has the Lord Jesus loved you? Can you say out of a full and glad heart, "Why, He has loved me well enough to lay down His life for me"? You think of Paul's words, and in a voice all trembling with emotion you exclaim, "The Son of God has loved me, and given Himself for me. That is the measure of His love!" What! is that so? Has the Lord Jesus

loved you with a love so great that He laid down His life for you? Is that the manner and the measure of His love? Let me then, ask you to look at 1 John iii. 16, where this very thing is spoken of: "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us; and *we* ought for the brethren to lay down our lives." What a word is that! We are to love the brethren with a love that holds nothing back, a love that delights to make every glad surrender. We may not indeed be called upon to lay down our lives in one great heroic act. There are other ways of spending them in the service of those who are dear to Christ. And the apostle shows that the first step on the road is to be ready to lend a helping hand to one in need. So, then, we are called upon to lay down our lives for the brethren. Our love to them is to be of such a sort that, if the occasion called for it, we are willing to die for them.

I raise the question again as to how much the Lord Jesus loves us. It has been already answered. He loved us well enough to lay down His life for us. True, but did His love end then? Is there no present love of the Lord Jesus showing itself in present activities on behalf of its objects? Think of what comes before us in the opening of this chapter. I refer to the Lord girding Himself with a towel, and taking the bason and water, and stooping down to wash the

soiled and weary feet of His poor disciples. What was it that lay behind that lowly act?

It was His undying love. "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end." I know very well that beneath so humble a deed of love there lies a great spiritual truth. But let us not miss the lesson on the very surface of the passage. It teaches us to be ready to do the lowliest service for any who belong to Christ, and the Lord Jesus will regard it as having been done to Himself. The Lord tells us elsewhere that even a cup of cold water given to one because he belongs to Him shall never lose its reward.

Let me now turn you to 1 John iv. 9. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Two very blessed verses. But mark what the apostle bases upon them. He says "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." So we are to love one another because God has loved us in this most wonderful way.

Let me refer you to another passage. Look at 1 Corinthians xiii. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels

and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Observe the remarkable language the apostle uses. Though a man speak in the dialect of angels, though he is able to discourse on divine things with a tongue of burning eloquence and in the sweetest speech that ever fell from mortal lips, if love is not animating his heart, he is but sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Though he have the gift of prophecy, so that he can peer into the future, and foretell things to come, though he understand mysteries that baffle the intellect of the others, though he have faith so that he could remove mountains, and have not love, he is nothing. Though he be a man of ample fortune, content to live in a cottage, spending but little upon himself that he might feed the hungry and clothe the naked, yet if he have not love, it profits him nothing. Though he give his body to be burned as a martyr, and have not love, it is nothing. How striking this is! Not eloquence, nor knowledge, nor gift, nor power, nor benevolence, but *love* is the measure of the man. How we need to feel this! And then when we read down this

thirteenth chapter, we see the beautiful traits of divine love that were seen so perfectly, and without a cloud, in the Lord Jesus Himself. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, . . . beareth all things, . . . endureth all things," and so on. Brethren, we need just to sit down as little children in the school where our gracious Lord is Master, and ask Him to teach us to love one another as He has loved us.

Then there is a further word which I commend to your notice. It is in Galatians v. "*By love serve one another.*" What a beautiful thing is this love that leads us to serve the saints because they belong to Christ! And suffer me to say this: It is a good thing to look at the saints in the vision of the Almighty. If I look into the face of one of the faultiest saints to be found on earth, I look into the face of one whom the Lord Jesus has loved well enough to die for. He bears with that one, and carries him in His bosom. And I am called upon to love that one as the Lord Jesus loves him. I know we shall need help to carry this out, and I am very conscious that I cannot speak to you about it as I would like. Perhaps the very feebleness of my words will make room for the Lord to display His grace by writing His own words on your heart and on mine. I pray to Him to do so. "Lord Jesus, look down upon

Thy poor servant, so full of fault, write this lesson deeply upon his heart, teach him to love them because they are Thine, and to love them with a love that is akin to Thine."

We are called to love *the saints*, not only those who agree with us in everything. It is easy to go along with those who see eye to eye with us, who walk with us, so to speak, arm in arm, who sit down in the same meeting room, sing out of the same hymn books, and who shake us cordially by the hand, who always tell us that they are glad to see us, and find pleasure in our company, as we in theirs. It does not require very much grace to love such. But to love those who will not walk with us, who sometimes say hard things about us, to love all these, to love them because they belong to Christ, and to pray for them, this requires very much grace. Of course, we have, and very rightly, to distinguish between love and fellowship. Sometimes because we cannot have fellowship with everything, people think that we are lacking in love towards them. That is a mistake. Fellowship is one thing; love is another. We have to embrace in fervent affection all who belong to Christ, but in this day we cannot have fellowship with all who belong to Christ. For example, suppose I know a Roman Catholic, and have reason to believe that he belongs to Christ. Suppose further that he says to me, "Come with me to our church." I could not do

that. I could not mix myself up with a thousand things that I know to be wrong. I should seek to show him that love was one thing and fellowship another. So our fellowship is necessarily narrower than our love. Sad that it should be so. It is so, because of the evil that we find all around us. But love takes in all those who belong to Christ. We love them and seek to serve them because they belong to Him. Let us love one another with a pure heart fervently; let us cultivate the holy, happy habit of seeking to find out in one another all that is of Christ.

It is, then, by this badge that all men are to know that we are the disciples of the Lord Jesus. How distressing it is that men do not exactly know us by this badge. We feel the sorrow of it and the humiliation of it, but still we may look up to the Lord and ask Him to teach us to love one another a little more, to love all saints, to love them with a deep, true affection, because they belong to Him. May He teach us this lesson.

W. B.

The power of gravitation holds a ship, which has run on to a shoal, fast to the ground until another power—hydro-dynamics—comes in with the rising tide. This lifts it clean off the shoal and makes it superior to the adverse power which has been keeping it down. Here we have an illustration of Romans viii. 2.

"ONE COUNTS TWO ON A DIVISION."

THIS is a well-known maxim in political circles. At election time it serves as a stimulus to the canvassers for the votes of the electorate, especially where the margin between success or failure is small. Every vote then is precious.

Two candidates A and B perhaps secure the same number of votes, 5,000. But suppose that just one individual, who voted for A, had voted for B. One vote taken from A would make his number of votes 4,999; one given to B would make his number of votes 5,001—a majority of two over his opponent. The one voter therefore counts two on a division.

Now we know a young Christian, who lives in lonely, dreary lodgings in a great city. He is within easy reach of all the ensnaring tinsel that this world knows so well how to display. There is the appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. He is strong, life surging through his veins with all the vigour of youth.

It is a case of real temptation. Will he succumb to all this, or will he take his true stand as a Christian?

There are tens of thousands of such cases, and it is for them we write, though what we

are about to say, we are persuaded, has a voice to us all.

We want you to remember that

"One counts two on a division."

We get it in the verse:---

"He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew xii. 30).

Note there is no neutrality as to position or practice in this verse. No person can say, "I am not *with* Christ, but I am NOT *against* Him." It is either a case of "*with*" or "*against*." Nor can a person say, "Though I do not *gather*, I do NOT *scatter*." It is either a case of "*gathering*" or "*scattering*." One counts two on a division." How searching this is!

And this holds good whether it be a matter of persons or actions. Our thoughts run thus. Suppose our young Christian friend, finding the tide of the world running too strongly for him, insensibly perhaps to himself, yields to a certain extent. Suppose it is a prayer meeting night, and he usually attends this important gathering. But some worldly friends, decent enough in their way, invite him to a pleasant evening with them. He yields, and soon he is sitting with them. We need not picture what takes place, perhaps nothing very wrong, but the atmosphere is of the world, worldly, blighting,

lowering for the Christian. But see how it works. The young Christian loses the help the prayer meeting would have been, if he had been present. That is a great loss! Does it stop there? Nay, the world will get a grip on that young man, unless he is miserable over his backsliding, and gets into the Lord's presence, and seeks His power to keep him. One absence from the prayer meeting, one presence amid the worldlings, without any testimony for the Lord. "Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *standeth* in the way of sinners, nor *sitteth* in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm i. 1).

Truly, "one counts two on a division." One—the Spirit is grieved and His power in the soul weakened. Two—the world gets a little more grip, the spiritual sensibilities are deadened, the young Christian is in the perilous position of being a backslider.

It is a real peril. The young Christian, it may be, is away from the atmosphere of a Christian home. He can slip off to questionable places of amusement, and nobody be any the wiser. "Nobody the wiser?" "THOU GOD SEEST ME" (Genesis xvi. 13) was a great deterrent and safeguard to the writer in his youthful days. God sees, God knows, God notes. Is nobody after all the wiser? God is a reality! "Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

Personal piety is alas ! a decreasing quantity in this world, and the world is poorer that it is so.

We make a strong earnest appeal for personal piety. "Wherefore shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word" (Psalm cxix. 9).

May we all be anxious so to walk in this world as to please God. It is said of Enoch, "He had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews xi. 5, 6). Life is a tragic failure if we fail in this.

A. J. POLLOCK.

SHORT STUDIES IN GENESIS.

MANY Christians confess that they have never read the Bible through, and this is sad because their loss is great. May these few thoughts on some of the treasures therein serve as an encouragement to do so. It may be said, "We know all the important parts, does the rest matter?" It does matter indeed.

Every word of God is pure, and every word is for our profit. Can it be thought that anything which God has caused to be written for our learning can be unnecessary for us? Moreover, no one who has not

carefully read the Old Testament will understand the New; and equally it is true that no one who neglects the New Testament has a right understanding of the Old. There have been times in all our lives when we have had to own that we knew not what to do, and whilst it may not always have been the case, yet it is very possible that our difficulty has arisen from our not knowing the word that would have directed us.

We will not in these short studies follow the great lines of typical teaching, which have been so ably unfolded by others, but with the Lord's gracious enabling will consider some of the little touches of beauty which are like the flowers in the garden.

Let us first take creation. Many questions are asked now-a-days and the Genesis account is often scoffed at; but we do well to remember that "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3). Suppose a person were intellectually convinced he would be still unsaved, but the one who understands by faith has had to do with GOD, and is the subject of His great salvation. A well-known writer has said that there must be in creation, time, force, space, matter, motion. Yet apparently he did not see that these are all found in Genesis i. 1, 2.

Many of the wonders which have been discovered in our times were always in that same chapter but not understood; as, for example, that there was light before the sun, that the lower forms of life came first—the moving creature that hath life, brought forth by the waters—that there was progression toward the higher, even to man; and that, not as developing one from the other, but each created after its kind. It was stated recently, as a reasonable account of creation that “millions of years ago aeons were” but who could for one moment compare this with the majestic utterances of Genesis?

It is often said that Genesis is the seed-plot of the Bible, and that the doctrines of Christianity are all illustrated therein.

In the life of Abraham, for instance, we are shewn the call of God, and in him faith, hope, and love are set forth. In Genesis xii. 1. we read of the call; Stephen tells us in Acts vii. 2. that the God of glory appeared to him, and Hebrews xi. 8. adds that “he obeyed and he went out not knowing whither he went.” Here we may surely say is “the obedience of faith.” In Genesis xv. 5. the Lord tells him to look at the stars, and says that “so should his seed be” when as yet he had no son, “and he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Here is faith resting on the sure word of God.

Years passed away and the fulfilment of the promise tarried until all human hope was over, but against hope, he "believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be" (Rom. iv. 18), and "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were," brought it to pass, and Abraham became the father of the faithful, and has been the example for the saints ever since of what it is to *hope* in God.

Once more his faith was to be exercised. It was the supreme test of his life when God bade him offer up Isaac on Mount Moriah. He might have pleaded that this was a sore ending to the life of the boy who had been named "Laughter," but no, he accounted "that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 19). But God who bade him, "take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest" (Gen. xxii. 2), knew the depths of his heart, and put this honour on His servant, that *love* is mentioned here for the first time in Scripture, and that through him we should see as in a picture, the great love of God the Father for His well-beloved Son. It is very beautiful to note God's estimate of His servant's faith—see, Genesis xxii. 16-18.

In the promise made to Abraham we have an intimation of the three circles of the New Testament, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God, thus:—the “dust of the earth” (Gen. xiii. 16)—the Jew; the “sand of the sea” (Gen. xxii. 17)—the Gentile nations; the “stars of the heaven” (Gen. xv. 5; xxii. 17; Heb. xi. 12)—the church, the heavenly people.

We shall now, for the moment, pass by Isaac and Jacob, and think a little of Joseph. In his life the story is told in figure of Him who was hated by His brethren, delivered up to death and raised from the dead, and who, rejected on earth, is, in resurrection, made both Lord and Christ. Joseph was made lord over all the land of Egypt and was the dispenser of blessing to all who came to him. His name, given by Pharaoh, the Revealer of secrets, the Saviour of the world, speaks to us of our Lord Jesus who came to reveal the secrets of Divine love, and to make known to us that “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John. iv. 14). Those who own Him Lord, find Him all-sufficient for their needs, and anticipate the day when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess His Name.

In the days of famine in Egypt, it was a great thing to have provision for the need, but it was a greater thing to be

brought into Joseph's household. He had an interpreter, a ruler of his house, a steward and evidently other servants, and this may remind us of our great privilege and responsibility as His servants, who loved and gave Himself for us. Rich and poor, high and low, must all bow the knee to Joseph, and his household servants must do his bidding, but there was one who had a nearer and a dearer place, even Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, who was given him by Pharaoh to be his wife. She bare him two sons, Manasseh, *forgetting*, and Ephraim, *fruitful*, and Joseph said, "God hath made me forget all my toil" (Gen. xli. 51). And thus it is with our Lord Jesus Christ. God has given Him, out of the strange land, the place of His rejection, one who shall be through eternal ages the bride, the Lamb's wife. And we have our part in this, for His joy and ours. May we more and more rise up in soul to dwell in the place He has won for us with His toil.

There is one word more. Joseph had a golden cup, and we are shewn how it was used to bring sin to remembrance, but what a contrast is here! The cup which the Lord Jesus took from His Father's hand was such a bitter cup that He prayed that if it were possible it might pass from Him. And this cup was not to bring sin to remembrance, but He drank of it that He might put sin away for evermore.

Now He waits for the day when He shall drink the cup of joy in His Father's Kingdom; He gives us the privilege of waiting with Him, and shall we not with glad and thankful hearts seek to be faithful in His absence, and treasure greatly, and read constantly the precious word of God, through which we have the knowledge of Him.

L. R.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Galatians iv.* 4-31).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

THE coming forth of God's Son was the event which marked the commencement of a new epoch in God's dealings with men. The steps, by which that new epoch was inaugurated, are given to us in verses 4 to 6.

First, the Son of God was sent, "made of a woman," or, more literally, "come of woman." Thus His incarnation is expressed, the guarantee to us that He was *a Man*, in the full and proper sense of the word.

Second, it could be said of Him, "come under law." When He came God's attention was focussed upon the Jew, as upon a people who were in outward relationship with Him and responsible as under His law. Amongst

that people He came, *assuming all the responsibilities*, under which they had wholly failed.

Third, He wrought *redemption* for those under the law, thus delivering them from its claims, in order that a new position might be theirs.

Fourth, as thus delivered we receive "*the adoption of sons*," or, "*sonship*." This wondrous position in regard to God is ours as a free gift, according to His eternal purpose.

Fifth, being made sons, God has given to us *the Spirit of His Son*, in order that we may be enabled to enter into the consciousness and enjoyment of this new relationship, and respond to God as our Father. By the Spirit given we cry, "Abba, Father!"

The above is a brief summary of these remarkable verses, but now let us notice in them a few points of importance.

The redemption spoken of in verse 5 goes further than the truth which we met with in verse 13 of chapter iii. We might have been redeemed from the curse of the law and yet left under the law, and consequently left still in the place of servants. The glorious fact is that the believer is not only redeemed from the curse, but also from the law that righteously inflicted the curse; so that now we stand in the liberty of son-

ship and the days of bondage under the "schoolmaster" are over.

Notice also the change from the "we" of verse 5 to the "ye" of verse 6. Only the Jew had been in the bondage of the law, hence redemption from law applied to Jewish believers of whom Paul was one. Consequently he says, "we." But, on the other hand, the place of sonship, in which Christians are set, is the portion equally of all, whether Jew or Gentile by nature. Hence the change to "ye." The wonder is that those, who once were degraded Gentiles far from God, should now be sons and happily responding to God the Father's love by the Spirit given to them.

The Spirit of God's Son does not give us the place of sons. That is ours as the fruit of God's purpose and gift on the basis of redemption. The Spirit gives the consciousness of the relationship and the power to respond to it.

In verse 7 the Apostle brings home the fact of this wonderful relationship to us each individually. And not only is sonship an individual blessing, so that he can say, "thou art . . . a son," but heirship is individual also. Each of us is, "an heir of God through Christ." This shows us that when the Apostle used "the heir" in verse 1 as an illustration of his theme, he was using an illustration which applied in a very exact and literal way. Such is the

amazing grace of God to us as believers, whether we were Jews or Gentiles. How little we have taken it in!

We call upon our readers to pause at this point and to meditate upon this truth. It is an established fact, and so stated without any qualification. The Galatians were not in the enjoyment of the fact. They were actually behaving themselves as though they were servants and not sons, yet the Apostle does not say, "Wherefore thou *oughtest to be* no more a servant but a son," but, "Thou *art* no more a servant but a son." Our relationship does not flow from our understanding of, or our response to, the place we have, nor from behaviour suitable to it; but rather our behaviour flows from the relationship, once it is understood and responded to. Let us each say to ourselves again and yet again, "I am a son and heir of God through Christ." Let us take time that this wonderful truth may sink into each heart.

When once the fact has really laid hold of us we shall be able to appreciate how Paul felt as he penned verses 8 and 9. The Galatians were formerly in bondage, not to the law indeed, but to false gods; and now having been brought to know God, as the fruit of God having taken them up and brought them into this wealthy place, what possessed them to turn again to the old principle of standing before God in their

own merits—or rather demerits? What indeed?

The principle of the law of Moses was that each should stand before God according to his own doings. This too is a root principle with every false religion, and thus the Galatians had proceeded in their former days of paganism. In now turning aside to Judaism they were slipping back into the old principles which are weak and beggarly. What expressive adjectives! *Weak*, since by them man accomplished nothing that counted for good. *Beggarly*, because they left him stripped of all merit and of all excuse. But if we wish to realize *how* weak and *how* beggarly we must view them in contrast with the principles of the Gospel, and its results in making us sons and heirs.

In verse 10 the Apostle gives an instance of what he alluded to, when he spoke of their turning back to legal principles. They were taking up Jewish feasts and customs. That might seem a small matter, but it was a straw which showed the way the wind was blowing, and it made him afraid lest there should be with them a lack of reality—lest their professed acceptance of the Gospel were not sincere after all; and consequently the labour he had expended upon them should be in vain.

This was a sad thought, and it leads

directly to the touching appeal which follows in verses 12 to 20. He beseeches them in the first place to be as he was as to their experience and practice, inasmuch as both he and they were just on the same footing as to their place before God. Alike they had been brought into sonship, and therefore alike they should all be walking in the liberty of sons. It was not a personal matter at all. He nursed no sense of personal injury against them.

This leads him to recall the great reception that they gave him when first he came amongst them with the Gospel message. He was at that time in much infirmity of a physical sort, and it would seem that his eyesight was particularly affected. On turning to Acts xvi. 6 we note that his first visit to Galatia was during the early part of his second missionary journey. The stoning of Paul even to the point of death took place at nearly the end of his first journey, as recorded in Acts xiv. 19. It is more than likely that there is a connection between the two events, and that this "temptation . . . in my flesh" resulted from the ill-treatment that he received, and is the same as the "thorn in the flesh," of which he writes in 2 Corinthians xii. 7. Be that as it may, he arrived amongst them in fulness of power and they received him with great gladness. Now it would appear that in speaking the truth to them he had become their enemy!

The fact was of course that the Judaising teachers, who had got amongst them, were aiming at producing alienation between the Galatians and Paul, their spiritual father, in order to capture them as followers for themselves. In verse 17 the Apostle in few words unmasks this, their real objective. "They are very zealous after you" he says, "but not in the right way. They are simply anxious to shut you away from us, in order that you become zealous adherents, following them." What Paul wanted was to see them always zealous after the things that are really good, and that as much when he was absent as when he was with them.

As things were however he could but stand in doubt of them. When first he visited them it was with great exercise and travail of soul. He did not preach himself but Christ Jesus as Lord, and their spiritual birth only came to pass when Christ was formed in them. The photographic artist takes care to have a good lens in his camera, that will throw on the screen a very accurate picture of the features of the sitter. But the photograph only comes to the birth when the sitter's features are formed in the sensitized plate as the result of the joint action of light and certain chemicals. This may serve as an illustration of the point. Paul travailed that as the fruit of Gospel light Christ might be formed in them. Then his birth pangs on their behalf were over.

But along come these Judaising teachers, and lo! instead of Christ these men, their sabbaths, their new moons, their circumcision, seem to be forming themselves in them. No wonder that Paul, in his ardent affection for them as his children, felt as though he must go through birth pangs *again* on their behalf, and was perplexed about them. Under these circumstances he wished that, instead of being at a distance and having to communicate by writing, he were in their midst, able to judge of their exact state and to change his voice, speaking to them in instruction, in rebuke, or even in severity, as the occasion demanded.

However as they seemed to be so anxious to place themselves under the law, they would at least be prepared to listen to what the law had indicated! Hence from verse 22 to the end of the chapter he refers them to the allegorical significance of an occurrence in Abraham's life.

Abraham was the great example of faith and promise, as we saw when reading chapter iii. Yet before ever he received by faith the child of promise, there was the episode in which by works he obtained a child through Hagar. Ishmael was born after the flesh, whereas Isaac was by promise. We can now see that there was an allegory in this, and that Hagar and her son picture for us Sinai, whence was proclaimed the law system which results in bondage, and

also "Jerusalem which now is," *i.e.*, the Jewish people, who though under law are still in virtual unbelief. The Christian, on the other hand, is in the position of the child of promise, and connected with "Jerusalem which is above," which is free.

The proud orthodox Jew might rightly boast that according to the flesh he was a true-born son of Isaac. Yet in a spiritual sense he was only a son of Ishmael and in bondage under the schoolmaster. True the schoolmaster regime came first, and later came the promise, which materialized in the advent of the Son of God. But that only confirmed the type, for Ishmael came before Isaac. The type was further confirmed by the fact that it was the proud Jews who persecuted the humble Christians, as verse 29 points out.

Again, the truth of the allegory finds a corroboration in the words of Isaiah liv. 1. That verse indicates that Israel in the time of her desolation would be more fruitful than she had ever been when she was acknowledge as in relationship with Jehovah. But then that verse is the immediate consequence of the glorious truth predicted in chapter liii. It was to be as the fruit of the advent of the suffering Messiah, and not as the result of law keeping.

When the law was imposed from Sinai no one broke forth into song. Very soon

there were cries to the effect that such words should not be spoken any more into the ears of the people. Yet when Isaiah unfolds before us the marvellous story of the Christ who suffers and rises again for sins not His own, the first word that follows is, "SING." Bondage is over, liberty is come!

Of old there was the inevitable clash between Ishmael and Isaac, just as now there is between the Judaiser and the believer who stands in the liberty of the grace of God. And yet it is not the clash that decides the question, nor even the persecution of the one "born after the Spirit" by the one "born after the flesh." What decides the matter is the voice of God. And that voice reaches us in the Scriptures.

"What saith the Scripture?" That is the decisive question. And the answer is that, "the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." The servant is displaced in favour of the son. He, who would stand before God on the basis of the law, falls. He, who stands in the fulness of grace, stands indeed.

Happy indeed it is for us if we can truly say, "We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." Then indeed we stand in Christ, and Christ Himself is formed in us. We are in the liberty of sonship, and that is liberty indeed.

F. B. HOLE.

ASSURANCE AND SATISFACTION.

UNCERTAINTY as to the future, and *discontent* with present conditions are the chief features of the world as we know it; and it is not pessimism but the truth that says, no man or group of men, no party, nations or league of nations has any practical remedy for things as they are. We have no intention of wasting our time or space in proving this; we have no need to, for it is being proclaimed from every house top. But it is our intention to urge upon our Christian friends that they need not be uncertain or discontented, for full assurance and satisfaction lie in the knowledge of God—in what He is and what He will give.

He has said, "I AM Alpha and Omega . . . I WILL GIVE unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6). "I am Alpha and Omega."—the A and the Z. He was the first to speak and He will have the last word about everything. We may rely with an absolute assurance on His word. He has spoken to us in His beloved Son, our Saviour; and His voice has not driven us

from His presence trembling with fear, but has drawn us to Him. How could we help believing on Him who sent our Lord Jesus Christ into this world to speak to us His words of salvation, of reconciliation, and eternal life. They have given us a great and sure hope, and we know, having heard and believed them, that the Tabernacle of God, which John saw in vision in this chapter, is our everlasting abode. To dwell with God, who is now not a stranger or an unknown God, but well-known to us in Jesus' love, is our destiny. We are not uncertain.

God will not go back on His Word, for the "I AM" changes not, and He "willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. vi. 17, 18).

Yet it seems easier to trust about eternity than about time, and many who have no fear as to what lies beyond death are greatly troubled about present circumstances and what tomorrow may bring forth. But this should not be. The word of the Alpha and Omega is surely enough for us. "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." If His love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, we cannot doubt Him. He may, and often does, use our circumstances in the way of chastisement, in order that we may be partakers of His holiness and weaned from the world, but He will not leave us nor forsake us as we pass through the trial. Thus has he said, and He will most certainly be faithful to His spoken word. He would deny Himself if He were not. He would not be Alpha and Omega.

