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MAGAZINE

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

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD.

WE will venture to take an Old Testament text clean out of its context, and give it a modern application. We are assured however that in this we shall not be doing any violence to the spirit of the text.

As we contemplate the many and varied opinions and activities and enterprises of men, whether in the world of which Satan is the god and prince, or in that smaller sphere where men profess to own Christ as Lord, we are constrained to say, in concluding any description of it we might give, "Therefore is the name of it called, Babel [i.e. Confusion]."

The world is full of big ideas. It always has been. Yet it is always *Babel* when it comes to putting them into execution. The professing church equally bristles with ideas and is equally filled with *Babel*. We need not be surprised. It is the result of the working of God's government.

But though not surprised the true believer may very easily become distressed and confused. This should not be. We

would like to remind all our readers of One, whom we have, strong and immutable, acting outside the present order of things altogether.

Again will we go to the Old Testament for a striking word.

“ASCRIIBE YE GREATNESS UNTO OUR GOD. HE IS THE ROCK, HIS WORK IS PERFECT.” (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4).

We turn our thoughts away from the modern Babel to where He lives in heaven's unclouded rays, and it is as though a great silence falls upon us. We know the greatness of our God; and we know more, for turning our eyes upon Jesus we see Him fully revealed. We know His infinite stability as the Rock, and we know the perfection of His work as executed by the Lord Jesus. God be praised for that!

Here is rest amid the turmoil. Here is quiet amid confusion. Here is substance and solidity amid the unsubstantial and passing away.

Let it not be said of us as Moses had to say of Israel later in his song, “Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful.” In a very real sense we have been begotten of the Rock, hence some very rock-like qualities lie fundamentally in each believer. They are fostered and enlarged as our souls stay themselves upon the Rock.

The men of the world have the rocks wherein they trust. One after the other they give way. Be it ours to show in a practical way how great is our Rock, by the implicit faith with which we rest our all upon Him. Thus shall we rightly recommend Him to others, and be able to say with triumph what Moses said ere his song was finished,

“THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK,
EVEN OUR ENEMIES THEMSELVES
BEING JUDGES.”

Let us aim at building one another up in the knowledge of Himself.

THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR.

(From Notes of Addresses).

IN the minds of many there is a growing conviction that we are on the eve of great happenings, and the cry is in the heart, and sometimes on the lips, “What is coming next?” A spirit of distrust is everywhere evident, and they look in vain for the man that they feel is needed to grapple with the confusion in the world, and bring order out of social, political and religious chaos. It was this feeling that led a leading atheist to express his conviction somewhat in the form of an advertisement, “Wanted, a super-man!” They really think

that the world can produce the man they look for, but their folly will be more and more completely exposed.

History can record what *has* happened. Speculation can suggest what *may* happen. Only God can tell us what *will* happen. *Someone is coming*, that is certain; and the Scripture of truth furnishes a conclusive answer as to whom the Someone is. There is no need to speculate. His name is JESUS.

It is true that He has been here once, but that is no argument against His coming again. Give it a thought! If He came once, why should He not twice? Seeing He rose from the dead, what is there to hinder Him? If His first coming ended abruptly; if violent hands were laid upon Him, and He died upon a Roman cross, many Scriptures being thus fulfilled; if, nevertheless, all this happened before many other prophecies concerning Him had had a fulfilment, do you think that His first coming is to be the last word? By no means. His enemies despised Him in His humiliation, but they will lick the dust when He returns in glory.

At the close of His life He made mention of His return. To His enemies He said, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the

clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 62). To His disciples He spoke of it in very different terms, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John xiv. 3). He left the world amid the insults of the heartless mob, yet their hoarse shouts had not long died away before angels, who heralded His first advent, announced that, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). This message has almost the sound of a legal document. There is a fulness of expression, hedging about the words as if to save them from misinterpretation, and foil any attempt to mystify them.

Yet there are many to whom the second coming of Christ appears mystical, visionary and unreal. And this in spite of the fact that in the 260 chapters of the New Testament there are not less than 300 references to it; so that instead of being put into obscurity it was given great prominence. It was one of the main pillars of the faith. It was an important part of the apostolic testimony. The converts "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). It is all very real. It is not a merely spiritual coming. It is not death. It is not the end of the world. It is not merely an event. It is the arrival of a great Person.

I would like to lift your hearts above thinking of it as prophecy, above the mere fulfilment of predicted events, to think of it as the return of Christ Himself personally. The return of a troopship after the war with the remnant of a regiment on board was a heart-stirring event for the man in the street, who witnessed it, but it was something more to the wife, who stood amongst the crowds waiting to greet her long absent and mercifully preserved husband. She had neither eyes nor ears for the fluttering flags and martial music; she did not notice the officers and men sent to meet them. It was *her beloved* she was meeting, whereas many amongst the thousands around had lost nine tenths of their interest because the one they loved could not return.

The coming of the Lord comprises two events, or two stages of one act. When He comes again it will be for the fulfilment of the two promises still waiting accomplishment: first, to the church, His bride; second, to Israel.

In the Old Testament we read a good deal about the coming and day of the Lord. But in every case the Old Testament refers to His coming in relation to Israel and the nations, and not to the church. But ever since Pentecost the world has been divided into three classes; the Jews, the Gentiles (or, nations), and the church of God. The truth of the church is entirely unrevealed

in the Old Testament, and the church itself did not exist until Pentecost. There could not have been "the church, which is His body," until there was the Head, and until that Head by resurrection and ascension had taken His seat in glory. Then it was that God "gave Him to be the Head" (Eph. i. 20-23).

Before that time the Lord Jesus spoke of the church, but He spoke of it as something in the future. He said, "I *will build* My church," not, "I am building," or, "I will continue to build My church." The secret concerning the church was not revealed until after Paul's conversion. He speaks of it as a mystery "kept secret since the world began," in Romans xvi. 25; and in Ephesians iii. 3-5, he gives us the same fact in a fuller way.

Now this being so, it is useless to look in the Old Testament for either the church or the hope of the church. At the end of the Old Testament we have what is really Israel's hope, the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings. It is at the end of the New Testament that we have the church's hope, the bright Morning Star. And just as in nature the morning star is the harbinger of the day, so Christ's coming as the Morning Star is the harbinger of the day of the Lord and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

To make these two things distinct and

clear, the Spirit of God has used two different words in 2 Thessalonians ii. 8, where we read of "the brightness of His coming." One is *Parousia*, which means His presence, translated here, and elsewhere, *coming*. The other is, *Epiphaneia* translated, *brightness*, which means the outshining of His glory, or His manifestation. The term, the coming of the Lord, covers both these, and practically they are one event though in two stages. The church's hope is our gathering together "unto him," at His *Parousia*, as is stated in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1. Israel's hope is His *Epiphany*, when every foe will be overthrown.

By way of illustration suppose that the whole of London had risen in rebellion against the King and his government, and that they signalized it by murdering the Prince of Wales, whom he had sent to them. Suppose further that there remained in London a minority of loyal subjects, who are suffering a good deal at the hands of the insurgents by reason of their fealty to the King. Presently the news comes that the King with a mighty army is drawing near, but instead of marching right into London he calls the loyalists out to meet himself at Hatfield on the outskirts. He reviews them, rewards them, and afterwards puts them into places of trust about his person; and then all together they start forth to subjugate London and thus finish up the story of his coming.

We get frequent mention in the Scriptures of the day of the Lord. But before that day sets in the Morning Star has arisen. Before Israel gets all its hopes fulfilled the church will have been safely housed with Christ; hidden with Him for a little time, but to reappear with Him in the day of His manifestation. When He comes forth in His glory it will be as the King. When He comes for His church it will be as the Bridegroom coming for His bride.

It was to this He referred when He spoke the words recorded in John xiv. 3. He was ministering something to their sorrow-stricken hearts, which was intended to buoy them up during the time of His absence: just as a fond mother says to the weeping child she is to leave behind her, "Don't cry, dear, mother will soon be back." And accordingly the child listens for the click of the gate, or the footstep on the path, or the opening of the door, as indicating the fulfilment of the mother's promise. It is her presence that the child desires. Even so we desire the *Parousia*, the presence of our Lord.

He is coming! Coming just as He went, just as His disciples saw Him go! How did He go? An important question, for that shall be the style of His coming.

He went away visibly. Not visibly to the world, for not one unconverted person ever set eyes upon Him after He was taken

down from the cross, but perfectly visible to His disciples. Thus He will come.

He went away a real, living, risen Man, with whom they had just been personally conversing. He will come again just as real, just as living, and the happy intercourse will be resumed in heavenly glory.

He went away with hands uplifted in blessing upon His people. He will come again to usher in the crowning hour of their blessing, and for ever.

He went away privately, from the midst of His disciples suddenly carried into heaven, and only seen by them. So when He comes His first action will be to assemble all His saints to meet Him and to greet Him in the air.

What a hope is this! Has the Morning Star already arisen in our hearts?

ART. CUTTING.

SO-CALLED CONTRADICTIONS IN SCRIPTURE.

IT GOES without saying that the Bible is the most wonderful book in the world.

Its translation in part or whole into about nine hundred languages is a tribute to the living character of the book. Behind this bald statement lies a very wonderful epic of heroic effort. First of all, think

of the thousands of missionaries, who owe their conversions to this book "living and powerful;" think of the work of God fanned into a flame in their hearts, leading them to leave friends and home and Christian fellowship, and go to the ends of the earth; some to "Greenland's icy mountains;" others to the torrid plains of India; others, again, to cannibal islands of the far-off Pacific ocean. Finally think of the plodding zeal that translated the Bible into these foreign languages, and the mighty result upon the peoples speaking these languages.

All this cannot be the result of an ordinary, an uninspired book. We never forget the advice of Adolph Saphir, a converted Hungarian Jew. He exhorted his readers not to judge of Bible inspiration by isolated passages, but by *the whole*.

We have known young Christians greatly stumbled by infidels pressing upon their notice some apparent contradiction in the Bible. These infidels have no sense of proportion, no eye for the majesty of the Book, the wonder of it, no acknowledgement of its beneficent results in lives changed for the better—lives turned from heathen corruption and superstition to lives which all right minded people can respect. And the apparent contradictions the infidels bring forward are *all* capable of solution.

We desire to illustrate our point that there are not contradictions in the Bible,

but insufficient knowledge on our part. An article appeared on these lines in a well-known Christian magazine. We desire to adopt the thought and cloth it in our own language.

Let your mind travel back well nigh two thousand years. Palestine is lying under the heel of the Roman tyrant. Naturally the people long for a deliverer. This desire stimulates the frequenters of the synagogues to study the Scriptures that promise a Deliverer to be sent by God, commonly called by them the Messiah.

We will suppose that expectancy is running high and many are the discussions on this point. A group of earnest young Jews are discussing the matter. They are conversant from childhood days with the Old Testament Scriptures.

Studying the great prophetic book of Daniel, they find in chapter ix. a starting date for the Messiah's advent in the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and to build Jerusalem. This great work was done in Nehemiah's time in the 20th year of the great king. The terminus was equally clear. Sixty-nine sevens had to run their course till the advent of the great Deliverer—the Messiah, the Prince. The sevens stood for seven years. Sixty-nine sevens amount to 483 years. The late Sir Robert Anderson has carefully gone into the matter. He points out that as 360 days make up the prophetic

year the period equals 173,880 days, which brings us to the tenth day of the month Nisan, being the 18th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—the *very day* the Lord entered into Jerusalem riding on the colt of an ass, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah ix. 9.

It is not often Scripture gives us a starting and closing date, and date-setters in connection with the rapture are to be deprecated, but here are dates given.

However these young Jews were all unanimous that the time had arrived for the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. It was evident that Daniel's prophecy related to the death of the Messiah, therefore His birth might be expected a number of years earlier.

The young Jews then talked over how and when and where their Messiah would appear. Remember they could not have our knowledge of what did really happen.

One gave it out as his opinion that the Messiah would appear first at *Jerusalem*. Did not Malachi, the prophet clearly say, 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His *temple*.' (chapter iii. 1.)

Another young man quoted Zechariah ix. 9, pointing out the king was to come to the daughter of Jerusalem riding on an ass's colt into the city, as their princes and judges were wont to do. *This seemed to*

point out His approaching the city from beyond the walls. He thought this clashed with the thought of coming “*suddenly*” to the temple as Malachi pointed out.

Yet, a third young Jew referred to Isaiah, who clearly foretold that great light would shine upon “the land of *Zebulon* and the land of *Nephtalim*, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.” (Isaiah ix. 1). He thought *Galilee* would be the spot where their great Deliverer would come into the world. The prophecy seemed to admit of no doubt.

At last one of the group of young men opened the sacred scroll, and read, clearly, “But thou *Bethlehem* Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.” (Micah v. 2). The young men thought this was conclusive especially see-it was King David’s royal city, the place of his birth, as well as of his father, Jesse; and was not the Messiah to be of King David’s lineage?

Finally a fifth young man ventures a further opinion. He referred to Hosea xi. 1. “I . . . loved him and called my son out of *Egypt*.” Did not Deuteronomy xviii, 15, prophecy that *the* Prophet would be raised up, and be like Moses, and just as Moses spent his early years in Egypt, might not

the Messiah be like him in that respect, and be called out of Egypt?

The long discussion came to an end. The young men felt that here were difficulties in the Holy Scriptures that were perplexing, to say the least of it.

Yet all these prophecies came true. They all fitted into each other in a wonderful way. Years rolled by as the prophecies were fulfilled one after another.

The Messiah was born in *Bethlehem* as Micah foretold. He was called out of *Egypt* as Hosea had prophesied. He was a *Nazarene* as the prophets pointed out. He dwelt in *Capernaum* in the coasts of *Zebulon* and *Naphtali*, and so those parts saw the great light as Isaiah had foretold centuries before. He came to the *Temple* as Malachi, foretold, though that prophecy may await a larger fulfilment in the coming day of Messiah's power. He rode in triumph into *Jerusalem* as Zechariah foretold.

Before the Lord came to earth it was impossible for any one to fit these Scriptures together, and yet how simply they were all fulfilled.

If this article is used to show how simply the apparent contradictions all harmonized in due season, and so to strengthen the faith of young Christians it will have achieved its purpose. What a mercy to

possess a reliable, inspired revelation from God, that can stand the test triumphantly on all occasions.

A. J. POLLOCK.

“NOT ASHAMED.”

VARIOUS kinds of messengers have been used by God. Angels have brought His messages to men. But it is His way to-day to use sinners saved by grace. He enables them by His Holy Spirit to tell of forgiveness and salvation through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Writing to a young servant of Christ, the Apostle to the Gentiles said himself that he was the chief of sinners; and that it was “a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” He also wrote, “I am *not ashamed* of the glad tidings; for it is God’s power to salvation, to everyone that believes.”

It is said in 1 John iv. 14, “We have seen, and testify, that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world” (N. Tr.) We are not told to preach ourselves, but the Son of God. He is the Saviour, and there is none other. There is no need to be ashamed of Him, though there may be good reason to be of others.

A young man was speaking earnestly at a meeting in the open air. An acquaintance afterwards said, “You ought to be ashamed of yourself, standing up there and preaching!” The reply was unanswerable, “I have good reason to be ashamed of *myself*, but I am not ashamed of *my Saviour!*”

“*Preach Christ!*” were the last words of an aged evangelist to another young preacher. The more simply this is done the better! Very illiterate men have been greatly used. It is written of certain haughty religious ritualists and rationalists of old, when they saw “the boldness of Peter and John, and perceiving that they were unlettered and uninstructed men, they wondered.” (Acts iv. 13. N.Tr.)

Leaving the ornate cathedral service one night, an educated young man was downcast, unsatisfied and unhappy. Quite near, an aged miner preached God’s way of salvation in the market place. As he passed, the young man listened. His anxious soul drank in the message. Soon after he was at a meeting, where others, who were saved by and separated to our Lord Jesus Christ, welcomed him; and he told how the glad tidings simply preached had brought liberty, peace and joy to his soul.

There are many troubled sinners to-day. What can help them? The plain gospel concerning God’s Son can! “Neither is

there salvation in any other; for there is *none other Name under heaven given* among men, whereby we must be saved." It was thus the apostles spake (Act iv. 12). Who can improve on their inspired words?

"Ah, Lord, enlarge our scanty thought,
To know the wonders Thou hast wrought;
Unloose our stammering tongues to tell
Thy love, immense, unsearchable."

H. J. VINE.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Ephesians i. 1-18.*)

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

AS WE closed the Epistle to the Romans last month we noticed that the Apostle Paul earnestly desired the establishment of the saints in a two-fold way; first, "according to my Gospel," and second, "according to the revelation of the mystery." Romans gives us a full unfolding of the former, while Ephesians more fully than any other epistle reveals to us the latter.

Romans moreover, while instructing us in the fulness of the grace of God, presents it to us as meeting in all particulars our need which has been created by sin. Eph-

esians, on the other hand, unfolds to us that grace of God which is according to His purpose. The words, "according as," or "according to," occur no less than six times in chapter i., and always in connection with His will, His pleasure, His purpose, His power, rather than our need.

A benevolent man of wealth might show great kindness to a poor lad of the streets charged with some petty offence. He might for instance, not only deliver him from the clutch of the law by paying a fine but deliver him from ignorance by having him educated, and from poverty by paying for his keep. That would be kindness in reference to his need. But if he formed designs to place him in a position of great nearness to himself and of great wealth and influence, that would be not according to his actual need but according to the pleasure and purpose of his own benevolent mind. This may serve as an illustration.

After the opening words of salutation the Apostle goes straight to the heart of his theme in the spirit of a worshipper. We have been blessed in such rich fashion by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He blesses God in return and carries our hearts with him in doing so. The blessings that are ours are characterized by three things. They are spiritual, not material as were Israel's blessings under the old covenant, in such matters as ample

food and health and peace under divine rule. They are heavenly and not earthly, since the sphere where they are to be fully realized and consummated is heaven, and their present administration to us is from heaven. They are in Christ. He, as the risen One, and not Adam, the fallen one, is the Fountain-head of them all. If we are in Christ they all are ours.

But in blessing us after this wonderful fashion God has wrought in keeping with an act of His mind in a bygone eternity. Before the foundation of the world He chose us in Christ. Let those two words, "in Him," be noted, for again and again they, or their equivalents, occur in this chapter. As a matter of history we each were in Adam before we were in Christ, but before Adam was created, God saw us as in Christ, and on that basis we were chosen. What was in view in His choice was that we might be holy and blameless before Himself in love.

Such is the efficacy of the work of Christ that each believer to-day stands before God as holy and without blame, and is in the embrace of that divine love from which nothing can separate him. This we have seen in Romans viii. The full and ultimate application of these words in verse 4 must however, be carried on into a future eternity. It has been remarked that very little is said in the Bible in the way of a description

of heaven; yet these words are practically just that. When the Spirit's work in us has reached its completion, including the quickening of our mortal bodies at the first resurrection, we shall be landed in heaven. We shall then be marked by perfect holiness of nature, and perfect freedom from all blame as to conduct. We shall be forever in the presence of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in an atmosphere of perfect love. That will be heaven indeed. Thus verse 4 begins in a past eternity and ends in a future eternity.

Verse 5 carries matters a step further. God had in His mind a certain relationship for us and He destined us to that relationship when He chose us, even the state and place of sons. Now this was not a need or necessity on our side. We should still have been very happy if, rescued from our sin, we had been appointed to a place amongst His servants. The relationship is not according to our need but "according to the good pleasure of His will." How thankful we should be that the pleasure of His will is as good as this! We are sons of God now but we are going to stand forth in the full dignity and glory of sonship when heaven is reached. Then indeed the real glory of His grace will be manifested, and result in eternal praise.

In working out this glorious purpose, certain steps have been taken and these are

now detailed for us—acceptance, redemption, forgiveness. We are working downwards to that which is simplest and most fundamental. In our understanding of things we usually begin with the forgiveness of sins. Then perhaps we apprehend the meaning of the redemption which we have in the blood of Christ, and begin to experience the freedom which that redemption has bought. Then on top of this comes the discovery of the fact that not only are we set free from slavery but that we stand in a positive acceptance before God, even in the acceptance of Christ, who is the Beloved One. His acceptance gives character to, and is the measure of, ours. In Colossians iii. 12 the saints are spoken of as beloved of God, and that of course flows out of the fact that they are accepted in the Beloved.

All this, whether it be redemption or forgiveness, is ours “according to the riches of His grace.” We were in the poverty of our sin, and this has become the occasion for the display of the wealth of His grace. If we read 1 Kings x. we may see how Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba all she desired, and then capped it by that which he gave her “of his royal bounty.” He satisfied her large desires and then went beyond them in the superlative greatness of his kingly munificence. In this he acts as a type. God has acted according to His exceeding riches of grace. The very forgive-

ness of sins which He has accorded us has been granted in a style and with a fulness worthy of the great and gracious God He is.

But there is more. Not only has He thus abounded to us in connection with His grace, but also in connection with His wisdom. Verse 8 speaks of "wisdom and prudence [or, intelligence]." The secrets of His wisdom He has made known in order that we may intelligently enter into and enjoy them. God has always acted according to His own will, though in the presence of sin and its ravages He chose for long ages to keep the main purpose of His will as a secret or mystery; and the pleasure of His will and purpose has always been good, for He is good. This is a great fact that we do well to lay hold of firmly. The "pleasure of His will" is good (ver. 5). The "pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself" is good (ver. 9). God's pleasure and purpose is not connected with judgment, though that work, which He calls His "strange work," is necessary, and to be fulfilled in due season.

Verse 10 tells us what the real secret of His will and purpose is. In the coming age, spoken of here as "the fulness of times," He is going to gather together in one all things in Christ, both things earthly and things heavenly. No mention is made here of things infernal, for this predicted gathering together is in connection with a world of blessing, and consequently things infernal

lie outside it. By establishing Christ as the exalted and glorified Head of all things there will be established on earth as well as in heaven a divine system of unity and blessing. Sin is lawlessness: it makes of every man in effect a little unit on his own, finding his only centre in himself. Hence during all these ages in which sin has been reigning, no matter how skilfully men try to engineer their unities, disintegration has been the order of the day. God has His unity. He is working towards it. When Christ is publicly established in glory as Head, God's purpose as to unity will be reached, as far as His government of heavenly and earthly things is concerned.

The coming age is going to witness at last the fullest possible harmony between the heavens and the earth, and Christ Head in both spheres, producing the unity. All is in Him. But then through grace we are already in Him, and thus have obtained an inheritance in all this wealth of blessing. That to which we are destined has been settled beforehand, not according to our need, nor even according to our thoughts or wishes, but according to the purpose of God, who effects all things as He pleases. We may be sure, as a consequence of this, that no possible slip can come between us and the inheritance to which we are destined.

The Apostle does not stop at this point to instruct us as to the particular character

of this inheritance, but he does tell us that when all is consummated we shall be to the praise of God's glory. Angels and men will gaze at that which God has accomplished in regard to us, and they will see in it some fresh display of His glory and utter to Him their praise. We need not wait until that day. These things are made known to us so that instructed in them we may gain fresh glimpses of His glory and be filled with His praises now. We may enjoy communion with God about these purposes of His grace, and realizing that all centres in Christ and is for His glory, we find subject matter and material for our praise and worship.

As we pass from verse 12 to verse 13 we notice a change in the pronouns, from "we" to "ye." In writing, "we . . . who first trusted in Christ," the Apostle's mind was dwelling on saints gathered out of Israel including himself, whereas the "ye" referred to saints gathered out from the Gentiles. The Jewish believers were a kind of firstfruits of their nation. By and by a redeemed and restored Israel will be for Jehovah's praise on earth. But those who trusted in Christ beforehand during this gospel age will have part in the heavenly calling and be to His praise in the heavenly places.

In all this however, the Gentile believers fully shared. They too, had heard the Gospel which brought them salvation, and

having believed it they had been sealed with the Spirit, who is the earnest of the inheritance. In His character as the seal, the Spirit marked them out as belonging to God. As the earnest He is the pledge of the inheritance which lies before us, and also He gives the foretaste of the blessings attached to it.