To whom can we go but to Him? "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." No matter how well meaning and honest they may be, they are not equal to the unravelling of the universal tangle. And this is because God is not the beginning of their schemes, nor His glory the end of their measures. The world is not ready for the fulfilment of the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and it is because of this that the Christian who sincerely prays that prayer must stand apart from the world and its politics. If he does not, he will be involved in the confusion and uncertainty of the world; but if he trusts in the Lord, he will be kept in peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

It gives great confidence and quietness of spirit to know that God is over all, and that He can, and does, control the waves of evil, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." And in this confidence the Christian becomes an intercessor on behalf of all men, and is of the greatest service to his day and generation. This is God's will for His children, that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority: *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*" (1 Tim. ii. 1-2). As long as the Church is on earth, God will keep His hand upon affairs and make all things work together for the good of them that love Him. It must always be so, since He is the One who has said, "I am Alpha and Omega."

It is "Alpha and Omega," whose word is infallible and final, who proclaims, "*I will give* unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." He is the giving God, He delights to give; it is His very nature. He does not withhold His gifts even though men are unthankful and unholy. We praise His goodness as we think of His kindness to men, but what tongue of men or angels can tell the love that led Him to give His Son? This was His "unspeakable gift." Thanks be unto Him for it, for ever.

But the greatest of all gifts did not exhaust His giving. He still gives and must do so for ever. He gives of Himself, not *for* now, but *to* the thirsty. For He is Himself surely the fountain of the water of life. And he that drinketh of this water shall never thirst. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us." And we do not here separate Father, Son, and Holy Ghost from each other in this infinite outpouring of the fulness of divine love. The Father is the Source, the Son has fully revealed it, and is the channel by whom it has reached us, and the Holy Ghost makes it a living reality to us, who apart from His work in us would be for ever dead to it.

Here is satisfaction, and the heart that knows it could not be discontented even though his poverty were as deep as that of the Son of Man who had not a place to lay His head. What has the world to offer as compared with this? Its best is vanity, and what it gives, it gives with a grudging hand; but here we have heaven's fulness offered freely and the only condition is thirst on the part of the recipient.

Let us thank God that in days of uncertainty and discontent we may rejoice in full assurance and complete satisfaction.

J. T. MAWSON.

DECISION FOR CHRIST.

(From Notes of Addresses.)

IT may appear a little out of place to deal with the subject of decision for Christ when the help of Christians is in view. This arises from the fact that the expression, as popularly used, has an unduly limited sense. It is applied simply to those who having listened to a Gospel address decide to forsake their old lives—they “make up their minds to be Christians.”

Here at the outset a word of warning is necessary. At the end of an evangelistic meeting decisions for Christ are called for, and a certain number respond. With far too many it seems to be just a question of “deciding to live the Christian life,” or, as one put it, “I have decided for the religion of Jesus Christ”; and there is cause to fear that it amounts to no more than a kind of reformation.

A man goes into a temperance meeting and hears of the horrors of strong drink. Influenced thereby, he decides at once—makes up his mind—to sign the pledge, and then he tries to live up to his pledge. That is all that happens. Another man attends a gospel meeting, and after hearing of the horrors of sin and sin’s judgment, and reviewing his own life in the light of that, he makes up his mind to live the Christian life, both as being a set-off to his past, and as being the noblest of all lives to live.

Then he tries to live up to his decision. Thus the mistake is made of thinking that all that has been wrong can be rectified by an alteration in the future.

This is a fatal delusion. Deciding to be a soldier will not make me one. If I learnt the drill of a soldier and had the deportment of a soldier that would not make me a soldier. To don the uniform of a soldier would not put me into His Majesty's service, though it might put me into one of His Majesty's prisons for masquerading as a soldier without being one.

When people speak of "decision for Christ" in this way there is a serious fallacy in their use of the term. It signifies nothing beyond a *religious* reformation, just as the signing of a pledge signifies a *moral* reformation. But then "making up my mind" to be anything does not accomplish anything. I decide that *I will do* something, rather than that *He shall do* something.

All this is a form of *doing* for salvation. You ask people when and how they were converted, and often they reply somewhat as follows:—"I went to hear Mr. — preach, and he made me feel more deeply than ever before that my life was not right. So at the end of the meeting when he called for decisions I rose to my feet amongst others, went into the enquiry room and there I decided for Christ."

This is all what *they have done*—you observe. I asked a young man in Sydney, "What did you think this decision was going to do?" "Oh, well, I thought it would clean my slate"—in other words, he had an idea that God would be so pleased with his decision that He would say no more about his past and help him to live a better life. Thus his "decision" would be accepted in lieu of "repentance" and the great "sin question" would be left untouched!

Do not overlook the fact that sin is an awful reality carrying a penalty with it; and that penalty nothing short of *death*. There is no "first offenders act" in connection with sin—no merciful letting off, in order to give you a fresh chance to do better in the future. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). "Death [is] passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12). This is what makes Christ and His atoning death a necessity. Christ alone can meet that need.

True decision for Christ is the fruit of the discovery of my desperate need, and is not a mere bit of religious or moral sentiment. This is illustrated by the case of Bartimæus as recorded in Mark x. It was his felt need of Christ that decided him to seize his first chance to reach Him. This is what happened on the Jericho road. His blindness was a need that only Christ could

meet. No alteration that he could produce in his own life could lift him out of his darkness into the light of day. But Christ crossed his path and no sooner did he hear His Name than he put his decision into action. He cried aloud for mercy, and being called he came, and so was saved from dying in darkness.

Bartimæus had a need. He confessed it and coming to Christ it was met. Thus it is *my need of Him* that brings me to Him, and my coming is the confession that there is no hope in myself and that I recognize in Him my Saviour and my Lord.

Thus when I do really decide *for* Christ, I decide *against* myself and it is *this* that we are so reluctant to do—it cuts against the very grain of our natures. That means something more than deciding that the "Christian life" is something better than the life we have previously lived. The root of the matter lies deeper. Not only has our outward life been wrong, but we are wrong and hopeless ourselves.

I am, let us suppose, in the Australian bush, and I injure myself and blood poisoning sets in. I first try to meet my own case by using every remedy I have at hand. I get worse however, until a friend comes and urges me to give up all effort of my own and seek the advice of his doctor in the city, 100 miles away. What he says of his ability, which he has proved for him-

self, and what I feel as to the failure of my own efforts, bring me to the point of decision. I at last decide *against* myself and my own efforts: then I decide *for* the doctor as the one who understands my need.

True decision for Christ, then, involves a definite decision against yourself. Moreover it does not stop with a merely mental decision: it really brings you in faith to Christ, even as it brought Bartimæus to Him. He had not tried "many physicians" as a certain woman, nor was he like the father of the demon-possessed boy, who had to confess, "I brought him to Thy disciples." The father decided for *disciples*, as the woman for *doctors* before either of them decided for *Christ*.

Bartimæus decided for Christ straight away. He was at a juncture, the seriousness of which he did not then know. If he had missed that chance he would have missed his last, for Christ never again went that way. He was at the parting of the ways—an opportunity for sight, or doomed to darkness. He seized his opportunity and receiving his sight he followed Jesus in the way. His decision for Christ meant that henceforth Christ was *Lord* and *Master* to him.

The authority of Christ as Lord will be established in all our hearts if we really have decided for Him.

ART. CUTTING.

EXERCISE AND REWARD.

THAT exercise is profitable, whether for soul or for body, no one will deny. In it, however, there is a relative value, which we do well to take into account. "For bodily exercise profiteth *little*: but godliness is profitable *unto all things*, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Hence the exhortation of Paul to Timothy: "Exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (1 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

The Greeks were excessively fond of physical exercise. To them it was more a passion than a sport. Every town in Greece of any size had its gymnasium. Ample means was thus afforded to athletes to develop the corporeal frame. Then the public games, which were periodically held, gave them occasion to demonstrate their agility, strength and endurance. Foot-racing, wrestling and pugilism were some of the many tests of physical power. To these, at a later date, was added the inhuman practice of fighting with wild beasts, which, though of foreign origin (it was introduced by the Romans), was hailed with national interest and enthusiasm.

In the gymnasium, candidates submitted themselves to a course of hard training, extending over a period of not less than ten months. Strict dietetic discipline was imposed, and severe exercises and tests per-

formed, to temper the body, and bring it to the maximum of suppleness, energy and resistance. At the games, rigid rules were observed, to prevent foul play, and ensure equality of contest. The coveted prize was a crown made of pine or wild olive leaves.

Among those who took part in the games, in an official capacity, were the herald and the judge. The former summoned the candidates to the stadium, and arranged them in their respective competitive order; the latter awarded the prizes to the victors, usually on the last day of the games. The event was celebrated with pomp and festivity; and the victors were the idols of a delirious populace. Such were the famous gatherings at Olympia, Delphi, Nemœa and Corinth.

Our reference to these celebrations is to bring before the reader an imagery, of which the apostle Paul aptly avails himself, to teach Christians salutary lessons in spiritual warfare. As Christians our exercise is *unto godliness*; our race is *heavenly*; our wrestling is with *spiritual wickedness*; our stadium is *the path of faith*; our goal is *Christ in glory*; and our prize is *the incorruptible crown*. Keeping these facts in mind, let us see what Scripture teaches us of the value of exercise and reward.

Three things are presented to us in 1 Corinthians ix. 24, 25.

(1) We are in a race, and must run, with such *individual* exercise and earnestness, as to obtain the prize. *All* run; *one* receives the prize. What others do, or fail to do, is not the subject of thought or comment: *all* are in the race; *one* receives the prize. "So run, that ye may obtain."

(2) Temperance is essential. Self-indulgence, in its multifarious nature, is eliminated. The body, like a highly tested machine, is to give its best, and be under complete control.

(3) The reward is far above the highest thought of earthly glory: one is "corruptible;" the other, "incorruptible." One is ephemeral; the other, eternal.

In the closing verses of the chapter referred to, Paul gives us his personal exercise for our example.

(1) He ran with *no uncertainty*. Victory to him was a *foregone conclusion*. He reached out to apprehend that *for which he was already* "apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12). Thus it ever is with faith.

(2) He fought; but not as one who beats the air—an unskilful combatant might do this at his elusive opponent. With hard and fast grip (here he uses a pugilistic term), he kept the body under, bringing it into subjection. The body is not viewed here as the *temple*, in which the Spirit

dwells; but as the *seat* of those desires, which, if gratified, would lead to bondage. The antithesis of heavenly-mindedness is seen in those of whom it is said, their "god is their belly," "who mind earthly things" (Phil. iii. 18, 19). And a fine specimen of non-combatants, in this warfare, are those who are termed "servants of corruption" (2 Peter. ii. 19).

(3) He did not herald to others, and fail to enter the race himself. The allusion is obviously to the herald at the games, who summoned the candidates to the stadium, but took no part in the contest. And the inference is, that there are some who preach to others, when they themselves are not Christians. Such, of course, would be castaways—disapproved and rejected. Paul, on the contrary, was a Christian *first*; *then* a preacher. *That* was why he was a good preacher.

Coming to Philippians iii., we have the race of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Its characteristic is energy. Stripped of everything in which the flesh would glory or confide, Paul enters the course as runner. "Forgetting those things that are behind," he reaches forth (allusion to the body of a runner, which is inclined forwards), and presses towards the goal. Everything in this race bespeaks spiritual energy. All that man in the flesh could boast of, he counts loss, esteems dung, leaves behind

and forgets! Beautiful example of spiritual energy! Can we find a better?

The short-distance race was the greatest high-speed test. In it *energy* was the deciding factor. One length of the stadium was run, a distance of about 606 English feet (one eighth of a Roman mile). A bad start, a look behind, the least possible embarrassment, or weight, would decide the runner's fate. But how careful he was to be *stripped* and *concentrated*! Has this not a voice for us?

No test, however, was so strenuous as the long-distance race. Several lengths of the stadium were run. Needless to say, this trial of sustained effort proved too much for many of the competitors. It is recorded of one, Ladas, by name, who actually won a long-distance test at the Olympic games, that so exhausted was he that, immediately on being crowned, he expired. And shall we not say *endurance* is the greatest test in spiritual warfare? Many there are who begin well, run well for a time, then end badly. A glance at Scripture suffices to prove it, to say nothing of our own experience of ourselves and of others. The fable of the hare and the tortoise has its moral lesson for us. If the former has *speed*, the latter has *endurance*: we need both of these qualifications for the heavenly race.

Turning to Hebrews xii., how befitting is the exhortation: "Let us run with patience

[endurance] the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." The secret of power to endure is in "looking unto Jesus." By faith we see Him; by faith we look to Him for strength for the way. By faith Moses "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." The weights are many to hinder; the sin of unbelief, "which doth so easily beset us," is ever near; but if we look away "unto Jesus," we shall run with endurance the race set before us.

The difference between the runner in the stadium and the Christian is this: the former has to draw on his *own* resource; the latter has *everything in Christ*. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall *run* and *not be weary*; and they shall *walk* and *not faint*."

But exercise will cease, and reward will be given. Happy prospect! Paul could say: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 6-8).

J. HOUSTON.

“A PLACE FOR YOU.”

THE above words were used twice (see John xiv.), by our Lord Jesus Christ.

He said, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

A certain teacher of religion, used to tell a lot of black girls and boys, they would have a place *in the kitchen* in heaven, provided they were good, and did what they were told!

One of the boys, in spite of this bad teaching, through divine mercy, was truly converted to God. As a repentant sinner he trusted Christ as his Saviour; and his soul was filled with joy and praise, as he learned how the Son of God had loved him and given Himself for him.

Betaking himself to prayer, and learning to read the Word of God, very soon the Holy Spirit opened his lips to speak of Christ to others. When quite an old man, after long, zealous and happy service for the Lord, he once told us how earnestly he searched the Scriptures, vainly trying to discover what *the kitchen* in heaven would be like; and then exclaimed, “I could not find one! but, thank God, I found that Jesus said, Where I am, there ye shall be also!

That is heaven for me!—TO BE WHERE MY SAVIOUR IS!—TO BE WITH HIM! "

Yes, the one who knows the love of Jesus, desires to be with Himself. His presence there, in His Father's house, will be the pre-eminent thing for our hearts; and our presence there is what His heart looks forward to; so He said, "I will come again, and RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF."

Then each shall share His joy above,
Behold Him whom unseen we love.

H. J. V.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Galatians v.*)

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

IN the first verse of chapter v. we have the main point of the epistle compressed into a few words. Christ has set us free in a wonderful liberty, and in that we are to stand fast, refusing to be again entangled in bondage.

Let us refresh our memories as to the extent and character of the liberty into which we have been brought.

In the first place we have been set free from the law as *the ground of our justification before God*. This was previously

stated in verse 16 of chapter ii. We are "justified by the faith of Christ."

Further, we have been set free from the law as *the basis of our relationship with God*. The "adoption of sons" is ours as having been redeemed from under the law. This is stated in verse 5 of chapter iv.

Consequently, in the third place, we are set free from the law as *the rule or standard of our life*. This came out in the whole passage, iii. 23 to iv. 7. For as long as God's children were in the place of servants, the rule of life for them was the law. Now, as full-grown sons in the house of their father, possessing the Spirit of God's Son, we have a higher rule or standard than the law of Moses—even the "law of Christ," of which verse 2 of chapter vi. speaks.

The liberty into which we are brought, then, is the complete emancipation which has reached us as being made the sons of God. It is the freedom of which the Lord Jesus spoke when He said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii. 36). We are no longer like servants of the household, who rightly have their conduct regulated by the rules suitable to the servants' hall; and to put ourselves in our thoughts and behaviour back into that position is to sadly entangle ourselves. It is indeed to *fall from grace*, as verse 4 has it,

The words "fallen from grace" are often taken to mean that such have fallen out of the gracious hand of God—that such are no longer saved. The phrase however, refers to what was produced *in their consciousness*, not to what is true *as before God*. (The verse begins, "Christ is become of no effect *unto you*." Is Christ of no effect REALLY?—that is, IN THE SIGHT OF GOD? Far be the thought—an impossible supposition! But *to them—in their experience and consciousness*? Yes. If they considered themselves as justified on the principle of law, Christ was most evidently disallowed in their minds, and they had descended from the divine and lofty principle of grace to the far lower level of law. And the descent between the two is so pronounced and precipitous that it can only be described as a *fall*!

To fall from grace is not a difficult thing. How many a professed believer there is to-day that is guilty of it! Are we all clear on the point? Do we stand in the liberty of grace in all our dealings with God?

In verses 2 and 3 Paul again alludes to the matter of circumcision as this was being used as a test question. It was the spear-head of the adversaries' attack on their liberty. It doubtless appeared to many to be a small and unimportant point, but it was quite sufficient to establish the principle. The law is one whole. If taken up

in *one* detail it must be maintained in *all* details. This is quite in keeping with what James writes—"whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in *one* point, he is guilty of *all*." (ii. 10). This enforces the fact that if the law be broken in *one* detail, it is broken *altogether*. Both statements correspond and show us that the law cannot be taken up piecemeal. It is one whole and must be considered as such. If but a very small stone be thrown through a large pane of glass it is a broken pane, as really as if it were shivered to atoms by a large chunk of rock. Or, to change the figure, the law is like a chain of many links. It is as really a broken chain if one link be fractured as if a dozen were snapped. Conversely, let a boat be connected with but *one* link of a chain and that boat is attached to *all*, and may be controlled by the hand that pulls *any* link in the chain. And this is the particular point that Paul is enforcing here.

Now note the contrast between the "ye" of verse 4 and the "we" of verse 5. "Ye"—such among the Galatians as were abandoning in their thoughts the place in which grace had set them. "We"—the mass of believers, standing in the grace of the gospel. It is the Christian "we"—if we may so speak; and verse 5 describes what the proper position of the believer is: not now his position of privilege before God as a son, but his position of liberty as left in the

world, which is in sharp contrast with all that the Jew had ever known.

Our position is one of expectancy. We wait, but not for righteousness as was the case with the Jew, who under the law was always "going about to establish his own righteousness," and yet never arriving at it. We have righteousness as an established fact in the Gospel, and are only waiting for the hope that is connected with it. The hope of righteousness is glory, as Romans v. 1 makes manifest. Now we are waiting for glory—by the Spirit given to us; and on the principle of faith—not the principle of the works of the law.

Is not this a position of wonderful liberty? The more we have experienced the drudgery and despair of seeking righteousness by diligent efforts at law keeping, the more we shall appreciate it; and see that faith working by love is the only thing that counts in Christ Jesus.

Once the Galatians had been like earnest runners in the race, now they were hindered and no longer obeying the truth. Take note that "the truth" is not something merely to be discussed and analyzed and understood, but to be *obeyed*. Are we sons of God? Then as sons we are to behave ourselves. Are we no longer under the schoolmaster? Then we no longer order our lives on a legal basis. Are we crucified with

Christ? Then we do not aim at living unto ourselves but that Christ may live in us. Every bit of truth that we learn is to have a practical expression in us. We are to obey it.

The Galatians however were turning aside not only from obedience to the truth, but from the truth itself. They had been persuaded to embrace these new ideas, which did not come from the God who had called them; and further, they had to remember that ideas and doctrines can work like leaven. They might be flattering themselves that they had only embraced a few minor items of Judaism, yet thereby they might become wholly Judaized.

The saying which we have here in verse 9 is also found in 1 Corinthians v. 6. It states the essential nature of leaven. In Corinthians it is applied to a matter of conduct and morals. Here it is applied to a matter of doctrine; for it was virtually "the leaven of the Pharisees" which was threatening the Galatians, just as that threatening the Corinthians was in its nature near to the leaven of the Sadducees and the Herodians. Still when the Apostle thought of the Lord and His gracious working in souls, he felt confident that his letter of remonstrance and correction would have its effect on the Galatians, and that the workers of mischief, who had troubled them and

perverted their thoughts, would eventually come under God's dealings in judgment.

In verses 11 to 15, Paul reinforces his appeal by one or two further considerations. He was no preacher of circumcision. Had he been he would have escaped persecution. The "offence" or "scandal" of the cross consists in the fact that it puts no honour upon man; in fact, it totally condemns him. Circumcision on the other hand, assumes that there is some possibility of merit in him, that his flesh in this way can be made profitable to God. And what is true of circumcision would also be true of any other rite which is performed with the idea that there is virtue in it. This explains why men so dearly love rites and ordinances. They induce in men a comfortable feeling of complacency with themselves. The cross makes nothing of them. Hence its *scandal*.

The Apostle longed for the true liberty of the Galatians and could have desired that those who were so zealous for the cuttings of circumcision would cut themselves off. Liberty, he points out, is not licence to sin but rather freedom to love and to serve. And this love was what the law of Moses had been aiming at all the time. Yet, as a matter of fact, while boasting in the law they had been biting and devouring one another, instead of loving and serving one another. It is ever thus. Legality leads to the very opposite of love in action, and the Galatians

had to beware lest their pursuit of holiness by law only led them to the unholy end of consuming one another in their contentions and criticisms. They would avoid the scandal of the cross only to come utterly to grief in the scandal produced by their own unholy conduct. We have sorrowfully to remark that this just sums up the history of Christendom. In proportion as the scandal of the cross has been refused and avoided, the scandal of its divisions and misbehaviour has increased.

The Galatians, however, might turn round to Paul and say, "you have pretty definitely and effectively shown us that our thoughts as to pursuing holiness by law-keeping are wrong, but what is right? You have demolished what we have been saying, but what do you say?" His answer to this begins in verse 16. "*This I say then, walk in the Spirit.*"

Walking is man's earliest and most primitive activity. It has consequently become the figure or symbol of man's activities. To "walk in the Spirit" is to have one's activities, whether of thought or speech or action, in the energy of the Spirit, who has been given to us. The Spirit of God's Son, conferred upon us as God's sons, is to govern all our activities. This is the way of liberty, a liberty which is the very opposite of licence, for walking in the Spirit it is impossible for us to fulfil the desires of the

flesh. The coming in of the higher power completely lifts us above the pull of the lower.

The flesh is not thereby altered, as verse 17 makes plain. Its nature, its desires, its action remain the same, and always contrary to the Spirit of God. But the Spirit prevails—if we walk in the Spirit—against the flesh, so that we “cannot” (or, more accurately, “should not”) do the things that otherwise we would. And then if we are “led” of the Spirit we cannot be at the same time under the leadership of “the schoolmaster”—the law.

In verse 16, then, the Spirit is regarded as the new Power in the believer, energizing him. In verse 18, as the new Leader, taking him by the hand and directing him in God’s will. In Romans viii. 14, the Spirit is also presented in this capacity. The sons are led by the Spirit. The servants are led by the schoolmaster.

The fact that there exists a total and absolute contrast and contradiction between the flesh and the Spirit is very manifest when we consider the outcome of each. Verses 19 to 21 give us the dreadful catalogue of the works of the flesh. Verses 22 and 23 present the beautiful cluster of the fruit of the Spirit. The former wholly under the condemnation of God and to be excluded from His kingdom. The latter wholly approved of God and hence no law

existing against them. In the one list we discover the hideous features which characterize fallen Adam: in the other the character of Christ.

Notice the contrast between the "works" and the "fruit." It is easy to understand the "works." The earth is filled with the noise of them. Their confusion and disruption are visible on every side. "Fruit," on the other hand, is of silent growth, even in nature. In summer time, amidst the orchards no one is driven to distraction by the noise of maturing fruit. The wonder of its growth takes place without a sound. So it is with the fruit of the Spirit. It is "fruit" you notice, not "fruits;" and this, because these lovely moral features are conceived of as a bunch; nine in number but all proceeding from one stem—the Spirit of God.

These lovely traits of character are going to fill the kingdom of God, whilst the blatant works of the flesh are totally excluded. No *true* Christian is characterized by these works of the flesh, though alas, a true Christian may fall into one or other of them, and only be extricated by the advocacy of Christ and at the cost of much suffering to himself both spiritual and physical. To belong to Christ means that we have come to a definite judgment as to the evil of the flesh, and have crucified it by heartily ratifying in our own conscience

and judgment the sentence against it pronounced by God at the cross.

We do well to enquire if we have really arrived at this, which is the proper attitude of the Christian. Have we definitely put the sentence of death on the flesh? Have we crucified it with the affections and lusts? Is it what we profess to have done as being Christians: but are we up to our profession? A very serious question which we must each answer for ourselves. Let us give ourselves time for conscience to answer !

Certain it is that we live by the Spirit and not by the flesh. Well, then, let us walk by the Spirit. Our walk must certainly be according to our life. A bird cannot have its life in the air and yet all its activities under the water. A fish cannot have its life in water and yet its activities on land. Christians cannot have their life in the Spirit and yet their activities in the flesh.

The last verse of our chapter is another pretty plain hint to the Galatians that the Apostle well knew what their false pursuit of holiness was coming to. Depend upon it, if we fall into their snare the same sad effects will be displayed in ourselves.

Only in the Spirit of God can we reproduce, even in small measure, the beautiful character of Christ.

F. B. HOLE.

THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION.

THERE is but one way, my dear friend, by which you—a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ—may *know* that you are saved. It is a very simple way, so simple that those who are seeking the peace of their souls sometimes wonder whether it can be right. Its very simplicity seems to stumble them.

But at the outset I would warn you that it is not by the state of your feelings you will know it, nor by your experiences either, be they unique or commonplace. Feelings you may have and experiences, too, but the sure and certain knowledge that you are saved can never rest on such uncertain grounds. Nothing is more fickle than feelings and nothing more changeable than experiences, and if you rely on these you only throw open the door for darkness, doubt and gloom to enter in. A house built on such a foundation is bound to totter and fall when the winds blow and the rain descends. It stands on shifting and treacherous sand.