Let us carefully note the order set before us in this verse. First, the hearing of the Gospel. Second, the believing of it. Third, the receiving of the Spirit. This order is quite invariable. We never believe before we hear. We never receive before we believe. If any enquire, Have I received the Spirit? we have to propound to them the previous question, Have you heard and believed the Gospel of your salvation? The one proceeds out of and flows from the other.

Again we shall do well to notice the fact that not only did we trust in Christ but we were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise in Christ. "*In whom . . . ye were sealed.*" All is found to be in Christ. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person in the Godhead and to be distinguished from Christ, yet we must not totally separate Him from Christ in our minds. This is the case with all the three sacred Persons. They are to be distinguished but not separated. The Spirit has been sent by Christ from the Father, and in Christ He has sealed us—sealed us, you see until the whole possession purchased

by the death of the cross is redeemed from the last adverse power that tends to hold it in bondage; that is, until the coming of the Lord. The Spirit is given to abide with us for ever. We may grieve Him but we cannot grieve Him away.

Having thus given an unfolding of the characteristic blessings of the individual Christian, Paul proceeds to tell the Ephesians of his thanksgivings and prayers on their behalf. He gave thanks for them as he thought of the wealth of spiritual blessing into which they had been introduced, and his prayer was that they might have an intelligent and spiritual understanding of all connected with the calling and inheritance which was theirs. We may be very certain that what he desired for the Ephesians is just what is highly desirable for us to-day.

In these prayers the Apostle addressed himself to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." God is indeed the Originator and Source of all glory, and to Him our Lord Jesus, when here as the subject Man, looked up as His God, as we see prophetically expressed in Psalm xvi. Our thoughts are thus fittingly directed to the place which the Lord Jesus took as Man, inasmuch as it is as Man that He takes His place as the exalted Head in the wide creation of blessing. Further it is in Him as Man that we see the Pattern and

Fulness of all that which is ours in Him. Everything is expressed in Christ, and we have nothing apart from Christ. The thing so greatly to be desired is that we may have the full knowledge of all that is purposed in connection with Him.

We come to know the wonders of God's purposes and work in connection with the knowledge of Himself. As we know Him we know that which springs forth from Him. Hence the first request of the Apostle concerns "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." We can only know Him by revelation, since by no amount of searching can we discover Him; and again on our side wisdom is needed, that spirit of wisdom which comes from the Spirit of God.

The word, "understanding," in verse 18 should really be, "heart." It is not a matter of cold intellectual understanding but rather the understanding of warm affection. Can anything be cold which centres in Christ? And it does centre in Christ; for though the "Him" which closes verse 17 grammatically refers to God the Father, it cannot but also point to Christ, for He alone is the Revealer of the Father. To have the full knowledge of the Father we must know Christ, the Son.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(1) THE PROMISE.

John xiv. 15-17, 26; *xv.* 26-27; *xvi.* 7-15.

THE fact that our blessed Lord said so much about the Holy Spirit as recorded in these chapters must at once impress us with the immense importance of this subject. If we note a few outstanding points it may assist us in our consideration of it.

(1.) *THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DIVINE PERSON.*

The way in which the Lord speaks of Him makes this abundantly clear. Have we not to ask ourselves, to what extent do we realise the fact that just as there was a divine Person in the world when our Lord Jesus Christ was here, so there is a divine Person in the world now? The difference being that Christ was seen and heard; whereas the Holy Spirit is not seen, therefore He is not received nor known by the world. (*xiv.* 17.)

(2.) We next observe that He was to be (a) sent by the Father; (b) sent by the

Son; and (c) would come. (xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13.) This, on the one hand, establishes His deity; and, on the other hand, sets Him forth as coming here to be the Servant of the Godhead in connection with Its interests in this world during the absence of the Lord Jesus.

(3.) Three times does our Lord speak of Him as

“*THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.*”

He had said of Himself in the familiar and precious words of xiv. 6, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Think of those loved disciples listening that night to Him who was; who is; and who ever shall be the “*I AM.*” How they must have been thrilled as they heard Him say, “*I AM THE TRUTH.*” Not the unfolder of the truth, nor the expression of the truth; but He, who was with them in the fashion of a Man, was, and is, “*THE TRUTH.*” We can understand then that the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth.”

(4.) All this makes the promise of the Holy Spirit more wonderful the better we apprehend it. Our wonder increases as we discover how intimately associated with us He should be. Three things we indicate in their reverse order for it is thus that we receive them.

(a) "Shall be in you" (xiv. 17). (b) "Dwelleth with you" (xiv. 17). (c) "Shall abide for ever" (xiv. 16). Every true believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If we grasp this great fact we will not pray for the Holy Spirit because He indwells us; and we will allow Him so to order our lives that we shall give pleasure to the One who indwells us, bring glory to God, and exalt our adorable Lord. He has come to dwell with us. Not a lodger; not a passing visitor; but to find His home in our heart. Knowing this we cannot pray that He may not be taken from us. David might pray thus, (Psalm li. 11.) and the Old Testament saints could say "Amen" to such a petition. In those days the Holy Spirit in the exercise of His divine sovereignty took possession of whom He pleased, not always good men at that—e.g. Balaam. (Numbers xxiv. 2)—used them for a particular purpose, and then came upon some other person. Now He has come to stay, and in the body of the believer He finds His dwelling place. How precious the assurance "that He may abide with you for ever." Never will He leave us; and always will He minister to us.

(5.) His offices are plainly stated. (a) Comforter. Just here we must turn aside to consider the peculiar circumstances in which these words were spoken. It was the night in which our Lord was betrayed. His last words to the world are recorded in chapter xii.

He decided to spend the closing hours before His death with His disciples. They were in the seclusion of the upper room. Outside, the world clamoured for His death. It was a black night for those eleven men. They were about to lose their beloved Lord and Master, and there seemed not a ray of light to illumine the darkness. He sought to cheer them by telling them that He would come again; that the Father's house should be their home; and that they would have Himself once more, never again to part.

We could imagine those disciples saying, "That is good, but what about the in-between! Who will care for us, protect us, and carry us through in face of all the opposition that we may expect from the world?" Just then He gave them this priceless promise, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you *another Comforter*, that He may abide with you for ever" (xiv. 16). This word we find four times in these three chapters, and once the same word in the original is translated "Advocate." (1 John ii. 1). It is said that the word, *solicitor*, expresses the meaning. One who looks after our interests. The Lord Jesus seemed to say in effect, "While I have been with you I have been your Comforter. I have relieved you of anxiety; I have protected you from the foe; I have ministered to your needs spiritual and temporal; I have looked after you in every possible way. When I have gone you shall have another Com-

forter, whose interest, whose life, whose power, and whose care shall not be less than Mine." Hallelujah! What a Saviour! How well cared for are we now! We have the Lord Jesus looking after our interests in the presence of God, the Holy Spirit looking after our interests down here, and both in constant communication as to the promoting of our greatest blessing and spiritual prosperity.

(b) The Holy Spirit is *the Teacher* (xiv. 26). This verse may refer primarily to the apostles, but we can apply it to ourselves, He seeks to teach us all things (see, 1 John ii. 27.)

(c) He is the power for fruit-bearing or witnessing (xv. 26, 27). These words also are, in the first instance, for the apostles. We have been left here however to bear fruit, and to witness for our absent Lord. We can do this only as we are enabled to do so by the Holy Spirit and as we are subject to Him in all things.

(d) The Holy Spirit's presence here brings demonstration to the world of its rejection of Christ. (xvi. 8). He is here because Christ is not here, and Christ is not here because the world has refused Him. He is also here to guide us into all truth. (xvi. 13). Can we conceive the greatness and the grandeur of this? Let us try to think of the vast, illimitable range of truth

that lies open before us. That which the natural man, however great, or distinguished, or learned, cannot receive, but into which the Holy Spirit would guide the simplest believer. His further work is to show us "things to come." In it all to glorify Christ; to set before us the great expanse of all the things that belong to the Son because they belong to the Father, and to give us to know that love that

"Gives, not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs."

Have we not to challenge our hearts here? Must we not ask ourselves—how much of this "all truth" do we know? What is the extent of our acquaintance with "things to come"? Just how much do we enjoy being divinely instructed in the things of the Father and of the Son? Do we not feel how miserably poor is our apprehension of these things and our delight in them.

Let us sum up. The Holy Spirit has taken possession of us in order that He may look after our interests, and that as a result we may be taken up with the interests of Christ. His normal work is to teach us; to fit us to be witnesses; to guide us into all truth; to show us things to come; to glorify Christ; to communicate to us things that neither angels in heaven nor natural men upon earth could understand, but only those whom He indwells and whom He teaches.

Let us again ask ourselves. "How much do we know?" Is it possible that the things of earth have such a place with us, or that there is the allowance of that in our lives that hinders the Holy Spirit in His much-loved work? If so, shall we here and now pray that every hindrance may be removed, that every barrier may be broken down, so that He may be able to work in us as Comforter, Teacher, Power, Guide, and all else that will conduce to the glory of Christ, and our present and lasting blessing?

May our souls be stirred! May our hearts be exercised! And may we place ourselves unreservedly at the Holy Spirit's disposal to work in us and through us as He will.

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

To follow. (D.V.) THE HOLY SPIRIT. (2) His Advent and Operations.

ABIGAIL.

(1 *Samuel xxv.*)

INTERWOVEN in the story of David's chequered life, there are many fine characters, of whom, Jonathan, the three mighty men that drew water from the well, Mephibosheth, and Ittai, are bright examples. Among these friends of David, there is not one, perhaps, that wears a more beautiful

character than Abigail, the Carmelitess. Very significantly her name means "source" or "cause of delight;" and surely her story proves that she was a source of delight to the heart of David.

At the moment that she comes upon the scene, David, though the anointed of the Lord—the coming king, and the man of God's heart—is seen as a hunted man, in the place of reproach, hiding in the caves of the earth; a needy wanderer in desert places; surrounded by a band of faithful followers, who had gathered themselves unto him (xxii. 1, 2). In the course of his wanderings, he, and his followers, went about doing good; for the shepherds of one Nabal have to own that David and his men "were very good unto us." They protected the shepherds and their flocks night and day; so that, as long as David and his men were in their neighbourhood, they lost nothing.

This Nabal, who had received such benefits from David and his men, comes before us as a man of substance and high social position. He was in the eyes of the world, a "very great" man—one who could entertain in royal style. (verses 2, 3, 36.) He was, however, in God's sight, a churlish man and "evil in his doings;" one that would brook no interference from others (3, 17). He professes to have no knowledge of David; for he asks, "Who is

David and who is the son of Jesse? ” Doubtless he knew of David’s great victory over the giant, and how the women had sung his praises; but probably he looked upon David as one whose head has been turned by his great deeds, and the songs of women, and, aspiring to the throne had become a rebellious servant who had broken away from his master, king Saul. If any rumour of Samuel having anointed David to be the king, had reached his ears, he evidently treated it as a matter of complete indifference. He paid no heed to such reports; to Nabal, David was only a runaway servant.

Thus it comes to pass when David appeals to Nabal, in a day of plenty, to make some recompense for benefits received, that David’s young men are driven away with insults (4-12). David, incensed by such treatment, prepares to take vengeance (13).

This brings Abigail to the front. She is described as a woman of a beautiful countenance, and, moreover, “of good understanding.” She had evidently considered the people and events of her day, and the Lord had given her understanding according to that word of an Apostle, uttered so long after, “*Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding.*” She hears from one of the young men of her husband’s folly, and immediately acts in faith, and hence, without consulting her husband. Nature could only see in David a

runaway servant: faith, not looking at mere outward circumstances, sees, in the hunted and needy David, the coming king. Thus she takes her place as a subject of the king, and acts with the deference that is becoming in the presence of a king. She prepares her present and, having met David, she fell at his feet, bowed herself to the ground, and owned David as her lord. She takes sides with David against both her husband and king Saul. She owns that Nabal, though her husband, and a great man in the world, is acting in an impious and foolish way; and that Saul, though the reigning king, is but "a man" that is opposing God's anointed. She sees that David, though hunted and in poverty, is "bound up in the bundle of the living," and coming into a glorious inheritance.

Like Jonathan she had a high position in this world, as the wife of a "very great" man; in contrast to Jonathan she was not hindered, by her social position, from identifying herself with David in the day of his poverty and reproach. Very blessedly she looks beyond the day of David's suffering, and sees his coming glory. In view of that glory, and in confidence in the king, she can say, "When the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid;" words which cannot but recall that far greater scene, when a dying thief discerned, in a crucified Man, the Lord of glory, and the King of kings; and, looking

beyond the awful circumstances of the moment to the coming glory, in confidence in the King, could say, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into thy Kingdom." Thus the high-born Abigail and the low-born thief, with the same faith, look beyond the present, and act and speak in the light of the future; and the future justifies their faith.

David, though in wilderness circumstances, rightly acts with royal dignity, as a king with a subject. He dismisses Abigail with his blessing after having accepted her present, hearkened to her requests, and accepted her person (32-35).

Returning to her husband, Abigail finds him debasing himself at a drunken feast. When sober he is informed of what has taken place, and at once "his heart died within him, and he became as a stone." About ten days after the Lord smote him, and, to use Abigail's figure, he is flung aside in judgment even as a stone is slung from the middle of a sling (29, 36-38).

Having obtained her freedom by death, Abigail becomes the wife of David. She leaves her high position, and the ease and comfort, that was naturally the lot of a woman of substance, to associate herself with David in his sufferings and wanderings. In this new path she will indeed know suffering and privation, even to being

taken captive by David's enemies in the day of Ziklag; but she will also share his throne in the day of his reign at Hebron (xxx. 5: 2 Samuel ii. 2).

Have we not in this touching story a foreshadowing of David's greater Son? Do we not see in the rejected and hunted David a picture of the One who was despised and rejected of men? Granted there is much in David that betrays the man of like passions with ourselves, yet, as a type how strikingly he sets forth the One who, in all His path of rejection, was absolutely perfect. David may, in a rash moment, gird on his sword to take vengeance upon his enemies; Peter, in like spirit, will draw his sword to defend his Master; but, Christ, Himself, in the presence of His enemies, will say, "Put up again thy sword into his place." In every type there are these contrasts, only serving to show that no type can fully set forth the perfection of Jesus. Others may give us, at times, a very blessed foreshadowing of the coming One, but they are but shadows: Christ is the substance, and He alone is perfect.

If in David we can see a type of Christ, the King of kings, can we not see in Nabal a picture of the world's attitude towards Christ, whether in the days of His flesh, or during His present session at the right

hand of God? Nabal-like the thoughts of the world do not travel beyond the present time. As then, so now, it is a world bent upon present gain, feasting and pleasure. By such a world Christ is a despised and rejected Man; One in whom it sees no beauty; One whom it sets at nought; a world that has no sense of its need of Christ. It may indeed put on a Christian profession, yet, even so, it is so well satisfied with itself, that it can say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"—not even "need" of Christ. Thus though it puts on the name of Christ, it puts Christ, Himself, outside its doors. Yet, such is the long-suffering grace of Christ that, as David appealed to Nabal, even so He stands at the door of the professing Church, and knocks.

If, however, in the midst of this Christ-rejecting Christendom, there are any that hear His voice, and open the door to Christ, how rich will be their blessing. In the present such will know sweet communion with Christ in the day of His rejection, for the Lord can say to the one that opens the door to Him, "I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." In the future, the one that has supped with Christ in the day of His rejection, will reign with Him in the day of His glory, for the Lord can say, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on my throne."

Of all this was not Abigail a bright example? When the world of her day slammed the door in David's face, she opened her door, and put her bounty at his disposal; and she had her bright reward. She enjoyed sweet communion with David, as his wife, in the day of his reproach; she sat with him on his throne, in the day of his glory.

Happy for us if we take warning by Nabal, and follow the example of Abigail. Happy indeed if we whole-heartedly separate from the corruptions of the Christian profession in order to gather to Christ in the outside place of His reproach. Christendom is putting forth vast efforts to bring about an unholy unity, in which every vital truth of Christianity will be denied, or lost in a mist of speculation, which Christ, Himself, will be outside; only to find, at last, that they have united to be spued out of Christ's mouth. Well then for the true saints to be awakened to the solemnity of the day in which we live, and hear the voice of the Lord as He says, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 4).

Those that obey the words of the Lord will find, even as Abigail in her day, that the ties of nature, social position, and worldly religious authorities, will have to be over-

come. If, however, like Abigail we are overcomers, we shall find the outside place with Christ one of deepest present blessing and highest future glory.

HAMILTON SMITH.

“THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.”

(*Haggai ii. 7.*)

WHO is the desire of all nations? Some commentators think it must refer to antichrist, for who can say that the nations really desire Christ? They want His opposite and the antichrist will be the apotheosis of all that the natural man craves for. He will be attractive, dazzlingly attractive to the carnal mind, and will evoke delirious outbursts of praise and admiration.

But antichrist will be in God's sight the maximum of sin—sin incarnate—sin that must be smitten, for when once a creature aspires to deity judgment does not linger. Satan aspired to deity and fell. Herod was saluted with the shout, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,” and because “he gave not God the glory” the angel of the Lord swiftly smote him, and he was consumed of worms and died. So it will be with the antichrist. His triumph will be measured by months, long enough to carry

out the purpose of God, and then the blow will fall.

Others think the desire of all nations will be the Lord Jesus Christ, and surely they are right. Examine Haggai ii. 6-9, and that will appear abundantly plain. The expression, "The Desire of all nations shall come," lies between the Lord of Hosts shak-all things in judgment, and His filling the house of the Lord, the Temple, with His glory, surpassing even the scene at the first dedication by King Solomon, when the priests could not stand because of the overwhelming glory.

The nations cannot be said to desire Christ at this moment, but they do desire the blessings that only He can bring.

For instance the nations desire *peace*. Who can give it to them? The League of Nations ardently works for peace. It labours for the disarmament of the nations, and yet the nations are armed as never before. It hands in its ultimatum to distant nations, and they pay no heed. The League of Nations has not even moral force enough behind it to control the nations, and it certainly has not physical force. However much we may admire the humanitarian efforts of the League of Nations, we can see that peace, so much needed by a world bled white, will not come that way.

Only the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the Prince of peace can satisfy the craving of the human heart and bring in *peace*.

The nations desire *righteousness*. China would like to get rid of her bandits; Chicago would like to get rid of her toughs and gunmen; commerce would like to get rid of her wild-cat company promoters; the working classes cry aloud for righteousness; employers cry aloud for the same, as the one class feels it is being sweated and imposed upon, the other complaining that labour does not give them an adequate return for their wages. The nations desire *righteousness*. Acts of parliament will not give it; international law will not encompass it. The outlook is hopeless as far as man is concerned.

Only the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the Prince of peace can bring in *righteousness*.

The natives desire *prosperity and plenty*. But things wax worse and worse. One nation has too little gold, and population grows and unemployment mounts higher and higher.

Another nation has too much gold—frozen gold it is called and it has an appalling sound—difficulties increase and unemployment and misery mounts higher and higher. Even the produce of the ground is ruth-

lessly destroyed. Coffee destroyed by thousands of tons; cotton destroyed; the produce of the soil destroyed. Want and misery and starvation on every hand, and yet produce, that would help to solve the difficulty, destroyed. Fishermen come in from the sea, learn how much fish has been caught, and that there is no demand, and overboard goes all or part of their fishing. It is a strange condition of things, passing the wit of man to rectify.

Only the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the Prince of peace can bring *prosperity*,

Aye, and when the shaking of all the nations comes according to Haggai's prophecy, we shall see men in their abject misery, in the utter failure of all their efforts to right things, discovering that what they want—peace, righteousness, prosperity, plenty—will never come through an earthly dictator, will never come through the Roman Empire with its superb organization, will never come through antichrist and the negation of every divine principle. The nations will at last discern that only the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the Prince of peace, can bring in their desire, 'such desire being purified and elevated through the sorrows of the great tribulation. Their desire will be the Son of God at last, and in Him they will find every desire amply fulfilled.

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Ephesians i. 18—ii. 10*).

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

IN the first place, the prayer of the Apostle concerned itself with the spiritual state of his readers. The things of God can only be discerned by those who have the eyes of their heart enlightened. Many things there are, both in the world around us and the flesh within, which, if permitted by us, inevitably form a kind of cataract film upon our spiritual eyes and hinder our understanding. This helps us to understand why in writing to Timothy Paul said, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine." Except he began by taking heed to himself he was not likely to obtain much good from the doctrine. Nor are we.

After that, the prayer divides itself into three parts, concerning respectively the calling, the inheritance and the power by which God brings to pass His purposes concerning us. The calling has been indicated in verses 3 to 7, and the inheritance in verses 10 to 14, whereas the power had not previously been mentioned, but is opened up to us in the closing verses of our chapter and in chapter ii.

We might perhaps sum up "His calling," as expounded to us in those earlier verses, in the one word, *sonship*. The prayer how-

ever is not merely that we may know the calling, but rather what is the *hope* of His calling. Well, what is this hope? If He who calls is GOD; if the place to which we are called is that of SONS; if that place is ours "by Jesus Christ," and as—"IN CHRIST"; what are we to expect? What but *heavenly glory*?

This indeed was no small prayer. Are we disposed to regard it lightly—and say, Oh, but we all know that: we all expect to go to heaven when we die—we only thereby show that we do not really know as yet what the hope involves and signifies. Were the eyes of our hearts so enlightened that we really knew it, we should be thoroughly delivered from the ensnaring attractions of the world-system that surrounds us. We should be wholly lifted above its unhallowed influences, and thus fitted to go through it in a way that glorifies God.

Nor are we only to know what is the inheritance. That knowledge might easily be arrived at in an intellectual way by reading the few verses that speak of it. But what are the riches of the glory of that inheritance? It is His inheritance, you notice, not ours: and it is "in the saints," which means, we understand, not so much that the saints form the inheritance—though they form part of it, no doubt—as that it is by and in the saints that He will take up His inheritance.

When God took Israel across the Jordan to conquer the land of Canaan, He took the initiative Himself by means of the ark. It was said, "The ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan" (Joshua iii. 11). The position was that God took possession of the land *in* His people Israel; that is, by putting them into possession. Presently He will make good His claim to the whole earth *in Israel*, and the glory of the millennial age will commence. It will be very great glory on earth. Now what will be the riches of that heavenly glory when Satan and his hosts are cast out of heaven, and the saints established in the heavens, and, as verse 10 has told us, Christ is the supreme and unifying centre in those realms of blessedness? It will be riches beyond all our conceptions. Only the Father of glory can give us the spiritual eyesight to take it in.

Thirdly, we are to know the greatness of the power of God, which acts on behalf of us who have believed. That power has fully expressed itself in the raising of Christ from the dead and in His exaltation, and is now actively working towards us. We have only to think of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ to realize how appropriate is the adjective, "exceeding," or, "surpassing." His power is characterized not merely by greatness but by *surpassing* greatness.

We do well to bear in mind that when the Lord Jesus went into death He put

Himself, if we may so say, beneath all the weight of antagonistic human power, and also all the power of darkness wielded by Satan, and further beneath all the weight of the divine judgment due to sin. Out of all this and into resurrection He was lifted by the power of God. This emphasizes very clearly the greatness of the power of God.

But further, we have to consider all that into which He has been lifted, as detailed in the closing verses of chapter i. Here we see a greatness which is surpassing indeed. He is gone into the heavenly places and is seated at the right hand of God; that is, in the place of supreme administration. In that position He is above every other name and every other power, whether in this age or the age to come. And not merely above, but "far above." No comparison can be instituted between any other and Him. All things are put beneath His feet, and He is given to be Head over all things. All these things are facts, though as yet we do not see all things subjected to Him.

There is in all this something which very intimately concerns ourselves. In that place of extreme exaltation where He is Head *over* all things, He is Head *to* the church which is His body. To that church every true believer belongs. There is a great difference between the significance of these two prepositions, which may be illustrated by the case of Adam, who is "the figure of

Him that was to come." Adam was created to be head *over* all other created things that filled the garden, but he was head *to* Eve, who was his body as well as his wife. The second headship is far more intimate and wonderful than the first.

Christ is not only Head over all things but He is to fill all things, so that all things are ultimately to take their character from Him. The church is His body and consequently His fulness—the body in which He is adequately expressed. This passage evidently contemplates the church in its largest and widest aspect, as the sum total of the saints of this dispensation; that is, the saints called out between the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the coming again of the Lord Jesus.