If you would know for certain the for-

givenness of your sins, your reconciliation to God, your acceptance with Him—for this, I presume, is what you mean by being *saved*—you must believe what is said on this great subject in the Word of God. You are not left to grope your way in the dark, nor told to plead in fervent, agonizing prayer for pardon and peace. You are not bidden to wait patiently and expectingly as if the assurance for which you crave might come like a flash of lightning, suddenly, you know not when. It may please God to give it thus in some cases, but no one is warranted to look for it in that way. “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep?” (Rom. x. 6). We are so apt to say something of the kind. Now the word of pardon, of peace and salvation is not to be sought for either in the heights above or in the depths beneath. It is much nearer to you than that, it is even in your mouth and in your heart. “The word of faith,” as Paul styles it, is close at hand. All that is needed is an attentive ear and willingness to believe the message sent. Nothing more. And if you ask, What is that “word of faith”? What is the message sent? It is found in the verses which I now proceed to quote. This is it:

“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,

and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans x. 8, 9).

Let us examine these verses. Notice in the first place, the thrice repeated word SHALT. If thou *shalt* confess... and *shalt* believe... thou *shalt* be saved. Very emphatic is that third and last shalt. There is no uncertainty about it, no perhaps, no peradventure. It gives a loud and clear ring that should reach the deafest ear. Here then is something tangible, something you can lay hold of—"thou *shalt* be saved."

Read them again and observe that they speak of three persons: God, the Lord Jesus, and yourself—just those three. Of the blessed God it is said that He raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, and that is what *you* are to believe. Perhaps you quickly reply, "I know it and I do believe it." And so do thousands more who have not the faintest idea of all that is involved in what they profess to believe. Have you yourself ever seriously inquired why the Lord Jesus was once numbered with the dead? What took Him into those depths? What takes sinful men there we know very well, but how come *He* to go down into Death's dark, lone land? That He went not there for any sins of His own we need not be told, for He did no sin. Death is the wages of sin. Who earned those wages? We did. Death is due to the sinner, not only in the

form in which it reigns over the *bodies* of men, sweeping them out of the ranks of the living into the gaping, yawning, unsatisfied mouth of the grave, but death also as the *soul's* separation from God, the only Source of life and blessing. Those wages in their full weight Christ received when on the Cross. His loud cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" proclaimed the solemn fact. But GOD has raised Him from the dead. Here is the supreme, the all-convincing proof that the sins He bore by imputation have been put away. The great Sacrifice for sins has been offered once for all. The atoning work is done. And if the requirements of Divine Justice made it necessary that the Holy One should hide His face from the Sinless Sin-Bearer when on the Cross, the same God has raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly glory.

"Oh, the sight in heaven is glorious!
Man in righteousness is there;
 Once the Victim, now victorious,
Jesus lives in glory fair.
 Him who met the claims of glory,
 And the need of ruined man,
 On the cross—oh, wondrous story!
 God has set at His right hand."

And if you in your heart believe *that*, what then has become of your sins? Once they were upon Jesus on the Cross, are they upon Him now in heaven? When making atonement for them He was forsaken, is He forsaken now? Such questions carry their own answer: "*It is finished.*" All is finished,

and there remains nothing for you to do but to believe these glad tidings and enter into rest.

If I may be allowed to take you again to our verse in Romans x. you will find a further thing there. It speaks of the confession of the mouth as well as the belief of the heart. With the mouth we confess Jesus as Lord. There should be no difficulty about that. We believe that God has **made** that same Jesus who was crucified and slain, both Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36). And with the mouth we confess it. He is Lord. His name is high over all. And in relation to ourselves we confess Him as *our* Lord, whom we are to honour and obey. Now if any one thus believes with his heart and confesses with his mouth, what follows? *He is saved!* This is the third shalt of our verse about which there is no ambiguity. It is as clear and shining as the day. Do you still say, But how shall I know this? You shall know it by the word of the Lord. By this word that we set before you now. By this verse in Romans x. Listen again to the Apostle: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy *mouth*, and in thy *heart*: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy *mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy *heart* that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." As we write these lines we lift our eyes to God, praying that as you read them the Holy Spirit may show

you their meaning and convince you of their truth.

It is thus that we know that we are saved. The Bible brings the tidings of it and the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see, and we believe the welcome news. We believe the blessed Book and we also believe the God of the Book. We believe the glad tidings of salvation; yes, indeed we do, but we believe the God who sends them. Our faith, our confidence, our trust is placed in God Himself. A surer resting-place none can have. There is none surer, there is none so sure.

Before I close let me tell you of something which a merry-faced, chatterbox little boy once said to me. I called one morning to see his parents and was shown into one of the reception-rooms of the house. While waiting there, the little fellow rushed in and eagerly asked me whether I knew how far the sun was from the earth. It was, I thought, a funny question for the dear child to ask of a stranger. Instead of answering him directly, I replied, "You tell me, my little man, how far it is." He answered without a moment's hesitation and with all the gravity of a judge, "Ninety-five millions of miles." What did he know of the meaning of those tremendous figures? Nothing at all. "And how do you know that?" said I. "*Mother told me so,*" he answered, with

looks of unbounded assurance. Why, if mother had told him that the mountains of the moon were made of cream cheese he would have believed it! Mother's word for him placed any matter beyond all possible doubt. Let us imitate the artless faith of that little child. Let God's Word place for us the question of our soul's salvation beyond doubt. He has said it—there is no room for uncertainty. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word shall endure to everlasting days. *And there we rest.*

W. B.

LIVING IS BURNING.

A FAMOUS French chemist, whom the "Reds" guillotined during the French Revolution, crying in their madness that the Republic had no need of *savants*, made a very memorable contribution to biology when he affirmed that from a chemical point of view living always means burning.

There is no life without burning. Think of the sun, that great vivifying power, without which the grain in the field would not fructify, nor life be preserved on this planet. It lives through burning. Take the heat of the human body. Without heat there would be no life. Living is burning.

That living is burning is no less true in the spiritual world. Scripture often uses natural illustrations to illustrate spiritual themes. So we find our Lord describing John the Baptist, as "a burning and a shining light" (John v. 35). What a life of strenuous service was his! How honoured he was! Life is measured rather by service than by years. Sometimes, when a person becomes old, and great care has to be taken, and everything possible done for ease and comfort, you hear the remark, "The patient may last for years, for there is no demand made mentally or physically." But we can scarcely call this living. It is merely existence.

Take the case of the Apostle Paul. He could write to the Corinthian believers, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you" (2 Corinthians xii. 15). Here is a wonderful instance of this matter. He was prepared to expend vital and spiritual energy if only he could be a help to them.

We may well challenge ourselves whether we live or merely exist; whether we are living to ourselves, or living for God and for others; living strenuously, for living is burning.

What a living was the Apostle Paul's! He could say, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." (Philip-

pians ii. 17). He was not a candle wrapped up in tissue paper, and placed on a shelf, but a candle burning, shedding light till it guttered down in its socket. That life has influenced every Christian that ever existed. What a life! Living is burning!

Of course the great example of all is that of our Lord Jesus Christ. What did He not accomplish during that wonderful three and a half years of strenuous service, ending up with the tragedy of the cross; streams of life flowing from that wounded side, every pulsation of divine life for the believer gained by His wonderful poured-out life on the cross! So we read, "Christ loved the Church, and gave HIMSELF for it" (Ephesians v. 25). He could not give more.

With such an example before us, we may well ask, Do we live or do we merely exist? What need on every hand! Our villages are fast becoming pagan, and the population of pagan lands increasing faster than the increase of converts at the mission stations. Cinemas are crowded. Churches are empty. Men "are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. iii. 4). May God wake us up from the self-complacency that marks us too much and too often.

SHORT STUDIES IN EXODUS.

THIS book seems to epitomise two very wonderful words, "I am," (iii. 14), "I will" (vi. 6, 7); indeed we might almost say it is written around the words "Now shalt thou see what I will do" (vi. 1). It carries on the narrative commenced in Genesis and supplies yet more reasons why we should read the Bible, read it all and read it continually.

The Old Testament tells us many things about the Lord, which are not found in the New. The types picture Him, the prophets announce Him in much detail—over three hundred prophecies have their fulfilment in Him—and the Psalms, in the most beautiful sacred poetry in the world, tell of His sorrows and of the joy that was set before Him.

No book of the Bible is an isolated unit. It may be compared to a building of which the first stone is laid in Genesis, and the headstone put on in the Revelation with shouts of triumph. There is so much in Exodus, so many types and shadows, as well as actual history that in this short study it is only possible to allude to two or three points. We seek the Lord's help to consider, the judgment, the lamb, and the sanctuary.

In Genesis we have read of the judgment on the first sinners, on the old world and

on Sodom, here the judgment falls on Egypt. It has been asked, "Why should Egypt be destroyed for the sin of Pharaoh?" But apparently Egypt was as guilty as its king. "The *Egyptians* made the children of Israel to serve with vigour; and *they* made their lives bitter with hard bondage" (i. 13-14). We may be sure the Judge of all the earth does right and that all His judgments are in righteousness and truth. Here the word to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Gen. xii. 3) has its first fulfilment. When Joseph *ruled* in Egypt and his brethren dwelt in peace there was prosperity and blessing; but when they were brought into bondage the results were sorrow, death, judgment; and in this history has repeated itself until now, and will doubtless continue doing so until the final blessing of Israel in a future day.

The Israelites were exposed to the same judgment as the Egyptians, and it was God who provided the way of escape through the blood of the lamb. A lamb had been offered by Abel in the early dawn of history. Isaac had asked the question, "Where is the lamb?" and Abraham had answered, "God will provide Himself a lamb"; but the lamb had been "a *ram* caught in a thicket by his horns" (Gen. xxii. 13). The strength of the ram was the means of its sacrifice, a foreshadowing, dim indeed, of Him whose going forth was from everlasting,

but who came to take the place of those on whom the shadow of death lay. In Exodus xii. 13, the blood of the slain lamb on the lintel and on the doorpost was the protection from the judgment of Egypt, (apart from the blood, "there was not a house where there was not one dead") and the flesh of the lamb, roast with fire, was the food of the people whom God had come down to deliver—figure of their appropriation of the sacrifice. Everything for Israel, for the world, for us, depends on the precious blood, shown in type here, and shed on Calvary.

We are told that this is "not acceptable to the modern mind," but in a very few years what is the modern mind of to-day will be hopelessly out of date; yet the Word of God will still be living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; and to eternal ages the theme of the praise in heaven will be, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. v. 12).

The reader is doubtless familiar with the events that followed—the deliverance from Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the first days of the wilderness journey, the lack of water, the want of food, the need of guidance, all supplied by Him who had bidden them to go, and who had foreseen and provided for their every necessity.

We may note that Genesis vi. 13 and Exodus xiv. 29 give us the figures of bap-

tism as quoted in 1 Peter iii. 21 and 1 Corinthians x. 2, and no doubt a better understanding of these two types would correct many wrong thoughts on this subject.

Exodus xv. tells us what THE LORD hath done, it is He who hath triumphed gloriously, He who brought them out, He who will bring them in, leading on to the intimation of what is afterwards more fully developed when God said, "Make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (xxv. 8).

In Eden the Lord walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day, and throughout Genesis we read that He visited and spake with His servants, but it was a new and greater thing that He should dwell among them. We may well ask how shall this holy Lord God dwell in the midst of a sinful people? The answer is, the ark of the covenant would be there with the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, the morning and evening lamb would be offered on the altar, the fire of which should ever be burning and never go out, type of the abiding efficacy of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there would also be the high priest who would enter into the holy place, with the fragrant incense and the shed blood.

It was a wonderful thought to extend to all the people the privilege of helping to build the tabernacle. How many different

workers were needed! how varied the materials! Read carefully chapters xxv. 1-7 and xxxv. 20-35. The wisest and the weakest might help, men and women; the qualification was that they should be willing-hearted and wise-hearted. They did what each *could* do, not what some one else could do; they offered what they possessed, and it would seem, at the cost of some self-denial, for the gold, precious stones, spices and perfumes must have been costly. But what joy filled their hearts! They were to build a sanctuary for the Lord to dwell in!

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians iii. 10-16 shows us plainly how God's people may build to-day. He had laid the foundation—Jesus Christ—but they were to take heed how they builded thereupon. Is it our joy to have a share in this building? No matter how young, or weak, or insignificant, there is work for such, and there is work too for the wisest and the most gifted. The work is the privilege of all who have been redeemed, and who are willing-hearted and wise-hearted.

Some one may say, "I would like to help but I do not know what to do; the Israelites had Bezaleel and Aholiab to teach them, but who will teach me?" We are not worse off than the Israelites but far better off; the Lord Himself is our Teacher and the Holy Spirit whom He has sent to

be our Guide. Those who turn to Him very simply, saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" will be shown by Him the little task He has appointed them.

It is helpful to ask, what is it that I *can* do? Christians are sometimes hindered because they would like to do some great thing for which they are not fitted; most of us are only very small, fit only for small things. The Gospels furnish us with many illustrations of the great variety of the work and workers. One found his own brother, one brought costly spikenard, some ministered of their substance, a boy gave five barley loaves and two small fishes, some servants filled water pots, and some were sent forth to preach, but all were ready to do the Master's bidding, and He knew all about the building He had in view, though as yet it was not clearly seen by them.

Exodus xl. 33 shows us the building completed, all of it done as the Lord commanded Moses. All the details were important because they were the patterns of things in the heavens. Moses could not enter because of the glory which filled the tabernacle, but, as forming part of God's house to-day, we have One who has gone in for us, representing us in God's presence. We have that which Israel never had.

FOLLOWERS OF PAUL.

WE might enquire what had brought about so deep and so permanent a change as stands recorded by the Apostle Paul in the third chapter of Philippians. So thorough and so wholly of God was it that in verse 17 he can exhort, "Brethren, be followers together of me." It was the heavenly vision which arrested him on the Damascus road. It was Christ seen in glory which led him to count "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," adding with such affection, "My Lord." His soul now trusts nothing, and his eyes see value in nothing but Christ. To be "found in Him" (v. 9); to "know Him" (v. 10) and to be "conformed to Him" (v. 11) is now the apostle's standing, object and hope.

To follow Paul *the apostle* or Paul *the martyr* may not be possible, but to step out in the footsteps of Paul, *the Christian*, is not only possible but highly desirable.

Blessed are we indeed to have the

APOSTLE'S STANDING.

To be found in Christ is the Christian's true position. If any man is in Christ, "he is a new creature: old things have passed away, all things have become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). Can the mind conceive or the heart desire any more excellent standing than to be "found in Him"? The logical outcome

of finding a more excellent righteousness than his own was to cast his own away and appropriate that which was of God by faith.

Then following Paul here, we find an absorbing object for our hearts. For the

APOSTLE'S OBJECT

we clearly get in the expression, "that I may know Him." His soul longed to know Christ. We seem to catch the fervour of it as the words sink into our souls, "that I may know Him." The watchword of the old world philosophers was "know thyself," but for the beloved apostle it was, "know Him." Oh for grace to follow—it may be far behind—but to follow in the aspirations and yearnings of Paul; to have that insatiable thirsting after the knowledge of Christ. Unworthy objects would be displaced and He would hold the supreme place in our thoughts and affections. We can be sure there is nothing more desirable, nothing more precious than to grow daily in the knowledge of Christ.

Growing thus we should always have shining brightly before us the

APOSTLE'S HOPE.

The heavenly vision left its mark indelibly upon him. The One he most hated formerly was the One he now most desired, and the One for whom he waited. His hope was conformity to Christ's body of

glory. As a welcoming beacon this ever shone before him. To be with Christ and like Him! Oh, the moral beauty and power of it! May the Lord Himself supply that grace that will keep us hard following after His devoted servant.

S. O. THURSTON.

THINK ON THESE THINGS.

GRACE takes account of all it sees in us that is contrary to God, not to bring it against us, but to separate us from it and work in us conformity to His will and nature—thus a Father's chastening discipline.

If we had a better idea of the evil of sin and how deeply rooted it is in our nature we should be less surprised at the frequency and severity and sometimes the singularity of our trials.

Don't wonder at the occasional castings down. The Bible would not be so full of "Comfort ye" and "Fear not," if God's dearest did not need it.

The language of faith may become the language of experience. In the place of testing the ground of our confidence is put to the proof as well as faith. When an unchangeable God is found to be the bottom where faith's anchor holds, the anchor can never drag.

The moment we step out of our nothingness we step into it. A paradox!

When we are the lowest His help is the nearest.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Galatians vi.).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

A CONTRAST seems to be implied between verse 21 of chapter v. and the first verse of chapter vi. The former contemplates those who are characterized by doing certain evil things. The latter speaks of a man being overtaken in an offence. Those who are characterized by evil will never enter the kingdom of God, whereas the man overtaken in evil is to be restored. It is taken for granted that he is a true believer.

The appeal to restore such an one is addressed to "ye which are spiritual." There were not many such amongst the Galatians, as the last verse of chapter v. infers. To approach a fallen brother in the spirit of vain glory would necessarily be provocative of all that was worst in him. To approach him in the spirit of meekness would help him. Let us take note that the spirit of meekness is a necessary accompaniment of spirituality, for there is a spurious spirituality, all too often to be met with, which is allied with a self-conscious assertiveness which is the very opposite of meekness. A truly spiritual man is one who is dominated and controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God and hence is characterized by "the

meekness and gentleness of Christ " (2 Cor. x. 1). But even such an one as that is not beyond falling in the presence of temptation. Hence while restoring another he has to take good heed to himself.

Verse 2 is an exhortation of a more general character. It applies to all of us. We are to fulfil the law of Christ—which in one word is LOVE—and bear one another's burdens. Very frequently the brother who falls has been bearing burdens to which we are strangers, and had we been walking in obedience to the new commandment of John xiii. 34, we should have been helping to lighten them.

And why do we not thus fulfil the law of Christ? What is it that so frequently hinders us? Why, we think ourselves to be something or somebody, and when we do we feel ourselves too great and important to lift other people's burdens. And all the time we are deceiving ourselves. We are nothing, as verse 3 so pointedly tells us. A man is never nearer to zero than when he fancies himself to be somebody,—even a "spiritual" somebody!

The fact is we need sobriety of thought. We need preparedness to face facts; testing our own work. If we do so we shall be brought down from the high thoughts we had entertained, And if indeed we do find

that which stands the test we may rejoice in what is really our own, and not in that which we are in other people's estimation. For we must each bear the burden of our own individual responsibility before God. There is no contradiction between verses 2 and 5 save an apparent one as to the words employed. In verse 2 "burden" refers to that which presses upon us each in the way of trial and testing. In verse 5 "burden" refers to the responsibility Godward which lies upon us each and which none can bear for another.

With verse 6 the apostle passes to a specific responsibility which lies upon all who receive instruction in the things of God. They are to be prepared to give help to those who teach them, and that in all good things.

Naturally we are selfish creatures. The great majority of us are glad enough to receive, but very parsimonious when it is a question of giving. Verses 7 and 8, with their solemn warning, are written in view of this. We are plainly told that our own spiritual prosperity hinges upon this matter, and since we are very apt to invent in our own minds ample reasons for not giving, but rather hugging to our own bosoms as much as possible, the apostle prefaces his warning with, "Be not deceived." It is so easy to deceive oneself,

The principle that he lays down is doubtless true in any and every connection. Still here it stands in connection with this matter of *giving*, and we are brought face to face with the fact that our reaping must inevitably be according to our sowing. This is true of course as to *quantity* and that fact is stated in 2 Corinthians ix. 6. The point here is rather that of *quality*, or perhaps we had better say of *kind* or *nature*; that just what we sow *that* we reap.

To sow to the flesh is to cater for it and its desires. To sow to the Spirit is to yield to Him His place, and lay oneself out for His things. If the former, we reap corruption. If the latter, eternal life. The corruption comes from the flesh. Eternal life, from the Spirit. In both cases it is just the proper outcome of what is sown; as normal as it is to obtain a field of thistles from the sowing of thistledown, or wheat from the sowing of wheat.

In the light of this fact how differently our lives would appear. How many things which may seem strange and arbitrary to us should we discover to be perfectly natural, just what we might have expected having regard to our previous course of action. We wonder why such and such an experience was ours, whereas the wonder would have been had it not been ours. Happy for us it is when our sowing has been such that

an abundant crop of "everlasting life" begins to appear.

No one can sow to the Spirit save he who has the Spirit; that is, is a true believer. Having the Spirit, and indeed having eternal life in the sense of John v. 24, we reap eternal life as the proper consequence of cultivating the things of the Spirit of God. This verse plainly sets "eternal life" before us not as the life *by* which we live, but as *the life we live*. As we cultivate the things of the Spirit we lay hold of and enjoy all those blessings, those relationships, that communion with the Father and the Son, in which life consists from the practical and experimental side of things.

Here, then, we are supplied with the reason why we so often have to bemoan our spiritual weakness, or the lack of vitality and joy and power in the things of God. We make but little advance, and we enquire why it is. How many scores of times have we heard this question asked and often in a kind of plaintive way that infers that God deals out His favours capriciously, or that the whole question is wrapped in mystery! There is really no mystery about it.

The matter is simply settled by asking oneself the question, "What am I cultivating?" I shall never get figs from thistles nor reap eternal life save by sowing to the Spirit. The trouble with most of us in these

days is dissipation of energy. Not exactly the cultivating of harmful things, but rather of useless and needless things. We are not like the Apostle himself who could say, "One thing I do." as he concentrated steadily on the one great thing that mattered.

Does some young believer ask us to be severely practical, and to come very close home to the point? Then we say, "Cut out of your life those 'harmless' amusements, those unprofitable frivolities, those little time-wasting engagements that accomplish nothing and lead you nowhere. Fill your heart and mind and time with the Word of God and prayer, give yourself whole-heartedly to the glad service of the Lord Jesus, and ere long your profiting will appear unto all."

You notice of course that we are back again at the point we reached in verse 16 of chapter v., only here we are carried a step further. There the point was mainly negative—*not* fulfilling the desires of the flesh. Here it is positive—*reaping* everlasting life.

The reaping does not come directly the seed is sown. Hence the need for patience as stated in verse 9. But reap we shall—*in due season*; and God, not we, is Judge as to when the fit season arrives. Still *arrive* it certainly shall. Genesis viii. 22, stands true even in this connection—"seed time and *harvest* . . . shall not cease."

Now, as we previously noticed, all this important truth is brought in to stir up the Galatians and ourselves to generosity in our giving, and to this point the Apostle recurs in verse 10. We are to be givers and doers of good unto all men; whilst the household of faith have upon us the first call. By creation we are connected with all men. By redemption and its results we are found in the household of faith. The former natural, the latter spiritual, and the spiritual has precedence over the natural.

The apostle Paul set great importance upon this letter of his to the Galatians, hence verse 11. Some render it "how long a letter" in keeping with our authorized version; others "in what large letters." If the former be correct it indicates that instead of employing one of his helpers to write the letter he had written it all with his own hand. If the latter, it signifies that he now took up the pen to add the last few lines with his own hand and wrote in extra large letters. In either case it was to give added emphasis to his words as he commences his closing summary.

In verse 12 he has a final word as to those who had been pressing circumcision on the Galatians. He unmasks once more their real object; namely, to make a fair shew in the flesh and to escape the persecution entailed by the cross of Christ. This was not a random accusation brought against

them, for in verse 13 he proves it by the simple fact that while pressing circumcision on the Gentile Galatians as the sign of subjection to the law, they did not keep the law themselves! In that way they really unmasked themselves. They just wanted to be able to boast in some fleshly sign and so conform to the spirit of the world.

In contrast thereto Paul states his own position in the matter. He gloried not in the flesh but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ which had put the sentence of God's judgment both on the flesh and on the world. The apostle speaks of the cross in its application to himself as regards the world. Crucifixion was not merely death, but *a death of shame*. It was as though he said, "In the death of Christ the world-system has been gibbeted in my eyes, and I have been gibbeted in the world's eyes. I discard the world as a thing of shame, and it discards me as a thing of shame." And the remarkable thing is that in all *that* Paul gloried. He was not in the least depressed or lugubrious about it.

How was this? Well, he knew the value of the cross and he now had before his eyes the new creation of which the cross is the basis. In virtue of the cross he could be found "in Christ Jesus" and there new creation is, and circumcision and uncircumcision are alike of no account.

Paul walked according to *this* rule; that is, the rule of the cross and new creation. Such is the walk proper to every Christian. The cross is that which has put away all that is evil and offensive, whether sin or Satan, the flesh or the world. New creation introduces all that is of God and in Christ Jesus. To the new creation we, Christians, belong, so according to that rule we are to walk. Peace and mercy are on all **such and on the true Israel**—at present of course found incorporated in the church of God. The apostle so puts it here, we believe, to pour contempt on the Judaizing teachers who were advocating a spurious thing.

In this sixteenth verse we read of the believer's "walk" for the last time in this epistle. We have read of walking "according to the truth of the gospel" and of walking "in the Spirit." Now we learn we are to walk according to the rule of the new creation. A lofty standard this! But not too lofty seeing we already are brought into new creation in Christ Jesus, in spite of our still being in the body and the flesh still in us. Again we see how all that is true of us is to exert its influence on our lives to-day.

The epistle closes somewhat peremptorily, even as it opened. There is a feeling of restraint about the two closing verses. Paul had his critics, as he knew right well. They

surrounded him in crowds, making all kinds of hostile insinuations, even challenging his apostleship. He brushes them and their objections aside. The Romans had a custom of branding their slaves and thus placing the question of their ownership beyond dispute. He was just like that. He was Christ's servant beyond all dispute. The floggings and stonings endured in His service had left His brand-marks on Paul's body. That was more than could be said of the sleek advocates of circumcision as they sat in their easy chairs. They had suffered nothing. They only knew how to instigate others to inflict suffering on such as Paul.

As for the Galatians, they were not the instigators of the wrong but only the victims of it, and Paul sought their deliverance in the grace of the Lord Jesus. If His grace was with their spirit all would be well.

For us too, the conclusion of the whole matter is this:—"It is a good thing that the heart be established with GRACE" (Heb. xiii. 9).

F. B. HOLE.

2 Timothy ii. 10. Prayer is one of the ways of enduring hardness. We need self-denial and resolute effort to get even time for prayer, and we must endure conflict with Satan and self ere we are able to continue in prayer. Away from company, from books, from study, from work, and let us give ourselves far oftener to prayer than we have done.

SHORT STUDIES IN LEVITICUS.

LEVITICUS is not read as it should be. Even Christians say it is not interesting, or that apparently it has very little to do with us. But it has a great deal to do with us, and if we find it uninteresting the fault lies in our lack of spiritual understanding. If we could imagine its being dropped out of the Bible, it would leave a gap which no other book could fill, and if we leave it out of our reading and study there will be a corresponding gap in our apprehension of Divine things. It carries on the history commenced in Exodus, and shows us the means whereby a holy God can dwell in the midst of a sinful people; it outlines the character and conduct suitable to a people among whom God dwells, and describes for our warning the failure of three members of the congregation, on whom the solemn judgment of God fell.

In the close of Exodus we read that, "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was *not able to enter* into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." But in Leviticus ix. 23, in most

striking contrast it is said that, "Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto *all the people*." What had made this great difference? The offerings had been appointed, the priests consecrated, the priestly service instituted. These are very wonderfully brought together in Hebrews x. The offerings make way for Him who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (v. 9), the earthly priesthood gives place to Him who is the "High Priest over the house of God" (v. 21), and the result is, "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the Holiest" (v. 19).

The burnt offering typifies the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus in its infinite acceptance to God. The word used for burning is to burn as incense, and is a different word to the burning of the sin-offering. The meat offering presents the Lord in His holy life of obedience and suffering, on earth. The peace-offering speaks of communion; God and the worshipper having part in the offering. In the sin and trespass offering we see, in the words of Isaiah liii. 10, His soul made "an offering for sin."

The difference in the offerings, a bullock, a sheep, turtle-doves, signifies the difference of apprehension in those who draw near. In the sin and trespass offerings it will be seen that the greater and more influential the

sinner, the greater his culpability; while he whose apprehension was so small that it is pictured as a handful of fine flour was *forgiven*, equally with him who brought a bullock.

It has been beautifully said that all the sweet savour of the burnt offering was put upon the offerer, but in the sin-offering all the guilt of the offerer has been laid on the offering. We should carefully observe the way the offerings are spoken of—a sweet savour unto the Lord—a thing most holy—especially is this said of the meat offering. It should warn us against the irreverent and flippant speech of our day; one hears of “the Man of Nazareth,” and other such sayings, which are contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture.

We must pass briefly over the consecration of the priests, though the details are full of instruction. They proclaim in no uncertain tone that it is not sufficient to be priests in name, but that there must be moral suitability also. There is one point on which we must however dwell a little. The high priest was to bear the names of the tribes on his shoulders and on his heart. In the two onyx stones on his shoulders—the place of strength—the names were engraved according to their birth. It was no question of what they were in themselves nor of different degrees of merit, but all, quite equally, had their share in the strength that

would bear them along, all the way, and for evermore. The twelve stones in the breastplate were all different, of varied values, and of varied colours, but all alike were borne on the heart of the high priest, set in the breastplate, which was firmly attached to the ephod by a lace of blue, and in the light of the Urim and Thummim (viii. 8).

The import of all this is very precious. The Lord as our great High Priest, loves all His people. In all their varying temperaments and capacities each has his own place in that heart of love, each is set in the light that lays bare all that *we are*, and each is in the perfection of all that *He is*. The day was yet future when He would grave those names on the palms of His hands. Poor, doubting Thomas, looking on those pierced Hands, could only cry from the depths of his heart, "My Lord and my God" (John xx. 28).

From chapter xi. to the end of chapter xx. are the injunctions for the behaviour of the congregation. We shall note that the things that were forbidden were things that no right-minded person should wish to do. It is a pitiful commentary on human nature, at its best, that a man should need the prohibition, not to oppress a stranger, not to curse the deaf, not to put a stumbling-block in the way of the blind. Moreover nothing was arbitrarily forbidden. The foods that

were pronounced ceremonially unclean, were, in their conditions, unsuitable for them; we are not quite sure now what creatures some of those enumerated were, but we are quite sure that our God never denies His people anything that is for their good.

Again, all the directions for the various washings, in the purifying of the unclean, were ceremonial and typical no doubt, but in them the foundation of sanitary science was laid.

Then the sanctity of family life was enjoined, and the integrity of commercial life, and—what should be emphasized at the present time—the people were repeatedly forbidden to have any dealings with witchcraft, sorcery, or necromancy. The man or woman who had a familiar spirit—a medium, as we say—was to be stoned.

Some people suggest that these things do not exist, but are fruits of a too vivid imagination, and probably in all the spiritist cults there is a certain amount of charlatanry, but this only blinds the eyes of the unwary to the great and horrible thing that lies behind such cults, nothing less than Satan and the power of darkness. Those who preach the Gospel in heathen lands, where sorcery and witchcraft abound, know well with whom they are in conflict, and by whose power things are done in secret which could never be told. What an appalling thing it is that in Christian lands men and

women should revert to that which was forbidden of God to His people so long ago, and which is the ruin, spirit, soul and body, of those who tamper with it. There is only one safe rule, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James iv. 7), and a word of comfort for those who may well fear his power is, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4).

Let us turn now to chapter x. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire unto the Lord; that same Nadab and Abihu who had been vouchsafed the wondrous vision of God as we read in Exodus xxiv. 10, but now "there went out fire from the Lord . . . and they died before the Lord." Moses explains it for us in his words to Aaron. "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified." Neither their exalted position as priests, nor their high privilege on the mount had availed to keep them in the hour of temptation.

From the command immediately following "Do not drink wine nor strong drink . . . when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation" (v. 9), it has been thought that this was the cause of their fall. It may indeed be so, and we who have been brought so near to God in grace do well to take it to heart, and ever to remember that "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). We would not have it otherwise, that

He is thus, should bow our hearts in worship and praise.

Only one other incident is mentioned in Leviticus and that also—such is man—is of failure. The son of a woman in Israel, whose father was an Egyptian, strove with another Israelite and—we may suppose he was losing in the fight—he blasphemed “THE NAME.” In this case the punishment is not direct from the hand of God but from his brethren. There is no haste, they wait that the mind of the Lord may be shown. “And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp and let *all that heard him* lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him” (xxiv. 13, 14).

So many warnings for our admonition seem to meet in this sad story. We are reminded what it is to be “under the law,” we are shown the danger of mixed marriages, of strife, of secret departure, for no man whose heart is right with God will blaspheme His name. We see the need of patience and of wisdom from on high in dealing with sin, and also how all the congregation is involved so that none may say, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

May we have a deeper sense of His grace, and a better understanding of what is pleasing to Him.

L. R.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

THE expression, "The Kingdom of Heaven," only occurs in the Gospel of Matthew. This is not surprising seeing that Matthew is the evangelist, who presents the Lord Jesus as King.

The question may be asked, What is meant by the expression, the kingdom of heaven? We answer, The kingdom of heaven is not heaven. We must be clear as to that. It might be defined as *the rule of heaven upon earth.*

As presented in the Scriptures it takes two forms, viz., the kingdom of heaven in mystery, and the kingdom of heaven in manifestation. While the King is rejected His kingdom cannot be a public affair. When it is public there will be the kingdom of heaven in manifestation, that is to say, the millennial reign of Christ. Meanwhile the kingdom is in mystery; that is, the kingdom, in the absence of the rightful Heir, is committed to the hands of men in responsibility, and is in a world that has rejected the rightful Heir, and whose every principle is contrary to God.

The whole Sermon on the Mount—Matthew v.-vii.—is based on the supposition of the rejection of the rightful Heir. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake," we read. This could

not be the portion of the faithful when the kingdom is set up in power. But it is their privilege to share the rejection of the Lord, whilst He is rejected.

When did this kingdom begin? It is evident that it could not exist in Old Testament times for the simple reason the King had not then come. It is true that God affected lives in Old Testament times, but the work did not then take the form of a spiritual kingdom.

This is proved by Matthew xi. 11. The Lord says that there had not risen one born of women greater than John the Baptist. Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than He. John was the Forerunner of the King, and he was the first to announce it as imminent, though, of course, the Old Testament prophets had foretold it. That the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John, and that he was the greatest born among women, proves that, whilst he was privileged to announce the kingdom, he was not privileged to be in it. It awaited the formal presentation of the King, the One that John announced.

It is evident that the start of the kingdom must be by divine work. Hence the parables of Matthew xiii. are of immense value. The kingdom is the result of the work of the Sower, and we are plainly told who the Sower is, even the Son of Man. The good seed that springs up are the children of the

kingdom, in other words, true believers on the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, as we have already said, the kingdom of heaven is the rule of heaven on earth committed to man in responsibility. It is true that sometimes Scripture clearly speaks of the kingdom as looked at only from the side of reality, as in Matthew xviii. 3, where we are told that conversion is absolutely necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

But when it is considered as being connected with man in responsibility, we get in Matthew xiii. the significant phrase, "While men slept." It was then that the enemy got the advantage, which he was not slow to avail himself of. He sowed tares among the wheat, in other words, mere professors introduced among that, which professed to be under the rule of a rejected King.

It is good that we have these parables from the lips of the Lord Himself. They were prophetic, and really give a prophetic outline, until the King shall come, of the history of that which professes the name of the Lord on the earth. If it were not for these parables, believers might get puzzled as they see such corruption in that which professes the name of the Lord upon the earth.

But as we see the parables being fulfilled, the trend of things, unspeakably sad as far

as man is concerned, does not stumble us. It is what we have been led to expect by the Lord Himself. Prophecy is history anticipated, and when the history unrolls itself according to the divine anticipation, we are only more and more confirmed in the truth.

The result of mere professors being connected with the kingdom leads us quite simply to the next parable. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed, which sown in the field of the world, grew into a great tree, and the birds of the air lodged in its branches. Here we get *religious pretension*. Unconverted professors could have no sense of the rejection of the King, and would naturally desire to popularize religion in the world, and make it acceptable by the introduction of worldly methods, methods which would gratify the eye and please the senses. The offence of the cross must cease. So we get magnificent buildings, magnificent singing, philosophical sermons with the cross left out, a whole paraphernalia of religion with the real thing smothered under forms and ceremonies. Is this not seen full blown in the Church of Rome, and in a lesser degree in all the great bodies of Christendom? It is the attempt to get the kingdom into manifestation without Christ. Its end is utter apostasy and the unveiling of the Man of Sin.

Then we get the parable of the woman hiding the leaven in the three measures of

meal, a fit picture of the leavening of the great truths of the Scriptures, of Christianity, *with evil doctrines*. It was a master stroke of Satan to introduce mere profession where all should be reality.

The situation to-day is graphically outlined in these parables. To-day we find leaders of religious thought openly refusing to believe the Bible except where it suits them. For instance, they are ready to believe in heaven but not in hell. The same book tells us of both. How can it be trustworthy as to heaven and false as to hell? What right has any person professing to believe on Christ to refuse to believe His word, for HE testified of hell over and over again in the plainest warnings possible.

The kingdom of heaven began when our Lord was here on earth, and it will go on after the church is caught up at the second coming of Christ. But we must remember that, whilst the Christians of this present dispensation are true members of the kingdom of heaven, they are also members of the body of Christ, and have a higher calling than that of the kingdom of heaven.

After the church is caught up at the rapture there will go forth a testimony to the Jew and the unevangelized heathen. The main lines of prophecy, and certainly all the prophecies of the Old Testament, have to do with the earth, the earthly calling as seen in the promises of God made to Abra-

ham and David. Now the church has a heavenly calling, and when God begins to visit the earth in judgment, having in view chiefly the restoration of His earthly people, the subjects of the heavenly calling—the believers of this present church dispensation—will be with the Lord in glory waiting for the day of manifestation.

The gospel of the kingdom was that which the Lord and His disciples preached whilst He was on earth, but during this present dispensation the gospel takes the character of the gospel of the grace of God, connecting souls with Christ in glory and a heavenly calling, bringing them into the church of God, making them members of the body of Christ. But when the saints are caught up, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom will begin afresh, and the result will be seen as delineated in Matthew xxv. 31-46, where those, who receive the testimony that the King is coming, will be found among the sheep on the right hand side of the King, and go into life everlasting, whilst the rejecters of the testimony will be classed as the goats, and pass into everlasting punishment.

Then will be set up the kingdom of heaven in manifestation. Then will the King reign in righteousness. Then will "the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah xi. 9).

As to our entrance into heaven that will be accorded equally to every believer. The

Apostle Paul will not get a more abundant entrance than the youngest convert or the feeblest saint, for our entrance there depends on the blessed finished work of the Lord Jesus, and there are no degrees of acceptance in that connection.

But our place in the kingdom of heaven will depend on our faithfulness. It does not depend upon gift, but upon devotedness. The highest place in the kingdom is open to any and every saint.

So we find the parable of our Lord in Matthew xxv. 14-30 gives reward in exactly the same language to the one, whose two talents put out to usury had made two talents, as to the one whose five talents had made five talents. There was a difference in their gifts, but the devotedness that each showed in doubling what was committed to their care was the same, and their reward was the same.

But in the parable of Luke xix. 11-27, where we find the ten servants each given a pound, all starting alike, and where one with his pound makes ten pounds, and another with his pound five pounds, the rewards are different. Clearly the one, who gained ten pounds was more diligent than the one who gained five. The one is made ruler over ten cities, the other over five.

Is there not a voice to us in this? Will not this cause exercise, and lead us to prayer and true activity in the Lord's things? We

may not be equally gifted, but we can be equally devoted.

The Lord give us to be really exercised about this for His glory, and for our true usefulness to the absent King in the midst of the abounding need on every hand, and for His joy in giving and ours in receiving His reward in the coming day of manifestation!

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE BEST PROTEST AGAINST ERROR.

The sheep-dogs, by their earnest barking, arouse the watchers to chase away the wolf; but it would be woe to the flock if it were left to the sole care of the dogs. Feeding is as needful as guarding. While the shepherd is hourly providing, he does in the best manner continually protect. An outcry against the false doctrine which is devouring the souls of men is needful, but it must not take any one of us off from the steady proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord. Indignant denunciation of the lie will be a poor substitute for loving testimony to the truth. The temptation to spend his soul in perpetual protest may readily overcome a brave and truthful spirit; but it is a temptation, come to whomsoever it may. Luther and the other Reformers

would have done little had they only thundered at Rome, and failed to preach the positive theology of the doctrines of grace.

In our holy warfare, to attack is often the best defence. Work for the Lord keeps off many a temptation. It is wise to carry the war into the enemy's country. Continual activity has a purifying power. Rivers cleanse themselves as they flow. When a church is intensely occupied with soul-winning it seldom cares for setting up worldly amusements; when it is seeing conversions daily, it has little patience with unbelieving novelties. The blighting influence of the far-spread influenza of "modern thought" is driven away by those powerful gales of grace which speed the ship of Holy Endeavour. As travellers who can keep moving do not yield to the death-sleep of the arctic regions, so Christians who continue in zealous activities almost always escape the fatal influences of this prevalent doubt. The plague usually begins among literary people who are personally unacquainted with evangelical efforts, and it finds its chief friends among young men who would be thought superior, and young women who affect strong-mindedness. It is not often that those who are good for anything as workers fall in love with soul-destroying inventions.

From C. H. SPURGEON.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Colossians i.* 1-16).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

THE believers at Colosse were far in advance of the Galatians as to their spiritual state. As we go through the epistle we shall see that there were certain important matters as to which the Apostle Paul had to sound a warning note, yet in the main they had been marked by progress, and he could speak of their "order" and of the "stedfastness" of their faith in Christ (ii. 5). They were therefore in happy contrast with both the Corinthians and the Galatians, for the former were characterized by disorder and the latter by backsliding as to the faith of Christ.

Because of this, doubtless, they are addressed as faithful brethren as well as saints. All believers may rightly be called holy brethren for all are "saints," or "holy ones," that is, "ones set apart for God." Can we all be addressed as faithful brethren? Are we all going forward in faith and faithfulness? Let us take these questions to heart for the unfaithful believer is not likely to appreciate much, or understand, the truth unfolded in this epistle.

As so often in his epistles, the Apostle opens by assuring the Colossians of his prayers for them. If any word of admo-

dition or correction is necessary, it comes with much greater power and acceptability from lips that have been habitually employed in prayer for us, than from any other. His prayers had however been mingled with thanksgivings, and both had been provoked by that which he had heard concerning them, for, as verse 1 of chapter ii. shows us, he had not yet seen and known them face to face. Tidings had reached him of their *faith* in Christ and of their *love* to all the saints.

These two things, simple and elementary as they may appear, are of extreme importance. They indicate with definiteness and certainty the possession of the divine nature—see, 1 John iii. 14; v. 1. An unconverted person may be quite attached to an individual believer here or there, who happens to strike his fancy, but he does not love “all the saints.” That is quite beyond any, save the one who is born of God.

The Apostle does not inform them as to the burden of his prayers for them until verse 9 is reached. He first tells them of that for which he gave thanks. “We give thanks . . . for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.” That hope is alluded to in the course of the epistle (see, i. 27; iii. 4), but it is not unfolded in any full way because they well knew it. Tidings of it had reached them when the word of the Gospel first came to their ears. We learn

from this that those who preach the Gospel should take care to emphasize not only its present effect in delivering from the power of sin, but also its ultimate effect—introducing the believer into glory. It would of course be equally a mistake to preach its ultimate effect without insisting on its present effect.

The Gospel in those days had overleaped the narrow boundaries of Palestine and was going forth into all the world. It had reached to the Colossians, Gentiles though they were, and consequently they knew the grace of God in truth. Does grace make us careless or indifferent? It does not; it works in an exactly opposite direction; it brings forth fruit. "The Glad Tidings . . . are bearing fruit and growing, even as also among you," is another rendering of this passage. Both growth and fruit-bearing are proofs of vitality. There is no stagnation and decay where the Gospel is really received.

It would appear from verse 7 that Epaphras had been the servant of Christ who brought the light to them. They had learned the Glad Tidings of the grace of God and of the hope of glory from his lips. Then verse 8 indicates that he had travelled to Rome and made known to Paul what God had wrought among the Colossians, and the depth and sincerity of their Christian love. We can see how highly Paul esteemed him. He speaks of him as

a faithful servant of Christ, and at the end of the epistle we learn how truly devoted he was to the spiritual welfare of the Colossians.

The report brought by Epaphras had not only moved Paul to thanksgiving, as we have seen, but also impelled him to constant prayer on their behalf. In verse 9 he begins to tell them of that which he prayed for on their behalf. His prayer may be summarized under four heads:—

1. He desired that they might have full knowledge of the will of God, so that
2. they might walk in a way worthy of the Lord and well pleasing to Him; that so they might be
3. strengthened to endure suffering with joyfulness, and
4. be filled with the spirit of thanksgiving and praise.

But let us look a little more particularly at these things.

The will of God is to govern everything for us; hence the knowledge of His will necessarily comes in the first place. The word used for knowledge here is a very strong one really meaning *full knowledge*, and with that full knowledge they were to be filled. The apostle would not be satisfied with anything short of this. The will of God was to possess all their thoughts and fill up their horizon. This is an immensely

high standard truly, but then the divine standard and objective never is anything but immensely high.

Further our knowledge is to be in spiritual understanding; that is, understanding acquired by the Spirit of God and not by a merely intellectual process. It is possible to acquire Biblical information in much the same way as one obtains historical or geographical information, and in such a case one may be able to analyse and expound the Scriptures and yet be quite a stranger to their experimental bearing and their power. Also our knowledge is to be in all wisdom. The wise man is he who is able with good judgment to apply his knowledge to the circumstances that he has to face. So what the Apostle desired for the Colossians, and for 'us, is that we might gain full knowledge of God's will by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, for in that way we shall ourselves be governed by what we know and also be able to apply our knowledge to practical details in the midst of the tangled circumstances that surround us.

Now this it is that will enable us to walk worthily of the Lord, so as to please Him well. Few things are more sad than to see a believer distracted by circumstances, filled with uncertainty, vacillating this way and that. How inspiring, on the other hand, when a believer is like a ship, which though

buffeted by fierce winds, blowing at times from all points of the compass, yet keeps with steadiness on its course, because the skipper has good nautical understanding of the chart, and the wisdom not only to take his observations from the sun but also to apply them to his whereabouts and direction. There is a definiteness and certainty about such an one that glorifies God. That of which we speak was exemplified in surpassing measure by the Apostle Paul himself. We have only to read Philippians iii. to see it.

This walk, worthy of the Lord and pleasing to Him, is the necessary basis of fruitfulness. We may distinguish between the "fruit of the Spirit," spoken of in Galatians v. 22, 23, and "being fruitful," according to our 10th verse. There it is fruit produced in the way of Christian *character*. Here it is fruitfulness in *good works*. The former lays the foundation for the latter, but both are necessary. Good works are the necessary outcome of a character which is really formed after Christ. Good works are works which give expression to the divine life and character in the Christian, and which are according to the Word of God. We are to be marked by *every* good work.

And in all this there is no finality while we are on earth, as the last clause of verse 10 shows. Though we may have the know-

ledge of His will yet we are to go on increasing in the knowledge of God, or, "by the full knowledge of God." We not only grow *in* it but *by* it, for the more we know God experimentally the more our spiritual stature increases, and the more too are we "strengthened with all might," as verse 11 indicates.

The language of that verse is very strong. It is, "all might," "His glorious power," (or, "the power of His glory,") and "all patience." We might well ask with astonishment, "Is it possible that weak and failing creatures like to ourselves should be strengthened to this extraordinary degree?" It is. The power of the glory is able to subdue all things to Himself, as Philippians iii. 21 indicates; hence it can subdue and strengthen us now. But to what end?

The answer to this question is even more astonishing. To the end that we may be able to endure all the trials of the way, not only with longsuffering but with joyfulness also. We should naturally have supposed that extraordinary strengthening would have been in view of the performing of extraordinary exploits in the service of God, of our acting like an Elijah or a Paul. But no, it is in view of suffering, sustained with endurance and joy. A few moments reflection will assure us that there is nothing less natural to us than this.

The world knows and admires that attitude of mind which is expressed by the saying, "Grin and bear it." We commend the man who faces adversity with cheerfulness, though his cheerfulness is only based on a species of fatalism and a refusal to look ahead beyond the day. The believer, who has grown in the knowledge of God and is strengthened, may be plunged into suffering, and instead of being consumed with desire to get out of it he endures with long-suffering, instead of grumbling at the Divine ways he not only acquiesces but is joyful. *Joyful*, be it noted, and not merely cheerful. His joy flows on like still waters that run deep. But then the power for this is according to the might of His glory. That glory exists to-day, and very shortly it is coming into display, so even now it is possible for us to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Read 1 Peter i. 6-9, for it illustrates our subject.

The saint who is joyful passes naturally to thanksgiving and praise. Hence verse 12 flows out of verse 11. We give thanks to God as the Father, for it is in this character we know Him, and that He has wrought on our behalf in the pursuance of His purposes of love. We give thanks for that which He *has done*. The items of the thanksgiving follow a descending scale. We work downwards from His purpose to the meeting of our need, which was necessary in order that His purpose might be reached.

Made "fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light." Not, *to be made*, nor, *in process of being made*, but, MADE. We who have believed are fit for heavenly glory, fit for that portion in the light of God's presence which is to be shared in common by all the saints of this dispensation. We may be very little able to realize what this inheritance means, but how full is the assurance that we have been made fit for it by the Father. The fitness is ours already though the inheritance is future.

In order that we might be made fit deliverance had to reach us. In our unconverted state we lay under the authority of darkness. Darkness here stands for Satan and his works, even as we have just had the word, light, used to describe the presence of God. We have been delivered from Satan's kingdom by being brought into a kingdom of an infinitely higher and better character—the kingdom of "His dear Son," or, "the Son of His love." By coming under the authority of perfect good we are delivered from the power of evil.

Again and again in the New Testament are we reminded that having believed we are brought under the Divine authority. The kingdom of God is spoken of, and in Matthew's gospel we read of the kingdom of heaven, inasmuch as Jesus, God's King, is seated in the heavens, so that He is exerting heavenly rule upon earth. Other ex-

pressions also are used as to the kingdom, but none of them give us so great a sense of nearness and affection as this which we have here. The word, kingdom, in itself might have a slightly harsh sound in our ears, but there is nothing harsh about "the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love." It speaks of authority truly, but it is authority of a perfect love, its every decree tempered by that.

Never let us kick at authority. The fact is we cannot do without it, and were never intended to do so. At the outset when man began to kick against the authority of God he instantly fell under the dark authority of the devil. It was never intended that man should be absolutely uncontrolled. If now we get deliverance from Satan's authority it is by being brought into subjection to God's dear Son. The yoke of Satan is burdensome to a degree. Those under it are like to the demoniac, who had his dwelling among the tombs, and who was always crying and cutting himself with stones. The yoke of the Lord Jesus, as He has told us, is easy and His burden is light. Our removal from the one to the other has been a translation indeed!

This translation has been effected in the strength of the redemption work of the cross. Only by redemption could we be extricated in a righteous way from bondage

under the power of darkness. We have been brought back to God by blood; and by that same bloodshedding have our sins been put away, so that all are forgiven. We should not be able to rejoice in the fact of being brought back to God apart from the forgiveness of all our sins, which once stood between us and Him.

Though the glorious truth of verses 12 to 14 is stated as from God's side on a descending scale, we on our side enter into the knowledge and enjoyment of it on the ascending scale, that is, in the reverse order. We necessarily begin with the forgiveness of our sins. Then entering into the larger thought of redemption we begin to appreciate the great translation effected, and our absolute fitness for glory, as in Christ. The more we do enter into all, the more will our hearts and lips be filled with thanksgiving to the Father, from whom all has sprung.

But if the Father is the Source of all, His dear Son is the Channel through whom all has flowed to us—the One who has put all into execution at such immeasurable cost to Himself. Redemption has reached us through His blood, and when we know WHO IT IS that shed His blood, our thoughts of it are greatly enlarged. Consequently in verses 15 to 17 we are given a sight of His splendour in connection with creation. Here is a passage hard to equal,

whether we consider the sublimity of the thoughts expressed, or the graphic power with which they are expressed in the fewest possible words. Sublimity, graphic power and brevity are combined.