The church is not yet completed, and the saints are here in weakness, but our Head is exalted far above all by the surpassing greatness of divine power, and this exhibits how great is the power that works toward us in life-giving energy. Hence chapter ii. simply opens with, "And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins." God's power has wrought, "in Christ . . . and you." It wrought in Christ when He was dead *on account of* our trespasses and sins. It wrought in us when we were dead *in* our own trespasses and sins. His quickening power in us is according to that supreme display which took place in regard to Christ.

In verses 2 and 3 we again meet with the distinction between the Gentile "ye" and the Jewish "we." Yet both had their activities in that which was wholly evil. The walk of the Gentile is declared to have been particularly characterized by the world and the devil, inasmuch as they followed false gods, behind which lay the power of demons. The walk of the Jew was more particularly characterized by the lusts of the flesh, as verse 3 indicates. They were not worshipping demons, but they were by nature the children of wrath, just as others. Just the same indictments may be brought to-day against those who are openly irreligious and profane, and those who profess a form of piety, yet simply follow "the desires of the flesh and of the mind." The desires of the mind may have often a very attractive and even intellectual appearance, and yet be wholly astray from God.

Such were we, whether Jew or Gentile. At one and the same moment we were dead in trespasses and sins and yet active in all kinds of evil. Very much alive to everything wrong, yet wholly dead to God. Being dead towards God we were without any point of recovery in ourselves: our only hope lay in Him. Hence the great words with which verse 4 opens, "But God —"

What has God done? We were full of sins and were subject to the wrath that sins deserve. God is rich in mercy and toward

such as ourselves He had great love. Accordingly He has made us to live together with Christ. And not only have we been made to live but we have been raised up and made to sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Let us note three things in connection with this striking passage.

First, observe that since it is wholly a question of God, His purpose and His actings, we are carried clean outside all question of time. That which is not to us exists for Him. Hence our sitting in heavenly places is an accomplished thing to Him, and is so spoken of here.

Second, observe how the word, "together," occurs. In our unconverted state, as Jews or Gentiles, as the case may have been, we were very different and very antagonistic. Now all that has been done has been done in regard to us together; all differences having been abolished.

Third, all that God has done He has wrought in connection with Christ. If we have been quickened, it has been together with Christ. If raised up and seated in heavenly places, it has been in Christ. Two prepositions are used, *with* and *in*. We have already been actually quickened in the sense of John v. 25, though we wait for the quickening of our mortal bodies. As quickened we live in association *with* Christ, because living of His life. We have not yet

been actually raised up and seated in the heavens, but Christ has and He is our exalted Head. We are in Him, and consequently raised up and seated *in* Him. Presently we shall actually be raised up and seated with Him.

We have only to meditate a moment on these wonderful things to be assured that none of them has been accomplished according to our need, but according to the mind and heart and purpose of God. Hence, when all is brought to final fruition in the coming ages, the marvellous kindness shown in Christ Jesus towards us will display the surpassing riches of the grace of God. God is indeed the God of all grace. His dealings with Israel, blessing them ultimately in spite of all their unfaithfulness, will redound to the praise of His grace. But when we think of what and where we were, according to verses 1-3, and then contemplate the heights to which we are lifted, according to verses 4-6, we can see that *His dealings with us* set forth a richness of grace that surpasses anything seen in Israel or anywhere else.

The contemplation of it leads the Apostle to again emphasize the fact that our salvation is all of grace. He had stated this previously, in verse 5, in a parenthetical way. In verse 8 he enlarges upon this important fact, and adds that it is also through faith. The grace is God's: the faith is

ours. Yet even our faith is not *of* ourselves. Faith is not a natural product of the human heart. The weeds that grow by nature in the heart of man are detailed for us in Romans iii. 9-19. Faith is no weed at all, but rather a choice flower which once planted by the heavenly Father can never be rooted up. It is the gift of God.

Now this necessarily excludes works; that is, works done in order to obtain life and blessing. The only works of which we were capable were those detailed in verses 2 and 3, and in those works we were spiritually dead. God Himself is the Worker and we are His workmanship; a very different thing. Further, the work necessary was nothing short of *creation*. How obvious then that human works must be excluded.

God has created us, you observe, in Christ Jesus. This is new creation. We were in Adam according to the old creation, but the Adamic life has been wholly corrupted. We have now been created in Christ Jesus with a view to our walking in good works in the midst of this world of sin.

This brings us back to the point with which we started. The surpassing greatness of the power of God, which wrought in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, was needed to accomplish so mighty a work in us.

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Does the last sentence of 1 Corinthians x. 16. refer to the personal body of Christ, or does it refer to the body composed of His members?—GATESHEAD.

WE do not think there can be any doubt that it refers to His personal body, when we observe the earlier part of the verse. We cannot give any meaning to the words, "the blood of Christ," than that of the actual blood which He shed. Neither should we give any meaning to the words, "the body of Christ," other than that of the actual body which He laid down in death for us. In partaking of the Lord's table we commit ourselves to fellowship with His death, as set forth in His body given and His blood shed.

We believers are one body, and that the body of Christ. But it is verse 17 which alludes to this. And in connection with that it is to be noted that it is not the loaf that indicates it, but rather the fact that we all partake of the one loaf. The unity is set forth not by the one loaf, but by the fact that *all* partake of *one*.

"Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass . . . Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." We fret, and lo! we speedily fall ourselves and are convicted of wrong.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good." We lift the eye of faith to Him, and the power to do good is ours.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(II) His Advent and Operations.

Luke xxiv. 49-53; *Acts i.* 8-14; *ii.* 1-21;
36-47.

THE last words of our Lord, as recorded by the inspired evangelist Luke, had reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit. The circumstances, as presented in these scriptures, are throbbing with interest. The Lord Jesus Christ had gained the greatest victory that had ever been achieved. In infinite grace He had gone into death. In divine power He had come forth from the grave having completely broken death's power, and opened up the way of life for all who should believe in Him.

He had sought out "His own;" had made two hitherto sad hearts to burn; had dispelled the fears of all; and had so attached them to Himself that as He was taken from them their hearts were filled with joy; and for the first time a company of humble folk upon earth worshipped a glorified Man in heaven. They were further cheered by the heartening message that He who had just left them would so come in like manner.

But now let us consider His parting charge to them. Having given them their

commissions and their message, He said: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts i. 8.) Could we imagine some disciples asking, after He had gone, "Why should we wait?" They had been commissioned to carry a message which they might think would revolutionize the world. Like one of old, they were "full of matter." (Job xxxii. 18). Then, why wait? Simply because the Lord had said, "tarry ye until." They had indeed received their commission and their message, but they lacked one essential and that was *power*.

We are well aware that the two verses to which we have drawn attention refer to the literal coming of the Holy Spirit; but we suggest that we may learn a lesson therefrom. We pray that these three words may be burned into our hearts:

"TARRY YE UNTIL."

How much activity there is to-day, but, alas! how little power. Is it the case that we sometimes go to our Sunday School class because we have to go? That we go to preach because it has been announced that we will do so? That we engage in some service because we have promised? Yet we have been conscious of the absence of power. In these days of rush, in this exciting and

excitable world, with our natural restlessness, we find it perhaps difficult to "*Tarry until.*" Oh that we could realise that no tarrying means no power; and that no power means no result.

The disciples tarried, "with one accord in one place." They "continued in prayer and supplication." The company included the women. There is no greater asset to a company of believers than praying sisters who, when able, are found with the brothers at the meeting for prayer.

They continued for ten days. "Some prayer that!" a reader may exclaim. Yes, and some result followed. Let us ponder it well, "*Tarry ye until.*" What will happen? "*Ye shall receive power.*" Put the two sentences together, "*Tarry ye until ye shall receive power.*" What shall we do? *Pray, and continue in prayer.* Shall we go in for it? The Holy Spirit came, filled the house, and filled each one in the house. "*They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*" (Acts ii. 4). They not only received the Spirit but they were filled with the Spirit.

It is striking to remark in the early chapters of the Acts how much we read of this, and how it came into the minute details of assembly life. When it was a case of choosing seven men to distribute some money, they were to be "full of the

Holy Ghost." (Acts vi. 3.) It was normal Christian experience. Ananias told Saul that he had been sent to him that he might receive his sight and "be filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ix. 17). It meant such power in preaching that "about three thousand souls" were saved on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 41). It meant such power in prayer that "the place was shaken where they were assembled." (Acts iv. 31).

The world looked on and mocked as they saw the wonderful doings of this Spirit-filled company. There seemed to be that about them that gave the impression that they were intoxicated, but Peter put their mind at rest on that point. Look at him as he stood up; behind him one hundred and nineteen Spirit-filled men and women. They were there not to criticize the man, nor his matter, nor his methods, nor his mannerisms, but conscious that he was their mouthpiece, as indeed he was the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit of God. Listen to his preaching. He spoke not about himself nor his experience, but about Christ, and as he called attention to Him where He now is, the people were "pricked in their heart." In their distress they called out. Convicted by divine power, they believed; were baptized, and received the Holy Spirit. Here we have the inauguration of the Holy Spirit's operations in the Christian era. The nucleus of the new company divinely equipped; the new testimony given;

the Church formed as a vessel through which God might be known, and in which Christ would be expressed.

Do any inquire—can we have anything resembling that to-day? The reply is—we are still in the day of Pentecost inasmuch as this is the Spirit's day, which will continue until the Church is raptured to Glory. The Holy Spirit is the same; the commission is the same; the message is the same; the power is the same. Are results the same? No. Why? Because, alas! we have not learned the secret to "*Tarry until.*" Because we are not "*filled with the Holy Spirit,*" and therefore we are not "*endued with power from on high.*" Every true believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, otherwise he would not be a believer; but every believer is not filled with the Spirit, otherwise we should not have the exhortation: "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" (Ephesians v. 18).

Why are we not filled? It may be because we are not emptied of self; or because we are not prepared to pay the price. It involves our letting go our own will; it means our complete, unconditional surrender; it requires our being prepared to be usable in order that He may use us as, and when, and where, and how He pleases. It may mean the scrapping of our scheme of life; the cutting right across

our cherished plan; it may make demands upon us such as we did not contemplate. Are we prepared for that? Are we ready to hand over the key of the citadel of our being in order that this blessed, divine, holy Indweller may have unreserved, uncontested, ungrudging possession. If so, then we believe blessing, joy, peace, spiritual prosperity, usefulness, await us, and that of such a kind that will surpass our highest thought.

What will be the result? The Holy Spirit will engage our hearts not with ourselves nor our experiences but with Christ. We will speak not of our experiences but of Christ. Those with whom we come in contact will be attracted not to us but to Christ. The love of God will be shed abroad in our heart; the treasures of Christ will be displayed to us; the world to come will be opened to our wondering view; and our life, as Spirit-filled, will confirm the testimony we shall be enabled to give with our lips, whether privately or publicly, to Him, who is the chiefest among ten thousand! the altogether lovely!

Say, dear fellowbeliever! Is it not worth our while to go in for this? Let us be done with a drab, colourless, useless existence; with that way of living that would not suit us in our ordinary work-a-day matters; and let us pray, and pray, and "con-

tinue in prayer and supplication," that we may be here for the delight of the heart of God, for the glory of our adorable Lord and Saviour; and that the Holy Spirit may have His own way with us, so that we may be usable and that He may be able to use us to this end.

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

To follow. (D.V) THE HOLY SPIRIT. (3) The Seal, The Earnest, etc.

"IN CHRIST"—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

IT has often been asked: "What does it mean to be *in Christ*?" The question involves a very important doctrine, which many Christians have difficulty in understanding. With a desire to help them, we propose a few remarks.

First of all, let it be stated, the words, "in Christ," belong essentially to Paul's epistles, and refer to a doctrine, which lies at the very foundation of his teaching. When we say, they belong essentially to Paul's epistles, we do not mean, they are exclusively found there; but that they refer to a doctrine which is peculiarly his, as administrator of the grace of God. Paul, it must be remembered, was the apostle of the *uncircumcision* (Gentiles); Peter was the apostle of the *circumcision* (Jews). As

administrators of God's grace, these apostles had their own peculiar sphere, for apostolic authority and action. This should always be borne in mind.

When Jesus was on earth, He called twelve disciples to be *with* Him. They accompanied Him, up to the time of His death, and were eye-witnesses of His life and works. This fitted them to testify of Him, for they could declare what they had seen and heard, during the years they were in His company. But it could not be said they were *in* Him, while He was on earth.

The time came, when He, the Shepherd, was smitten, and they, the sheep, were scattered, every one to his own (John xvi. 32). When He was risen from the dead, He gathered them again. This was on new ground—resurrection ground. Their link with Him on earth was severed at the Cross, and a new link was formed with Him in resurrection.

Consequent on the Lord's ascension and glorification, the Holy Spirit descended, and baptized that little company in the upper room at Jerusalem. In this way, the twelve apostles were endued with power for their ministry; and, in accordance with the Lord's express commandment, they preached "repentance and remission of sins," beginning at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 45-53; Acts ii.

38). They began at Jerusalem, not only because it was there the Lord had been crucified, and that grace was God's answer to man's evil in that wicked city, but because it was the centre of the Jewish nation, and that in this metropolis the testimony of the Gospel (such as the twelve apostles preached it) should be borne. God was still dealing with His earthly people, and He sent His testimony by the twelve apostles to that people. Thus, to the Jew *first*, was the Gospel preached. Peter said to the Jews, at Jerusalem, “Unto you *first* God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts iii. 26; Rom. i. 16).

But, so long as this national distinction existed, the flood-gates of divine love could not burst open, to allow grace, in its own ocean-fulness, to flow out to man. It was reserved for Paul to do this administratively in the ways of God with man. The Gospel he preached (which he called *his* Gospel) was “to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. i. 23). It passed over every barrier which might have stood between Jew and Gentile, making no difference between them, as to their sinful state, and making no difference between them, as to their acceptance “in Christ.” This surpassing fulness of grace came to God's creature, wherever it might be under heaven, irrespective of nationality, or of sin-

fulness—nay, the very magnitude of its sin could but give that grace occasion to display its own fulness! In speaking of "Jew," or of "Gentile," we think of peoples, with, or without, national privileges. In speaking of the "creature," we think of mankind, in its widest sense. It is to mankind grace has come—"every creature which is under heaven."

And if this grace, in its outflow from God to man, does not take account of national distinctions, no more does it take account of these, in bringing man to God. It does not merely convert a Jew, or Gentile, and leave them as converted Jew, or Gentile. It sets aside nationality, and creates both into *one new man in Christ*. This is "new creation." So that, "if any man be in Christ, there is new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17). Having this standing before God in Christ, it can be said of us, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26-28).

It will be seen, then, our whole condition, as in Adam, is judged, and set aside; and that we, in Christ, are a new creation. God sees us, as He sees Christ; and He treats

us, as He treats Him. Our standing in, and association with, Christ are so real, and so vital, that we are in the favour and acceptance of Christ. Only in the light of this precious truth can we say:

“So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

“So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I could not be;
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me.”

Yes, in all the favour and acceptance of Christ, we stand before God. No distance between us, no sin on us. In reality, we are, as Christ is, holy and blameless, before God, in all the favour, in all the love, in all the light and glory, in which Christ is.

J. HOUSTON.

“TAKE HEED . . . TO THE DOCTRINE.”

BUT if any one fact is clear . . . it is that the Christian movement at its inception was not just a way of life in the modern sense, but a way of life founded upon a message. It was based, not upon mere feeling, not upon a mere programme of work, but upon

an account of facts. In other words it was based upon doctrine.

Certainly with regard to Paul himself there should be no debate; Paul certainly was not indifferent to doctrine; on the contrary, doctrine was the very basis of his life. His devotion to doctrine did not, it is true, make him incapable of a magnificent tolerance. One notable example of such tolerance is to be found during his imprisonment at Rome, as attested by the Epistle to the Philippians. Apparently certain Christian teachers at Rome had been jealous of Paul's greatness. As long as he had been at liberty they had been obliged to take a secondary place; but now that he was in prison, they seized the supremacy. They sought to raise up affliction for Paul in his bonds; they preached Christ even of envy and strife. In short, the rival preachers made of the preaching of the gospel a means to the gratification of low personal ambition; it seems to have been about a mean a piece of business as could well be conceived. But Paul was not disturbed. "Whether in pretence, or in truth," he said, "Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. i. 18). The way in which the preaching was being carried on was wrong, but the message itself was true; and Paul was far more interested in the content of the message than in the manner of its presentation.

It is impossible to conceive a finer piece of broad-minded tolerance.

But the tolerance of Paul was not indiscriminate. He displayed no tolerance, for example, in Galatia. There, too, there were rival preachers. But Paul had no tolerance for them. “But though we,” he said, “or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. i. 8). What is the reason for the difference in the apostle’s attitude in the two cases? What is the reason for the broad tolerance in Rome, and the fierce anathemas in Galatia? The answer is perfectly plain. In Rome, Paul was tolerant, because there the content of the message that was being proclaimed by the rival teachers was true; in Galatia he was intolerant, because there the content of the rival message was false. In neither case did personalities have anything to do with Paul’s attitude. No doubt the motives of the Judaizers in Galatia were far from pure, and in an incidental way Paul does point out their impurity. But that was not the ground of his opposition. The Judaizers no doubt were morally far from perfect, but Paul’s opposition to them would have been exactly the same if they had all been angels from heaven. His opposition was based altogether upon the falsity of their teaching; they were substituting for the one true gos-

pel a false gospel which was no gospel at all. It never occurred to Paul that a gospel might be true for one man and not for another; the blight of pragmatism had never fallen upon his soul. Paul was convinced of the objective truth of the gospel message, and devotion to that truth was the great passion of his life. Christianity for Paul was not only a life, but also a doctrine, and logically the doctrine came first.

Extracted.

DEFEAT.

A FEW days ago I received the following laconic note from a fellow in despair, "I've tried and tried, but I've Always Failed."

I suppose the capital letters were intended to impress me with the hopelessness of the situation.

It seems to be a fairly universal experience, this "Always Failing." But if the Bible is true, and if we can accept the evidence of those who have gone before us, there really is a golden experience of freedom from sin open to every believer even while here on earth. To deny or minimise the fact is to proclaim that Jesus is not very "mighty to save" after all.

There is an agony behind the large sale of those Consecration and Victory-secret books, which seem to be the staple diet

of the despairing. It is a grim witness to the fact that there is an army of young Christians, and older ones too, who have never yet found the way out. Personally I have devoured the very cream of these books. Each has given me fresh hope, only to be the precursor of another muddy tumble and more complete despair. Probably any one of them rightly read would have brought deliverance.

Constant defeat leads either to a morbid state of hopelessness and possibly unbelief, or to a treacherous morass of sophistry. Despair in the honest clear-sighted man, and sophistry in his less honest brother, who fights pathetically to retain his faith, and at the same time to reconcile its apparent failure to deliver him.

“How can I preach a Saviour from sin to the lost if I myself know nothing of this saving power in my own life?” cries the honest man. While the sophist makes theories to explain the discrepancy away, and preaches with redoubled earnestness to allay the fear gnawing at the roots of his being.

Again, there is a dangerous tendency to drop into morbid self-interest and introspection when we are doing the battle in the lists against sin, and “Always Failing.”

Agonizing with prayers, be they never so earnest, cannot find a way out, nor yet

will mental gymnastics produce "proper repentance" or the "right kind of faith" or "full consecration."

And yet—and yet—with one voice they tell us that there is a way; that they have found it, and proved it. The light in their eyes and their very peace, as they tell us of God's sunshine coming in and sin's mastery overthrown, seem to mock us.

So, as one who has known something of these conflicts, I write these few words to my friends unseen and unknown who love Him and are still voyaging discouraged. It is here, on the dark seas of life with the waves and the cold and the loneliness, that we can truly glorify God, who has called us to adventure our destiny upon His faithfulness.

"I have glorified thee on the earth," said One who did gloriously triumph in all things, and who has called us to follow Him.

Two passages of Scripture clear the way for our study.

Colossians ii. 6. 7. says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

Here we learn that there is nothing new involved. We are kept as we were saved,

by Christ. There is no need for obscure initiation into the mysteries of faith, no strange rites, no special virtues to attain, no hills to climb, before we can enter the El Dorado of our quest, this victorious life.

“As ye received Christ--so walk in Him.”

Again Acts xx. 20, 21 gives us the essence of the christian message--“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you” says Paul, and let us note the meaning of it, “but have shewed you . . . testifying . . . repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”

A right attitude to sin in the sight of a holy God, and a right attitude to Jesus, God's Christ, and our Lord--*that is it.*

Read it and read again. Think. Above all pray, till it soaks into your mind and heart. I cannot teach you its meaning because I am learning it myself very slowly under God's tuition. There is no other way and no other Name, no prop to lean on, no emotion to call up. All voices must be hushed, all books (even the best) put away, as the simplicity of it comes to your heart in all the saving grace of God's Holy Spirit, who alone can teach us the truth of it.

The fact is that there is no “secret” at all. Christ is the open secret. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodi-

ly—all God's power, and available for folks like you and me!

CHRIST is made unto us—sanctification.

It is a vision hard to catch and harder to hold. We make it so by our complicated thoughts. So out of my painful experiences, hoping to simplify what is already so amazingly simple, and to meet some very persistent difficulties, I propose to set out in a further paper seven distinct secrets of defeat. There may be more and probably your own experience will suggest additions and amendments, but they shall appear, D. V., with a prayer behind them that God will bless them with His own peculiar blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.

A. F. S. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Ephesians ii. 11—iii. 8.*)

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

WE have been newly created in Christ Jesus, as stated in verse 10. This is the work of God *in* us, but it is not to be dissociated from the work of God wrought *for* us by the blood and cross of Christ. From verse 11 to the end of the chapter we are bidden to re-

member three things: the depths from which we Gentiles have been brought; the heights to which we have been introduced; the basis upon which the mighty transference has been accomplished—the death of Christ.

The picture of the natural condition of Gentiles, drawn by the Apostle in verses 11 and 12, is a very dark one. Nor is it made any brighter for us to-day by reason of our living in the midst of a civilization which has been slightly christianized. It matters little that we should be called Uncircumcision by the Jew: but the other six items in the count against us matter very much indeed.

Being “in the flesh,” means that the fallen Adamic nature characterized our state, and consequently controlled us. This alone would account for all the gross evil which fills the Gentile world.

But then we were “without Christ.” Without, that is, the only One who could bring in any way of salvation from our lost estate.

Again, God had at an earlier date brought in certain very definite privileges. He established the commonwealth of Israel, making them the depositories of the covenants of promise, though putting them for the moment under the covenant of law. And further, inasmuch as they did have the covenants of promise they were the only people with definite hopes securely founded

upon the Word of God. As regards all this the Gentiles were "aliens" and "strangers" and "without hope." Not a streak of light appeared upon their dark horizon.

Lastly they were "without God in the world." Idols they had without number, and the modern world has them too, though in a different form. God was, and is, unknown.

To sum it all up: they had the flesh and the world, but they had no Christ, no privilege, no hope and no God. We too were in exactly the same plight.

Now let us turn to survey that into which we have been brought, as detailed in verses 13 to 22. First of all we have been "made nigh" in Christ Jesus. Being made nigh means that we now have God. The blood of Christ has given us a righteous place in His presence, and the wonderful thing is that we are brought near as introduced into a wholly new relationship. This is indicated in verse 18. Our access to Him is not merely as God, but as Father.

In what way are we made nigh? Israel had a certain nearness under the old covenant. Are we to be a kind of duplicate of them? No, for according to verse 14 both have been made one. The word, "both" indicates believing Jews on the one hand, and believing Gentiles on the other. This oneness has been brought to pass by

Christ. He has broken down the dividing wall and made peace between the warring factions. He has abolished the enmity in His flesh: that is, by the offering up of His body in death.

The enmity was connected with "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The law of Moses contained great moral enactments, which are never abrogated, but there were also many ordinances of a ceremonial nature connected with it. These ceremonial rules separated Israel from the nations by making them a peculiar people in their habits; indeed, they were intended so to do. Such ordinances were annulled for believers in the death of Christ, and at once this great cause of hostility was removed. Acts xxi. 20-26, shows how little this was realized by the early believers in Jerusalem, and how even Paul himself seems to have been for the moment deflected from what he here lays down. We see in that passage also how great the hostility was on the part of Jews: an hostility which was fully reciprocated by the Gentiles.