In verse 15 two words call for brief remarks. The word "Image" has the force of "Representative." The invisible God is exactly represented in Him, a thing impossible apart from the fact of Himself being God. Some are inclined to slightly demur to this on account of the second word in the verse, to which we have referred. In the word "Firstborn" they lay too much stress in their minds upon the second half of the word. "But He was *born*," they say. The word "firstborn" however besides its primary meaning has also a figurative sense (as in Psa. lxxxix. 27; Jer. xxi. 9), meaning, the one who takes the supreme place as holding the rights of the firstborn. That is the sense in which it is used in our passage. The Lord Jesus not only stands forth as the Representative of all that God is, He also stands forth absolutely pre-eminent over creation. All creation's glory and its rights are vested in Him, for the simple reason that He is the Creator, as verse 16 states.

That verse not only states it but emphasizes it in a threefold way, of which we must speak more particularly on the next occasion.

ENLARGEMENT.

MANY a time we must have marvelled at the favour shewn to those eleven Galileans to whom the Lord Jesus shewed Himself after His resurrection from the dead, by many infallible proofs. And we may have wished that we could have been with them and listened to His own voice speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Well, we should not have been alive to-day if we had been there, and I am inclined to think that the last days of the church's history on earth are as important as the first, and to have part in the final victory and to greet our Lord at His coming again will be as great a favour as it must have been to have had a part in the first great move against the forces of the foe.

Not only this, but I apprehend that all that has gone before, and which is recorded in the Bible, is an inheritance upon which we have entered, and which we may hold fast and enjoy. We may put ourselves, for instance, alongside those disciples as they assembled with their Lord, and study them. We may see the effect upon them of His

victory over death, and His presence with them, and learn the good and right way as we listen to the final instructions and commandments that He gave them.

They were happy men, of this we can have no doubt, and triumphant men, and eager to tell the glad news of God's signal vindication of His well-beloved Son, and I have thought, and I pass it on, that they were also impatient men. This comes out in their question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel." There was not a doubt in their minds as to His being the King, nor had they any question as to His taking the throne. He had conquered death and surely no other foe could stand in His way. Yet, why did He not do it? Why the delay? Why waste forty days when Jerusalem might lie at His feet and the land ring with His fame?

Ah, they had much to learn, and needed to be greatly enlarged. Yet they were teachable and obedient, and bowed before His wisdom, and were ready to await His way and will. Blessed men they were! We owe much to them. Yet at first they had limited thoughts of His greatness. They thought only of the throne of Israel; the Father had no less a place for Him than His own right hand. Their horizon stretched out from Dan to Beersheba, but the story of His glory was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth. They

looked up stedfastly unto heaven when He was taken up from them, and no wonder! We may stand with them in thought and look up there also, and see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and how the heart thrills at the glorious knowledge that He is thus acknowledged and exalted! And as they gazed upward, they were assured by heavenly messengers that He would come back again.

So He will, and we may look for Him as they did, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Between these great events, His departure and return, we see them; *obedient*, for they tarried in Jerusalem, and were of one mind, loving one another, according to His word; *dependent*, for they continued in prayer. And in these things they shewed their love to Him, and He fulfilled His own word to them—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter" (John xiv. 15, 16). So they were *empowered* to be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.

We know that our Lord has been raised up to *the highest place*, and that His fame must be spread abroad to *the widest circle*, and that *the greatest power* has come from on high to bear witness to the honour that heaven has given Him, and of His worthiness to be trusted by every creature under heaven. We feel that the Holy Spirit must

often be grieved and quenched, that in spite of our knowledge we yet have such narrowness of heart and such limited views of Christ and His greatness. We are so ready to confine Him within geographical or ecclesiastical bounds, when the Holy Spirit would enlarge us and make us overflow in the triumphant knowledge of the greatness of Christ and His all-sufficiency for all saints and for sinners to the uttermost part of the earth. The grace of God that shines in the face of Jesus, shines for all. The Bride that is to share His throne and glory, must be gathered out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.

The work is almost done. For nearly two millenniums the Holy Spirit has continued His labour with an unwearied devotion, and He will finish it, and the Bride of the Lamb shall be presented all glorious and perfect to the heavenly Lamb. And we may have a blessed part in the labours of the Holy Spirit just at the close. Abraham's servant who went forth to bring Rebekah to Isaac, did not go forth alone, we read of "*the men that were with him.*" Deeply interested, we may be sure, they were in his mission, and ever ready to do as he might direct them; they were his companions and helpers, bearing witness to the truth of every word that he uttered in Rebekah's ear. The disciples of Jesus were *the men that were with the Holy Ghost* when He came forth first on His great mission; honoured men,

faithful men they were! And now that the mission is almost completed, *we may be the men that are with Him*, working with Him, in communion with His mind and ways, being the vessels of His testimony.

But if we are to be this, our hearts must be enlarged, our eyes must be turned upward to Christ in glory, and our sympathies must flow out to the uttermost part of the earth. Our prayers must be for all men, and our love must be for all saints. And thus shall there shine out at the end of this gospel day, the same light that shone at the beginning. It will shine through those who are thus enlarged.

J. T. MAWSON.

THE LIFE SURRENDERED.

(From notes of Addresses on Mark x. 46.—xi. 11)

WHEN first we came to the Lord Jesus Christ, we came because we had a need of Him: that is the thing that brought us. We had a need that only He could meet. We have an illustration of this in the well-known instance of Bartimaeus. It says, "they brought him to Jesus." He was not long in making a decision when he heard who was passing by. He cried out in very great distress, and the cry of distress always gets an answer from the Lord. It does

even to-day. Bartimaeus came for what he could receive from the Lord.

Now in the incident concerning the colt it is just the other way about. You notice the expression, "the Lord hath need of him." Did it ever occur to you that our Lord has a need that you can meet? I think I might also add that He has a need that *only* you can meet. What a wonderful privilege is ours, who have come to Him and had had our desperate need met, that we should have an opportunity of meeting a need that He has.

The story of the colt is very simply told. First, it was standing in a very significant place, "where two ways met." It stands, as it were, at a crisis, just as we reach a spot where we must make up our minds—we must come to a decision one way or another. We come to a spot where the road divides.

Secondly, it was a colt, "whereon never man sat." It had never before been controlled. It was unbroken, self-willed, and thus fittingly illustrates the natural wilfulness of man in the flesh. The mind of the flesh "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7).

Thirdly, it was tied. It was in bondage and needed to be liberated before it could be of any use to the Lord.

These three things, which were true of the colt before ever it was requisitioned, supply us with features which we shall without difficulty recognize as applying to ourselves.

If this little colt was the firstling of an ass, it had been at the fork of the road before. In Exodus xiii. 13, you find that the moment it was born the question had to be decided if it was to live or die. It was dependent upon the death of another, a lamb; otherwise it could not live. There was that crisis in its very earliest history. We have to face a similar crisis, for a more significant than flattering statement follows, "all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem." It is not very flattering that we should be put along with asses! Yet redeemed we must be by the blood of the Lamb of God if we are to live and be of service.

It is useless, my dear friends, your attempting to take up Sunday School work, or any other kind of "Christian" work, until you are in the benefit of Christ's redemption work. That is where we begin, and having begun we come to a place where we have to decide whether we are going in God's way or in our own.

The question is, how is this colt to be used, and who is to use it? There is a life that has been spared, and given for

service. Who is going to get that life of service? There are two that are putting in a claim for that life of service. There is the old master and a new One.

Who is the old master? Not exactly Satan this time. There is another bondage that Scripture speaks of: there is the bondage of SIN. So we find people who have been redeemed, who would like to be of service, yet they are in bondage. They have to confess, "When I would do good, evil is present with me"; until out of bitter distress the cry is raised, "Who will deliver me?" We read of that in Romans vii.

Sin, then, is the old master. In the space of about sixty verses (Rom. v. 12—viii. 3) you find the word "sin" occurs about forty times. Look, for instance, at verse 14 of chapter vi., "Sin shall not have dominion over you." It is "sin" you notice, not "sins"; not the wrong things that we do, but the evil principle within us, from which springs every wrong thought and word and deed. So we read, "Ye were the servants of sin."

How can we get free from the dominion of sin? There is only one thing that can set me free, and that is death. "He that is dead is freed from sin," as Romans vi. 7 says. A slave dies and you say, "What a relief!" for his death has secured his deliverance from unbearable conditions. The

biggest slave would not be troubled by sin if he died, for there is an end to that state of things. But in what way can that apply to us who are not actually dead? How can a man die and yet be living here? Can a man's history close without actually dying?

Yes, it can. Let me use this illustration. I met a young lady one day who said to me, "I am going to see the end of Miss —." I said, "I did not know that she was ill." She replied, "She is not ill, she is going to be married, and therefore won't be Miss — any longer." Her history as Miss — was terminated without her actually dying. Just so our history in connection with Adam, and with sin, that overbearing master, can terminate without our actual death.

The death of Christ has terminated our history in connection with our old master, for, "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." This is how God takes account of the situation. Our "old man" signifies all that sticks to us as coming down from Adam, all that we were as connected with him. So closely were we identified with the cross of Christ that His death was our death in God's reckoning. He died to end sin's rule and authority over you, so that you may have a right and title to say, "I have no more to do with that old master.

You may perhaps say, "But I don't experience that!" No, neither did you experience His dying for your sins. But He did both. The Word of God assures you that in His death you died. If your faith enables you to say, "He died for me," it should enable you to say, "I died with Him." Then you are done with servitude to sin.

Not only have we died with Christ but we are risen with Him. So we are to reckon ourselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 11). We now have a life that is beyond death and beyond the dominion of sin, and we have a perfect right to say so. Consequently we are to be loosed from all bonds and let go that we may serve the Lord.

"Yes, that may be all right to faith," some may say, "but when it comes to experience sin does not seem to have done with me, for I find I often do just what I used to do when sin was my master." You feel yourself tied like the colt, or bound with grave clothes like Lazarus was when brought alive out of the tomb. God is allowing you to find out how fearful a thing sin is in His sight. It is a terrible discovery.

What am I to do? As Romans vi. 13 says, "Yield yourselves unto God." In this verse the word "yield" occurs twice, and there is a change in the tense which is

very difficult to render in English. If we are allowed to give a free translation we might put it, "Neither be yielding at any time your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but be yielded definitely to God . . . as instruments of righteousness." If we have yielded ourselves to God as a once accomplished act, we shall find power to preserve us from daily yielding to sin.

Let us go back to the colt, as an illustration of this matter. It was loosed, set free for the Lord to use. Three steps can be traced.

- (1) Admit
- (2) Submit
- (3) Transmit

The owners of the colt admitted the Lord's claims. That clearly was the first step. What have you to admit? Well, you have sung before now,

"I love to own Lord Jesus
Thy claims o'er me divine."

The One that loves you has a claim upon you. I ask you in His presence, Are you prepared to admit His claims paramount over you? Thank God! if your answer is, "Yes."

Then the next thing is, submit. The colt was brought to Jesus that He might use it as He pleased. What did you sing?

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to Thee."

Did you mean it? If so yours is a surren-

dered life. You have been brought to Jesus that you may go in the way that He pleases.

What is the last thing? They put Jesus on the colt. Once it had been an uncontrolled thing. Nobody had ever controlled it before. Now it is controlled by Him, and transmitting Him as He pleases. That was what He wanted the colt for.

Do you know what He wants your life for? He wants you to carry Him victoriously into the kitchen, into the workshop, behind the desk, into the workroom, behind the counter, into the Mission-field—anywhere that He wants you to go. You may have the honour of bearing Christ. He has got somebody working at your elbow. He wants you to take Him there. His name is on you. You may take the virtues of Christ with you.

Years ago I was having breakfast with a friend in Kent. One of his boys was misbehaving at the breakfast table. He said, "Come here, my boy. What is your name?" The boy replied, "Father, you know my name." He said, "What is your name?" He replied, "Paul." "What is your other name?" and he told him his other name. "My boy, that is *my* name. Paul, if you behave at school this morning as you have behaved at this breakfast table the last twenty minutes, you will get my name in the black books at school. Would

you like that? " He said, " No, Father." I was listening to that. Oh, I thought, many times I have to grieve over getting the sacred Name into the world's black books. When you show an unchristian way or habit, they will say, " There's your Christian! " The whole shame of that will come back on the sacred Name that you are carrying.

Take the name of Jesus with you. You could not do anything else. He wants you to carry Him into the sphere in which He has set you to live and walk. May we all have grace to do so.

ART. CUTTING.

PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE.

HE who teaches truth destroys error in the surest manner, the Holy Spirit being with him. To let in light is the simplest and most certain way of driving out darkness. We need not stand up and shout ourselves hoarse in order to expose a falsehood; let us go on quietly witnessing to the truth.

The Scriptural method of protesting against evil is to quit it yourself; and we may rest assured that the Scriptural rule has more wisdom in it than any form of carnal policy. " Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate," is the command

of the Lord; and if we reply, "We will stay among them, and make them better," our wisdom is not of the Lord, and it will before long be seen to be folly. The way which pleases the flesh is not the way which pleases God. Great praise for charity and liberality is, in these days, a sure token of unfaithfulness to truth.

What is the value of the testimony of a man who remains in league with the evil he deplors? One hears an address against a certain laxity of conduct, and it is known to all that the speaker does the same himself—where is the force of the protest? To lament defection from the once-delivered faith, and then to be hand in glove with the aiders and abettors of such defection, is not altogether the manifest opposite of hypocrisy. The utmost charity of judgment is unable to put a high value upon testimonies against error, adduced by those who are in open and avowed union with those who love and spread that error.

To take up arms against insidious falsehood, and to give our mind to war against it, is one of the most effectual ways of keeping it out of one's own soul. The Holy Spirit preserves the heart by the activity which He creates. In any case, sloth and false doctrine have an affinity; while zeal for the truth will burn like coals of juniper, and consume the wood, hay, and stubble with which it comes in contact. Let there

be something attempted, something done, as well as something unmasked and denounced. The honest man's position "outside the camp" is his loudest and clearest protest; and his energetic spreading of the truth is the most powerful weapon of his holy warfare.

From C. H. SPURGEON.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Colossians i. 16—ii. 2).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

IN the very first verse of the Bible creation is attributed to God, and it is a remarkable fact that the word used there for God is a plural word, *Elohim*. It is the more remarkable inasmuch as the Hebrews employed not only the singular and the plural but had also another number, the dual, signifying two, and two only. Their plural words therefore signified *three* or more, and when we turn to the New Testament we find that there are *three* Persons in the Godhead. We also discover that of the three Persons creation is always attributed to the Son.

It is so here; and in verse 16 this great fact is stated in a threefold way, three different prepositions being used, *in*, *by* and

for. In our Authorized version the first preposition as well as the second is *by*. Literally, however, it is *in*. If you turn up this passage in Darby's New Translation you will find footnotes which instruct us that *in* signifies "characteristic power:" that "He was the One whose intrinsic power characterized the creation. It exists as His creature." They instruct us also that *by* signifies that He was "the active Instrument," and that *for* signifies that He is "the End" for which creation exists.

You will notice too the comprehensive way in which the creation is described in this passage. Heaven as well as earth is brought into view. Things invisible are contemplated as well as things visible; and the invisible and spiritual powers are spoken of under four heads. What may be the real distinction between thrones, dominions, principalities and powers we do not know, but we do know that they all owe their very existence to our Lord Jesus. Twice over in this one verse is it stated that He is the Creator of "all things." Consequently He is before all both as to time and place; and all things hang together by Him. The stars pursue their appointed courses, but they only do so because directed by Him.

It is not difficult to see that the Creator, having entered into the midst of His own creation by becoming Man, He necessarily stands in the creation as Head and First-

born. In verse 18 however, we find that He is both Head and Firstborn in another connection. He is the Head of the body, the church, and that church is God's new creation work. He is the Firstborn from among the dead; that is, He holds the supreme rights in the resurrection world. Consequently in all things and in every sphere He has the first place.

What glorious truth is this! How wonderful that we should know Him as Firstborn in this twofold way, both in connection with the first creation and the new creation! Only our relation with Him according to the new creation is far more intimate than ever it could have been according to the old. In all creation He is of course Head, in the sense of being Chief, and it is in that sense that He is spoken of as, "the Head of every man," in 1 Corinthians xi. 3. He is Head to the church in another sense, illustrated by the human body. An organic and vital union exists between the head and the other members of the body, and just so does a vital union exist between Christ and His members in new creation.

Further, He is "the Beginning." He existed in the beginning, as we are elsewhere told, but that is another thing. Here He is the beginning, and that beginning is connected with resurrection as the next words show. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the new beginning for God. All that

God is doing to-day He is doing in connection with Christ in resurrection. All our links with Him are on that footing. Let us very prayerfully consider this point, for except we lay hold of it with spiritual understanding we shall fail to appreciate the true nature of Christianity.

In the risen Christ, then, we find God's new beginning, but let us now notice the important truth that follows in verses 19—22. There had to be a complete settlement of every liability incurred in connection with the old creation. Unscrupulous men may sometimes open a business and having incurred heavy liabilities, close it up without any attempt at meeting them. Then they depart elsewhere and propose to open up a new business! Such a practice is universally condemned. God ever acts in strict righteousness. By His death the Lord Jesus has wrought a settlement as regards man's sin in the old creation. Then in His resurrection God commenced anew.

Verse 19 tells us that all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in the Son when He came forth to do His mighty work, and by the blood of His cross the Godhead aimed at so effectually making peace that the basis might be laid for the reconciliation of all things. And we may safely add that what the Godhead aims at the Godhead always accomplishes.

The effect of sin has been that man has lapsed into a state of enmity with God, and hence the earth is filled with strife, confusion, disharmony. In the death of Christ a clearance has been effected judicially by judgment falling on that which created all the trouble. The disturbing element being removed peace can ensue. Peace being established reconciliation can come to pass.

Now peace *has been made*. No one has "to make their peace with God." Nor could they make peace with God if they had to do it. Christ is the Maker of peace. He made it, not by His life of singular beauty and perfection, but by His death. We of course are to enjoy the peace, and that is what is spoken of in Romans v. 1. "Being justified by faith *we have* peace with God." By faith we have the peace in our hearts, and what a wonderful peace it is! Here however the point is the making of the peace at the cross. The only possible basis for the peace enjoyed *inside* us is the peace made *outside* us when the blood of the cross was shed.

Peace having been made the reconciliation of all things is coming. We must not, however, imagine that this means the salvation of everybody, for a qualifying clause is immediately added. The "all things" is limited to "things in earth or things in heaven." When it is a question of bowing the knee to Jesus, there are included "things

under the earth," but they are not included here. The world of the lost will have to submit. They will be broken but not reconciled.

It is perfectly evident that reconciliation has not yet been reached as to things on earth. Yet believers are already reconciled, as verse 21 states; and in that verse we find a word that helps us to understand what reconciliation really means—a word that describes the state which is the exact opposite of reconciliation—*alienation*.

Manifold evil has engulfed mankind as the result of the incoming of sin. Not only have we incurred guilt but we lie under a terrible bondage. Again not only are we in bondage but we have been utterly estranged from God, in whom all our hope lies. We needed justification in view of our guilt. We needed redemption in view of bondage. And because we were so wholly alienated from God we needed reconciliation. The alienation, be it observed, lay wholly upon our side. The enmity existed in our minds towards God, not in God's mind towards us; and the enmity and alienation expressed itself in wicked works. Hence we may say that, whilst there *is* a sense in which God needed reconciliation, we needed it in a twofold way.

Reconciliation was effected "through death,"—the death of Christ. His death is

the stable basis on which it rests, needed by God and needed by us. We however needed more than this. We needed the mighty work in our hearts by which the enmity should be swept out of them for ever. As a result of it all God looks down upon us, as in Christ, with complacency and delight; whilst we, sensible of His favour, look up to Him with responsive affection.

God only has full delight in that which is perfect. But then the effect of the death of Christ is that we can be presented "holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight." Cleared are we from everything which formerly attached to us as the fallen children of Adam, for "in the body of His flesh through death" the judgment of all that we were has been executed. That same death provides the basis for the coming reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth.

What a glorious prospect this is! There are things in heaven which have been touched and tarnished by sin, and these are to be reconciled, though the angels that sinned have been cast down to hell, and so do not come within its scope. Everything upon earth has been wrecked. Yet a day is coming when everything within these two spheres will be brought into complete harmony with the will of God, and bask for ever in the sunlight of His favour, responding in every particular to His love. Well

may we cry, Lord, haste that day! Well may we ponder deeply upon such themes, for the more we do so the more will dawn upon us the wonder of the death of Christ.

All that we have been considering supposes of course that we are really and truly the Lord's. Hence the qualifying "If" in verse 23. Many there are who, hearing the Gospel profess to believe and yet at some later time they totally abandon their profession. They do not "continue in the faith grounded and settled," they are "moved away from the hope of the Gospel"; and thereby they make manifest that they had not the root of the matter in them. The words, "yet now hath He reconciled," do not apply to such.

Again in this verse does the Apostle emphasize the vast scope of the Gospel, even "every creature which is under heaven," just as in verse 6 it is stated as "all the world." The point here is of course not that it had then been actually preached to every creature, but that the sphere of its operations was no less than every creature. Of that Gospel Paul had been made a minister. A further ministry, that of the church, was his also, as stated in verse 25.

The Apostle introduces the subject of his second ministry by a reference to his sufferings. He was in prison when he wrote and he speaks of his sufferings as, "the afflictions

of Christ." That was their character. They were certainly afflictions *for* Christ, but the point here seems to be that they were in character Christ's afflictions, of the same kind as He endured in His wonderful path on earth, though far less as to degree. Needless to say the Lord Jesus stands absolutely alone in His atoning sufferings in His death. There is no allusion to those here.

The sufferings which rolled in upon Paul's flesh were endured for the sake of the whole church, and that church is the body of Christ. In his imprisonment the Apostle was filling up the cup of his afflictions, and that on behalf of the church in its widest sense—we mean, not only for the church as existing on earth in his day, but for the church through the ages to the finish of its earthly history, including ourselves. He suffered that the truth as to the church might be made abundantly plain and established, and out of his sufferings sprang these immortal epistles which instruct us to-day. In this way his ministry as to the church is made available for us to-day.

A "dispensation," or "administration" was given to him of God that thereby he might "fulfil" or, "complete" His Word. This does not mean that Paul was to write the last words of Scripture, for, as we know, John did that. It means that the revealing of the mystery alluded to in the succeeding verses, was committed to him, and when

that was made known the last item of revelation was filled in, the circle of revealed truth was complete.

In Scripture a "mystery" does not mean something mysterious or incomprehensible, but simply something which up to that time had been secret or hidden, or at all events only known to the initiated. The mystery spoken of here had been completely hidden in earlier ages, and now is only made manifest to God's saints. It concerns Christ and the church, and more particularly the bringing in of the Gentiles in one body. This side of it is more definitely unfolded in the epistle to the Ephesians. In verse 27 of our chapter it is said to be "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Read the verse and you will see that the "you" here means "you Gentiles." Formerly God had dwelt for a brief time in the midst of Israel, and then again the Messiah had appeared for another brief season amongst Jews in the land, but that Christ should now be found in Gentiles was an altogether new and unprecedented thing. It was a pledge of the glory to come, for Christ will be all and *in all* in that day.

It is not easy for us to imagine how revolutionary a doctrine this appeared to be when first announced. It completely set aside the special and exclusive position of the Jew and this was its chief offence in their eyes, arousing their furious opposition. The

maintaining of this it was that had brought imprisonment and such suffering upon Paul.

On the other hand Paul knew its great importance as being the characteristic truth for this dispensation. Every dispensation of God has truth which gives character to it, and this is the truth which characterizes the present dispensation. Only as instructed in it are we likely to be "perfect" or, "complete" in Christ. Hence the Apostle laboured mightily in making this truth known according to the working of the Spirit of God in him.

Not only did Paul labour in teaching this great truth, but he laboured also in prayer, and this the more now that he was restrained from his former activity by prison walls. His prayers were so intense that he describes them as conflict. In this conflict he was led out specially on behalf of those he had never met face to face, such as the Colossians, the Laodiceans and others. He wanted them to come to a full knowledge of this secret and to have their hearts knit together in the process, for in this full knowledge lay the full assurance of understanding.

In Hebrews x. we read of "the full assurance of faith," the faith that simply takes God at His word. That is something with which we are entitled to *begin* our career as believers. Full assurance of understanding marks *maturity* of spiritual intelli-

gence. Entering into the understanding of the mystery, the last segment of the circle of truth falls into its place, the whole becomes intelligible and luminous, the vastness and wonder of the whole Divine scheme begins to dawn upon us, and a very wonderful assurance takes possession of our hearts.

For this month I take leave of my readers with this question, *Is that assurance yours?*

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Would you kindly explain the difference between the Passover and the Lord's Supper in Luke xxii. ? Also as regards the Judgment-seat of Christ, some think the judgment begins when we get converted, others say it goes back to the beginning of our history. Will you explain to us its meaning?—SYDNEY.

LUKE xxii. makes it quite plain that the Lord and His disciples came together to eat the Passover and that, when that was finished, He instituted His Supper. Verse 16 makes it evident that He regarded that celebration of the Passover as the last, so that we may look upon that occasion as the ending of the one and the beginning of the other.

The Passover had a twofold bearing. Primarily it commemorated the great deliverance out of Egypt, but in the second place it was prophetic, pointing forward to the sacrifice of Christ that was to come. Hence we read, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

The primary thought in connection with the Lord's Supper is also remembrance. In it we

commemorate the One who died. We think of Him as the One who thus expressed the greatness of His love. Yet connected with it also there is the onward look of expectation, for as often as we eat the bread and drink of the cup we "shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

The death of the Lord Jesus was the point where, so to speak, both ordinances met. The solemn transactions in the upper chamber that evening were in view of the far greater transaction of the coming day. Where one found its fulfilment the other found its beginning. This we think expresses the difference between them.

The Judgment-seat we read of in 2 Corinthians v., so to that chapter we must turn for light on the subject. In verse 10 we find the statement that seems to us decisive as to the point you raise. At that Judgment-seat we are to "receive the things done in the body." The deeds we wrought before conversion were done in the body equally with those done after conversion. We judge therefore that *all* our lives will be passed in review, and we feel thankful that so it is to be.

"We must all appear," it says; that is, we must all be *manifested*. Everything must come into the light of His presence. Would we have it otherwise? No indeed! To have the feeling that there was a part of our lives, which had not been investigated and appraised by the Lord, would cast a shadow over an otherwise blissful eternity.

Would you give us a little help on Exodus iii. 3 and 4? We were reading that chapter and thought of the

burning bush as typifying a Christian burning for God here and now.—BRIDLINGTON.

THE fire that burned in the bush was evidently the sign of the presence of God, for we read, "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." In Hebrews xii. 29, we read that "Our God is a consuming fire." The word used for "bush" signifies that it was a thorn-bush or bramble, the kind of bush that is easily consumed by fire. Yet the bush was not consumed.

The first meaning of this miracle was, we believe, that God would dwell in the midst of His frail people Israel and yet they should not be consumed; that in fact they should prove to be unconsumable just because He was there. This was being demonstrated in Egypt at the time the vision of the burning bush was given, and it has been demonstrated since.

Then doubtless the vision had a prophetic bearing and pointed forward to Christ, for when He appeared "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John i. 14). He who was God assumed Manhood—a Manhood that could support His Deity, and yet not be consumed. He was "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. i. 23).

The explanation that you mention may come in as an application, rather than the interpretation of the scene. The Christian has received the Holy Spirit of God. Thus it is that God dwells in him, and consequently he should be as one who burns for God. He burns for God but he never burns out, and in that he is like the burning bush.

THE LONGEST PSALM.

PSALM cxix. is by far the longest chapter in the Bible, containing no less than 176 verses. The fifteen Songs of Degrees that follow it contain 101 verses, that is, 75 verses less than this Psalm. It is divided into twenty-two sections, each headed by one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Alphabet in their order. Every verse but three verses—90, 122, 132—contains an allusion to the law.

Several words are used, each meaning the law, but viewed from different stand-points.

- (1) Law (*Torah*)—direction, teaching.
- (2) Testimony (*Eduth*)—witness, testimony.
- (3) Precept (*Piqqudim*)—charges.
- (4) Statute (*Choq*)—decreed limit.
- (5) Commandment (*Mitvah*)—precept.
- (6) Word (*Dabar*)—word, matter, thing.
- (7) Judgment (*Misphat*)—judgment.
- (8) Way (*Derek*)—trodden path.

It is a delightful psalm to read, standing in vivid contrast to the atmosphere that pervaded the children of Israel when the

law was promulgated from Mount Sinai. There they beheld the mount smoking as a furnace, shaking as in an earthquake. They heard the trumpet waxing louder and louder. Blackness, darkness and tempest raged. Words were heard that terrified them. What was commanded was unendurable. No wonder they entreated Moses that "the word should not be spoken to them any more" (Hebrews xii. 19). And so terrible was the sight that even Moses—the law-giver, the one nearest to God in this matter—said, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Hebrews xii. 21).

How different is the spirit of Psalm cxix. At Sinai the law came to men in the flesh, and they loathed it, rebelled against it; in Psalm cxix. the writer delights in the law of God. Evidently he is the subject of the new birth, and antedates personally the blessing of Israel in a future day, when the Lord shall say, "I will put My laws into their *hearts*, and in their *minds* will I write them" (Hebrews x. 16).

It is in this Psalm not the law of bondage, condemnation and death, but "the trodden path" of delight that the renewed man longs to take.

It is delightful to see the intense love the writer has for the law—"love . . . the fulfilling of the law" (Romans xiii. 10)—love that lifts what to the natural man is a

crushing burden, an intolerable bondage, into what the writer James characterizes as "the royal law" (James ii. 8), "the perfect law of liberty" (James i. 25), "the law of liberty" (James ii. 12). What a contrast! How does it come about?

It is all a question of the *heart*. The principle of it is seen in Psalm xxvii. 8: "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." The fleshly heart finds the law an insufferable burden. "A new heart" (Ezek. xxxvi. 26) finds it a delight. No less than 184 times, under different names, does the writer pour out his deep joy and delight.

He is ever at it. "Seven times a day" does he praise Jehovah (verse 164). Before the morning breaks he cried: "I hoped in Thy Word" (verse 14). At night he robs the night watches of slumber, as he says, "that I might meditate in Thy Word" (verse 148).

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (verse 105). It is a terrible experience to grope one's way in the dark when a step may carry you over the precipice to destruction. How welcome is light amid the darkness, and this is what the Psalmist found in Jehovah's precepts.

Nor was his meditation in the law merely a dry duty. He cries, "How sweet are Thy

words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (verse 103). "O how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (verse 97).

With his "whole *heart*" he seeks the Lord (verse 10). He calls upon Jehovah to listen to his *voice* "according unto Thy lovingkindness" (verse 149). His eagerness is intense. He cries, "I opened my *mouth*, and panted: for I longed for Thy commandments" (verse 131). "My *lips*"—he exclaims—"shall utter praise, when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes" (verse 171). He prays, "Open Thou mines *eyes*, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (verse 18). "My *hands* also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which I have loved" (verse 48). "I have refrained my *feet* from every evil way" (verse 101).

Every part of him is aflame with intensest desire for God's thoughts for him, every member of his body is requisitioned, as the strings of the harp of his soul to make melody to God as he rejoices in His law.

It is not that the Christian is "under the law." God forbid! But whilst we "are become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Romans vii. 4) and "we are not under law, but under grace" (Romans vi. 15), yet the Gospel comes to us in all its liberating power "that the righteousness of

the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans viii. 4).

The Apostle Paul could exclaim, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Romans vii. 22); and after deliverance came from his terrible struggles as depicted in that historic seventh chapter of Romans, he could yet say, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God" (verse 25). Is that to cease because we are "under grace"? It is just because we are not "under law" but "under grace," that it does not cease.

True, Christianity goes much further, but many a Christian would be all the better in his life and conduct if he had more of the rapturous spirit characterizing the one hundred and seventy-six verses of Psalm cxix.

A. J. POLLOCK.

SHORT STUDIES IN NUMBERS.

THE book of Numbers takes up the history of Israel where Exodus leaves off. Exodus showed us the tabernacle set up, with the cloud of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, and man unable to enter; Leviticus unfolded the means whereby man might be found, without fear, in the presence of God, and Numbers relates for us God's order and provision for

the tabernacle in the wilderness, and for the journeyings of His people.

Let us look first at what is surely the central point of the book—the brazen serpent and the springing well. The Lord Jesus Himself takes up both these in the Gospel of John.

No child, one would think, but has thrilled at the story of the Israelite, perishing through his sin, looking to the brazen serpent, and being, not “healed,” not “recovered,” but, “when he beheld the serpent of brass he *lived*” (xxi. 9).

The Lord, in His interview with Nicodemus, uses this incident to teach him that of which, though a Master in Israel, he knew nothing. He tells him “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life,” and from chapter xii. of this same gospel we know that He spake this, signifying what death He should die.

What a contrast is here! The bitten Israelite lived indeed, but only for a time; we read later in Numbers that he ultimately died in the wilderness, for not one of the men who came out of Egypt went into Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua. But he who believes in the Son of man lifted up

lives eternally and not only so, but he lives according to a new order of life, for "we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20).

Oh! for hearts to better apprehend the greatness of the Son of man lifted up.

Immediately following the account of the brazen serpent we read of the springing well. "Then Israel sang"—the first time for many a long day—"Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it." And the Lord Jesus at Sychar's well said to an outcast and sinful woman, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst [again for ever]; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14). How does the antitype exceed the type! Israel's well was outside, the princes and nobles digged it with their staves; but the Lord would give her a well within, which should rise up to Him and flow forth to others.

It is only possible to consider one or two of the many themes of the book of Numbers. We will look at *God's provision for the wilderness*, and *the discipline of the wilderness*.

It would seem that Israel sojourned about a year in the wilderness of Sinai, and that there they built the tabernacle. Now the

time has come to go forward. First they are numbered, and the heads or princes of tribes are appointed. It is a wonderful thing to be counted among the people of God, and we may see how from the first it was necessary that there should be leaders and rulers; more than necessary, it was, and is the Divine order.

Next the Levites are separated for the service of the tabernacle, and the priestly family is marked out; as has been said, the people may be described as warriors, workers, and worshippers, all in connection with and in relation to the tabernacle. Each tribe had its appointed place and standard. It will be noted that the priests alone might touch the holy vessels (iv. 5-15). When they had covered them with cloths of the appropriate colours, the Kohathites would bear them on their shoulders, a work of special trust and privilege.

The Gershonites and Merarites were provided with wagons and oxen—the offerings of the princes—to bear the tent and boards on their journeys; two covered wagons and four oxen for the Gershonites, and four covered wagons and eight oxen for the Merarites. To those who had the lighter burden the two wagons were allotted, and to those who had the weighty burden of gold-covered boards and silver sockets four wagons were given, showing us how exactly the Lord had measured the

need of His service, and how exactly He had provided for it—a word of encouragement for His servants to-day. His arm is still unshortened, it is our faith that fails, and hence the temptation to resort to worldly methods to obtain the means for so-called Christian work. May we remember that the Lord is ever sufficient for everything that He would have done.

In the wilderness He led them in the daytime with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He brought streams out of the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers. He rained down manna upon them to eat. Man did eat angels' food. He sent them meat to the full. He led them on safely so that they feared not. Thus does the sweet singer of Israel describe God's care for His people in Psalm lxxviii. And Isaiah takes up the tale of grace, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed His holy Spirit." (Isa. lxiii. 9, 10). They never learned the lesson of simple trust in God. When difficulties arose, they spake against God, they asked, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" they said, "Let us go back to Egypt."

"And so they murmured, murmured very often,
Their stubborn hearts rebelled against the light,

And had not God been strong and very patient. They never would have found the way aright."

This leads us to our last point, the discipline of the wilderness. We must remember that God had chosen Abraham and promised that He would make of him a great nation, and that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed.

But from the first they showed themselves wholly unfit for their high destiny, and God would train them so that what was true of them might be true in them. Alas! they had brought idols out of Egypt, they had brought out the appetites of Egypt; they had developed a slave mentality in Egypt; and unable to rule themselves they were utterly unable to govern others. In chapter xiii. the warriors break down; in chapter xvi. the workers (Levites) do likewise, and in chapter xx. the worshippers (the priesthood) fail. It is one long story of God's faithfulness and of their faithlessness. As another has well said, "Faith would have filled the desert with song; unbelief filled it with murmurings."

Numbers does not tell us how God brought them into the land as He had promised, but in Balaam's prophecies (chapters xxiii. and xxiv.) we learn His thoughts of His people in spite of all. It is very touching to read in chapter xxxiii. His account of their journeys, and see how every halting place is remembered and recorded.

All that happened to them is of great moment to us. The apostle Paul tells us "These things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11).

We sometimes are surprised at the discipline of the wilderness, and ask why is it? Some Christians seem to think that they may be forgiven, justified, translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love, given the adoption of sons, be made accepted in the Beloved, and that there it ends. It is true nothing can make all this more true of us than it is, because all is established in Christ, but such are we by nature that God our Father deals with us in discipline, often painful, in order that what is true *of* us in Christ, may in measure—how poorly and feebly we know but too well—be true *in* us. God will have reality and it avails nothing to boast of our high calling, but everything to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. xii. 2).

True we only learn very slowly and these are great things, but our God has apprehended us for nothing less, and would have us count on Him and trust in Him for all, always remembering that we have such an High Priest who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

L. R.

THE SON OF GOD.

THE outstanding mark of the great saints of God seems to be the depth and reality of their sense of sin.

Those who have most power with God, whose holy lives set them head and shoulders above their fellows, who live upon the mountain-tops, these are the very ones who realize and mourn over the depths of deceit which they find in their own hearts. These are the very ones who plead the virtue of the blood of Christ to give them holy boldness to enter into the sanctuary.

Time would fail to tell of the saints of modern days who have so learned the exceeding sinfulness of sin—of their tears and wrestlings and prayers; but we have a noble army of saints whom God has singled out in the Scriptures to show us this secret of godliness.

When did Peter's career of chequered greatness begin? Was it not when he clung to the feet of the Master and cried, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord"?

Isaiah finds himself of unclean lips, Job abhors himself, Elijah covers his face with his mantle, Paul adds a sob to his cry of triumph and calls himself "the chief of sinners," John falls down as dead, Moses exceedingly fears and quakes, Daniel finds his comeliness turned to corruption. All,

when they catch the vision of God in His Heaven, are overwhelmed by the horror of their sin. And in the greatness of their sense of sin we read the greatness of their glory.

But what of Jesus ?

We hear no word of repentance fall from his lips, no fear as He approaches the Father in prayer, and when He enters the presence of God His face and His garments shine with the very Majesty of His Person.

Never a word to regret. Never a step to retrace. Never a sin to confess. He alone can gaze unabashed at the glory of God.

Why should He alone, incomparably the choicest of all choice souls, be exempt from the scourge of greatness ?

The centurion gave the answer, the only answer which can solve the mystery, a noble answers which rings over the years and echoes in the heart of every believer,
"Truly this was the Son of God."

A. F. S. POLLOCK.

Believe Christ's love more than your own feelings; your *Rock* does not ebb and flow though your *Sea* does.

Character is to wear *for ever*. Who can wonder that it cannot be made in a day.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

·(*Colossians ii. 2-19*).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

WE must not leave verse 2 without noticing that word, "their hearts . . . knit together in love." In the mystery of God all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, and by a full knowledge of it the full assurance of understanding is obtained, but it is when divine love reigns amongst the saints that the full knowledge of the mystery becomes a simple thing. A believer isolated from all Christian companionship might so study his Bible in dependence on the Spirit's teaching as to gain a very good *mental* grasp of it, but he could not grasp it *experimentally*. We never understand it fully until we have some experience of what it means.

Here lies the reason, without a doubt, why the mystery is so little understood to-day. The true church of God is so sadly divided that there is very little knitting together in love. We cannot remedy the divided state of the church but we can walk in love towards our fellow-saints as far as we know them; and as far as we do this so far shall we have our hearts expanded to embrace this truth—so far shall we enter into our place in the body of Christ, instead

of thinking, as so many do almost exclusively, of a place in some body of Christians, or some denominational organization.

In the first century they had not to face difficulties springing from the divided state of the church, but there were difficulties nevertheless as verse 4 indicates. Already men were going about beguiling believers. Let us take especial note that they were doing so "with enticing words." Smooth, elegant, persuasive speech is the chief stock-in-trade of deceivers. How often have simple and unsuspecting folk said of some propagandist, "Oh, but he must be all right: he spoke so beautifully!" When a little subsequent investigation showed that he was as far from being "all right" as could be.

The Apostle proceeds to warn them more in detail as to these deceivers whose teachings would altogether turn them aside from any understanding of the mystery. Before doing so however he joyfully acknowledges the good that marked the Colossians, and he exhorts them to further progress in the right direction.

The good that characterized them we have in verse 5. In the first place they were orderly. In this they contrasted happily with the Corinthians, who were in a very disorderly state. Evidently both in their assembly life and in their private lives they had been subject to the apostolic instruc-

tions. In the second place there was a steadfastness about their faith. They were like soldiers who had firmly withstood the shock of battle. Every assault upon their faith had failed.

Verses 6 and 7 indicate that the best preventive against evil is progress in the right direction. Having received Christ as their Lord, they were to "walk in Him," that is, to put into practice what they knew of Him and of His will. Having been rooted in Him they were to be built up in Him, and thus established so firmly in the true faith that they were like vessels filled up to the brim with it, and overflowing with praise and thanksgiving. Let us all take note that it is when our knowledge of the truth comes out in our *practice* on the one hand, and in our *praise* on the other, that we are really established in it.

But when a frontal attack fails the enemy will try an assault upon the flank. What cannot be accomplished by open and bold denials may perhaps be achieved by subtle insinuations, by sly subtractions, or even better still, by apparently harmless additions to the faith of Christ—additions which nevertheless do nullify much that is vital. Such has ever been the plan of the devil, and Paul's watchful eye saw signs of danger for the Colossians in this way. Consequently the rest of the chapter is taken up with earnest and loving warnings, together with

unfoldings of truth calculated to fortify them against the dangers.

The Apostle's warnings seem to fall under three heads. This may be seen by looking at verses 8, 16 and 18, each of which opens with a word of caution as to the activities of men. The activities run in different directions, but all are antagonistic to the truth. In the first case the danger comes from philosophy. In the second from Judaism. In the third from superstition. All three dangers are tremendously alive and energetic to-day, particularly the first and third.

The word "spoil" in verse 8 does not mean *to mar*, but rather, *to capture as spoil*, or *to make a prey of you*. It describes the kind of thing that will happen to you if instead of progressing in the faith of Christ you submit to the teachings of philosophers. It is a strong way of putting it, but not one whit too strong. In the ancient world the Greeks were the great philosophers. They had no knowledge of any revelation from God, and in its absence set their minds to work on the problems presented by man and the universe. In result their teachings were but empty deceit, all of them framed according to man and his little world.

Even in Paul's day some were found who wished to accommodate Christian teaching

to Grecian philosophy, and this meant the virtual destruction of faith. In our day the same kind of thing has taken place. The philosophy of to-day differs in many ways from that of the ancient world. Two terrible features characterize it: firstly, it pursues its investigations and theorizings not in ignorance of any revelation from God at all, but in rejection of the revelation that has been brought to their notice; secondly, it all too frequently has seized upon the terms used in God's revelation, the Bible, and then having emptied them of their Scriptural meaning has filled them with another meaning suited to their own purposes. A very deceitful process, this! When the Apostle coupled together *philosophy* and *vain deceit* he wrote as a prophet indeed!

Philosophic teachings, whether ancient or modern, are brought in professedly to supplement the simple teachings of the Gospel and lead us on to more perfect knowledge. In reality they destroy the Gospel. Christ is the test of all teaching. Is it according to Christ?—that is the test. And why is Christ the test? Because the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and we ourselves are “complete”, or “filled full” in Him. We need go outside Him for nothing.

There is a strong likeness between verse 19 of chapter i. and verse 9 of our chapter; only there it refers to that which was true of Him in the days of His sojourn on earth,

whilst here it is stated as being true of Him to-day. It is hardly possible to imagine a stronger statement of His deity, and yet it plainly infers that He still is Man in saying, "bodily." If then we are rooted and built up and filled full in such an One as He, it would be manifestly very foolish to turn aside to the philosophizings of poor little human brains that ere long will be eaten of worms.

Verse 11 adds another important consideration. We are circumcised in Him as well as complete in Him. Now circumcision is a thorough cutting off. The circumcision of Christ was His cutting off by death. In His death He put off all connection with the old order of things; He died to sin, and lives to God, as Romans vi. 10 puts it. A spiritual circumcision, "made without hands," has reached us by means of His death, which to us has been "the putting off the body of the flesh"—the words, "of the sins," should not be included in the text. Death has come in between us and the flesh, and consequently we are cut off from the teachings of man and his world.

If verse 11 speaks of death, verse 12 brings before us burial and resurrection. Burial is the completion and ratification of death. That which goes to corruption must be put out of sight. We are buried, be it noted, *in baptism*. In submitting to that ordinance we go to our own funeral. But

we go into burial in view of resurrection, for we are risen with Christ through the faith of that which God did, in raising Him from the dead. In these two verses we are instructed in the true force of the death and resurrection of Christ and also of our baptism—what God sees in them. And we are entitled to see in them what He does. The application of all this comes later in the epistle.

As we commence verse 13 we pass from that which has been accomplished in Christ to something accomplished in us. As to our spiritual state we were dead; dead in our sins—what we had done; dead in the uncircumcision of our flesh—what we were. But now quickened—made to live—together with Christ; our new life being of the same order as His. Resurrection put us in a new world, and quickening endows us with a new life. Neither the one nor the other however brings us release from the guilt of our sins. We *are* released however. All our offences are forgiven. But that brings us back to the cross.

The cross blotted out our sins truly, but it did more than this: it blotted out also the whole system of legal ordinances which had been against us. The law was not blotted out: far from it, for it was vindicated and magnified in the death of Christ. On the other hand we died from under the law in His death, and we are now under

grace, with all the old legal ordinances-- samples of which are found in verse 16-- set aside. The language of verse 14 may need a word of explanation. The word translated "blotted out" is one "used for annulling a decree of law." The idea of "handwriting" is that of "obligation to which a man is subject by his signature." Paul used a very graphic figure. We had bound ourselves by our signature to Jewish ordinances, but the document has been nullified in the death of Christ. As far as we are concerned it was nailed to the cross when He was nailed to the cross. In these words of course Paul particularly had Jews in view.

The cross is viewed in still another light in verse 15, so that we have it here presented in three connections. We may summarize them thus:—

- v. 11. The cross in relation to ourselves, and in particular the flesh.
- v. 14. The cross in relation to legal ordinances.
- v. 15. The cross in relation to the spiritual forces of evil.

Whatever these spiritual powers may be, from Satan downwards, in the cross the divine triumph has been manifested. On the surface it looked like being the triumph of the powers of evil. Really it was their undoing. This being so we can see that when verse 10 spoke of the Lord Jesus as

“the Head of all principality and power,” it was stating something which is true not only upon the ground of creation, but also on the ground of what He accomplished at the cross.

The truth of the cross as unfolded in verse 11 had special reference to what had preceded, that is, the warning as to the snare of philosophy. To-day we should speak of it not only as philosophy but as rationalism also—the worshipping of human intellect and human reasonings. Immediately we discern in the cross our circumcision—our cutting off—a clean sweep is made of rationalism, as to any authority it possessed over us. It influences us no more.

The cross as presented in verse 14 is the basis of the warning uttered in verse 16, as indicated by the word, “therefore.” There were plenty of Judaizing enthusiasts who would take them to task as to their observance or non-observance of ordinances, but they were not to be moved, nor to pay attention to them. Five classes of ordinances are specified, those relating to meat, drink, feasts, new moons, sabbaths. These things are all shadows of things to come, as we are told also in the epistle to the Hebrews, but the body—that is, the substance—is of Christ.

If any are disposed to ask in what way these things have to say to us to-day inas-

much as there is no active Judaizing party at work in the church at present, the answer is that they are still very much to the point. The reason why there is not much active Judaizing is that the professing church has been for many centuries so largely Judaized. But have you never met the Seventh-day Adventists? If so you may thank God. But if you have, take special note of the way in which this Scripture negatives their propaganda, the spear-head of which is their insistence on the Jewish sabbath. They will judge you as to the sabbath, if you will let them. The word here is not exactly "sabbath days," but rather, "sabbaths," as covering sabbaths of all kinds whether of days or years.

The sabbath as a legal and Jewish ordinance is set aside, but that of course does not touch the fact of one day in seven being set apart by God from the creation as a day of rest. This is a mercy from God which we do well to esteem very highly.

We come in verse 18 to what we may call the ritualistic snare. We shall easily see that it is a snare if we revert to the truth of the cross as it was presented to us in verse 15. The only angels that desire to have our homage are evil ones. The holy angels always refuse human worship, ascribing all worship to God. See, for instance, Revelation xix. 10 and xxi. 9. Now the unholy angels have been despoiled

and vanquished at the cross. Who then would wish to worship them? Oh, what light does the cross shed! What deliverance it effects!

There is another very powerful consideration. We are entitled as members of the body each one of us to be "holding the Head." Thereby we maintain an intimate and worshipful contact with Him. The figure of the human body is evidently before the mind of the Spirit, and the head is considered as the seat of all supply for the body. The supply and the increase may reach us *through* the "joints and bands," yet it all comes *from* the head.

It is of the utmost importance that we should take up our privilege and learn what it means to hold the Head. Once we have learned that, we shall be rendered proof against the seductions of ritualism. If I am accorded the right of access to the presence of His Majesty the King, and privileged to hold intercourse with him, you will not find me presenting my requests to, or expecting to receive from, one of his footmen. The footman may be a very fine fellow, and very gorgeous to look at in his golden-braided uniform, but you will not catch me doing my obeisance to him.

Someone may wish to observe that by doing homage to the footman we should at least be showing what very humble people

we are. But should we? Has His Majesty ordained it? He has not! Then after all we are only doing our own will; and this is self-will, the exact opposite of humility. This may serve as an illustration of what is said in verse 18.

Angels have been purposely hidden from our eyes lest we should give them the place that belongs to God. They are amongst the things not seen. Their would-be worshippers are puffed up by the mind of their flesh. The opening of the verse has been translated, "Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize, doing his own will in humility and worship of angels." This makes the whole position very clear. The procedure all looks very humble. It is really self-will, a thing very hateful to God. And those who fall a prey to it may indeed be true believers but being fraudulently diverted from Christ they lose their prize.

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Had Christ any infirmities when here? This question was asked me sometime ago, and I hardly knew what to say. I was afraid to say much: it was raised in a reading I was at recently. I am quite aware it is a very delicate question, and it needs one to be very careful as to the Person of Christ.—GATESHEAD.

THE question raised is indeed, as you say, a very delicate one. In attempting to answer, our safeguard will be the careful observance of what Scripture does and does not say, and a refusal to go beyond its utterances.

We presume that the question arises out of the closing verses of Hebrews iv., where we read that our Lord can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," inasmuch as He has been in all points tempted as we are tempted, sin apart. From this the inference might easily be drawn that He must have had infirmities: else how could He be touched with the feeling of ours?

But on carefully examining Scripture we discover that it never states that He had any infirmity. And not only this, it places Him in full contrast with the priests of Aaron's race as to this very thing. These were "compassed with infirmity" (Heb. v. 3), and out of this sprang their ability to have compassion. But we must not jump to the conclusion that therefore it must be just so with Christ. The very opposite, for presently we read, "The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (Heb. vii. 28).