Having thus abolished the enmity, the Christ has made the two into one *in Himself*. It is not that the Gentile is now one with the Jew, but that the Jew in Christ is now absolutely one with the Gentile in Christ. Both are found in a position and condition before God which is wholly fresh and original. They are no longer two men but *one*

man, and that man is altogether *new*. This is a complete solution of the enmity difficulty—"so making peace." Two men might quarrel. One man cannot very well do so. And he has no inclination to do so, for he is a new kind of man. In all this we are of course looking at what God has accomplished in an abstract way: that is, according to its essential character, and without introducing those modifications found in our practice, owing to the flesh still being found in us.

Verse 16 brings in an additional thought. Not only are believing Jews and Gentiles one new man—that expresses their new *character*—but they are formed into one *body*, and as such reconciled to God. Reconciliation was needed because they both were in a state of enmity Godward, as well as being in a state of enmity between themselves. Again, you notice, the death of Christ is introduced; this time as, "the cross." By it He slew the enmity—that enmity Godward, which was in the hearts of both, and not only the enmity they had cherished between each other.

Having done it, and thus effected the great basis of reconciliation, He has Himself acted as the Messenger of peace to both Gentile and Jew. The former were "afar off" in the old dispensation, and the latter were "nigh." This is a remarkable sentence. Christ is presented as a Preacher to Gentiles and to Jews *after the cross*;

that is, *in resurrection*. Yet, as far as we are told in Scripture, He has never been seen or heard by any unconverted person since He was hanging dead upon the cross. He did appear in resurrection to His disciples and speak peace to them, but when did He preach peace to either Jews or Gentiles? The only answer we can give is—Never at all in Person. He only did it by means of the apostolic preaching, or in other words, by proxy.

This mode of speaking may seem to us somewhat strange, but it is found elsewhere in the Bible. I Peter iii. 19, is a striking example, and verse 11 of chapter i. in the same epistle furnishes us with something very similar. If the verse in 1 Peter iii. had been read in the light of Ephesians iii. 17, we should have been spared many mistaken explanations of the former passage, for there can be no doubt that the preaching alluded to here was that of the apostles and other servants of Christ, who in the earliest years of Christianity carried the tidings of peace far and wide.

The word, *one*, occurs for the fourth time in verse 18. It is evident that special emphasis is laid upon the word. Verse 14 states the fact that we are one. Verse 15 adds the fact that it is as one new man. Verse 16 shows that we are one body. Verse 18 completes the story by showing that we both are given to possess one Spirit, whereby we have access to the Father. How

evident it is then that in the Christian circle all distinction between Jew and Gentile is completely gone.

These glorious facts being established, Paul introduces these Gentile believers to the height of their spiritual privilege. They were no longer strangers and foreigners, nor are we: rather we are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the Divine household, and built into the structure that God is rearing. Three figures are laid under contribution in these closing four verses—the city, the household, the building. It would seem as if we are introduced step by step to that which is more intimate.

We are fellow-citizens with the saints. This is rather a general thought. God has prepared a heavenly city for believers of Old Testament days, who are to enjoy a heavenly portion. This is stated in Hebrews xi. 16. In all that heavenly portion believers of this day are to share. Its privileges are ours, for our names have been written in heaven (see, Luke x. 20); inscribed upon its rolls we can say that our citizenship is there.

An household is a place of greater intimacy than a city. The Lord Mayor of London, for instance, appears in greater splendour when he acts in that capacity as the head of the City, but he is known more intimately when he has laid aside the proud trappings of his high office and acts

simply as the head of his own household. Now we are not merely citizens but are also of God's household. Thus it is that we are brought near and have such liberty of access; but thus also it is that we are responsible to wear the character of that One to whose household we belong.

When we come to the thought of the building we have to consider ourselves as stones—as suitable material for the structure—and God Himself as the Builder on the one hand, and as the One who dwells within the shrine when constructed, on the other. The house of the Lord is where one may behold “the beauty of the Lord” (Psa. xxvii. 4). In the temple of God, “doth every one speak of His glory” (Psa. xxix. 9), or as the margin has it, “every whit of it uttereth, glory.” That we should be thus “fitted together” on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, and all speaking forth the glory of God is a matter of extraordinary intimacy indeed. The wonder of it is increased when we remember that we were nothing but Gentiles by nature.

The third figure, that of the building, subdivides itself under two heads. There is first the building viewed as a progressive work all through the present age and only reaching its completion in glory, though each stone that is added is fitly framed together. Completed, it will indeed speak forth the glory of God.

Secondly there is the building viewed as an habitation of God all through the present age—a complete thing at any given moment, though those who constitute it change. All along from the Day of Pentecost God has dwelt in the church through the Spirit—that church which is composed of every Spirit-indwelt believer on earth at any given moment. He does not dwell in temples made with hands, but in this house He does dwell by His Spirit.

Let us not overlook the two words with which both verses 21 and 22 open—"in whom." When we were considering the blessing into which we are brought as individuals we saw all was ours in Christ. It is just the same when we consider the blessing in which we stand in a collective or corporate way. All is in Christ. The church is builded together *in Christ*, and God dwells in it *in Spirit*.

All these things are not just ideas, but rather great realities. If perchance they sound strange in our ears, is it not because we are more familiar with what men have made of the church, largely perverting it according to their own ideas, than with what the church really is according to God? And remember, all men's perversions and adaptations will pass, and God's handiwork will remain. So we had better make haste to acquaint ourselves with what God has

made the church to be, otherwise all too much of our service may be lost, and we ourselves be sadly unprepared for what will be revealed when the Lord comes, and in the twinkling of an eye the church comes forth *altogether* according to divine workmanship and *not at all* according to man's organization.

Having presented us with this great unfolding of truth, Paul commences to exhort us to walk in a way that shall be worthy of such an exalted vocation. This may be seen if the first verses of chapters iii. and iv. are read together. The whole of chapter iii, excepting verse 1, is a parenthesis, in which he points out how definitely the Lord had entrusted to him the ministry of all this truth—which he calls, “the mystery”—and in which he again puts on record that which he prayed for the Ephesian believers.

He evidently felt that his exhortation to walk worthy would come with greater force if we realised how fully the authority of the Lord was behind it. A “dispensation” or “administration,” of the grace of God towards such as ourselves had been committed to him, inasmuch as “the mystery” had been specially revealed to him, and he had just previously written concerning it in brief fashion. He alludes evidently to what he had written in chapter i. 19—ii. 22. An even briefer summary of it is given in verse 6 of chapter iii. where again the

wonderful place given to Gentiles is emphasized. The three words in that verse have been translated, "Joint-heirs, a joint-body and joint-partakers." This may be clumsy English, but it has the merit of making us see the main thought of the Spirit of God in the verse. Now *that* was a feature, of God's purpose in blessing, wholly unknown in earlier ages: necessarily unknown, of course; for once known the order of things established in connection with the law and Israel was destroyed. It was therefore a secret hid in God until Christ was exalted on high and the Holy Spirit given below.

Now however it is revealed, and the apostle Paul was made the minister of it. It was not only revealed to him but to the other apostles and prophets also. Thus the fact of it was placed beyond all doubt or dispute. Yet the ministry of it was given to Paul, as verse 7 clearly states. In keeping with this we do not find any allusion to the mystery in any of the epistles save Paul's.

How great a theme it is, we can realize if we have at all taken in the things we have just been superficially surveying. Paul himself was so impressed with its greatness that he alludes to his ministry of it as, evangelizing "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

F. B. HOLE.

DOES GOD PLAN OUR LIVES ?

LET us take Joseph's life as an illustration, and see what the answer is to be.

As a lad of seventeen he had two dreams, evidently God-given to prepare him for an extraordinary future. The dreams foretold his future eminence when his brethren and even his father should bow down before him. (Genesis xxxvii. 1-11.)

For this his brethren hated him; and plotted to take his life. If they had succeeded the dreams would not have come true. Therefore their plot was frustrated.

His elder brother Reuben comes to the rescue, intending to deliver him from the pit into which he was cast, and return him to his father. Now Joseph would naturally be delighted if he knew of Reuben's design, but the intended kindness would have frustrated the fulfilment of Joseph's dreams, and therefore it failed.

Judah is kindly disposed up to a point, and proposes that Joseph be not slain, but sold to the Midianite merchants. This is carried out. For twenty pieces of silver the lad Joseph is sold as a slave.

Put yourself in Joseph's shoes. Might he not have said to himself, "Is this the

way to the fulfilment of my dreams? Is God not mocking me? Has He not forsaken me? I may as well give up faith and hope." It this not like many of us, when difficulties or disappointments cross our path?

Arriving in Egypt, Joseph is sold by the Ishmaelites to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard, a man of high position. We read, "The Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis xxxix. 2). He prospered. Very young though he was, he evidently had a sense of the favour of God. Remember what few privileges Joseph had, as compared with ourselves. No Scriptures, no knowledge as we have of Christ, of His work, of His compassion, tenderness, high-priestly grace. May not Joseph put many of us, all of us, to shame?

Prosperous and God blessing Potiphar's house for his sake, yet Joseph is submitted to perhaps the hardest ordeal a young man can pass through. He refused the temptation; but falsely accused, he was flung into the goal where the king's prisoners were bound.

Joseph might again have said, "This is a pretty way of having my dreams fulfilled. Not only sold into Egypt as a slave by my own brethren, but flung into prison for withstanding temptation and honouring God!"

Again we read, "But the Lord was with Joseph and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison" (Genesis xxxix. 21).

Surely God was preparing Joseph in a very remarkable way by these very calamities. He stood the test, and was stronger spiritually each time. There is an old-fashioned meaning for the word "temptation" that is, it is something that tries us, and successfully met only improves and strengthens the character. You get the idea in "tempered" steel--steel made stronger and better in the process. So it was with Joseph.

It was not long before Joseph in prison became trusted and prosperous, just as he had been in Potiphar's house. Little as he knew it and painful as were his experiences, which landed him in prison, he was in the very place that would forge the link that would bring about the realization of his dreams.

There were two fellow-prisoners with him, men who had been in close touch with the king, especially one of the two, the chief butler. He had fallen into disgrace somehow, and at length he had a dream (Genesis xl. 5-15). Joseph interpreted this dream as foretelling that the chief butler would be speedily reinstated in the king's favour, and be restored to his chief butlership.

In three days time, as Joseph foretold,

the chief butler stepped out of prison a free man restored to the monarch's favour and service, with the words from Joseph ringing in his ears, "Think of me when it is well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house" (Genesis xl. 14).

Sad indeed and ungrateful was the conduct of the chief butler, where we read, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him" (verse 23).

Two full years rolled by, and still Joseph lay in prison. It was a big test. It seemed as if he were forgotten, and might end his days there. He might have been tempted to say, "And is this the answer to my dreams?—hated of my brethren sold as a slave, flung into prison, and the one chance of being mentioned to Pharaoh has died out."

"And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed" (Genesis xli. 1). His dreams were the last strange links in the chain of divine purpose for the fulfilment of the dreams of that lad of seventeen some years before.

All the magicians and wise men of Egypt failing to interpret them, the chief butler's memory revived and convicted him of his base ingratitude. He "spake unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day" (Genesis xli. 9), and he then told Pharaoh

how Joseph had interpreted his dream to him when in prison. Joseph was sent for. Pharaoh rehearsed his dreams, and their significance was at once made plain. Pharaoh was so struck by Joseph's wisdom and deportment, that he appointed him second ruler in the land, put his signet ring upon Joseph's hand, arrayed him in fine linen, put a chain of gold about his neck, made him ride in the second chariot that he had. The people cried out before Joseph, "Bow the knee!"

What a test for the young man, for young he was. One moment languishing indefinitely in prison; the next, second only to Pharaoh in the land, the people bowing before him on every hand, a truly dazzling position.

Seven years of plenty went by. Joseph was the super-organiser of the corn of Egypt, storing it against the days of famine. The famine came, gripping Egypt and the adjacent countries in its terrible strangle-hold.

Away in distant Caanan Joseph's father and brethren were in distress and famine-stricken. We all know the beautiful story, how the brethren came to Egypt, not knowing Joseph, probably thinking he was dead, how Joseph supplied their needs in a way to awaken their consciences as to their sin towards himself. When their consciences were reached, Joseph disclosed who he was, forgave them, sent for his father, and settled them in the land of Goshen.

We read, whilst Joseph was dealing with his brethren before he made himself known to them, "And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: *and they fell before him on the ground*" (Genesis xliv. 14). Thus was Joseph's dream fulfilled.

What a life was Joseph's to look over. The links in the chain of God's purpose were remarkable. The steel was tempered by the long years of reverses, fitting him for the wonderful place God called him to.

Should not we as saints of God more definitely commit our ways to Him? The husband comes home. He has lost his employment. The situation is dark. Husband and wife are struck dumb. Happy if they put their affairs in God's hands. It may be a few years go by. We call on the couple. They live in a different part of the country. They say, "What we thought was a crushing blow that tempted us to think that God was harsh, has turned out to our material and spiritual blessing. We can see God's hand in it all now in a wonderful way."

Take this single simple illustration and apply it in a hundred different settings. It will work.

How true it is that God orders our lives, if we will only trust Him step by step.

A. J. POLLOCK.

COUNTING THE COST.

(From notes of addresses.)

THERE are people who deep down in their hearts would like to be Christians. And what is preventing them? Two or three things are preventing them, but mainly that they don't think they could live up to it if they started. And what is behind that? Well, probably this; you know what you said when others made a profession of being converted. You laughed at them and then when they broke down you said all kinds of nasty things about them. Now you want to start yourself, and you fear you will break down, and then you will have the nasty things thrown at you!

So the evil suggestion comes, the thing is a splendid impossibility, nobody can live up to it, you have not strength to do it. These are the things that hinder, and Satan keeps all these things well to the fore, and out of sight all the divine sufficiency there is in the One who picks you up at the beginning to carry you through to the end.

Oh, but, you say, you must count the cost. Doesn't the Bible tell you to sit down and count the cost? Yes, but people begin to count the cost, and they count the odds that come *against* them, while the

enemy keeps in the background all that is *for* them. Is that counting the cost? You must take both in.

A man wants to build a house. He says to an architect, give me a plan and specification. I want so many reception rooms and so many bedrooms, and so on. Tell me what it would cost. Presently he brings a plan. That is it—how do you like the plan? Very nice indeed, but what is the cost? Well, he says, a house built of this material will cost you about £3,000. Oh, £3,000! He puts his hands in his pockets and takes the money out—£4 17s. 6d.—saying, I can't do it. Can't do it! Well, he says, we must count the cost before we begin to build. Is that all the money you have in the world? Have you nothing in the Bank? Oh, yes, he says, I have £30,000 in the Bank. Well, you could build half-a-dozen houses like that.

What would you think of such a man? Would you call that counting the cost? Leaving the great banking account out, and only counting what he had on his person. Yet that is what hundreds of people do, who think they are counting the cost. They have left the great banking account out. Christ is an all-the-way-home and an all-sufficient Saviour to carry them through.

I suppose that few verses more than the 25th verse of Hebrews vii. have been mis-

understood and consequently misapplied. When I used it years ago I can tell you what I meant—that He is able to save the vilest sinner that ever lived, no matter how far he may have gone or how foully he may have sinned. Christ is able to save the worst character that ever lived. That is true, but it is not what it means. If you take a look at it you will see. May I ask this question, why is Christ able to save the worst character, the most depraved? Oh, you say, because He died to save him. He is able to save the vilest sinner, because He died for the vilest sinner. Right! But you will find nothing in that verse about dying for sins, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he *ever liveth*.” Here is a salvation connected with His life and not His death.

Soon after I was converted I thought I had found a mistake in the Bible. I read the 10th verse of Romans v, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Saved by His *death*, I could understand; I had often heard and rejoiced in the fact that Christ died for sinners, but saved by his life—oh this is a mistake! I thought the Book was wrong. Just as when I was at school. The Teacher would come round and correct my sum and say,

it is wrong there. I don't think so, Teacher. It is wrong there, add it up again. He comes round and again he finds it wrong. Round and round he comes, every time he finds it wrong, until I say, Teacher it must be the old Answer book that is wrong. But it was not, I was wrong, not the Answer book.

Saved by His life, how can that be? Now I want to show you how it can be. You see the Lord Jesus Christ is not only a Saviour but in Hebrews ii. He is called the "Captain of our Salvation." He is the great Leader, who has been made perfect through suffering. He is a perfect Leader because He knows every step of the road; He knows all the dangers; He has gone right through the road to the end, so that Hebrews xii. says, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of . . . faith." He is the Beginner and the Finisher of the whole course of faith, and its finish is at the right hand of the throne of God. To that the pathway leads, and He has reached that end and put on His crown. He has gone the whole course of faith. He is qualified to be the Leader, and God has put into His hands many sons to bring them to glory. Get that firmly fixed in your minds. God has furnished us with a Captain, a great Leader of our Salvation, who "became Him," that is, exactly suited Him.

Well, now what does God want? He wants One to be faithful to His trust. He would not be a faithful Captain if God put many sons into His hands to bring to glory, and He let some of them drop out. The great Captain is going to lead the many sons, not half way to glory, leaving them to scramble over the other half, but He is going to lead them *to glory*—all the way.

The priesthood of Christ is connected with this. In Hebrews ii. we read, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest." What kind of a High Priest? Merciful and faithful. He connects His great Leadership of salvation with His Priesthood, and He is described as both merciful and faithful. It is the Priest who is able to save us because He liveth for us—it is an unchangeable Priesthood, and He is able to save right away on to the end. The uttermost means the uttermost place of the journey. From perils in that journey He delivers, and lands us home, like the shepherd, who, finding the sheep, lifted it on His shoulders and only put it down when He reached home. That is when the great Captain will put us down. He has taken charge of us for God's glory and joy, and as sons He will bring us to glory.

He is a Captain that suits God. And more than that, He is a High Priest that will suit us. A farmer buys a couple of hundred sheep at a market, and says to Joe, "I have 200 sheep I want you to take to my farm; they are valuable sheep so don't lose any of them." "You put the 200 in my hands sir; I will be faithful to my trust; 200 I will bring." Presently he turns up with the 200. "Well," he says, "I have had a pretty job with these sheep; one or two of them have turned lame, and I have had hard work to get them here." Wiping the sweat off his brow he says, "They are all here, sir, I have had a hard job, but you can count them; you see I have been faithful to my trust." The farmer says, "Yes, you have. You have them all here, Joe, but if what my neighbour says is true, though you have been faithful, you haven't been very merciful. He says, he saw you take a big stick out of the hedge and begin to belabour these poor sheep. You have got them here all right, but you have not been very merciful." What he wanted was one that is faithful—what the sheep wanted was one that is merciful. The Lord Jesus is both; He is a merciful and a faithful High Priest. He is going to carry us through, and He says, "to the uttermost," to the very farthest end of the journey.

SEVEN DISMAL SECRETS OF DEFEAT.

THE *first secret* lies in our *wrong motive*. It happens often that our desire for victory is more sinful than the sin about which we are praying!

Of course we will hardly swallow that without a bit of thinking. It deserves thought because it lies at the root of the problem, and is very common.

Do you detect beneath your desire to be free from the hateful limitations of sinful habit a desire to have your self-respect and sense of completeness restored? Do you want to go to God able to say, "I'm free at last. It was a hard fight but I've won and now I'm really qualified to serve Thee"? Take one quick look into the dark depths of your heart and motives, and maybe you will see the slither of the old serpent of pride. Perhaps you'll hear the clank of the old chains of the law as you go, trying to climb a mountain of attainment to God and self-satisfaction. We want our self-respect restored, our wretched self-complacency that ought to have been judged for good in the sight of the cross!

So God leaves us, to struggle and lose and be crushed under the humiliation of defeat, to save us from the treachery of our own hearts and to throw us broken and helpless upon Himself.

As soon as you say, "I've got there," you are in spiritual danger, and God shatters your "victory" by the humiliation of a fresh fall. You never "get there." In fact you are really "there" already by the fact of your conversion, and God wants you to live where He has put you, by constant dependence upon Himself.

God won't save in patches. Nothing will do but to maintain before God a steady refusal to trifle with sin of thought or word or deed, and a steady, dead-set desire to please Him by conformity to His Word and to Christ.

The second secret lies in a faulty vision.

Is it deliverance you are seeking, or a Deliverer? Something, or Somebody?

Stop looking for victory and look for God. Those that seek Him early shall find Him, and with Him, victory and joy unspeakable. You will find Him in Jesus whose thrice blessed name is Emmanuel—God with us.

The third secret lies in the cost.

Victory over sin is so expensive! The cost of my victory over sin is His victory over me. He is my Master, but has He the mastery? Has He?

George Herbert could never utter the sacred name without adding, "My Master!" "He is a good Master," said David Living-

stone, who knew Him, "None ever like Him." Let us yield heart and life to His blessed mastery.

The fourth secret lies in faulty diagnosis.

Often the struggling soul is like an ignorant quack treating measles with ointments or a surgeon's knife. The spots need not be touched. Medicine and treatment alone can touch the disease and rid the body of the damaging toxins and germs.

So with bad temper or any other sin, it is useless just to seek strength to control its wicked outbursts. Bad temper arises from self-will, and self-will from self-love. Only a deliberate choice of the moral being before God in turning from self-love to love for Christ can rid us of it. Christ is the medicine every time.

Diagnosis is fairly simple. Psalm cxxxix gives the right method of looking within, which is as different from the ordinary way as cheese is from chalk.

Christian introspection has little difficulty in tracking down the trouble, for it realizes that the heart is too big to explore, the motives too twisted to unravel, and it prays—"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." God does not so often search us "on our knees" as some expect. God searches, I have found, by the

annoying folk who come my way, by disappointments and pain and the rough places of life.

God will find the hidden pride, the hidden greed, the hidden evil thoughts fostered, the hidden self-pampering and gratification, and then pitilessly (for the good surgeon heeds not the shrinking of flesh and blood) He will discover the root of self-love ever lying at the bottom. Let Him search, and when He has shown you all, be done with it and let God pluck it from you even though it leaves for a moment a gaping wound and pain and loss.

The fifth secret lies in spiritual paralysis.

A wrong attitude to our brethren and our fellow men, a grudge, a harboured thought of contempt or cruelty, will paralyse the life of God in our souls.

You dare not pray for deliverance while you hold your brother by the throat and say, "Pay me that thou owest." God's moral law is inexorable and we must always pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive . . ." This, of course, is quite distinct from the forgiveness of our sins for Christ's Name's sake, which is complete and eternal. This phrase applies to disciples and to God's ways in government with us.

"First be reconciled to thy brother and then come . . ." says God. (Matt. v. 24.)

The sixth secret lies in our rebellion against God's will.

Some of us think that we would be all right if we could change our circumstances and live elsewhere, or if our temperaments were changed. It simply amounts to saying that we could be victorious if there were no sin to be victorious over!

One of the hardest lessons to learn is to accept God's will, to believe that God is the God of circumstances and that He really does know and care about every detail. Such a faith, so contrary to us naturally and so hard to reconcile with life's vagaries, brings an amazing rest of heart and is never disappointed.

The seventh secret lies in our petulant haste.

Victory is not an attainment, but a daily habit. It is not just a crisis of consecration; but a habit of admitting gladly God's claims upon us, and of practising Acts xx. 21. *A habit.* Pay attention to that and you may be saved from the weariness of expecting a victory that is as elusive as a shadow.

If God leaves you in the shadow of a humiliating defeat don't be petulant with Him. Don't tell Him that you have done your part and that it isn't fair to allow you still to suffer. Don't become heroic or tragic. Petulant martyrs are trying creatures.

Read Isaiah l., verses 10 and 11, the golden rule for those ploughing on in the dark.

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.” Lean upon His unchanging love and cling to His faithfulness in naked faith until the morning dawns.

“Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” Beware of false fire. Sparks are a poor substitute for walking in the light! If you indulge in a light of your own making you will lie down in sorrow. I did, and you will.

Reading this article cannot deliver you any more than that pile of devotional books at home has done! But the Christ of whom we speak can.

“In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.” (Psa. lxii. 7, 8.)