The Son then most evidently has no infirmity. It may however be remarked that this verse refers to Him, in His risen place, and so it does. It is in His risen place that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. How then did He know infirmity? By having them of His own? No, but by bearing ours, as it says in Matthew viii. 17, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Read verse 16 as well, and you will see how He fulfilled that quotation. It was in the way in which He accomplished His works of power.

He not only relieved folk by His miracles, but He took up and bore in His own spirit the sorrows that He removed by His power.

It is quite true of course, and much to be remembered, that our blessed Lord knew what it was to be tempted of Satan. He knew what sorrow and loneliness and hunger and thirst and weariness were, but these, we judge, are not exactly what Scripture calls infirmities.

I should very much like to know how you understand, "Ye are washed," 1 Corinthians vi. 11?—NORWICH.

WE understand it in the sense of, "ye are cleansed from your former character and mode of life." The two preceding verses give us a dreadful picture of the sinful filth into which mankind has sunk. Then the Apostle adds, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed." Three things are mentioned in this verse, purification, sanctification, justification. All three are brought about in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God, but the order in which they stand is to be noted. In view of the filth in which we were, washing naturally stands first. Then as washed we are set apart for God, and justified from all our offences.

There is a rather similar passage in the epistle to Titus. The Cretians were "alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." Hence in chapter iii. Paul writes of their salvation being accomplished "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (verse 5). Two verses later he speaks of their being justified. So here again

washing precedes justifying, because it is the moral filth of our unconverted condition which is before the mind of the Spirit.

In both these passages the reference is, we believe, to that mighty inward renovation which is brought about in the name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit through the Gospel. It is very much akin to, or at least connected with, the new birth, which is spoken of in other Scriptures, as for instance, 1 Peter i. 22-25. "Seeing ye have *purified* your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit . . . being *born again* . . ."

The sow that is washed externally will for a certainty return to its wallowing in the mire. But if we could give it a washing which consisted in the communication to it of a sheep's nature we should have cleansed it in an effectual and lasting way. It is in this effectual way that the washing has reached us.

"What will ye then that I shall do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" (Mark xv. 12).

"**Ye!**" What had they to do with the great decision? They were the accusers, Pilate was the judge. Why leave it to them to settle the matter? Why? especially when he knew both their evil motives and the prisoner's innocence?

Bondage is the only answer. There are many Pilates to-day who leave the decision to be made by their circumstances or habits, or by their companions, whom they know are no friends of Christ.

SINGING TIMES.

(Notes of an address on *Exodus xv. 1-22; Numbers xxi 7-17; Hosea ii. 14-15*)

IT has often been said that song has its birth in sorrow. That singing is the result of the lifting of some pressure on the spirit, is, I think, borne out by the scriptures above. "The time of singing is come," says Solomon, but he gives the reason for saying this, "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone" (Song of Sol. ii. 11). Sorrow's night with its weeping gives place to the song of joy in the morning.

In Psalm xxii., it was when the bitter winter-time of the judgment of God was over and the storm was past, that we find the Lord saying, "In the midst of the church will *I sing* praise unto Thee" (see, Heb. ii. 12).

It was when the winter-time of our soul's distress, and the rain of tears was over and gone that we came into the joy of the morning: it was under the clear blue sky of divine acceptance, that we sang our first song, that ever went to heaven. I think if our winter time had been a bit harder and longer our singing would have been sweeter; i.e., if the ploughing up of con-

science and heart and the harrowing of conviction had been a bit more bitter, the song would have been brighter and longer and sweeter.

There are three singing times in the history of God's people Israel, and they find their parallel in the history of His people to-day.

In the first scripture we have the first recorded singing in the Word of God. It is not difficult to see that this song was the result of the lifting of the pressure of Pharaoh's hard and bitter bondage, and when they saw that power broken for ever for them, then "sang Moses and the children of Israel," this song!

This scripture gives us one of the most striking analogies in the Old Testament to the wonderful deliverance that was wrought for us by the death of Christ, when He brought us from the house of Satan's bondage and sin's galling yoke, and delivered us from this present evil world.

Here we have the first message of the cross. The firstborn delivered from the stroke of the destroyer, and that by the shelter of the blood of the lamb, and then later from the power of Satan and the world, the sphere of his rule. Both the blood on the lintel and the Red Sea are figures of the death of Christ, and the latter a figure also of His resurrection.

I like to think of it thus. God wished to have the voice of that firstborn son to sing His praise in the land of promise when He could dwell with them and they with Him. To secure this He had to devise the means for sheltering him from His own judgment and saving him from the power of Pharaoh. He was sheltered by the blood in Egypt that he might sing the praises of God in the land. There was no singing in Egypt, there was plenty of sighing, but no song; that could only be when they were put for ever free from all their pressure.

Now He comes forth as a Saviour—in a different character. He is going to save them not merely from His own righteous judgment, but from the power of Pharaoh and from his land. The outstretched rod, the bitter east wind and the dark night are the accompaniments of that mighty deliverance. How strikingly are these things in evidence in the death of Christ.

“Jehovah lifted up His rod,
O Christ it fell on Thee!”

“The Tempest’s awful voice was heard,
O Christ it broke on Thee!”

That is our Red-sea song if you will; anyway a part of it. That first song went right away to heaven, and we can easily see that God never forgot that bit of singing.

There were two names specially mentioned in connection with this first redemption

song; viz., Moses and Miriam. Notice the difference between their singing. Miriam seems to sing on a lower clef than Moses. They both begin, "Sing unto the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." There Miriam stops. She seems only to be a chorus singer. It was sweet though not very long. But see how far Moses could go with his part of the song! God made His ways known unto Moses and His acts unto the children of Israel. Moses was in the secret of God's purpose but the rest of the nation only knew what He had *done*, and not what was the fixed *purpose* of God. Hence we find that Moses' song reached right out to the introduction of the Kingdom with Messiah on the throne.

If we could catch the spirit of Moses and look out to the vast sphere of coming glory, as the purpose of God for Christ and for us with HIM, our song would be of a higher order. If we are restricted in our intelligence of God's ways our note of praise will be proportionately restricted, and like Miriam we shall only be singing on the lower clef of our salvation from our mighty foe.

The second song we find in Numbers xxi. The sweet and comprehensive song of Exodus xv. soon died away. Indeed that chapter does not close before you hear the murmurs of the wilderness begin. It is

said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me" (Psa. l. 23). How little praise God got from that people all those forty years. They can complain but they do not praise, they can murmur but they do not sing. They are learning lessons for forty years that are most important to learn and without which there will not be much praise. They are learning themselves, and *from themselves*. They are their own lesson book! Deuteronomy viii. 3, tells us the object that God had in leaving them in the wilderness. It was "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart." How many bitter tears have been shed over the discoveries we have made of the unmendable badness of the heart of man in the flesh. What humiliating and disgusting lessons we learn when with the candle of the Lord in our hand we are let down into the recesses of our own hearts. Romans vii. gives us the history of that lesson-learning. In the last half of that chapter nearly every sentence begins with "I" and winds up with "*Wretched I.*"

After forty years of wonderful mercy and forbearance of God, they are murmurers just as much at the end as they were at the start. All that God has done for them has not altered them in one iota, so we find them in Numbers xxi. at the end of the journey speaking against God and Moses. Not content with that, we find them *loathing* the bread of God sent down from heaven.

Has it ever come home to us that we have a heart and a nature that simply loathes Christ. They had in reality got tired of Christ, in the figure of the Manna. It is a terrible thing to contemplate that after all these years of conversion you have a nature within you that is not one bit changed since the day you came to Christ as a poor sinner. The contemplation of these things does not lead us to sing. It leads us to sigh.

We begin to ask ourselves, "Am I really converted when I have such sad experiences as these?" Says some tired soul, "I thought when I was converted that the work of God in me would change the old nature into a new one, and that never again should I sin or have the same desires as I used to have!" When it was discovered that this was not the case we could only come to the conclusion that we had not been properly converted and that we had been deceiving ourselves, and the only thing to do was to make a fresh start and try again; but only to make the heart-sickening discovery that things were no better, and at last we were ready to give it all up with the thought that Christianity might be all right as an ideal, but it was a splendid impossibility practically. Such a crisis is all too good an opportunity for the enemy not to use it. He always works behind religious ignorance.

If then the new birth does not remove a sinful nature and the presence of the Holy Ghost does not improve it, then if God must judge what is evil always, how am I with this evil within me to stand clear of that judgment?

We began our Christian career perhaps by singing,

“Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.”

That was what you expected, but instead of that it has meant that every day has witnessed some fresh defeat!

If my sins did not escape God's judgment and Christ had to bear them, surely this evil nature so ruled by sin must be judged as well. Neither has it escaped the judgment of God. It has not received its judgment *in you*, but sin has received its judgment *in Christ* when He was *made sin*.

Numbers xxi. and John iii. shew us the same picture. Christ takes the brazen serpent out of type for us, and points us back from the Cross on which He was uplifted, to the pole on which the serpent of brass was uplifted.

Just as that serpent was made in the *likeness* of the serpents that bit them, and brought all the mischief in (and being made

of brass we see the figure of God's righteous judgment against sin), so Christ was lifted up on the cross to bear in Himself all God's judgment on the sin that had brought in all the trouble.

Romans viii. 3, speaks of the same thing. God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin "*condemned sin in the flesh.*" What I found in myself to condemn as hateful, and wished to get rid of, God has condemned in Christ sacrificially.

When Christ died I died with Him in God's account. "Our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin [that is, *sin in its totality*] might be destroyed," that is, annulled, no more to be brought into our reckoning. It is well to remember that God did not remove the serpents, but He caused a serpent to be made *like* to the one that had bitten them. Their deliverance from its power came when they had faith to look to the uplifted serpent. There was life in a look, outside of themselves. Whosoever looked lived. Life is found not in the betterment of the old nature but in Christ. Christ is the believer's true life. That is the believer's true self now; thus we have in Romans vii. the terms, "I" and "I myself." Sin is connected with the old "I," but he begins to look at himself apart from the old condemned life; and the true I is the *I myself*.

We attempt a bit of carpentry, and being inexperienced in wielding the hammer we smite, not the head of the nail, but our own finger-nail! It turns black and presently, a new nail having grown, it is cast off. Before it comes off however, we disown it and treat the *new nail* as our *true nail*. My true self is like the new nail. When I see that I am entitled to look at myself apart from the old evil nature it is a great relief, and sigh gives place to song and now we can move forward, singing on our way to the sun-rising—the coming of the Lord.

It has come like a fresh conversion to many when they found out that God was not making the discoveries they were. We live our lives on the principle of the block calendar, where we tear off a leaf for each day. God views them on the sheet almanac principle, where the whole year lies exposed to one glance.. “He knew what was in man,” was said at the end of John iii., and knowing He could not trust man. Hence in that same chapter He prepares us for the introduction of a new man. The new birth means the formation of a new moral being, called in Romans vii., “the inward man,” that delights in the law of the Lord.

Israel's third song is found in Hosea ii. This song has not been heard yet, since praise is silent for God in Zion. That people who should have been to His praise is scattered over the face of the earth. They

are a backsliding people to-day. The song before us is the song of the restored backslider. It is the song of the valley of Achor. This was the valley where Achan the "troubler of Israel" met his judgment. The place of God's judgment has become "a door of hope" for thousands.

Before the backslider can be restored to the joy of communion, he must be brought to the place in his soul where he can judge himself as God judged him in the place of judgment—the cross of Christ. The song of the restored people will be as sweet to Him as the song they first sang on the banks of the Red Sea. What a touching remark that is, "She shall sing there, . . . as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." He has evidently not forgotten that first bit of singing, nor will He forget our first bit of singing, even if it was only, "O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away."

See how He brings about the restoration. "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart." If you want to see a backslider restored seek to get to the heart. It is well to reach the conscience but equally well to reach the heart. Not the whip for the conscience merely, but comfort for the heart.

Still He dries up the creature springs of prosperity and enjoyment. We are made to

feel, as Jeremiah told them, that "it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord,"—the Fountain of living waters. He dries up our springs and then when His work in us is done He speaks to our hearts. When the heart is right we can begin to sing. The judgment of ourselves opens to us a door of hope, and once more we sing as at the beginning.

ART. CUTTING.

DEMOCRACY OR THEOCRACY.

WE had best begin by defining our terms. DEMOCRACY is *government of the people, by the people, for the people.* Such was the famous dictum of Abraham Lincoln.

THEOCRACY is government by the immediate direction of God.

A few preliminary remarks may be necessary to introduce the subject. Does it matter what a Christian believes in the way of politics? First of all a Christian should not be a politician. Twice over the Lord affirmed of His own, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 14 and 16). If it were right for a Christian to be a politician, the Lord, our great Exemplar, would have been a politician. On the contrary, when requested

to give a judgment, He replied, "Man, who made Me a Judge or a Divider over you?" (Luke xii. 14). If it were right for a Christian to be a politician, we should have seen the apostles giving us an example in that line. Neither by example nor precept is there a word in Scripture to encourage the believer to be a politician.

In the Old Testament, where the dispensation was different, there were instructions for the office of a king, but in the New Testament, whilst there are instructions how the Christian is to obey, there is not a single line as to how he is to rule. The Christian is to "honour the king," but there are no instructions how to behave as a king. We are told "to obey magistrates," but there are no instructions how to fulfil the office of a magistrate. We have the exhortation, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans xiii. 1), and that at a time when the Roman Emperor was that monster of iniquity, Nero. Yet there is not one line of instruction to the Christians as to ruling. The *silence* of Scripture is as powerful as its speech. The Christian is not exhorted to remedy abuses in this world. "Let the dead bury their dead" (Luke ix. 60), was the sharp comment of the Lord to one, who declared that he would be a disciple, but who wished to put the burying of his father before discipleship. The Christian has to do with the Kingdom of God. But his reigning time has not

come yet. Till Christ gets His rightful place, there is no place for us as rulers of this world, but on the contrary we are exhorted as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter ii. 11).

The children of Israel were specially chosen to be God's people, and their government was theocratic, in other words they were governed by the immediate direction of God. This is the ideal government. The last verse of the Book of Judges says, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges xxi. 25). The government should have been theocratic, but when democracy ran wild, it is aptly described by the words, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

When the people asked for a king to be like the surrounding nations, the Lord said to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel viii. 7). They rejected theocracy. Witness the plight of the nation from that day to this as to the sorrow of their course. With God as their Ruler and themselves obedient to Him they were invincible, secure and happy. No enemy could bring them into subjection. See them to-day, scattered, peeled, persecuted, despised, a nation of sad hearts and weary feet.

It has often been said by misguided people that Christian Socialism is the highest policy for the Christian. We have shown that to engage in any kind of politics, reactionary or otherwise, is not Christian. But it has been urged that Christ was a Socialist. Never was there a bigger mistake, showing complete ignorance of His character as Man. He was a Theocrat, that is, every word and action of His were governed by God Himself. He could say, "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things . . . I do always those things that please Him" (John viii. 28, 29). What a happy world it would be if all its inhabitants could truthfully say that. It would make life less complicated. We should not need safes in which to secure our treasures, nor keys to lock our front doors, nor lawyers to a very large extent, nor policemen, save to regulate traffic, nor prisons, reformatories and the like, nor armies and navies. Staggering taxes would be a thing of the past.

Let us look at the difference between democracy and theocracy.

Democracy has for its roots, the Greek words, *demos* (the people), and *Krateo* (rule).

Theocracy has for its roots, the Greek words, *theos* (God), and *Krateo* (rule).

Democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people. Note not a word about God in this. Can a fallen man govern himself? Is there any evidence of his capacity to do this? Scripture puts things in sharp contrast, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John v. 19). If democracy is government by the people then there is nothing higher in it than its source. If the source of sovereignty is the people nothing can be higher than the people. That much is evident. As a matter of fact there are infernal influences of work. Democracy in the long run will lead to the deification of man, and his complete apostasy as far as God is concerned. If man is worshipped as God, and Scripture prophesies this clearly, and there are signs that things are working in this direction, then God Himself is dethroned.

Democracy is horizontal; theocracy is perpendicular. The former stretches out on the low level of poor fallen man, all unconscious that infernal forces are subtly at work to lead the movement into utter revolt from God; in the latter all rule and authority comes from God, comes down from above.

Now the believer, who would be consistent with Christianity, can only be a theocrat. Let the Christian, who dabbles in politics, whether it be monarchy, aristocracy, plutocracy, bureaucracy, or democ-

racy, weigh this over. To grasp it will be a great deliverance.

Doubtless the Christian views the great happenings in the world with interest in the light of Scripture, but if he is wise and instructed he keeps to the service to which he is called and does not interfere with matters outside his province.

Suppose, on the other hand, a Christian leans in his sympathies to Conservatism, he remembers the exhortations,—“Honour the King”—“Let every soul be subject to the higher powers”—he feels there is more respect for God in that line of things, and he deplures the spirit of democracy. He sees its disintegrating results, the unrest, and instability of everything. He sees all this, and feels inclined to put his weight into the opposite scale. But here is the serious question. How can he know whether the rise of democracy is not allowed of God in order to carry things to the point when Christ shall return to this earth, and set up His kingdom? How does he know that he is not acting against God's will in the matter, if he seeks to stem the tide of democracy?

Suffice it for him to be a theocrat in his own life, to let the will of God dominate him, and to use his influence to get others to do the same, to pray to God about these things.

Democracy degrades a man. Theocracy elevates him. When a Christian refuses to honour the King, according to Scripture he degrades himself. Wisdom is justified in all her children.

May the reader be one of wisdom's children in his spirit in a day of moral degradation, of disintegration and decay of all that speaks of God in this world.

Even Voltaire, the infidel and cynic, writer of monarchy and democracy, declared that he would rather be governed by one lion than by one hundred asses. There is much shrewd wisdom in this.

How much better off is the Christian who is governed by God—a God of wisdom, love and power.

A. J. POLLOCK.

History recounts that Louis XI. of France executed a solemn deed of gift in favour of the Virgin Mary, making her the owner of Boulogne and surroundings but reserving for himself all the rents of the same! It is to be feared that the conversion and consecration of many is after this pattern. We dedicate ourselves to the Lord, yet reserving for ourselves all the benefits that result from it. So let us take care!

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Colossians ii. 20—iii. 17*).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

THE fact of the believer's identification with Christ in His death and resurrection has already been before us in verses 11 and 12. We have now to see that it is not a mere doctrinal notion, something existing only in the region of theory. It is a FACT, and intended to exert a very potent influence upon our lives.

In verse 20 we get the words, "dead with Christ": in verse 1 of chapter iii., the words, "risen with Christ." So complete was the identification that His death was our death, His resurrection was our resurrection. It may be remarked however that in both cases there is an "if." Yes, but not as expressing doubt but rather as furnishing the basis of an argument. *If* this, *then* that. It really has the force of "since." Certain things are incumbent upon us since we have died with Christ: and again certain other things should mark us since we have been raised with Christ.

Since we have died with Christ our true interests lie clean outside the world and its rudiments, or, elements. Having died out of the world system we cannot proceed as though we are alive in it. That is the

argument of verse 20. The world, and particularly the religious world, has its many ordinances concerning the using or not using of perishable material things. According to these ordinances we should not handle or taste or touch this or that. But if we really understand our identification with Christ in His death we find ourselves outside the world where ordinances have their sway, and that of course settles all such questions for us in a very decisive way. There were many ordinances connected with the law of Moses, which was given to curb men in the flesh. They have no validity as regards men who are dead with Christ.

But the point here is not so much as regards Jewish ordinances but rather those that are "after the commandments and doctrines of men"; ordinances which never did have any divine sanction at all. Such are the ordinances which ritualism enforces upon its votaries to-day.

In our Bibles verse 21 and the first part of verse 22 are printed in brackets. In the New Translation all verse 23 save the last six words is printed in brackets also. This makes the sense of that verse clearer. The words in the first bracket give us samples of the ordinances which the Apostle had in mind. The words in the second bracket tell us certain things which characterize these ordinances. They have an appearance of wisdom, being marked by "will worship,"

(i.e., voluntary worship) and humility and the neglecting of the body instead of giving it the honour which is due. And then the words not enclosed in brackets read, "subject to ordinances . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men . . . to the satisfying of the flesh."

What a searching condemnation of ritualism it is! All these elaborate ordinances may look like the voluntary rendering of homage in great humility. The asceticism connected with it looks very lowly. The dress, the girdle of rope, the poor food and the fastings and neglect of the body may appear to be very holy and very wonderful; but in point of fact it is all according to purely human teachings and all ministers to the satisfaction of the flesh. In true Christianity the flesh is disowned and refused. In ritualism it is fostered and gratified. That is the condemnation of ritualism.

The counterpart to our identification with Christ in His death is our identification with Him in His resurrection. The effect of the one is to disconnect us from man's world, man's wisdom, man's religion. The effect of the other is to put us into touch with God's world and with all that is there. The first four verses of chapter ii. unfold the blessedness into which we are introduced.

There are things which find their centre in Christ seated in heavenly glory. They are "things above," that is, things

which are heavenly in character. On these things our minds and affections are to be set, and not on earthly things. At the present moment Christ is not in manifestation here, He is hid in God. Now He is our life, and all the hidden springs of our life are consequently hidden with Him in God. The day approaches when He will be manifested, and then we shall be manifested with Him in glory. It will be quite clear in that day where our real life is found.

It is, alas! not nearly so clear to-day. Yet our life to-day lies just exactly where it will then. This is what makes this truth so very practical. The unbeliever necessarily lives and moves and has all his thoughts in "things on the earth." As a fallen creature estranged from God he knows nothing else. Still there is a very great danger of our getting absorbed with earthly things. Hence the need for these exhortations.

The fact is we have an altogether new sphere of life. Our interests centre in the right hand of God, and not in our homes or businesses, however important these may be in their place as furnishing us with occasions for serving the will of God. We set our minds upon things above, not by reposing in arm-chairs indulging in dreamy and mystical imaginings as to things that may be in heaven, but rather by setting our

minds supremely upon Christ, and seeking in all things the furtherance of Heaven's interests. The British ambassador in Paris sets his mind upon British things by seeking British interests in French circumstances, and not by continually sitting down to try and recall to his memory what British scenery is like.

As risen with Christ, then, we are lifted into His heavenly interests and permitted to seek them while still on earth. A position of extraordinary elevation, this! How little do we go about as those who are risen with Christ into another region of things, and that a heavenly one! How much do we get our minds clogged with earthly things!

The Apostle recognized how great and how many the hindrances are and hence he exhorted us to mortify certain things. The "members which are upon the earth," of which he speaks in verse 5, are not of course the actual members of our bodies. The term is used metaphorically as indicating certain moral, or rather immoral, features of an earthly nature which characterized us more or less in our unconverted days. We now have heavenly interests and therefore these purely earthly features are to be mortified; that is, put to death.

Put to death is a strong and forcible expression. Our tendency is to parley with these things, and sometimes even to play

with them and make provision for them. Our safety however lies in action of a ruthless kind. Sword in hand, so to speak, we are to meet them without any idea of giving quarter. We should rather meet them after the fashion of Samuel who hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord.

But there are other things besides those specified in verse 5, which we must have done with, and these are mentioned in verses 8 and 9. It is not now, "Mortify," but, "put off." Once we lived wrapped up in these things as in a garment. When men looked at us that is what they saw. But they are to be seen no more. The ugly garment that once characterized us is to be visible no more. Another garment is to be put on as we shall see when we arrive at verse 12.

Notice how much the things mentioned in verses 8 and 9 have to do with our tongues, and consequently with our hearts which express themselves thereby. Sins of the tongue are terribly common even among Christians. We all know the kind of words that are provoked by anger, wrath and malice. Would any true believer blaspheme? Hardly, yet how very easily it is to fall into speaking of God and of divine things in a light and irreverent way. How easy too it is to utter unsavoury things with our lips, even if we do not go so far as "filthy communications." And what about lying? An

Ananias or a Sapphira may still be found. And we may go further and assert that every one of us who possesses a sensitive conscience knows right well that it is no easy thing to stick to absolute and rigid truth in all our utterances.

Truth, however, is incumbent upon us because we have put off the old man, and have put on the new. This is what we have done in our conversion, and the exhortations to put off and put on in verses 8 and 12 are based upon it. Conversion means that we have learnt to judge and condemn and refuse the old order of man and his character, and to put on the new man which is God's creation and partakes of His character. We do not for one moment say that we understood this or realized it at the moment of our conversion. But we do say, in the light of this Scripture, that this is what was really involved in our conversion, and that it is high time that we do understand and realize it.

In this new man the distinctions of this world—whether national, religious, cultural or social—simply do not exist. Christ is everything, and in all who have put on the man, for the new man is a reproduction of Himself.

Just what the old man is and what the new man is, is not easy to grasp, and still less easy to explain. In both expressions we have a certain character of man personi-

fied. In the one you have the Adam character, in the other Christ. Only it is not just idealism but a real transaction. The Adam order is judged and we have done with it and put on Christ and consequently the character of His life. We put it on however not just as a man may don a new coat, but rather as a bird dons a new dress of feathers after moulting. The new character grows naturally out of the new life we have in Christ.

In verses 12 to 15 we find portrayed the character that we are to put on. It is just the opposite to those things that we are to put off according to verses 8 and 9. We are to put off the characteristics of the old man because we have put off the old man. We are to put on the characteristics of the new man because we have put on the new man. What we *are to be* hinges entirely upon what *we are*. We are the elect of God—if indeed we are believers—holy and beloved of God. From this flows what we are to be. Grace always works thus—first what we are, then what we should be.

In these verses CHRIST is in evidence. It is His character that we are to wear. If a standard is set as to the forgiveness we are to accord to others it is, "as Christ forgave you." The peace that is to rule in our hearts is "the peace of Christ," for so it should read, and not "the peace of God," as in our Authorized Version.

Also the word, "quarrel," in verse 13 is really "complaint," as the margin of a reference Bible shows. Have we ever heard of any Christian having a complaint against another? Ever heard of a complaint! we should reply. Why the air is frequently thick with complaints! The difficulty would be to discover any Christian company without them! Well, see what is enjoined upon us in connection with such—forbearance and forgiveness; and that after the pattern of Christ Himself. For this we need the humbleness of mind, the meekness and long-suffering mentioned in verse 12, as well as the charity, or love, which verse 14 enjoins. Love is the bond of perfectness for it is the very nature of God.

The peace of Christ is that of which He spoke in the upper chamber the night before He suffered. "My peace I give unto you," He said. It is that rest of heart and mind which results from perfect confidence in the Father's love and perfect subjection to the Father's will. In our chapter we are reminded that we are called to this peace in one body. Consequently, the peace ruling in all our hearts, an atmosphere of peace pervades the whole body. The closing words of the verse, "and be ye thankful," are significant.

The men of this age are peculiarly marked by unthankfulness—see, 2 Timothy iii. 2. They see the hand of God in nothing,

and if perchance things go well with them they only say "My luck was in." It is our privilege to see the hand of God in all things, and, walking in His fear, to trace His ways with us in a thankful spirit.

The peace of Christ is followed by, "the word of Christ," in verse 16. His word gives us all the direction we need and it is to dwell in us, to have its home in our hearts. Further it is to dwell in us richly. Our hearts and minds are to be filled with it in all wisdom. We are not only to know it but also to know how to apply it to all the problems that life presents to us. And we are to be so filled with it that it overflows from us, and we communicate it the one to the other. In our every-day dealings the one with the other we are to be able to instruct each other in that which is His will, and also to warn each other against all that would divert us from His will.

Further we should be marked by praise and song. Only our hymns and songs are to be spiritual in their character, and the Lord is to be the Object before us in them--they are to be "to the Lord." Moreover we must be careful as to our own spiritual state even in our singing. Our songs are to be with grace in our hearts. Singing which springs from a mere spirit of jollification is nothing worth. When the heart is filled with a sense of grace then we can sing to the pleasure of God.

Finally every act and detail of our lives is to be under the control of the Lord, and hence done in His Name and in the spirit of thanksgiving. This comprehensive word closes these more general instructions. The next verse begins to take up things in a more particular way.

F. B. HOLE.

CONTINUE IN PRAYER.

THE native Christians in a small West African village had no privacy for prayer in their huts, so every Christian used to make off into the bush, away behind his hut, to have a time of prayer with God. Behind every Christian's hut a little track became plainly visible where they went to and fro from their places of prayer. If it ever happened that the track was rather overgrown for want of use, another Christian would come and say, "Brother, there is something the matter with your track."

We fear that many a Christian to-day has something the matter with his track. Why is it that prayer-meetings are so often deserted, or at best but poorly attended in comparison with other meetings? Because in the strain and rush of modern life private prayer is so largely neglected. Depend upon it, here lies the secret of powerless preachings, and of general lack of success in the service of the Lord. We should each be profited if some observant and kindly fellow-christian laid his hand upon our shoulder saying, "Brother, there is something the matter with your track!"

EMMAUS; OR, JESUS HIMSELF.

EMMAUS always brings to the writer's mind a certain afternoon service in the hospital ward in which he was recovering from an accident. From the text, "And Jesus Himself drew near," the speaker sought to comfort the patients. Right well the end was attained in one case at least.

The deep unchanging interest Jesus has in His people is beautifully displayed in the seeking out of His own after His resurrection. In love and peace He visits them, soothing and restoring. That we have an interest in Him is, of course, true, but it is His interest in us, coming out so clearly in His post-resurrection activities, that, if apprehended in any measure at all, must deeply affect our hearts. Do let us pause for a moment and let some of the wonder of this blessed fact get into our souls. Jesus Himself is vitally and demonstrably interested in us—in you, in me! Are you perplexed? Are you sad? Jesus Himself will instruct and rebuke, and yet soothe.

Three conditions of heart came out in the scene brought before us in Luke xxiv. 13-35. The sad heart, the burning heart, and the heart in communion with Christ.

To two disappointed and sad hearts Jesus drew near as they plodded along that memorable road to Emmaus. What joy was to be theirs as the result of the Stranger attaching Himself to them! See how perfectly He handles their case—how His presence drew the burden from them! “Then *He* said unto them.” Oh! let but Jesus speak unto them and the clouds are riven and their fears dispelled. In place of perplexity, understanding; in place of sadness, burning joy. Only to His own is known the joy of communing with Jesus. To hear His voice, by the Spirit in His word, will turn sadness into gladness. The two cannot let Him go. “Abide with us,” they beseech Him “when He made as though He would have gone further.”

Constrained by them He stays and by that which is the sign of His death, the breaking of bread, He makes Himself known to them. What love is His to interest Himself in, draw near to, and abide with His own. How it truly affects the heart and draws praise from the lips!

Experiences in the world may leave us “sadder and wiser,” but experience of Christ leaves us wiser indeed but supremely joyful. Two such hearts returned that day to recount their experiences. Has He not treated us thus, blessed be His name? May our experience of the love of Christ grow deeper and deeper!

He disappears from their sight directly He makes Himself known to them, for they and we are called to walk by faith, not by sight. Yet once more He comes to them, gathered now with the eleven and others, and assures them all that it is He Himself who "saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

What comfort it brings to the soul as we are thus assured by His word that everything is known to Him. In our wanderings, perplexities, or sadness His interest in us and love for us is unfailing, and as He "draws near" and "our hearts" are made to "burn within us," we are compelled to seek His presence, and knowing Him now in heaven to worship Him, "with great joy" — "praising and blessing God."

S. O. THURSTON.

"Behold the Lamb of God!" (John i. 36). Of what use are ten thousand sermons if that is not their theme? Of what use are tons of theology if these five words are not at the foundation?

It is not, "Behold the great world-teacher!" When a man is drowning he does not need lessons in swimming. He needs **saving**. A hopeless bankrupt is not then needing lessons on the most approved and up-to-date method of book-keeping. He needs one to save him from financial ruin.

Christ came not to instruct the sinner but to save **him**.

SHORT STUDIES IN DEUTERONOMY

A VERY slight acquaintance with this book will show us how different it is from every other book.

It marks the end of the wilderness journey—eleven days' journey which had occupied forty long years—and ere the first step is taken into the promised land Moses, at the command of God, rehearses the desert history, and the ordinances and commandments to be observed in the land. It is a sorrowful story, as we have seen in a former study, a story of unbelief, of disobedience, of murmuring.

But in contrast to all this and in spite of it, we have the wonderful revelation that the Lord loved His people; nothing that they were altered His love, and to this day they are "beloved for the father's sakes" (Rom. xi. 28). In tender and beautiful words Moses tells them, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you" hath He "brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen" (Deut. vii. 7, 8).

Our hearts may well be glad at these words, for it is the same love which has stooped down to meet our need; only now, through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and as blessed in Him, we are made children of God and are loved with that same love that rests in all its fulness on Him, as He said, "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them" (John xvii. 26).

We read also that God spoke to them. In the fourth chapter Moses tells them, "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but ye saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice." And again, "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? . . . Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice that He might instruct thee."

The foolish and flagrant infidelity of to-day denies God, denies that He has spoken; but Israel when they heard the voice from the flaming mountain-top were in no doubt who it was who spoke to them. In every age of the world's history God has spoken, by creation, by signs and wonders, by prophets, by a still small voice, and "in these last days . . . by His Son" (Heb. i. 2). Three times during the Lord's pathway through the world God spoke to Him audibly so that others might hear, and in the gospels we are allowed to listen to His words as He spoke to His Father. Let no one doubt that God has spoken, nor that by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, He speaks still to those who have ears to hear.

If it is objected that Deuteronomy is of doubtful authenticity, or that the Pentateuch is not to be taken literally, let us remember that the Lord Jesus quoted from this book. As is well known, He met the three temptations in the wilderness with words which for ever accredit it.

“IT IS WRITTEN, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. iv. 4; Deut. viii. 3).

“IT IS WRITTEN again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matt. iv. 7; Deut. vi. 16).

“IT IS WRITTEN, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. iv. 10; Deut. x. 20).

May those words, “It is written,” be deeply engraved in all our hearts. There is much in this book, much in the whole Bible that with our present knowledge we do not understand; there is much more that we might understand if we studied it more diligently. It carries within its own credentials; it is not given to teach us history, though it is greater than all history; it was not written to instruct us in science, though above all science; but, “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man *live*.”

The Apostle Paul quotes from chapter xxx. 11-14 in Romans x. 6-8, but with how

great a contrast! In Deuteronomy it is the way of law, in Romans the way of faith; as he says plainly, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). So the word, which has been given us that we may *live thereby*, must be received by faith, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There is, moreover, no alternative. By it we have the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ; by it we have the assurance of sins forgiven, and the light of eternal life; without it we live and walk in darkness, and die in the dark, without the least ray of hope beyond the grave.

There was no response in Israel to Jehovah's love, they were "children in whom is no faith" (xxxii. 20), and the law which He spake, and which was their life, was made death unto them by their disobedience. Moses set before them "life and death, blessing and cursing" (xxx. 19), and they chose the way of death and cursing—idolatry and disobedience, until the day came that, having filled up the measure of their guilt by crucifying their long-promised Messiah, the judgment predicted in chapter xxviii. 49-58 fell on them and was fulfilled to the letter. To this day they are an abiding witness to the truth of the word recorded for our warning in this book.

The only event mentioned in Deuteronomy, apart from the history rehearsed by Moses, is his seeing the land from afar, and

his death and burial. God "buried him in a valley in the land of Moab . . . but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (xxxiv. 6).

With Moses passed the last hope of man under law, *speaking typically*; actually the period of law continued until the commencement of the Christian era. The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, and Moses was the mediator who had stood in the breach when the Lord threatened to destroy the people for their sin. Not that the law was wrong, for "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. iii, 21). It had indeed been proved, beyond doubt, that there was no blessing for the people by the law, only a curse, and now the mediator whom the Lord knew face to face is dead, and the outlook would have been hopeless indeed were it not for the appointment of a new leader and of a different order of things, as recorded in the closing words of the book.

How this should stir our hearts to praise for the grace that has come to us! Now, "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5), who died, and rose, and liveth evermore, and who has annulled death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.

Before we close our study of the Pentateuch, we should briefly look at the numbering of the tribes. We may compare Genesis xlix. 1-28; Exodus i. 1-5; Numbers i. 5-15; Deuteronomy xxxiii. 6-25; and in contrast the last numbering in Revelation viii. 5-8. It will be seen that in each case the order of the names is different.

In Genesis xlix. we have Jacob's prophecy which is generally admitted to be an outline of Israel's history from that day to their final blessing under Christ. In Exodus the tribes are enumerated as in Egypt; in Numbers as in the wilderness; and in Deuteronomy as about to enter into the land; the order of the names should be compared with the final numbering in the Revelation.

It is sad to trace the same story of man's failure throughout. Reuben at the first forfeited his birthright which was given to Joseph, and entailed this loss on his tribe for all time. They were the leaders of those who settled down on the wilderness side of the river Jordan, and were the first to be carried away into captivity long after. Simeon is omitted from the record in Deuteronomy. The tribe seems to have had little interest in possessing their inheritance for we read of them later within Judah's territory. In Revelation Dan is left out, a very solemn thing, for it was in Dan

that idolatry was first systematized, and it is thought that from Dan antichrist will come. Ephraim, the tribe of "ten thousands" is not mentioned, and Joseph appears instead. Manasses, the tribe of "thousands," has a place. The Scripture in Hosea iv. 17, may explain this. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

The tribes varied in numbers and in characteristics through the years, and it may be that in the order of their enumeration this is considered.

The blessing of Judah in Genesis and in Deuteronomy must be noted, because "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. vii. 14). Judah is the royal tribe as we read in Revelation v. 5, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed." Joseph, as we saw in our study of Genesis, is a typical person, to whom the rights of the firstborn belong. The blessing of Joseph in Genesis and in Deuteronomy would seem to foreshadow millennial blessing, as though heaven and earth, sun and moon, the everlasting hills, the dew and the great deeps were all laid under tribute to gladden the kingdom of Him at whom the archers had shot and sorely wounded, and who, separate from and despised by His brethren, has been exalted by God far above all principality and power, and might and dominion. We see a little foretaste of the blessing that can no longer be limited to Israel in John

iv, when the Lord, wearied with His journey, sat on the well, "near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph," waiting to bless Samaria's outcast daughter with eternal life and joy.

Let us read one verse more. "This glorious and fearful name THE LORD THY GOD" (xxviii. 58). We whose happy lot it is, in this day of grace, to be brought to God as Father, do well to remember that God does not abate one iota of His glory and majesty; He is ever the "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty," and, whilst we worship Him with filial hearts, let our worship be also and always with reverence and godly fear. The day may be much nearer than we think when He will arise to shake terribly the earth, and will make His power and His wrath known. We may have light thoughts of sin, but let us take it to heart that the sin which has dishonoured God, necessitated the Lord's giving of Himself at Calvary, degraded man, and filled this fair earth with weeping, will yet receive its swift and due retribution.

May writer and reader be ever more earnestly interested in the study of Scripture, that therein we may learn the mind of God, and "His deep eternal counsel" for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the blessing of the vast universe.

“DO THE LITTLE JOBS WELL AND CLEAR UP AS YOU GO.”

A STRIKING message! And it was sent under circumstances that made it still more impressive. Further, it was sent by a Christian man, who illustrated his advice in his own life.

Uttered with difficulty because of breathing conditions, the message was brought from a death-bed to a number of young Christians.

The Christian man, who uttered it, was no Spurgeon or Moody, no super-organiser in Christian service. He earned his living, and devoted his spare time with a singular steadfastness of purpose in the interests of the Lord in a London Sunday School. He displayed no desire to be in the limelight. But he has left behind a memory of steadfastness and devotedness, which is inspiring.

“Do the little jobs well, and clear up as you go,” he said. Does not everyday life illustrate this? The doctor, who performs a delicate and important operation, must eat like anyone else. The little maid, who peeled the potatoes, that the doctor eat at dinner, and took care to put the peelings neatly into the dustbin, was doing a little job, and clearing up as she went. The signalman on a railway, who sees that a royal train is travelling in safety, is doing

a useful job. Everybody cannot be a king, or a successful surgeon, or something important. But most of us can “do the little jobs well, and clear up as we go.”

So in the things of God, there are little jobs to be done. Do them! Do them right heartily as unto the Lord! Do them as unto Him, and they become invested with an interest and a glory that will entwine your affections round your work.

A servant of the Lord much used in conversions was about to preach the Gospel. A band of young Christians, brothers and sisters, spent two or three hours from door to door, earnestly inviting the people to attend. What a link such might prove to be between a soul, blessed at the service, and the Lord.

Yes, “do the little jobs well, and clear up as you go.” There may be wearisome and tedious work to do, moving heavy forms, stoking a fire or heating apparatus, reading to a blind person, caring for a sick child, a thousand and one things, perhaps some of a decidedly menial nature, but nothing is menial if done unto HIM!

The writer remembers seeing five or six healthy young fisher lasses in a Scottish fishing village, advancing in a row, each with pail, scrubbing brushes, and cleaning cloths in hand, singing hymns as they came

along. He enquired what it meant. He was told they had been washing the floor and seats of a very large meeting room, and that they did it weekly. Is this not a happy example of doing the little jobs well, and clearing up as they went?

It has often been pointed out that it is not the big jobs that test us, but the little ones; not the big trials, but the little ones. May we be found faithful. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke xvi. 10).

"Do the little jobs well, and clear up as you go."

A. J. POLLOCK.

"Fill it Full of Wheat."

WE would not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. Such Gospel witness will raise a barrier against the intrusions of the apostasy. A people established in the true faith will not easily be seduced by false teachers. To make Gospel teaching more and more plain is happy service, and is, probably, the most practical way of lifting up the standard against the great flood of evil which is rolling in on all sides. Our country friends used to say, if you would keep chaff out of the bushel, fill it full of wheat. The need of the age is a frequent rehearsal of the "things most surely believed among us," with a serious Scriptural defence of them against all adversaries.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Colossians iii. 18—iv. 18).

Please have your Bible open at the passage indicated above as you read this article. The writer takes it for granted that you will do this, and consequently all his references to Scripture are in the briefest possible form.

IT is worthy of note that the instructions of this epistle are not confined to the laying down of general principles, but come down to very practical and personal details. We might have supposed that when spiritually minded believers were in question, such as the Ephesians and Colossians, nothing would be needed beyond principles, and that they might be safely left to make all needful applications themselves. It is however, just in these two epistles that we get full details as to the conduct that befits the varied relationships of life. We are told exactly how we should behave, in the full light of Christianity.

We cannot go through the world without having many and varied relations with our fellow-creatures. Most of our testings and trials reach us in connection with those relations, and hence it is God's way to leave us after conversion in the same old relationships, only teaching us how to fulfil them in the light and power which the knowledge of Christ brings. We are not set to the task of putting the world right. That will be done effectually and speedily by the Lord when He takes up the work of judgment.

We are left to bear effectual witness to what is right by acting rightly ourselves.

Though the relationships of life are so many, and varied in detail, they may, we believe, be all condensed under the three heads that we find in the verses before us—(iii. 18—iv. 1). There is, first, the *marriage* relation. Second, the *family* relation, which springs out of the marriage relation. Third, what we may term the *industrial* relation, which springs out of the fact that hard work is decreed to be man's lot as the result of his fall.

The organization of life in this world, according to God, is based upon marriage. If we read Matthew xix. we shall find the Lord opening out the truth, first upon marriage, then upon children, then upon possessions. Our passage deals with marriage, children, work, in that order. We make bold to say that NEVER was it more important for Christians to fulfil these relationships in a Christian way, for never have these divine institutions been more fiercely assailed than just now. Being bulwarks of that which is good the devil aims at their destruction, and every weapon is used from a "modernism" which has all the appearance of being scholarly and refined to the "bolshevism" which practices "free love," turns the children on the streets to prowl about in droves, and alternately encourages the workman to destroy his

master's property on the one hand, or shoots him for complaining of his miserable pay and food, on the other. We may incidentally remark just here that without a doubt "modernism" and "bolshevism" are but varying phases of the same great devil-inspired movement. The same basic principles are common to both.

In all our relations two parties are involved. It is so here. The marriage relation is taken up as between wives and husbands; the family as between children and parents; the industrial as between servants and masters. Each of the three relationships, as instituted by God, involves this, that one party shall assume the lead and the other shall be subject. Moreover, this is not a point which is left for negotiation and arrangement as between various individuals entering upon the relationship. It is a matter which is settled by the Word of God.

In each of the three cases those who have the place of subjection are addressed first. Subjection becomes the wife; obedience, the child. In the case of the servant there is to be not only obedience but heartiness and integrity. The most striking thing about the exhortations in each case is the way everything is to be done as in the sight of the Lord. This lifts the whole matter on to the loftiest plane. The wife is subject, but it is, "in the Lord." This implies that the

prime reason for her subjection is that it is the Lord's appointment. She is subject to her husband as expressing her subjection to her Lord. It is to be hoped of course that her husband bears such a character that subjection to him is no hardship but a pleasure. But even were it otherwise she would still be subject, seeing it is to the Lord.

The same principle applies to the children and to the servants. They are to consider what is pleasing to the Lord. We must remember that the servants contemplated here were bondmen—they were practically slaves. There was very little or no profit for themselves in all their labour. Yet they were to work exactly as if they were working for the Lord. And indeed they were working for Him, and they will ultimately receive from His hands a full reward for their labour, though they might never get as much as a "Thank you" from a churlish master. "Ye serve the Lord Christ," is what the Apostle says.

Subjection, we must remember, does not necessarily imply inferiority, but it does imply the godly recognition of the divinely established order.

Moreover, God's arrangements are never lop-sided. If there is a word of instruction and guidance for those who have the subject place, there is equally a word for those who take the lead. In each case the Spirit

of God puts His finger upon the weak spot. The husband is exhorted to love. Mere natural love can easily turn to bitterness, but this can never happen when his love is a reflection of the divine. If the husband is marked by love the wife has no difficulty in being subject.

So with the fathers, they are not to provoke or vex their children. Discipline is necessary and good, but, if not itself controlled by love, it may easily become excessive and vexatious to the utter discouragement of the child.

In the third case, that of the masters, the prominent thought is not that of love but of righteousness. Every Christian master should be continually asking himself in regard to his servants, "What is just? What is fair?" And further he is to remember that he himself is a servant with his Master in the heavens—a Master who has laid it down that, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Here, then, are six items of instruction which if obeyed would go far towards producing a heaven upon earth. Family discord and industrial discord would be a thing of the past! But the point here is that we, believers, should anticipate the blessedness of the millennial day, and carry out God's will in our several relationships,

while waiting for the day when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Verses 2 to 6 of chapter iv. bring us back to exhortations of a more general sort; first as regards prayer, then as regards the relations of the believer with the unconverted.

We are to pray, and not only so but to persevere in it, and to watch God's dealings that we may not miss His answers to our requests, nor fail to render thanks to Him for grace received. Moreover our prayers are not to be mainly of a personal or even selfish nature. Paul urged the Colossians to intercession on his behalf, that he might make manifest that "mystery of Christ" to which he had alluded in the epistle. He wanted them to be intercessors on behalf of the work of God, and thus taking a share in the conflict connected with it.

We are very, very weak to-day in this matter of prayer. Modern life is organized on the principle of rush, and prayer gets crowded out all too often. Again, what about persevering? When we deeply desire a thing we do persevere, but how often are we creatures of very shallow desires! Our sympathies are called forth on some point and we join in a prayer—but that is the end of it! We soon forget and there is no perseverance.

In verse 5 the unconverted are spoken of as "them that are without." There are

those within the Christian circle and those without it, and it is very important that we should be right in our relations with those without. We are set in a place of testimony in regard to them. First our general behaviour towards them is to be marked by wisdom. That being so we are sure to have opportunities for witnessing which we are to redeem by seizing them as they present themselves.

It is one thing, however, to seize an opportunity, and another to use it to best advantage. Words *not* fitly spoken are often more to be deplored than no word being spoken at all. Our words are to be always with grace. Never are we to descend to the censorious, or the bitter, or the cutting remark. But then on the other hand our words, while full of grace, are not to aim at merely pleasing men. They are to be seasoned with that which salt represents--the pungent quality of truth. Grace and truth were found in our Lord and they should mark those who are His, even characterizing their words.

The standard here set is a very lofty one. We come far short of attaining to it. Yet let us not lower the standard in our minds. Let us maintain it at its full height as seen in Christ, and let us press on toward it.

With verse 7 the closing messages and salutations begin. They present many points

of interest. Tychicus, of whom the Apostle writes so warmly, was evidently to be the bearer of this letter to the Colossians. Onesimus, who is called "a faithful and beloved brother," was the run-away slave, with whom the epistle to Philemon is concerned. What but the grace of God can turn a defaulting and absconding slave into a faithful and beloved brother in Christ? So Tychicus carried the letter to the Colossians and Onesimus the letter to Philemon when they travelled to Colosse together. Philemon does not appear in our chapter, as is natural, seeing there was the special letter for him. But Archippus appears in both letters.

At the time of writing Paul had with him Aristarchus, Mark and Justus. He was able to speak of each of them in high terms as workers for the Kingdom and as a comfort to himself. It is most encouraging to find Mark mentioned in this way since the glimpses we have of him in the Acts are so unpromising. It shows how one who was a failure at the beginning of his service was yet thoroughly recovered to complete usefulness. So much so that he eventually became the writer of the second Gospel which specially portrays the Lord as the perfect Servant. An illustration, this, of how the power of God can ultimately make us strongest in that very thing wherein at first we were weakest.

Epaphras also was with Paul but he was "one of you," that is, a Colossian, and so not "of the circumcision." Separated as he was from his own people he yet had a great zeal for them and he was fervently labouring on their behalf. This labour was accomplished in prayer.

Prayer, you see, is labour: or rather, it may be labour. Epaphras carried it to such a point that it was truly labour for him, and *continued* labour too, since Paul bears witness that it was always his practice. The word translated "labouring" really means striving or combatting. Epaphras though absent from his friends was engaged in a real prayer combat on their behalf, the object of which was that they might stand in the will of God, perfect and complete.

It is a great thing to have a full knowledge of the will of God; that the Apostle desired for the Colossians in verse 9 of chapter i. It is a greater thing to stand perfect and complete in that will. Standing in it implies that we are subject to it and characterized by it, according to that which is said in verse 10 of chapter i. It is evident that the desires and prayers of Epaphras, for the saints of Colosse and neighbourhood, ran exactly parallel with the prayers of Paul for them.

Laodicea was in the neighbourhood. It is mentioned in chapter ii. 1, as well as three times in our chapter. The very name

has a sad sound about it in view of what the Lord has to say to this church in Revelation iii. 14-22. In spite of the prayers and conflict on their behalf of a Paul and an Epaphras, in spite of the circulation of Apostolic epistles in their midst, it fell to the lowest depths. The "epistle from Laodicea," was no doubt an epistle which just at that time was being circulated from assembly to assembly.

This epistle to the Colossians and the Laodiceans sets forth exactly that truth which, had it been heeded by the Laodiceans, would have preserved them. It sets forth the glory of Christ, the Head of His church. It exhorts them to "hold the Head." Alas! they heeded it not; and the epistle to them sent from Patmos reveals them as supremely self-satisfied, and Christ, their Head, entirely outside their door.

We are, as regards the flesh, no better than they. So let us take to heart the warning with which they furnish us.

Let us also accept the word of admonition given to Archippus as applicable to ourselves. Has the Lord given a service to you? Then take good heed to perform it, however insignificant it may appear to be. Non-fulfilment of the service means laziness, which at once opens the door to decline and spiritual disaster. Nothing can preserve us but that grace, which is the closing word of the epistle.

F. B. HOLE.