A. F. S. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Ephesians iii. 8—iv. 3.)

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

IF we read the expression, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," in its context, we perceive that it refers, not to all the wealth that is personally His, but rather to all that which is *in Him* for His saints. Scanning chapter i, we find that the term, "in Christ," (or its equivalents, "in the Beloved," "in Him," "in whom") occurs about twelve times. In chapter ii, it occurs about six times, and in chapter iii, about three. Let us take one item only, "Blessed . . . with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Can we search or trace those blessings out, so that we are thoroughly masters of the whole subject? We can do no such thing. They are too big for our little grasp. They are unsearchable; and so too is all that which we have in Christ. Yet though unsearchable they may be known by us, and so they were the subject of the Apostle's ministry.

A second thing was covered by his ministry. He was commissioned to make all see, not only what the mystery is, but what is the "fellowship of the mystery," or, "the administration of the mystery." (N. Tr.).

The mystery is concerning Christ and the church, and particularly concerning the place that Gentiles occupy in it, as has already been explained by Paul. The administration concerns the practical arrangements for assembly life and order and testimony, which Paul everywhere established. These arrangements were ordered by the Lord that there might be a representation, even to-day in the church's time condition, of those things which are true and established concerning it in God's eternal counsel.

The mystery itself was something entirely new, for from the beginning of the world up to that moment it had been hid in God. Consequently the administration of the mystery was entirely new. Previously God had been dealing with one special nation on the basis of law. Now God was calling out an election from all nations according to grace, and that which was merely national was submerged in this larger and fuller purpose. In the church of God everything has to be ordered or administrated according to these present purposes of God. The Apostle does not stop in this epistle to instruct us in the details of this divinely ordered administration; he does this in writing his first epistle to the Corinthians.

The assembly at Corinth was not walking in an orderly way, as were those at Ephesus and Colosse. There was a good deal of

ignorance, error and disorder in their midst, and this furnished the occasion for the Spirit of God to enforce upon them the administration of the mystery, at least in a good many of its details, dealing with matters of a public nature which an ordinary on-looker might observe. That the point of this may not be missed we take up one detail out of the many, to serve as an illustration.

Our epistle lays it down that we, whether Jews or Gentiles, "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." This is one of the great items included in the mystery. We turn to the Corinthian epistle and we discover that this is not a mere doctrine, an idea divorced from any practical effect in the present ordering of church life and behaviour. The very opposite. Paul declares that consequently the Spirit is supreme in that house where He dwells. He dwells there in order that He may operate to the glory of God—"All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11). In chapter xiv. of the same epistle we find the Spirit ordering and energizing in the exercise of the various gifts, and we are bidden to acknowledge that the instructions given are "the commandments of the Lord." The Lord, you see, is the great Administrator in the church of God, and Paul was the chosen servant to make known His administration to us.

The administration of the mystery is, we fear, very lightly brushed aside by many Christians to-day, even by good and earnest ones, but we are assured that they do so to their own great loss, both now and in the coming age. If we neglect any part of the truth we become undeveloped as to that part and like "a cake not turned," as Hosea puts it. Also we have to take into consideration verses 10 and 11 of our chapter, which tell us that the administration of the mystery, as worked out in the assembly, is a kind of lesson book before the eyes of angels. The lesson book of to-day, on which the eyes of angels look down, is very sadly blotted and obscured. Yet, since angels do not die, those same eyes once looked down and saw the beauty of the manifold wisdom of God, when the excellence of the Divine administration, ministered through Paul, was first seen in the church's earliest days.

Then for a brief moment things were "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now for many a long day they have mainly been according to the disconnected desires and arrangements of men, though many of the men who made the arrangements were doubtless godly and well-meaning people. May we have grace to adhere, as far as in us lies, to the administration as ordered by God, for it is evidently intended that

what was "hid in God" should now be made "known by the church." At the same time let us not expect to do so without opposition and trouble, for Paul was face to face with tribulation enough, as he hints in verse 13.

Moreover we do not very easily or speedily enter into the power and enjoyment of these things. Hence again at this point the Apostle betakes himself to prayer, and is led to record his prayer that we may be stirred up by it. The prayer is addressed to the Father, and it is concerned with the operations of the Spirit with a view to Christ having His due place in our hearts. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are thus involved in it.

The Father is addressed as imparting His own Name and character to every family that will ultimately fill the heavens and the earth. The Lord Jesus is our Head, and He is also in some sense the Head and Leader of every one of these different families. It should be "every family" and not "the whole family." God will have many families, some for heaven and some for earth. Amongst the heavenly families will be the church and "the spirits of just men made perfect," i.e. Old Testament saints. For the earth there will be Israel, redeemed Gentiles, and so on. Now amongst men every family takes its name from the one

who is father to it, the one from whom it derives its origin. But fatherhood amongst men is only a reflection of the divine Fatherhood.

The main burden of the prayer is that Christ may dwell by faith in our hearts, that He may be abidingly the controlling centre of our deepest affections. This can only be as we are strengthened by the Spirit's mighty power in the inner man, for naturally that which is selfish controls us, and we are fickle and uncertain. Christ dwelling in our hearts, we become rooted and grounded in love, His love not ours. Only as rooted and grounded in love can we proceed to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge.

Verse 17 speaks of that which lies at the very centre of all, the indwelling Christ and the consequent rooting and grounding in love. Verses 18 and 19 pass on to *to the widest possible circle of blessing, love and glory.* A pair of compasses may serve as an illustration. It is not easy to draw a circle except one leg be firmly fixed. With one leg fixed the circle can easily be described. So it is here. Fixed and rooted in love, the mighty sweep of verse 18 becomes possible.

If verse 19 tells us we are to know that which passes all knowledge, verse 18

infers we are to apprehend that which eludes all proper definition. Four dimensions are enumerated, but we are not told to what they refer. The dimensions of what? Doubtless of all the great truth which Paul had been unfolding, the dimensions of the unsearchable riches of Christ. These things are only to be apprehended with all saints. We need one another as we begin to learn them. All saints should be keen to apprehend them, and they are only to be apprehended as all saints are kept in view. In these days of brokenness and division in the church of God we cannot bring all saints together, nor can we incite all saints to apprehend these things, but we can cling very tenaciously to the divine thought of all saints, and, as far as in us lies, live and act in view of all saints. They who do this are more likely than others to apprehend the mighty scope of the unsearchable riches of Christ, to know His love which is centred upon all saints, and to be filled with all the fulness of God.

The contemplation, in prayer, of such heights of spiritual light and affections and blessing moved the heart of the Apostle to worship, and the chapter closes with a doxology ascribing glory to the Father. That which he had desired in his prayer would be impossible of accomplishment were it not that there is power that worketh in us, the Holy Spirit of God. By that Power

the Father can accomplish that which overwhelmingly surpasses all our thoughts or desires. Many of us, reading the Apostle's desires for us, may have said to ourselves—Very wonderful, but altogether beyond me. Yet, be it remembered, not beyond the Power that works in us. All this blessing may be really and consciously ours: ours in present possession.

The glory which the last verse ascribes to God will certainly be His. Throughout all ages the church will irradiate His glory. As the bride, the Lamb's wife, it will be said of her, "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Rev. xxi. 11). And all that the church is, and all that she ever will be, is by and in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus is the most glorious Minister of the glory of God. He has wrought out the glory, and covered Himself with glory in doing it. Thus it is that we can so happily sing,

There Christ the Centre of the throng,
Shall in His glory shine,
But not an eye those hosts among,
But sees His glory Thine.

As we open chapter iv. we pick up the thread which Paul dropped at the end of the first verse of chapter iii. In comparatively few words we have had brought before us the Christian calling in its height and

fulness according to the thoughts and purposes of God. Moreover that calling has been unfolded to us, not only as it relates to us each individually, but also as it concerns us all together in our corporate or church capacity. Now comes the exhortation of a general character, and it covers all the more detailed exhortations with which the main part of the remaining chapters is filled. Still the Apostle knew right well that it is not enough to give general instructions, but that very intimate and pointed details are necessary, such as may get home to every heart and conscience. Let those who minister to-day take heed to this and be as wise and courageous as he.

The exhortations comprised in the first section of chapter iv. down to verse 16, have evidently in view our calling, not as individuals but rather as members of the body of Christ, the church. In the assemblies of the saints how often friction occurs! A little experience of assembly life will suffice to convince us that this is so. Here then is an immense field for the cultivation of the beautiful graces enumerated in verse 2. The lowly mind thinks nothing of itself. Meekness, the opposite of self-assertiveness, is of course the direct outcome of lowliness. Longsuffering, the opposite of the hasty spirit so critical of others, is the child of lowliness and meekness. When all these three are in operation how simply and happily do we bear with

one another in love. Let us connect the love also with what we have just been seeing in chapter iii. Rooted and grounded in love, and knowing at least something of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, we ourselves are enabled with eyes of love, to look out on all saints, even those amongst them who according to nature are least lovable.

Amongst men we see the tendency for love to degenerate into a kind of soft amiability, which ends with condoning all kinds of things which are far from right. Thus it is not to be amongst saints, inasmuch as a very definite standard is set before us. We are to aim, not merely at agreement, for we might all be of one mind and in the sweetest agreement in favour of something entirely wrong! We are to give all diligence to keeping the unity of the Spirit—not Paul's unity, not Peter's, not yours nor mine, but rather that unity which the Spirit has produced. We did not make the unity, and we cannot break the unity. The Spirit made it and we are to keep it in a practical way in the uniting bond of peace. That is to be our constant endeavour. Our success in that endeavour will depend upon the measure in which we are marked by the beautiful features mentioned in verse 2.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(III) The Seal, the Earnest, Etc.

Ephesians i. 7-14.

WE start off with the basic fact, stated in verse seven, that in Christ, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. What a multitude of Christians stop just there. They know that their sins are forgiven, that consequently they have been delivered from judgment, will go to Heaven when they die, and with that they rest content. If, instead of writing just here *ne plus ultra*, they would read and consider the closing words of the verse, then they would say, "Still there's more to follow," and they would seek to discover what that is.

Let us note the words, "*According to the riches of His grace.*" It would seem as if the inspired writer had difficulty in finding language to adequately express the magnificence of the grace of God. He writes not merely of grace but of the *riches* of His grace; while in chapter two he goes farther and writes of *the exceeding riches* of His grace.

Let us look at the early portion of the chapter. (1) We have been "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (v. 3.) (2) We were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." (v. 4.) (3) We were predestinated unto, or marked off for, adoption, or sonship. (v. 5.) (4) We have been made "accepted in the Beloved." (v. 6). (5) God has made known to us "the mystery of His will." (v. 9.) (6) He has disclosed to us the secret of His plan, and has given us to know that His objective is to head up all things in Christ. (v. 10.) (7) He has told us that there is an inheritance in view, and that the Holy Spirit is at once the seal and the earnest of it. (vv. 13, 14). The inheritance is Christ's, and He who loves us, as we have already remarked, with

"That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs."

will share that inheritance with us.

How do we know? Because we trusted in Him, after we heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation: and, having believed in Him, we were "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (v. 13.) When through mercy, we believed, God sealed us as His own, and we came into that marvelous wealth of blessing outlined in the preceding verses, to which we have referred. The Holy Spirit is also "the earnest of

our inheritance." (v. 14.) What an arresting word! "*Our* inheritance." In view of it we have been sealed, and the Holy Spirit is the earnest, the pledge of it. What is His word now? To tell us more and more about "*our* inheritance," and so to enrapture our hearts that we shall want to know all about it, and in spirit to live there now.

Shall we linger a moment just here, and ask ourselves to what extent do we apprehend this, and how much do we enjoy it? Is it not, alas! the case that we sometimes live more like paupers than princes? Do we not sometimes grovel among the things of this world when we might be revelling in our riches?

This brings us to another point. We have the solemn word, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (iv. 30). It is worthy of note that the Holy Spirit is spoken of here in the same way as in chapter i. We quite understand, that if we realize that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person indwelling us, we will earnestly desire that we may not grieve Him. Here, however, it would seem as if the inspired writer sought to impress upon us that if we grieve Him we hinder Him in His normal and happy work of unfolding to us the wonders and grandeur of "*our inheritance*"; and thus we miss the joy that He desires

us to have. Verses 29 and 31 indicate that it is not only by some outrageous sin that we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, though that is true, but across these verses we can write "*the flesh.*" We well know the injury we sustain to our own souls, and the harm we do to others by the allowance of these things. Over verse 32 we can write *C-H-R-I-S-T*, and we do want to be like Him, do we not?

Now we pass on and read, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (v. 18.) This is normal Christianity. We are to understand that the will of the Lord is that we are not to be characterised by fleshly excitement, but to be "*filled with the Spirit.*" We have already observed that every true believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, therefore we need not pray for that, but obviously every believer may not be filled with the Spirit, hence the exhortation which gives us the warrant to pray for it. We must however be prepared to pay the price. Our will gone, and "the will of the Lord" alone governing us. On the day of Pentecost when the people saw the Spirit-filled disciples they said, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13). Here says the writer in effect, "be not drunk with wine, but let your intoxication be that of holy joy—psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, making melody, giving thanks." It is to be in evidence in our home-life in all its

relationships. He who does not shine at home will not shine either in the church or in the world; and the secret of shining in every sphere is to be filled with the Spirit. What a power for God there would be in this world if this were true of us all. Shall we here and now go in for it?

Please turn over now to 1 Thessalonians v. 19, and there read that short pithy, pointed verse of four words:

“QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.”

We are exhorted to “Rejoice evermore,” (v. 16) to “Pray without ceasing,” (v. 17). We are expected to know “the will of God in Christ Jesus” concerning us. We are urged to “despise not prophesyings.” (v. 20.) to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good,” (v. 21.) and to “abstain from all appearance of evil” (v. 22). Sandwiched between these wholesome sentences is this word, “Quench not the Spirit.” There are those who know the truth but who are not disposed to follow where it would lead. They know that loyalty to Christ calls for separation from the world, but they are not prepared for it. There are those who are assured that they are wrong in remaining in religious associations that the Word of God does not sanction, but they also know that to step out from these would bring upon them “the reproach of Christ,” and they are not willing to face

it. It may be that in many ways we all are conscious of the Holy Spirit leading us in a certain direction, and we hesitate; it may be we do not follow. In this way we may quench the Spirit. If on the other hand we accept His direction, bow to the truth, and go forward, we taste true joy; we find an unfailing resource in prayer; we are made intelligent as to the will of the Lord; we value prophesyings; we recognize truth, detect error, and have power to hold fast; and we are preserved from all that would tarnish the glory of Christ.

In conclusion we call attention to Revelation i. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Or as it should read "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day." The beloved disciple had been banished to what has been described as a barren, inhospitable place. It seemed a pathetic end to a useful life. But the Lord was behind it. He was removed from all the sights and sounds, and distraction of earth, in order that he might hear only the voice of the Lord, and receive the remarkable revelation which he has communicated to us. For this purpose he tells us "I became in the Spirit." This was not normal. He was taken possession of absolutely, and dominated completely by the Holy Spirit for this definite purpose. Under divine control, he heard a great voice, he saw a great Person, he received a great commission. In chapters i, ii, and iii, he wrote the things which he had seen, and

“the things which are.” In chapter iv. 2, he again tells us, “I became in the Spirit,” and from that point he indicates “the things which shall be hereafter.” Whether or not a believer may become in the Spirit in this sense now we are not prepared to say. We do believe however that He would seek to abstract us from things here; and to control us so completely that from the sacred page we may learn more and more and be enabled to communicate to others in divine power, the precious things of God. May this be a living, bright reality to us while the Lord is pleased to leave us here.

W BRAMWELL DICK.

To follow. (D.V.). THE HOLY SPIRIT. (4). His Work in the Individual and in the Assembly.

DUAL LIVES.

(A word to young Christians).

IS it possible for a Christian to be leading a dual life? Alas! it is not only possible, but in too many cases such lives are being lived, especially among young Christians.

There are many young people, who are undoubtedly the children of God, but in whom the work of God has as yet got but little depth. Such are in danger of leading dual lives.

What do you mean by leading a dual life? you may enquire. Well, it is like this.

Believers have two natures. One is the flesh, inconceivably evil, only capable of what is bad. The other is the new nature, every instinct of which is Godward, and towards holiness and truth.

Now if the believer sets out to cater for the flesh, there is the dual life. The two natures are diametrically opposed to each other, and the sad part is that the cultivation of the flesh destroys the appetite for the things of God. We read the solemn words, "No man also having drunk old wine [that is, indulged in the activities of the flesh] straightway desireth new [that is, the enjoyment of divine and spiritual things]: for he saith, The old is better." (Luke v. 39.) Reading one of those exciting sexual novels, that pour from the press to-day, takes away the appetite for the Word of God. Attendance at the cinema or the theatre, etc., destroys desire for the prayer meeting and the Bible reading.

We get warning examples in Scripture against leading the dual life.

Take the case of Lot. He chose by the sight of his eyes and natural inclination; there was no seeking the guidance of God. He chose all the plain of Jordan. Next he pitched his tent towards Sodom—Sodom, a type of the evil world. He looked that way. Next he dwelt in Sodom, where "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Genesis xiii. 13).

Then he "sat in the Gate of Sodom" (Genesis xix. 1). From looking *towards* Sodom he found himself *in* Sodom, his daughters naturally marrying young men belonging to Sodom, whilst his sitting in the gate was equivalent to becoming a justice of the peace, a sign that he had thrown himself into the municipal life of the place.

Who would have imagined from the record in the Old Testament that we should read in the New Testament that "Lot" was "vexed with the filthy conversation [manner of life, including talk but embracing the whole life] of the wicked"—that he "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds"? (2 Peter ii. 7, 8).

Surely Lot lived a dual life; outwardly hail-fellow-well-met with the world, and filth and wickedness were its moral features then as now; inwardly chafing and grieving over the condition of things.

How sad was his end. The Lord delivered him at the finish, and did not allow him to share the doom of the guilty cities of the plain, but what a humiliating deliverance it was! He lost his wife, who looking back became a pillar of salt; and he was made drunk by his own two daughters on successive nights, becoming the father by them of children, who were the progenitors of two races—Moabites and Ammonites—the implacable enemies of God's people.

Let us all be warned about leading dual lives, for there is this temptation with us all.

Read the unutterably sad story of Samson as unfolded in Judges xiii. 24- xvi. 31, and lay the lesson to heart. It is possible for a Christian to sin like Samson, but how sad beyond words.

It is possible to appear a saint in the meetings, and be something quite different out of the sight of one's fellow Christians.

It is sad indeed that the eye of a Christian friend will often act as a deterrent, whilst the eye of the Lord, which is *always* upon us, is forgotten and ignored.

As we have said, often the work of God in the young Christian, and sometimes in the old, is very shallow, and the pull of the Spirit is feeble, and the pull of the flesh is strong. There is with the young all the full vigour of bodily life, the natural desire of youth to enjoy the pleasures that this world can afford, to experience for the first time what the flesh craves after, but all too often it is like the moth, whose wings are singed by flying too near to the alluring light of the candle or the lamp.

Eliphaz of old asked some searching questions. Let us put these questions to you, and will you answer them on your knees with the eye of the Lord looking into the

inmost recesses of your heart, and knowing all about your life? "Is there any secret thing with thee? why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thine eyes wink at?" (Job xv. 11, 12).

If such things are, alas! and to your shame, true of you, will you seek grace to get into God's presence, and judge your past, and seek to throw yourself wholeheartedly into the things of God?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians vi. 7). How foolish to sow to the flesh; how happy to sow to the Spirit.

Life is short. Sin whether in sinner or saint is disastrous. There will be no flesh in heaven. What is going to characterize us for ever and ever, should characterize us now, and that for our true profit and real happiness.

Cease tampering with what is of the flesh. Listen to the stern admonition of Scripture. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry . . . put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians iii. 5-9).

These are straight words. They are inspired. They were needed in Paul's day. They are needed to-day. You and I need them. They speak to us. Shall we listen?

A dual life is mere hypocrisy. Let us seek to be true to the Lord in every way, and live a life that is pleasing to Him: being those that live, "not . . . unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians v. 15).

A. J. POLLOCK.

NOT CONVENIENT.

SPEECH is a sure index of the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii. 34). The grace of Christ alone can tame the tongue. Such a stupendous task is beyond the power of man as James iii. 8 tells us. It is the heart filled with Christ which expresses itself in meekness and lowliness.

In those Epistles where the Apostle is seen as *teacher* we get doctrine followed by precept. The Ephesian epistle is an example of this. In connection with this we do well to remember that, "Precepts are the expression of the hidden moral virtue that lies in the doctrine." We can have

nothing more directly personal than God speaking to us in this way through His Word.

Take just one precept which occurs in the Ephesian epistle, "Foolish talking and jesting . . . are not convenient" (v. 4). The word for "foolish talking," has been interpreted by some as the "slipping of the tongue." Liddell and Scott's lexicon gives as a definition "talking in a silly way." Speaking of this word an early Christian writer uses the Latin expression, *lubricum verbe*. It is not difficult to see our modern *lubricate* in this. *Lubricated*, carries its own suggestion of the tongue easily slipping along in the talk of fools. There is always the danger of discourse becoming first foolish and then corrupt. Sound speech which cannot be condemned, speech in grace seasoned with salt, is the hall mark of the heart occupied with Christ. This word then which in profane literature may have meant little more than "random talk" when taken up by the inspired Apostle can mean nothing less than that which is both folly and sin.

The word for "jesting," like "foolish talking" occurs once only in the New Testament. This word would have special significance to the Ephesian saint. It speaks no less powerfully to Christians of this age of widely diffused education. The writer recently copied a line from a pre-Christian

writer which shows how well known was the character of the Ephesians. "Ephesian" was almost synonymous with "jester." The line was,

"I devote myself to pleasure, love and mirth,
In fine at *Ephesus* I was born."

In the Greek this word is derived from "well" and "turned"—"that which easily turns." The "jester" then, is always ready with an answer or repartee. He is witty and lively. He adapts himself to any circumstance, or to whatever is the mood of the person addressed, without coarseness or indecency. In spite of the atmosphere of refinement attaching to "jesting" it is coupled to "foolish talking" and for ever stamped as "not convenient."

It is useless attempting corrective methods. The specific complaint must be dealt with and then the symptoms will disappear. Christ filling the heart will mean Christ on the tongue. When He was here He was as perfect in His speech as He was in every other expression of that life which was the Light of men. It behoves us to remember that to all that precious unfolding of the counsel and purposes of God in the Ephesian epistle is added a number of exhortations for our admonition and profit, and among them that which has to say to us about the very manner of our speech.

S. O. THURSTON.

PAUL'S "INTOLERANCE."

WHAT was the difference between the teaching of Paul and the teaching of the Judaizers? What was it that gave rise to the stupendous polemic of the Epistle to the Galatians? To the modern Church the difference would have seemed to be a mere theological subtlety. About many things the Judaizers were in perfect agreement with Paul. The Judaizers believed that Jesus was the Messiah; there is not a shadow of evidence that they objected to Paul's lofty view of the person of Christ. Without the slightest doubt, they believed that Jesus had really risen from the dead. They believed, moreover, that faith in Christ was necessary to salvation. But the trouble was, they believed that something else was also necessary; they believed that what Christ had done needed to be pieced out by the believer's own effort to keep the law. From the modern point of view the difference would have seemed to be very slight. Paul as well as the Judaizers believed that the keeping of the law of God, in its deepest import, is inseparably connected with faith. The difference concerned only the logical—not even, perhaps, the temporal—order of three steps. Paul said that a man (1) first believes on Christ, (2) then is justified before God, (3) then immediately proceeds to keep God's law. The Judaizers said that a man (1) believes on Christ and (2) keeps the law of

God the best he can, and then (3) is justified. The difference would seem to modern "practical" Christians to be a highly subtle and intangible matter, hardly worthy of consideration at all in view of the large measure of agreement in the practical realm. What a splendid cleaning up of the Gentile cities it would have been if the Judaizers had succeeded in extending to those cities the observance of the Mosaic law, even including the unfortunate ceremonial observances! Surely Paul ought to have made common cause with teachers who were so nearly in agreement with him; surely he ought to have applied to them the great principle of Christian unity.

As a matter of fact, however, Paul did nothing of the kind; and only because he (and others) did nothing of the kind does the Christian Church exist to-day. Paul saw very clearly that the difference between the Judaizers and himself was the difference between two entirely distinct types of religion; it was the difference between a religion of merit and a religion of grace. If Christ provides only a part of our salvation, leaving us to provide the rest, then we are still hopeless under the load of sin, for no matter how small the gap, which must be bridged before salvation can be attained, the awakened conscience sees clearly that our wretched attempt at goodness is insufficient even to bridge that gap. The guilty soul enters again into the hopeless reckoning with

God, to determine whether we have really done our part. And thus we groan again under the old bondage of the law. Such an attempt to piece out the work of Christ by our own merit, Paul saw clearly, is the very essence of unbelief; Christ will do everything or nothing, and the only hope is to throw ourselves unreservedly on His mercy and trust Him for all.

Paul certainly was right. The difference which divided him from the Judaizers was no mere theological subtlety, but concerned the very heart and core of the religion of Christ. "Just as I am without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me"—that was what Paul was contending for in Galatia; that hymn would never have been written if the Judaizers had won. And without the thing which that hymn expresses there is no Christianity at all. *Extracted.*

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Ephesians iv. 4-32*).

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

IF verse 2 of our chapter gives us the characteristics which, being developed in us, will lead to the keeping of the unity of the Spirit, verses 4-6 give us a series of unities which strongly support the exhortation of verse 3. The word "one" occurs seven times in these three verses.

First we have the oneness of the body of Christ, which is composed of all the saints of the present dispensation. This body has been formed by the baptism and indwelling of the one Spirit, and every member of that body shares in a common calling, which has one hope in view. Nothing that is unreal enters into this body. All is vital here in the life and energy of the Spirit.

Next we have the Lord, and the faith and the baptism that are connected with Him. Oneness is stamped upon these things connected with the Lord, equally with all that is connected with the Spirit; though the faith may be professed and baptism be accepted by some, who afterwards turn out to be nothing more than mere professors.

Then we come to God the Father, and here again oneness is pressed upon us since we all find our origin in Him. And further, though He is above all and through all, He is in all of us.

In these seven unities is found the foundation and support of the unity of the Spirit, which we are responsible to keep. It is buttressed in this sevenfold way, which is a definite testimony to its importance, as also to our frailty in keeping it. We are one, and that by the presence and action of the Spirit of God. We may fail to keep the unity, yet the unity will not thereby cease to exist, since it stands in the energy of God.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

On the other hand we are great losers, and the testimony of God suffers, as we fail to keep it. The very divided state of the people of God proclaims how grievously we have failed in this respect, and it accounts very largely for the weakness, the lack of spiritual insight and vigour, which prevails. We cannot rectify the present divided state of things, but we can make it our aim to pursue the unity which is of the Spirit of God with all lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance. Only it must be the Spirit's unity. To aim at keeping any other unity, yours, mine or any one else's, is to miss the unity of the Spirit.

Moreover unity does not mean a dead uniformity. Verse 7 is plain testimony to this. We all are one, yet to each of us is given both gift and grace that is peculiar to ourselves. This thought leads the Apostle to refer to those gifts of a special yet abiding nature, which have been bestowed by the ascended Christ in proof and manifestation of His victory.

The quotation in verse 8 is from Psalm lxxviii., a Psalm which celebrates prophetically the Divine victory over rebellious kings and all His enemies, which will usher in the glorious millennial age. The Apostle knew that the victory, to be publicly manifested then, had been already accomplished in the death, the resurrection, the ascension of Christ. Hence he appropriates these words from the Psalm and applies them to the

ascended Christ before the day of millennial victory arrives. Having conquered Satan in death, his last stronghold, He has gone on high, having brought into subjection to Himself those who had been the slaves of Satan. Then He signalized His victory by bestowing on those, who are now captivated by Him, spiritual powers which should suffice for the carrying on of His work, even while they are yet in the place where Satan is permitted still to exercise his wiles.

Verses 9 and 10, as we notice, are parenthetical. They emphasize two things. First, that ere He ascended He had first to go down to death, where He vanquished the power of the enemy, and even the grave. Second, that having achieved victory He is supreme in exaltation, with a view to the filling of all things.

“Far above all heavens,” is a remarkable expression. In Mark xvi. we have the Divine Servant “received up into heaven.” In Hebrews iv. the great High Priest is “passed through the heavens.” Here the victorious Man is “ascended up far above all heavens.” The very heaven of heavens is His, and it is His that He may “fill all things”; another remarkable word. Even to-day each believer should be filled with the Spirit as we see a little further on in this epistle. Each believer who is filled with the Spirit is necessarily filled with Christ, and consequently Christ comes out

of him. If filled with Christ we display His character. The day is coming when Christ will fill all things, and consequently all things will display Him and His glory. The "all things" spoken of here is of course all things that in any way come under His headship—all things within the universe of blessing.

Verse 11 reads straight on from verse 8. The four great gifts are specified. Apostles, the men sent forth for the establishment of the church, through whom in the main the inspired Scriptures have reached us. Prophets, men raised up to speak on God's behalf, conveying His mind; whether doing so by inspiration, as in the earliest days of the church, or not. Evangelists, who carry forth into the world that great message which avails when received, to rescue men from the enemy's power. Pastors and teachers, those qualified to instruct believers in the truth revealed, and to apply it to their actual state, so that they may be fed and maintained in growth and spiritual health.

The simple meaning of the word translated, "pastor," is "shepherd," and the words, "shepherds and teachers," describe not two gifts but one. Let this be taken to heart by any who are gifted in this direction. No one can very well act as shepherd without doing a little teaching, but it is possible for a very gifted man so to concen-

trate on teaching that he never concerns himself to act as a shepherd; and this in practice proves very hurtful both to himself and to his hearers.

The objects in view in the giving of the gifts are stated in verses 12-15. The saints are to be perfected, qualified each to take their due place in the body of Christ. The work of the ministry is to be carried on, and thus the body be built up. And all this is to proceed until God's purpose as to the body is carried to its completion. Until then the gifts abide. The gifts in this passage, be it remembered, are not exactly certain powers conferred; but rather the men who possess these powers, who are conferred as gifts upon the church. Apostles and inspired prophets remain in the Scriptures that came from their pens. Uninspired prophets, together with evangelists and also pastors and teachers, are found in the church even to this day.

The ultimate objective contemplated in the bestowal of the gifts is stated in verse 13. We are to arrive at "a full-grown man," and that according to the measure of that which is God's purpose for us. As the body of Christ we are to be His fulness (see, i. 23) and up to the measure of the stature of that fulness we are to come. We shall arrive there in oneness—that oneness which springs from the faith fully apprehended and the Son of God really known.

Again, God's objective in connection with the gifts is set before us in verses 14 and 15, but this time not the ultimate but the immediate objective. It is that we may be marked by spiritual growth, so that instead of being tossed about, like a boat without an anchor, and at the mercy of false teachers, we may be holding the truth in love and growing up increasingly into conformity to Him who is our Head.

These objectives, whether we consider the ultimate or the immediate, are very great, very worthy of God. If we take them in we shall not wonder that with a view to them special gifts have flowed from the ascended Christ. But verse 16 completes the story by showing that the increase and growth of the body, which is the present objective, is not to be reached only by the ministry of these special gifts, but that every member of the body, however obscure, has a part to play. Just as the human body has many parts and joints, each of which supply something to the general upkeep and growth and well-being, so is it in the body of Christ.

It is very important that we bear this in mind, otherwise we easily fall into the way of thinking that the general good and spiritual prosperity of the church altogether depends upon the actions and service of gifted men. Consequently when things are poor and feeble, or altogether wrong, we

can conveniently absolve ourselves from all responsibility and blame, laying all at the door of the gifts. The fact is that the healthy action of every part, down to the smallest and most unnoticed, is needful for the welfare of the whole. Let us all aim at so going forward ourselves that there may be increase of the body, to the building up of itself in love. Truly intelligence is necessary; but love, Divine love, is the great building force. God help us all to be filled with divine love.

With verse 17 we come face to face with detailed injunctions. The general exhortation occurs in the first verse of our chapter, and is of a positive character. Here the first injunction is of a negative sort: we are not to walk as do men of the world. Verses 18 and 19 give us a glimpse into the dark cesspool of Gentile iniquity which surrounded these saints at Ephesus. We see enough to discern the same hideous features as are exposed more fully in chapter i. of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Is the Gentile world of the twentieth century any better? We fear not; though the evil may be more skilfully hidden from the public eye. Still there is vanity, coupled with darkness, ignorance, blindness, and consequent alienation from all life which is of God.

Now we have learned Christ. Not only have we heard Him, and as a result be-

lieved in Him, but we have been "taught by Him," or as it may be read, "instructed in Him." He is not only our Teacher but our Lesson Book. He is not only our Lesson Book but our Example. The truth is in Jesus: that is, He Himself when here on earth was the perfect setting forth of all that is enjoined upon us. He perfectly manifested the "righteousness and holiness of truth," of which verse 24 (marginal reading) speaks.

What we have learned, then, concerns three things. First, as to our having put off the old man, which is utterly corrupt. Second, as to a complete renewal in the very spirit of our mind. Third, as to our having put on the new man, which is wholly according to God. The putting off and the putting on are not something which we are to do, as the Authorized translation would infer, but something which the true believer has done. "Your having put off . . . and having put on" (N. Tr.).

The "old man" is not Adam personally, but rather the Adamic nature and character. So too the "new man" is not Christ personally, but the nature and character which are His. The righteousness and holiness, which spring forth from, and are in entire consonance with truth, were altogether proper to Him, and like a native growth. With us they are not native but foreign, and consequently as regards us the new man is

spoken of as created. Nothing short of creation would do, and nothing less than complete renewal in the spirit of our minds.

But let us not miss the point that all this is what has been arrived at in the case of the true believer. It is of the very essence of true Christianity. We are to be characterized by a walk wholly different from the rest of the Gentiles *because* this great transaction has taken place, if indeed we have heard and learned of Christ; which is equivalent to saying, if indeed we are really His.

The Apostle proceeds to lay his finger upon particular manifestations of the old man that we are to put off. Because the old man has been put off we are to put off all his features in detail. He begins with lying which is to be put off in favour of truth. The previous verse had mentioned holiness of truth as marking the new man, so we must be off with the lying which marks the old. Moreover, anger, theft, corrupt speech, and all similar evil use of the tongue, are to be put away, and kindness and forgiveness are to characterize us. We are to forgive others as we have been forgiven ourselves.

In these closing verses of the chapter we have not only what we are to put away but what we are to put on. Not lying, but truth. Not stealing, but toiling so as to have the wherewithal to give to others. Not corrupt talk, but words of grace and

edification. Not anger and bitterness and heated clamour, but kind forgiveness. And all this in view of the grace which God has shown us for Christ's sake, and in view of the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

We are sealed by that Holy Spirit until the day of the redemption of our bodies and of the whole inheritance purchased by the blood of Christ. He will not leave us, but He is very sensitive as to holiness. We may easily grieve Him, and in consequence lose for the time the happy experiences that result from His presence. So may God help us to lay these practical instructions very much to heart, that we may walk not as the world, but in righteousness, holiness and truth.

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Will you please give a comment on 1 Peter iv. 1. What is the flesh there?—KILKEEL.

PETER wrote to converted Jews who had formerly looked for a Messiah who would appear amongst them in the flesh, and as such be glorified. He had indeed appeared in the flesh, but only to suffer in the flesh. Nevertheless, they had believed in Him, and as His followers they also had to expect suffering. Consequently they were to arm themselves with the same mind—the mind to suffer.

The whole pathway of Christ, when in the flesh among men, was one of suffering. Such was His perfect devotion to the will of God that He was in constant collision with the will of men. His sufferings of course culminated at the cross, where another element entered into them, even suffering for sin at the hands of God in judgment, and for our sakes. We have nothing to do with those sufferings that came upon Him at the cross, but we are committed to a course in the world, that will bring us too into collision with man's will, and except we are armed with the mind of Christ we shall not get very far on that course.

We too suffer in the flesh. Only there is an element in our flesh which was totally absent in the flesh of Christ. Sin lies latent in our flesh as long as we are in the flesh, and it does not require much for the sin which is latent to become terribly patent. When temptation appeals to us from without it promises gratification to the flesh within. If we gratify the flesh we sin. If we do not gratify the flesh but accept suffering in the flesh we cease from sin.

We believe then that the words, "in the flesh," have in a general way the force here of "bodily condition." Only we have very particularly to bear in mind that our bodily condition is characterized by sin and Christ's was not. His flesh was holy flesh, whereas ours is sinful flesh. This perhaps is where the difficulty of understanding the verse comes in.

PRESENT SALVATION.

(From notes of addresses.)

WHEN we speak of a present salvation, it is often understood to mean that a sinner can be saved now, *at* this moment. That is quite true, but that is not what I am meaning, but rather that there is a salvation *for* the present moment. A salvation for whom? For people that are saved. But how can saved people require a salvation? Well, because when we speak of them as saved, we mean that through the finished work of Christ, through His precious atoning blood, He has saved our souls from sin's bitter consequences and all that threatened us, that eternal doom which lay before us. In that sense our soul is safe. But now there is another way of speaking of salvation, and that is what the young believer feels he wants. Well, he says, "I have trusted Him, but I don't know how I'll get on," and he begins to measure his own frailty and weakness against all the odds he has to meet with in the workshop, in the office, at the bench, or wherever he is, and he feels he wants someone who can stand by him. Well, God has found that Someone for us in the same Person that

died for us, but now ever lives for us, and that to carry us through.

Over 50 years ago I got peace with God through hearing a dear servant of God, long since gone to his rest, Mr. C. H. Mackintosh. He was preaching from Hebrews ix., the three appearings of Christ. That is the thing that settled my soul. I don't remember what he said, but I know the peace of God has been with me ever since. It is a subject that has got a very warm place in my thoughts and affections. We speak about the three appearings of Christ because it says He appeared here once to "put away sin." He appeared on earth, and His mission was to put sin away by "the sacrifice of Himself." He now appears "in the presence of God," in "heaven itself;" that is, for all those who belong to Him, His people. Then it says He shall "appear the second time," apart from any sin question. He took up the sin question when He came the first time and He settled it; therefore it does not require to be taken up again. When He comes again He won't have to touch that question at all, but He is coming for salvation.

There are not three salvations; there is only one. But although it is one salvation, there are three ways of looking at it. If I am a bankrupt, there is facing me nothing but beggary and ruin. Who is to save

me? I cannot save myself; I am hopeless and helpless! The man who can save me is the man that will grapple with my debts, and settle them righteously to the satisfaction of my creditors. That is the man that can save me. There is no salvation for me except by the settling of that debt question. What puts my soul into peril? It is the sin question, and there is no salvation for me until the settling of the sin question. Christ came into the world to save sinners. He grappled with that question of sin and settled it. Paul writing to Timothy says, "God who hath saved us"; it is a thing that is put in the past tense. "Oh, but," said a young lady to me the other day, "I don't think anybody should speak so positively about that. My teacher says we ought to say, we are being saved." Now there is a certain sense in which that is true, but in connection with the sin question, the soul salvation question, it is absolutely untrue. Why? Because all that rests on the work that is finished. It is true that we are being saved, but that rests upon an unfinished work. Whose unfinished work? Christ's unfinished work, as unfolded to us in Hebrews vii. 24-28.

In that passage the salvation spoken of is a *preservation*, the keeping of our feet from falling and stumbling along the road. Those, who have taken Christ as their Saviour and confessed Him as their Lord, now want to live so as to please Him; to

walk down here to be a testimony to Him, and to be used of Him to bring others to Him. But then, you see, Christians are only reckoned by their walk and ways. The world does not measure you up by how much you *know*; it measures you up by how much you *show*. The Lord has left us here to be His disciples, to be fruit-bearers, and to be a testimony for God. Here comes the whole power of the enemy to defeat that object, and if he can get you back into your old worldly ways and associations he has practically brought about a defeat of the present object God had in saving you. Now Christianity does not only mean that I have got my soul saved, and am going to heaven by-and-by; Christianity means also the reproduction of Christ, in His moral features, in our everyday life. And I can tell you the world knows how a Christian ought to walk, and behave, but we may bring our utter feebleness to our Lord Jesus Christ who has set Himself apart in heaven to be the Priest, and therefore a Deliverer, a Preserver. So you see there is an aspect of salvation with reference to that.

A Priest is not for sins; a Priest has been set apart in order to help us in our infirmities—so it says at the end of the fourth chapter of Hebrews. Infirmities! what are they? They are not sin. I have heard people say when they got into a towering rage—This is one of my infirmities. It is

one of my family failings. But that is not an infirmity. We must call things by their right name. Where is the infirmity? In the tendency. There may be that natural proclivity to be very short in the temper, with very little patience. But the Lord has set Himself apart to supply you with grace to preserve you in the midst of your temptations and your frailties and your weakness. That is what the Priest is for.

So we have a High Priest that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted as we are, except sin; there was no sin in Him. There was nothing in Him to answer to temptation; He suffered being tempted. The Devil never tempts with anything that costs us suffering; he tempts us with *something we like*. But the temptation to the blessed Lord caused Him suffering. We have to suffer if we resist the temptation, but He is there a great High Priest and for all that come to God by Him. Them "that come unto God by Him," is a term that covers all the Christian company; those are the people He is interceding for.

I might just say, by the way, that we read, "to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." People tell us it is only those who are looking for Him He is going to take up when salvation, in the third and final

way, comes to pass at His second advent. He will leave the other believers behind. Make no mistake about it. "Them that look for Him" is a term which covers all true Christians, the same people that "draw near to God by Him." So also "them that love God" is a term that covers the whole Christian company.

He is a Priest that does not die. Other priests died; their priesthood passed from one to another: He ever lives, and He is able to save us for evermore, right on to the end of the journey. He knows our frailties, and He is able to sympathize, to succour, and ever to keep our feet from falling.

Where can I find all this help? Come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain the mercy and seasonable help. That throne, which otherwise would have become the throne of judgment, has become the throne of grace, and you draw near and you get His succour, His sympathy, His tender compassion in your hour of need.

Our High Priest is "made higher than the heavens"—a good thing too! Why? Well, if you fell out of a rowing boat, and I came to you in a rowing boat, I might be able to lift you where I am into the rowing boat, but I couldn't lift you into a tug. I could only lift you where I am myself. If

I were in the tug I might lift you into the tug, but I couldn't lift you into the big ocean liner. No, I am not there myself. If He is going to bring us to heaven, isn't it a comfort to know He is higher than the heavens; He can bring you there.

What kind of a Priest is He? Holy. That is the path He trod; it was one of holiness and separation from sinners. Is that the path you want to tread? You say, "Yes, Lord, that is what I want." Then He is for you, though the devil is against you. The Lord has been in our circumstances, and He feels with us; if we want to tread in the way of holiness we have His sympathy. The people that know this present salvation, are people who want it.

If I tied you to a seat you would not be much inconvenienced by it until the moment came for you to get up and go; then you would be in difficulties. When a person begins to move on, then they find there is a hindrance. If you want to tread the heavenly way, the pathway of holiness and separation from sinners, you find you are against the stream, with the power of evil against you. But in all your weakness the Priest is for you, your Succourer and your Sympathizer. This is the "present salvation," and I can get it at the throne of grace.

A girl was converted. She was one of a number of servants in a gentleman's large establishment, but she stood to her guns and faced the lot of them, who came down hard upon her every day. She had a time of trial. And do you know what Mary used to say? "Lord, help me!" and He helped her. She found mercy and seasonable help. But one morning they began even before she got out of bed, and she said, "I think it is too bad of you; you don't give me time to get out of bed and dress," she boiled over with annoyance and scalded the lot of them. Then they at once said, "There is your saint!" Mary said in her heart, "Lord, help me!" You are too late, Mary! If you had said that before, He would have helped you, but you just left Him out; you thought you could manage this by yourself. No, Mary doesn't want a Sympathizer. Christ could not sympathize with her in that path of sin because He never trod it. Yet He became her Advocate. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." The Priest is only for frailties and tendencies.

Suppose a young Christian gets up in the morning and kneels, saying something like this:—"Lord, I am starting a new day; I don't know what will happen to-day, but there is one thing I do know, if there is a chance of going wrong I will be sure to do so unless Thou dost hold me up and keep my feet from falling." Telling the Lord

all the frailties and tendencies, and coming to the throne of grace, in the hour of need the support is there. And where does the strength come from? It comes from Him.

A dog fancier and trainer was converted. Somebody said to him one day, "Why, Jim, you have got rid of the dogs!" "Yes," he said, "I have, I have got something better." "It seems very queer to see you without the dogs." "Well," he says, "I have learned a good lesson from the dogs before now. When I was their trainer I didn't let them eat too much. In going down the street the dog would see a bone in the gutter, and a dog and a bone are very old acquaintances. I would say, 'No, you mustn't,' and the dog would look at me as much as to say—what is wrong with the bone? And when I take my eye off him, why, he goes to the bone again. 'No, you mustn't!' He looks at me as much as to say—why can't you let me have it? I noticed this, that as long as the dog's eye was on me there was power in me that kept him proof against the temptation, but the moment his eye wandered *from* me, his eye was *on* the bone." Now all power is given to Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is here to keep your eye upon Him. Let your eye wander from Him, and like the dog, you will be after the next temptation—and fall.

May the Lord help us to keep our eye on Him. A Yorkshire miner got converted. Before his conversion he was an awful character, now there was a vast change. And then the boys in the pit, that before never dared to cross him for a moment, all attacked him because he was a Christian. One day he went for one of the boys, seized his cap and flung it to the side of the wall. They thought the old demon had come back. He said, "Thank God that I have been converted, because otherwise that would have been your neck!" Well, one day his business was to keep some trucks running on the line, but at a curve the truck wheels came off the line, so he had to get them on again. He would manage to get the fore wheels on, and the back ones would come off and when he got the back wheels on the fore wheels would come off, and this went on for some time until his strength was giving way, and his patience too. Three fellows were standing round the corner, and they said, "We know Tom all right. We have seen him in that difficulty before. You will hear him break out presently!" He did not know anybody was watching him. Tom tried again—the same thing happened. And Tom did break out. Do you know how he broke out?

"I need Thee, oh, I need Thee,
Every hour I need Thee."

He sung that little prayer, and it went straight to the throne of grace; and then he started again. This time on went all

the wheels and off went the truck, and away. And these three fellows were disappointed, and the devil was cheated of his hoped for victory, and God was glorified. If we should break *out* like that, we should never break *down*. You know how we break down? Because we don't break out in prayer to our loving and living and all sufficient Saviour.

ART. CUTTING.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(IV) His Work in the individual and in the Assembly.

1 *Corinthians vi.* 19, 20; *xii.* 1-13.

WE have already observed that when the Holy Spirit came, He filled the house and filled the disciples. Let us quote from Acts ii. 2-4, "And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." We have no doubt, the lesson we have to learn from this is that on the day of Pentecost the true House of God was formed; i.e. "the House of God, which is the 'Church of the living God'" (1 Timothy iii. 15); and that the Holy Spirit took up His residence therein.

This is confirmed by the apostle saying, when writing to the saints at Corinth in their corporate capacity, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). And again, "Ye are the Temple of the living God" (2 Cor. vi. 16); and yet again we read of that which "Groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 21, 22). We also learn however that the Holy Spirit filled all the disciples, so that from that scripture as well as the first at the head of our paper, we learn that the Holy Spirit likewise takes up His abode in the bodies of all true believers.

The words of 1 Corinthians vi. 19, 20, are so striking that we naturally want to consider their setting. From chapter v, we learn that there had been the allowance in the Assembly at Corinth of grave moral evil. Unsavoury though the subject was, the inspired writer returned to it in chapter vi. He asked two arresting, challenging questions:

(1) "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (verse 15). Do we realise that? As really as our hand is a member of our physical body, so is our body a member of Christ. If our hand is injured our body is affected. If we abuse

our body Christ is affected. How intensely solemn!

(2) "What? Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" (verse 19). What does the thought of a temple convey to our minds? A shrine; something that is sacred, holy, which fills us with a sense of awe and reverence. We read that when Solomon's temple was completed, and "when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven... and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house" (2 Chronicles vii. 1, 2).

Carry this conception of the temple into our text and let us hear these words addressed to us individually. "YOUR body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." Our body is inhabited by a divine Person. He has taken possession of it to govern our movements; to control our thoughts; to direct our steps; to have power over every fibre of our being. He claims us absolutely and unreservedly for God. Are we prepared for that? Is it not the case that whilst we are willing to entrust God with our spirit and our soul for time and eternity, we are unwilling to let Him have our body. That might upset our plans, check our ambition, alter the whole course of our life.

It is obvious that if we believe that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, we will be careful what we put into it, what we put on it, and where we take it. We will not ill use it; we will not subject it to the caprice of worldly fashion; we will seek that by our treatment of it we do not grieve Him who dwells therein.

Read on: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (vv. 19, 20). Here the verse stops. We are not "Captain of our own destiny," nor "Master of our own fate" as the world talks; we are not our own. We have been bought with a price, and what a price:—"The precious blood of Christ." If we have been purchased at such a price, then indeed we are no longer our own but His, and has He not established an incontestable claim? Why have we been bought? Why has the Holy Spirit taken possession of us? That we might glorify God in our body.

Our blessed Lord Jesus came into a body prepared for Him and said, "Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews x. 7). In that body He did the will of God in every thought, word, and deed; and at the close of His wonderful pathway, looking heavenward, He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (John xvii. 4). He glorified God in His body, and

we have been left here in order that we might glorify God in our body. What an honour! How the knowledge of this would settle many problems that confront young believers in particular. Can I go there? May I do this? Should I read that? and countless other questions. The divine Person who indwells us, and whose temple we are, would settle all these difficulties for us, indeed they would not arise if only we were controlled by Him. But how large is that *IF*. To give Him His way means not to have our way; to do God's will means to let go our will; to glorify God in our body means to say *NO* very emphatically to ourselves. Yet, if only we apprehended the fact that God has not only forgiven our sins to deliver us from judgment and to fit us for heaven, but He has bought us with a price inconceivably great; that His Holy Spirit has taken possession of us, made us His temple, and has told us that we are not our own, but that it is our privilege to glorify God in our body, how readily and gladly, as well as gratefully, we should respond.

Space prevents our dwelling at length on 1 Corinthians xii. We would remark however that it is only as that of which we have written is true of us, that the Holy Spirit will be able to work through us in the Assembly. I Corinthians vi. 19, 20 is to be known individually. I Corinthians xii indicates our answer to it in

the Assembly. Here the precious truth of the one body is presented, not as in Ephesians, where we learn how indispensable the body is to the Head; nor as in Colossians, where we see how indispensable the Head is to the body; but showing how indispensable are the members of the body one to another.

In the first thirteen verses the Holy Spirit is mentioned eleven times. In connection with gifts and their exercise we learn that the Holy Spirit is the active Agent; (verse 4), the Lord is the Administrator (verse 5); God is the Author and the Director of all (verse 6). We observe further that in the exercise of His divine sovereignty, the Holy Spirit divides the gifts "to every man severally *as He will*;" (verse 11) just as "God hath set the members, every one of them in the body *as it hath pleased Him*" (verse 18).

The first three gifts mentioned are important. (1) "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom" (verse 8). How we value one to-day to whom has been given "the word of wisdom." One who in a time of difficulty has the Lord's mind for the moment and can communicate that to us. Like, "The children of Is-sachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles xii. 32).

(2) "To another knowledge" (verse 8). There are those—thank God—who know the precious truth; they are not leavened with modernistic tendencies either in interpretation or in exposition. That which is from the beginning is that which fills their souls, and they find their joy in communicating it to others. How beautifully this comes out when gathered together in Assembly is outlined in chapter xiv. In chapter xii. we have the thing itself—the Assembly. In chapter xiii, the motive power; and in chapter xiv. we see the Assembly in function.

(3) "To another faith" (verse 9). This is not that saving faith which is the portion of every believer. It is the faith of an Abraham, a Caleb, a Joshua, an Elijah, of the galaxy of men and women, named and unnamed, in Hebrews xi. The faith that at all times lays hold on God, "laughs at impossibilities," and says, "it shall be done." Faith that brings not only the individual, but the Assembly, when in exercise, in touch with God; and that glorifies Him by unquestioning trust in Him, be the difficulties what they may.

We notice that in each case it is "by the Spirit;" "by the same Spirit" (verses 8 and 9). Once again we urge that if the Holy Spirit has His own way with us individually, He will have His own way when we are gathered together in Assembly. His authority will be acknowledged; His lead-

ing will be recognised; the Lord will have His place, and His saints will have their portion. May our hearts be increasingly exercised in this direction, so that we may answer to the Lord's mind in this respect.

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

To follow D.V. THE HOLY SPIRIT. (5) His activities in the world.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Ephesians v. 1-25*).

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

THE closing words of chapter iv. enforce upon us the obligation to kindness and forgiveness which rests upon all saints, inasmuch as we have been forgiven of God for Christ's sake. The opening words of chapter v. carry this thought a step further and a step higher. Not only have we been forgiven but we have been introduced into the Divine family. We are children of God and beloved by Him. Hence as dear children we are to be followers, or imitators, of God.

The imitation enjoined is not artificial but natural. Here are children playing in the market-place. They hold an imaginary

court. This little maiden, arrayed in cheap finery, is impersonating a queen. She imitates queenly manners as best she can, but it is all very crude and artificial. There however is a small lad, minutely observing his father. Presently friends are smiling at him and observing how very like his father he is. His imitation is largely unconscious and wholly natural, for he *is* the son of his father, possessing his life and nature. Now it is as children of God that we are called upon to be imitators of God.

We are to walk in love. This is not natural to us as the children of Adam, but it is natural to us as born of God, for God is love. Walking in love is thus simply the manifesting in practice of the Divine nature. Hence it adds, "as Christ also hath loved us," since in Christ the Divine nature was seen in all its fulness and perfection. In His case moreover love led to action. He gave Himself for us in sacrifice to God. In this of course He stands alone, though we are to love even as He loved. He was the true burnt offering, the Antitype of Leviticus i.

Now love of the true and divine sort is altogether exclusive of the evils that spring from the flesh. Hence these things are to have no place amongst saints, indeed they are not to be even named among them. Things like those specified in verse 3 appeal to instincts deeply rooted in man's

fallen nature, and we do well not only to avoid the things but also the contamination that is induced by thinking about them. We cannot talk about them without thinking of them, even if we condemn them in our talking. Therefore let us not talk about them. Nor let us allow our talk to descend to the level of foolishness or jesting. A Christian is neither a fool nor a jester, so let us not appear either in our conversation. Thanksgiving is what becomes the lips of those who are forgiven and become children of God.

The firm and decisive way in which the Apostle draws the line in verses 5 and 6 is very remarkable. The kingdom of Christ and of God is characterized by holiness. The unholy are outside that kingdom and subject to the wrath of God. There was to be no mistake about this, for evidently then as now there were those who wished to blur this sharp distinction and to excuse unholiness. Other scriptures indicate that one who is a true believer may fall into any of these sins, but no true believer is characterized by any of them. No one characterized by such sins is to be regarded as a true Christian whatever they may say or profess.

The true believer's attitude towards such is to be regulated by this. Whatever be their profession they have no part in the kingdom of God, and therefore we who have an inheritance in the kingdom can

have no part with them. This is what verse 7 so plainly states. Notice too that the last word of that verse is *them*. We are not only to avoid the sins, but also to avoid all participation with *the sinners*. The persons as well as the evils are to be avoided. The difference between us and them is as great and distinct as that between light and darkness.

Once we were darkness ourselves. In this fact lies our danger, for as a consequence of it there is that in us which answers to the appeal of the darkness. Therefore the less we have to do with the darkness the better—whether as regards the practices of darkness, or as regards the people who themselves are darkness and consequently practice it. We who believe are light in the Lord and as a result intolerant of darkness; for as it is in nature so it is in grace. Light and darkness cannot exist together. If light comes in darkness vanishes. Light and darkness mutually exclude each other.

Being light in the Lord we are to walk as children of light. We are to be in practice what we are in actual reality. Let us carefully note this for it is a feature of the exhortations of the Gospel. The Law demanded of men that they should be what they were not. The Gospel exhorts believers to be what they are. Yet the fact that we are so exhorted shows that a contrary principle is in existence. It infers

that the flesh with its tendencies is still within the believer. As the flesh is held in check and quiescent, what we really are as God's workmanship shines out.

Verse 9 explains what will shine out, for the correct reading is not, "the fruit of the Spirit," but, "the fruit of the light." Three words sum up that fruit—goodness, righteousness, truth. The opposites—evil iniquity, unreality—should be entirely shut out of our lives. Walking thus as children of light we prove what is pleasing to God: prove, that is, not by a process of reasoning, but by experience of a practical sort. We put things to the test, and thus learn experimentally for ourselves.

The believer's life therefore may be summed up as bringing forth the fruits of the light, since he is a child of the light, while maintaining complete separation from the unfruitful works of darkness, for he is no longer of the darkness. Indeed he is to go even further and reprove them. This word, *reprove*, occurs again you will notice in verse 13. The meaning of it is not exactly, admonish or rebuke, but rather, *expose*. It is to expose, as by light, the true character of the works in question. If a believer shines out in his true character, his whole life will have that effect, just as in supreme measure his Master's did. Nevertheless of course there may be many occasions when words of rebuke are needful.

The passage we are considering puts a very solemn responsibility upon us. It is just here that friction and trouble with the world begin. People do not usually object to the kindly side of Christianity: gracious words and gracious actions meet with their approval. The trouble begins when holiness is maintained. And holiness, as these verses show, demands no fellowship with evil—neither the evil-doers (v. 7), nor their works (v. 11). When a believer walks the separated path which is here enjoined, and manifests himself as a child of light, then he must expect storms. It was thus in superlative degree with our Lord and Master. "God is Love" has always been a far more popular text than "God is light."

The peculiar quality of light is that it makes manifest all things that come under its rays. The truth of things becomes plain, and hence the one who does truth naturally welcomes the light, whilst he who does evil hates the light and avoids it. God is light in Himself; believers are only "light *in the Lord*," just as the moon is only light to us, in as far as its face is in the light of the sun. Therefore it is that we, like the moon, must abide in the light of our great Luminary, Christ Himself. This is very plainly indicated in verse 14.

This verse is not a quotation from the Old Testament, though it is probably an

allusion to Isaiah lx. 1. We very easily fall victims to spiritual sleepiness, since the influences of the world are so soporific. Then we become like men sleeping amongst those dead in trespasses and sins. We are the living and they are the dead, and there should normally be the sharpest distinction between us. If we sleep amongst the dead we all appear very much alike. The call is to awake and arise that we may be in the sunshine of the Christ. Then it is that we are clear of all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and, being luminous ourselves, the fruit of the light is manifested in us.

Our walk and behaviour then is to be marked by wisdom—the wisdom that seizes every opportunity of serving the Lord on the one hand, and of gaining an understanding of His will and pleasure on the other. The very essence of good service is, not merely that we accomplish work, but that what we do is according to the will of the One, whom we serve. The fact is that for this, as for all else enjoined upon us here, we need to be filled with the Spirit.

Each of us, who have believed the Gospel of our salvation, has received the gift of the Holy Spirit, as we saw when considering chapter i. It is another thing however to be filled with the Spirit, and the responsibility as to it is left with us. We are exhorted to be filled, which plainly infers

that we are not filled—at all events at the moment when the exhortation is given.

The Spirit-filled believer is the subject of an extraordinary uplift. He is carried clean outside himself, centred in Christ, and enabled for the service of God in a power which is more than human. The man who is drunk with wine is carried outside himself in a way that is wholly evil. By the Spirit of God we may be carried outside ourselves in a way that is wholly good.

We get instances of the disciples being filled with the Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles—ii. 4; iv. 8; iv. 31; vii. 55; xiii. 9. These references lead us to think that the filling with the Spirit was an experience of rather an exceptional nature even in the earliest apostolic time. Still it is most evidently set before us in our chapter as something to be desired and aimed at by every Christian.

It is not only an obligation but also a very wonderful privilege. To be filled with One who is a divine Person, can that be a negligible thing? It means that He has a complete control. If we take the exhortation to heart we shall naturally ask—*How* may I be filled? What have I to do in order that I may be?

That is no small question. We may at least say this; that it is ours to remove out of the way all that hinders. The Spirit of God is *holy*. Moreover, He is sensitive. We may easily grieve Him, even by things

that we allow without a bad conscience. Correspondingly we may easily be preoccupied with things that we consider quite harmless, and yet being *pre*-occupied there is not the room for Him to *occupy* us. A good many "harmless" things will have to go out of *my* life and *yours* too, if we are to be filled with the Spirit.

The fruits of being filled with the Spirit follow in verses 19 to 21. The heart is filled with gladness which finds a spiritual outlet in song. There is a glad acceptance of all things—even adverse circumstances—with thanksgiving to the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus; and as to our relations with one another the spirit of yieldingness and submission, whilst always maintaining the *fear of God*. Our submission to one another must not be at the expense of true subjection to Him.

All these detailed exhortations, which have continued from verse 17 of chapter iv., have been applicable to all believers. Now we have the special exhortations, and with verse 22 the apostle turns to the wives. To them the exhortation is comprised in the one word, *Submit*. This flows naturally out of the general exhortation to submission in verse 21. The difficulty about submission is that it entails the non-assertion of one's own will. But clearly enough in the economy of things, divinely established, for this world, the subject place is allotted to the wife. Her place is typical of the position

in which the church stands to Christ. Just as Christ is "Head of the church," all authority and directing ability and power being vested in Him, so the husband is "head of the wife."

Alas! in practice through the centuries, the church (as a professing body) has got far away from its true position. The church "is subject unto Christ," according to the Divine plan: it has been very insubject in its actual behaviour. It has acted for itself, and legislated as though it were the Head and not the body. Hence the confusion in church circles, so manifest on every hand. When the wife, even the Christian wife, sets aside the authority of her own husband, trouble ensues in a similar way.

The wife may however urge that she has a very awkward and incompetent husband! Too often indeed so it is. But the remedy for that is not the overturning of the Divine order. The church certainly has no such excuse, for it has an absolutely perfect Head; who is not only Head to the body but Saviour also.

Because the human husband, even the believing one, is frequently *very* imperfect, and always somewhat imperfect, an even lengthier exhortation is addressed to him. In one word his duty is *love*. It is easy to see that if the husband yields to his wife the love which is her due, she will not have much difficulty in yielding to him

the submission which is his due. Obviously the greater responsibility is placed upon the shoulders of the husband. He is to love, and she is to submit; but the initiative rests with him.

F. B. HOLE.

A Little Thing for a Little One.

A CUP of cold water. A little thing that! It might entail the exertion of drawing it from the well, or of turning on the tap. It would not even involve the trouble of heating it.

The cup of cold water is handed to "one of these little ones" (Matt. x. 42). Someone, you see, of no importance, yet one of *these*. Our Lord referred to those, whom just then He was sending forth. They were men of no importance in themselves, yet they were *followers* and *representatives* of HIM.

And the cup of cold water is given to one of these little ones "in the name of a disciple." We might give him the cup of cold water, moved to do so by the fact that he is related to a friend of ours. Then we give it to *him* in the name of a friend. If we give it for no other reason than that he is a disciple of our Lord, then we give it in the name of a disciple. He who so gives "shall in no wise lose his reward."

The reward is pledged by His, "Verily I say unto you." It is not so little in His eyes, after all.

“SAVED: YET SO AS BY FIRE.”

SAVED by grace! Yes, we all like that, we all can understand that. The more the believer understands his own heart, the more he recognises that grace is the only possible ground on which He can stand before a Holy God. The foundation of our walking in the light as God is in the light, of walking in fellowship with Him and our fellow-believers, is that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL sin” (1 John i. 7). That precious blood has given us a standing that can never break down, blessed be His name. Romans v. 2 tells us that it is in grace the believer stands, and we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Let nothing weaken our sense of the grace of God. The very word, *Grace*, intimates that there is activity on the part of God, not because of what is found in man in the way of goodness or desert, either before or after conversion, but because of what He is in Himself, and based upon the righteous foundation, which the atoning work of Christ affords Him, whereby He can shew His love to poor fallen man.

Saved by grace! Yes, but what means our title, "Saved: yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians iii. 15). The answer is found in the fact that God is not only righteous, but holy. God's righteousness has been divinely satisfied to the full at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But God is *holy*. Now holiness has to do with *nature*. God has a nature that cannot tolerate sin. Sinful flesh cannot stand in His presence. "Yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job xv. 15). That which marks sinful man cannot stand before Him.

In the case of a believer, not only must there be *a righteous standing* before God, furnished through the atoning work of Christ ALONE, but there must be *moral suitability* to God, so that he may be happy in His holy presence. Without that moral suitability the believer cannot be happy in the presence of God, nor can God take pleasure the believer.

The objective in all God's ways in holy government is that moral suitability may be produced in each believer. The consideration of the context of the title at the head of this article will help us to an understanding of this matter.

We are told in 1 Corinthians iii. 11, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." That

foundation must be *divine*, the work of God's holy Spirit. Thank God for that. We begin with an immutable, eternal foundation. The work in the soul of the believer *must* be on the basis of the work accomplished at Calvary for God's glory and our eternal salvation. That foundation can never, thank God, be destroyed.

Then we read of material being built upon that foundation. We are reminded of a young people's chorus,

“We are building day by day,
As the moments pass away.”

How true this is, and how responsible it makes our lives, for there are two classes of material, which can be built upon the foundation. We read of “gold, silver, precious stones;” material which can stand the test of the fire; and of “wood, hay, stubble,” material that cannot stand the test of the fire. Of course these materials are symbolic, as also is the fire. The fire symbolises the test of God's discriminating judgment. “Gold, silver, precious stones,” set forth that which in the believer's life is the product of the Spirit of God—actions, deeds, words, thoughts, that emanate from a life controlled by the Spirit of God. “Wood, hay, stubble,” set forth actions, words, thoughts, that are of the flesh, sinful and wrong. All the believer's actions partake of the character of these two classes. This is intensely solemn! It gives room for deepest exercise.

We read, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (verse 13). What will be the result? Work that will stand the test of the fire will have a reward. Work that will not stand the test of the fire will bring loss. Here we have the result of the judgment seat of Christ, when the lives of the believers will be manifested.

Now consider the verse that gives us the title of our article:—"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (verse 15). Now this is one of the most comforting and yet most solemn and searching verses in the Bible. "SAVED: *yet so as by FIRE.*" That is to say, the fire does not touch the *person*, but tests the believer's works—his life, his thoughts and deeds and actions. Why should the fire not touch the person? The answer is, that the atoning work of the Lord Jesus gives to the believer a standing before God that nothing can shake. Our Lord said, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, *and shall NOT come into condemnation*" (John v. 24). Why then should the fire try the believer's *works*? If the work stands the test of the fire a reward will be given—work, the product

of the Spirit of God in our lives, for which we can take no credit, yet the grace of God will not forget one thing done for His glory, and it will meet with its reward. Not surely as determining our place in heaven, for that is already determined by the grace of God, on the righteous foundation of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what shall we say of the works burned up? Fire is one of the most useful things in this world. It heats by consuming. It cooks our food by consuming. It clears us of rubbish. If rubbish could not be burned the world would be an insupportable place to live in. Fire destroys pollution, dangerous putrifying matter. Fire is one of the great friends of humanity. Can we not learn a lesson from nature?

Will it not be a wonderful thing to see everything offensive to God removed, and pass out of sight for ever? The believer whose works are burned up suffers loss, but it is a gain in one sense to suffer loss, for thereby we shall have acquired a true and right judgment of all in our lives that was offensive to God. It is, truly loss, for the time on earth in which we could have been glorifying God was spent on that which was unprofitable, nay, even, in the light of the judgment seat, sinful and vile.

We get in Galatians v. a good description of "gold, silver, precious stones" in the enumeration of the qualities constituting the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, [how impatient we are apt to be, the impatience of the flesh] gentleness, [how rough we often are], goodness, faith, meekness, temperance [self restraint], against such there is no law." But we have the works of the flesh, answering to "wood, hay, stubble"—"adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (snares of the passions of the human body, which need to be guarded against with earnestness and resolution] idolatry, witchcraft [snares whereby the devil seeks to catch men. It includes the temple worship of the heathen, but it takes in more than that. The covetous man is an idolater. Many have been "kicked to death by the golden calf.], hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, [in the main, the expression of a self-centred fleshly life], drunkenness, revellings [the gratifications of the appetite], and such like."

The man is SAVED, yet so as by fire. This we may call *moral* salvation. The man saved. His works burned, and the burning of them the only way he is brought morally and fully into line with the thoughts of God. Is it worth while indulging a bit of the flesh when this is to be the end of it? Surely not!

Of course these things are not found only in our private lives, so we may well challenge our hearts also as to our behaviour in the house of God, in the assembly. It is there alas! that emulations, wrath, strife, schools of opinions, are apt to be seen. The history of the Church of God upon earth is sufficient to make us realise a thousand times over that it is only grace, grace, grace—*grace* ALONE—that will bring us into blessing at last.

But now for two more remarks before we close. What is the great gain of all this solemn truth that we have been considering? First and foremost, it ought to have a *present* effect. If it has not a present effect we fear the wood, hay and stubble will predominate in our lives. It is possible to comfort oneself with the thought that at the coming of the Lord we shall be like Him, and yet have little exercise as to how far we are like Him now. Scripture says distinctly, “Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John iii. 3). If the *present* effect of the judgment seat is not felt in our lives, it shows a very feeble apprehension of its reality and meaning.

Second, the manifestation of our whole lives at the judgment seat of Christ will bring the believer into a fuller understanding

of what sin is in its heinousness, its deceitfulness, all its ramifications. Much that we think right in our lives may be found to be sin in its deceitful forms. Thank God, at the judgment seat of Christ there will be no evil in the believer. The flesh will be left behind at the summoning shout. On the other hand it will give the believer a far deeper, fuller sense of the grace of God that has met his need, and he will follow with adoring worship all the way grace has dealt with him, either before or after conversion. Is there no gain in this? Indeed, who can measure the gain?

May I conclude with a quotation from an honoured pen:—"Surely there is great gain as to light and love in giving an account of ourselves to God; and not a trace of the evil remains in us. We are like Christ. If a person fears to have all out before God, I do not believe he is free in soul as to righteousness—being the righteousness of God in Christ, not fully in the light. Everything there will be brought out, and with immense profit and gain to us. We shall know right and wrong then as we are known." (J. N. Darby.)

May all this exercise us before God for His glory and our blessing.

A. J. POLLOCK.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

BRROTHERLY love supposes family relationship; the same parentage and consequently the same nature. It should be perfectly natural for Christians to exercise brotherly love since the church of God is truly a family. All possess the same nature. All owe their origin to the same parentage. All are begotten by the word of truth and confess God as their Father, Jesus as their Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as their Comforter.

Brotherly love in exercise conduces to the continued happiness of the family; so we read: "As to brotherly love, kindly affectioned towards one another" (Rom. xii. 10. N. Tr.). What a beautiful expression this is! Brotherly love in exercise, is to be kindly affectioned toward one another. How exquisitely delicate and tender this is! Nothing hurtful, nothing rough, but the affection that is marked by kindness. The kindness and love of God our Saviour has come out to us and having freely received, may we freely give.

In addressing the Thessalonians the Apostle expressed himself as having no need to write to them upon such a subject. They were "taught of God to love one another" (iv. 9). It was a part of their home training. The blessed God Himself, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would instruct

them in the exercise of this most precious grace. As obedient children they were doing so, not only in their own immediate circle but in all Macedonia, and they were exhorted to "increase more and more." It this true of us? Are we taught of God in this way? Can it be said of us, "*And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren,*" not only in our own meetings, but those at a distance. Do we lovingly consider one another as did these Thessalonians? God help us to do so and increase more and more.

In Hebrews xiii, the opening words are, "Let brotherly love abide" (N.Tr.). Changes may and do take place, but in the exercise of this there is no change. It is to abide, or continue. How the words of our adorable Lord come to the mind in this connection, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). How has He loved us? Need we ask? In like manner, through grace, are we to love one another. We lack much, but may our hearts be kept fresh in the sense of our Saviour's love, and then shall "brotherly love continue" with us all.

Then again we read, "And beside this giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kind-

ness charity" (2 Peter i. 5-7). Here the Apostle sets before us an addition sum, and the last but one item to be added is brotherly-kindness, brotherly love. These things have to be definitely added. Are we adding them? Amongst them, in its divinely appointed order, have we added brotherly love?

What is a company of Christians like where this precious quality is not added? Ah! well do we know. What unholy criticisms! What unfounded suspicions! What secret jealousies! What rivalries! What bickerings! What biting sarcasms! What innuendos and unkind hints are thrown out! In fact there is present every evil work, and the ground is prepared for strife and divisions. How beautifully the Apostle gives expression, in this self-same epistle, to the exhortation he brings to bear upon those to whom he writes. At the close he says, referring to one who on a previous occasion had withstood him face to face, because he was to be blamed, "*our beloved brother Paul,*" also he addresses his Jewish fellow-believers, "Ye therefore *beloved.*"

What a charming company the assembly of God should be. Each esteeming the other better than himself. Each seeking the other's wealth. Each loving the other with a pure heart fervently. And then, when "charity" or "divine love" itself is added as the top-stone, the stamp of the

divine nature rests upon the whole. The blessed God sees in His own, His own reflection. May the Lord exercise all our hearts, as we wait for His coming, to continue to develop this precious heavenly trait and to continue in it more and more.

J. H. EVANS.

GATEWAYS TO VICTORY.

OLD men who have lived with God through all the heat and burden of the day seem to have eyes that pierce the clouds of worldly glory and catch a sight of the glory of the next.

So that old man in Patmos, John, despite the decay of natural perceptions (for tradition says that he was over 90), was chosen to see the things of eternity and to pass them on to us.

Let us listen a moment to some of his strangely appealing words. They seem to bring eternity near.

He saw a new heaven and a new earth. He saw the Holy City with her walls and gates; no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the temple of it; no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. He saw the twelve gates never shut at all by day (and there was no night

there), and the twelve gates of the city were twelve pearls, every several gate of one pearl.

What a city, and what a vision for tired eyes!

We know that John's eyes were looking away into the future, into eternity. God has not yet wiped away all tears and there is still with us the bitterness of death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain. They are still here. The former things have not yet passed away. But Christian hope watches, and waits with the dignity of certainty, for that day to come, and for the unveiling of that holy city.

Several times during the past months, as my mind has been engaged with the problems of defeat and victory in the Christian life, the vision of the city has occurred to me with growing meaning. Even though there can be no present fulfilment of the vision, it seems to stand as a kind of symbol of the life of victory—a refuge for sin-stricken hearts, a foretaste of the glory of a full deliverance and a triumphant entry into its eternal reality.

Scripture often seems to work like that. It gives us a present token for a future possession.

Are there tears now, and death and crying and pain? Do they mock us in our spiritual battles with sin, our experiences of defeat?

And yet they say (these saints of God who have trodden the road before us) that there is an experience of joy and peace where tears and death and crying and pain cannot intrude, though they may assail on every hand.

Perhaps if we think of the gateways into the Holy City we shall find a gateway out of our own experience of defeat into the long desired experience of victory.

As we have seen, there is no "secret of victory" to be found. Christ Himself is the only and all-sufficient secret, and having Him as our Saviour and Lord, there is nothing further to look for.

"The City" has twelve gates, always open—for God's blessings are very accessible—and "every several gate of one pearl." All the gates are Christ, but each of us may find in Him our own personal approach, a different gateway. All the gateways are equally precious, for each several gate is of one pearl; and my gate is no better than your gate, nor yours more sure or safe than mine.

Let us look at some of the very well-trodden gateways which other souls have found. The City is open to all whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and God invites you to enter. Do not stop to argue as to which gate is your gate, and seek not (with the contrariety

of human-kind) to find one of the gates on the other side of the City!

Take your courage in both hands, despite all fluctuating feelings, and despite the absence of feelings, and step through into the enjoyment of God's liberty which is ours in Christ Jesus.

Romans vi. is a gate for many people, especially verses 11 to 13. "Don't yield your members to unrighteous ways," says Paul, "but yield yourselves to God." That is the "yielding" way.

Romans xii. 1 is the "consecration" gateway. "I beseech you," he cries, pleading the mercies of God, to "present your bodies, a living sacrifice . . ." Give your body to God!

Galatians v. 16 is a wonderful gateway for the weary footsteps of defeated souls. Freely rendered, we may say, "This I say then, Walk step by step in the Spirit and ye shall by no manner of means fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

Then there is the way of taking Christ's yoke. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew xi. 29). Or again, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink, and out of the depths of his life shall pour torrents of living water" (John vii. 37. Syriac).

And what about John x. 36? "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

All these and many more are gateways that lead the soul into the Holy City where tears are wiped away and sin is left outside, for "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." Sin-stained feet can never tread those streets. What power there is in the blood of the slain Lamb of God, that our feet, once foul with the filth of sin, are free to venture there!

Coming into contact with many young people I have found one burning question with those who were frank enough to speak about it; and as it has been a problem of my own I suppose it must be a fairly general one.

Must we *struggle* to obtain victory? Most of the "victory secret books" say that we must cease from our struggling and look away to Christ, and it is in trying to carry out that advice that people get puzzled and disappointed.

May I tell you about my gateway—taken from the practical James. I often use it when my heart gets out of tone.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (ch. iv. 7).

This is God's order:—

- (a) Submit to God
- (b) Resist the Devil

And then watch him flee!

In submission to God—which includes our books, friends, ambitions, dress, pleasures, bodies, tongues and the rest of life's trappings—we find that struggling, at least the old hopeless, fearful, pathetic, always-failing, kind will cease, and God's peace and strength are available, not just to be *felt*, because feelings are often so deceptive, but to be relied on.

Then comes the new struggling, the day by day fight of faith, resisting in the security of God's strength, the devil and all his works. There must always be a struggle, sometimes worse, and sometimes easing off for a bit, but never giving us time to take off our armour.

Sometimes he comes with such "harmless" suggestions, so solicitous of our welfare! Sometimes he comes as a roaring lion. Beware of him. He is a big foe, too big for our strength to meet, and too clever for our poor wits. But in God's strength resist him!

And can I be sure of winning? "HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU," says God, and you can rest your soul on His promise, and take courage.

A. F. S. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Ephesians v. 25—vi. 24.)

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

WHEN we turn from the responsibility resting upon the husband, which is the type, to the antitype, which as ever is seen in Christ, we find ourselves in the presence of perfection. The initiative indeed was with Him, and He has taken it in a most wonderful way. He not only loved the church but gave Himself for it. Moreover He has undertaken its practical sanctification and cleansing, and ultimately He will present it to Himself in glory in a perfection which is absolutely suitable to Himself.

The giving of Himself for the church took place in the past: it involved His death and resurrection. The sanctifying and purifying, of which verse 26 speaks, is proceeding in the present by means of the Word. The cleansing here spoken of is by *water*, be it noted, not by blood. The distinction is an important one. The Blood indeed cleanses, as 1 John i. 7 declares but that is in a judicial sense. The Blood absolves us from guilt, and thus cleanses us in the eyes of the great Judge of all. The water of the Word cleanses us morally; that is, in heart and in character, and con-

sequently in all our ways. This present washing of the church by the Word is taking place of course in the hearts and lives of the saints, of whom the church is composed.

The presentation of the perfected church will take place in the future glory. It will be Christ's own gift to Himself! It will be all His own workmanship; for *He* loved, *He* gave Himself, *He* sanctified, *He* cleansed, and, as verse 29 adds, *He* nourished, *He* cherished, and finally *He* presented to *Himself*. A most wonderful work, and a most wonderful triumph, surely! Let us keep this aspect of things well in view, especially when cast down by present difficulties in the church, and painfully conscious of its sorrowful plight.

Now all these facts as to Christ and the church are to shed their light upon the relations between the Christian husband and wife. The marriage relationship is consequently set forth in the highest possible light; in a light altogether unknown to believers of Old Testament days, which accounts for the fact that many of them freely practised things which are wholly disallowed for us to-day. We are to walk in this light, and consequently the Christian husband is to love his wife as he loves himself—no mean standard that!—and the wife to reverence her husband.

Briefly observe three further points. First, this mystery concerns Christ and *the* church

Not *a* church; no thought here of a local church, nor of any number of local assemblies. It is the church, one glorious body, and the church not viewed as a professing body, but rather as that elect body which is the fruit of Divine workmanship.

Second, the thought of the *body* comes in here; for we, who constitute the church, are spoken of as "members of His body." Yet the main thought of the passage is that of the wife, for the church's place is set forth as the pattern for Christian wives. We point this out because sometimes the fact of the church being the body of Christ is emphasized in order to maintain that it therefore cannot be in the place of the bride or wife. The fact is, as this passage indicates, that the church holds both positions.

This is made yet more plain by the third thing we point out. God's original creation of Adam and Eve was ordered in view of Christ and the church, as verses 28 to 32 show. Now Eve was Adam's wife, but she was also his body, being built up from one of his ribs. Adam's rib has no doubt provoked a good deal of sarcastic merriment amongst unbelieving modernists, who call themselves Christians. Yet here the fact concerning it clearly underlies the argument. It is nearly always thus. There is a new Testament allusion to the ridiculed Old Testament story. You cannot scrap the one without scrapping the other, if you

add mental honesty and integrity to your modernism. We whole-heartedly accept both.

We pass from the relationship of husband and wife to those of children and fathers, servants and masters, as we open chapter vi. Obedience is to mark the child, and careful nurture and admonition the father. But all is to be as under the Lord, as indicated in verses 1 and 4. This sets everything on a very high level. So also it is with the servant and the master. Their relations are to be regulated as before the Lord, as verses 7, 8 and 9 show.

All these exhortations are very important to-day for strong Satanic influences are sweeping through Christendom, to the denying and disturbing of all that should characterize these relationships. But the very fact that this is so presents to the believer a great opportunity for witness to the truth, by carefully maintaining the relationships in their integrity according to God's word. The opportunity for witness as servants or masters is very pronounced, inasmuch as that relationship is much in the public eye. The sight of a Christian servant marked by obedience and service with all good will, as rendered unto the Lord, is a very fine one. So also is that of a Christian master marked by an equal good will and care, in the sight of the great Master of both in heaven.

Thus far the epistle has given us a very wonderful unfolding of truth as to Christ

and the church, followed by exhortations to life of a very exalted character. Now in verse 10 we come to his final word. It concerns the adversaries and the armour that we need, if we are to maintain the truth and live the life that has been set before us. We are not left at our own charges. The power of the Lord is at our disposal and we are to be strong in His might.

The adversaries that are contemplated here are not human but Satanic. They exist in the world of spirits and not in flesh and blood. Satan is their chief, but they are spoken of as principalities and powers, and also as "world-rulers of this darkness" (R.V.). We know very little about them, and do not need to know. It is enough for us that their evil design is unmasked. They are "world-rulers" for the whole world system is controlled and dominated by them, little as the human actors on the world stage may suspect it. The effect of their domination is darkness. Here is the explanation of the gross spiritual darkness which fills the earth. How often after the Gospel has been very clearly preached have we heard people express their wonder that unconverted folk have listened to it all without a ray of light entering their hearts. In this scripture, and also in 2 Corinthians iv. 4, is an explanation which removes all element of wonder from the phenomenon.

The point here however is that these great antagonistic powers exert all their wiles and energy against believers. They cannot rob them of their soul's salvation, but they can divert them from an understanding of their heavenly calling, and from a life which is really in keeping with it; and this is what they aim at doing. Now it stands to reason that we cannot meet such powers as these in our own strength. Thank God we need not attempt any such thing for all the armour that we need is freely provided of God. But we have to *take* it. Otherwise we shall not experience its value.

We are to take unto us the whole armour of God, and also we are to put it on. Then we shall be able to withstand, and to stand. The conflict here is viewed mainly as being defensive. We are set in an exalted and heavenly position by the grace of our God, and there we are to stand in spite of every attempt to dislodge us. In keeping with this the various parts of the armour specified are, with one exception, of a defensive nature. Girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield and helmet are none of them weapons of offence; only the sword is that.

The Apostle is speaking figuratively of course, for we find that each item of the armour is something of a moral and spiritual sort which is to be taken up by us: things which though given to us by God, and hence to be taken by us, are also to be

put on in a practical and experimental way. The first item is truth. That is to be as a girdle to our loins. The girding up of the loins expresses a preparing for activity. All our activities are to be circumscribed by truth. The truth is to govern us. The truth is given to us by God, but we are to put it on, so that it may govern us. God's word is truth; but it is not truth in the Bible which is going to defend us, but rather truth *applied* in a practical way to all our activities.

The breastplate is righteousness. We are the very righteousness of God in Christ, but it is when we as a consequence walk in practical righteousness that it acts as a breastplate, covering all our vital parts from the blows directed by our powerful foes. How many a Christian warrior has fallen sorely wounded in the fight because there were grievous flaws in matters of practical righteousness. Chinks in the breastplate offer an opening to the arrows of the enemy.

In a normal way we hardly think of shoes as being in the nature of armour, yet inasmuch as it is with our shoes that we continually come into contact with the earth, they take on that character from the Christian standpoint. If our contact with earth is not right we shall be vulnerable indeed. What does "the preparation of the gospel of peace," mean? Not that we should be preparing the way of the gospel in an

evangelistic sense (though to do that is of course very desirable) but that we ourselves should come under the preparation which the gospel of peace effects. If our feet are shod in this way we shall carry the peace of the Gospel into all our dealings with men of this world, and be protected ourselves in so doing.

Then besides all this there is faith to act as a shield; that faith which means a practical and living confidence in God; that faith which keeps the eye on Him and His Word, and not on the circumstances nor on the foes. With the shield protecting us, outside our other armour, the darts of fiery doubt flung by the wicked are averted and quenched.

The helmet protects the head, which next to the heart is the most vulnerable point in man. Salvation, known, realized, enjoyed and worked out in practice, is that helmet for us. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure," (ii. 12, 13) he was really exhorting them to take and wear the helmet of salvation.

Lastly comes, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." This may be used both defensively and offensively. The Word of God will parry every thrust which

our adversary may make; it will also put him to flight with one well directed blow. It is spoken of as the Spirit's sword, for He indited it at the outset, and He it is who gives skill and understanding in its use. Our great Example in the use of this sword is the Lord Himself, as recorded in Matthew iv. and Luke iv.

Our Lord is also our Example as to the prayer which is enjoined upon us in verse 18. Luke's gospel specially emphasizes this feature of His life. Having assumed Manhood, He took the dependent place which is proper to man, and carried it through in the fullest perfection. Hence prayer characterized His life, and it is to characterize ours. Prayer is always to be our resource, and especially so in connection with the conflict of which we have just been reading. The Word of God is indeed the sword *of the Spirit*. But just because it is we shall only wield it effectively if we are praying always *in the Spirit*. Without continued and abiding dependence on God we shall not wear any piece of the armour aright.

Our prayers are to reach that earnestness which is indicated by the word, *supplication*; they are also to be accompanied by watching. We are to be on the look-out to avoid all that would be inconsistent with our requests on the one hand, and to welcome the answer to our requests on the

other. This indicates intensity and reality in our praying, so that our prayers are indeed a force and not a farce.

We are not to be circumscribed in our prayers. We have to begin with ourselves doubtless, but we do not stop there. We enlarge our requests to include "all saints." Just as all saints are needed for the apprehension of the truth (iii. 18), so the scope of our prayers is not to be less than all saints. The scope of our prayers is enlarged to "all men" in 1 Timothy ii. 1. Ephesians is however pre-eminently the church epistle and hence "all saints" is the circumference contemplated here.

Yet we are not to be so occupied with *all* that we wander off into indefiniteness. So the Apostle adds, "and *for me.*" Great servant of God though he was, he desired to be supported by the prayers of others not so great as he. Only he desired prayer, not that he might be released from prison, and his circumstances eased, but that he might be able to fully accomplish his ministry though a captive. He was in bonds, yet as much an ambassador as when he was free (See 2 Corinthians vi. 20).

When free he thought of himself more as an ambassador of the Gospel, beseeching men to be reconciled. Now in captivity he regards himself as an ambassador of the mystery—that mystery which he has briefly unfolded in the earlier part of the

epistle. It is "the mystery of the Gospel," inasmuch as the one springs out of the other and is its appropriate sequel. If we do not understand the Gospel we cannot understand the mystery. The mystery, for instance, must be as a closed book to those who imagine that the Gospel is intended to Christianize the earth and thus introduce the millennium.

Paul's closing desires for the brethren though simple are very full. How happy must the brethren be when peace, love and faith, all proceeding from a Divine source, have free course in their midst. Then indeed grace rests upon them. Only there must be purity of heart and motive. The last words of verse 24, "in sincerity," or, "in incorruption" are a reminder to us that even in such early days, as those in which Paul was writing, that which was corrupt had found an entrance amongst those who professed to be Christian. To love the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption is the hallmark of reality, the fruit of the genuine work of God.

F. B. HOLE.

Earth has internal heat; hence volcanoes and earthquakes.

It receives heat from above; hence life and fertility.

Such is the contrast between flesh and Spirit. The mind of the flesh is death: of the Spirit, life and peace.

GOD'S SILENCES.

(From Notes of Addresses).

I SUPPOSE that there are few things that astonish and try the Lord's people so much as the silence and non-intervention of God, especially when they are under pressure and cry for relief. It was this that almost stumbled Asaph, as he records in Psalm lxxiii. 2. It was most trying to him that God should be as though He were asleep in the presence of all the oppressive evil of men. Have we the smallest conception of what those years of silence, between the end of Malachi and the beginning of Luke, meant to the faithful remnant of Israel, whose hearts beat true to God amid all the corruption and ruin that surrounded them?

Just imagine, if you can, what it must have meant to them when generation after generation had been carried to the grave, and never a voice from heaven had been sent for their cheer: no prophet had been raised up to encourage them. Yet they were not left resourceless. Though not to be found in one another, yet resources were there for the uplift and cheer of that true

remnant. But what a test it must have been to the endurance and faith and patience of those dear saints! There was to them no hope of improvement till the Lord—the Messiah—should come. What had they to count upon? Simply GOD, and the *word* of His law and the *promise* of the coming of the Messiah.

What sort of people were these? Were they a company of dejected pessimists saying, "It's all up! What is the use? God used to send His prophets in days gone by. Now He sends no one to cheer and help us." No. Nothing of the kind.

Nowadays people want to make so much of environment. They think that favourable surroundings are quite necessary for their happiness and prosperity. But what was the environment of these people? They were surrounded by those who were corrupted and indifferent, who had lost all conscience toward God and were full of their own importance. Seven times over are they depicted in the book of Malachi as answering God back! (i. 2, 6, 7; ii. 17; iii. 7, 8, 13). They absolutely refused to own that there was anything wrong about them, or that they had in any way departed from God.

Now notice in chapter iii. 16, that significant word of four letters—THEN. In

the midst of this apostate mass there were found some who feared the LORD. How many there were who thus "thought upon His Name," we are not told, but apparently they were but a small minority. It does not look as if there were enough of them to hold conventions, or arrange special meetings for lectures, for it just says that "They spake often one to another." This was evidently something quite informal that sprang out of their thinking upon His Name. They conversed together in spite of their busy lives, and they did it OFTEN.

The day in which we live is a serious one, and every true believer, who is spiritually minded, is made to feel it. We can see almost all the vital truths of Christianity being thrown overboard by the very men who by their profession should have stood for their maintenance. The very bulwarks of the faith seem to be breaking down before the rising tide of apostasy, now quickly reaching its height. Many, that we had hoped would have been foremost in withstanding it, are falling before it.

It is not that we have not been forewarned of it, but we seemed to relegate the state of things predicted to a later date than our own, so that now when it comes upon us we are shocked and taken aback. As we look around and see the wholesale departure from the truth which we have

learned, we may be ready to cry, "Who will shew us any good?" We may stand all amazed and say, "What have we left to us? What shall we do?"

The answer comes to us from Job xxii. 21. "Acquaint thyself now with Him [God] and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." What we have left to us is, "God and the Word of His grace," to whom Paul commended the elders of Ephesus, in view of all the departure that should come in, as recorded in Acts xx. What we have to do is to **STAND FAST** on the great foundation, truths of the Gospel, as revealed to us; and **HOLD FAST** all that which we have, without wavering, without swerve or bend.

Never give up the thing you have got. "Hold that fast which thou hast." "Hold fast till I come." We have God Himself for *protection*. We have the Word of His grace for *direction*. Moreover, that which we have from God abides. There is not a principle of evil, which has arisen, that has not already been exposed by the light of the Word; and there is not a principle of good, that has not been preserved to us. We have all the essential things that they ever had in the church's brightest day.

God and His Word—Christ and His Spirit—the Apostles in their written teachings—the

coming of Christ as our hope—the fellowship of saints—all these things remain to us. We are not badly off. It is not a new Bible we are needing, nor is it so much an increased intellectual understanding of the Bible we have, as it is a more *devoted* heart, thoroughly *subject* to the truth which already we have received.

In John viii. 12, the Lord said, “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Let us follow HIM. We shall not then walk in darkness, nor even “amid the encircling gloom.” On the contrary our experience will the rather be summed up in these words,

“Light divine surrounds thy going,
God Himself shall mark thy way,
Secret blessings richly flowing
Lead to everlasting day.”

Does anyone say, “This is all well as an ideal, but are there not times when we feel that God has forgotten us, seemingly maintaining an indifferent silence?” Yet God is to be trusted in the dark as much and as surely as in the light. Some of our best lessons are learned when in some dark passage God seems to have forgotten to be gracious. To trust, when we see circumstances favouring us, is *not* faith. To trust when all seems against us, IS.

ART. CUTTING.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(V) His Activities in the World.

Genesis xxiv.

THE activities of the Holy Spirit in the world are twofold. (1) To call out from the world a people who should form the bride of Christ. (2) To conduct that bride across the desert to meet the Bridegroom.

It is good for us to be intelligent as to what the Holy Spirit is doing in relation to the world at the present time ; to see that He is here as the Servant of the Godhead for the carrying out of the divine and eternal purpose. As we apprehend this we will seek to be in line with Him in His activities. We will also be preserved from that restlessness of the flesh which we may sometimes mistake for Spirit-begotten activity. We will be saved from the erroneous ideas that it is our duty to make the world a better place ; or to work for the conversion of the world, etc. The Holy Spirit will let us into the secret of the divine plan ; we will be subject to Him ; and will work under His direction when, where, and as He may be pleased to lead us.

We know of no finer illustration of the present activities of the Holy Spirit, on the lines indicated, than that of the chapter

noted at the head of this paper. In chapter xxii. we have the first mention in the Bible of love, and that is the father's love for the son (xxii. 2). In this chapter before us we have the second mention, and that is the love of the son for the bride (xxiv. 67). In chapter xxii. we see figuratively the son's death and resurrection (cf. Hebrews xi. 17-19); so that Isaac is a type of the heavenly Man, on the resurrection side of death. As such the father gave to him all that he had (xxiv. 36; cf. John iii. 35); and he sent his servant to find a bride who should be sharer with Isaac in all that he possessed. It was necessary that the bride should be of the same order as the bridegroom. We need not labour that point, its meaning will be at once apparent.

The servant is not named; we may speculate as to who he was, but it is not without significance that his name is not given. He went forth sent by the father, on behalf of the son, and took his journey to a distant country on his great mission. His going forth, his journey, his mission, his objective were probably unobserved by, and unknown to, any save the servants who accompanied him. The meaning of this lies on the very surface. The Holy Spirit has been sent forth by the Father, in the name of the Son (John xiv. 26). His coming, His presence, His mission, His objective are known only to those in whom there has been His divine work (John xiv. 17). He

has travelled from heaven to earth. The gospel is being preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Peter i. 12).

Just as Abraham's servant expressed his dependence upon God and sought His direction, so the Holy Spirit works in unison with the Father and the Son for the carrying out of divine purpose. Similarly as Abraham's servant gave Rebekah evidence of Isaac's wealth, so the Holy Spirit makes known "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" attracts hearts to Him; and reveals to them the unlimited riches that are His and which He desires to share with them. The servant found the object of his quest, he impressed Laban and Bethuel with his messages but his work was not yet finished. His mission was urgent, he desired to get away to his master, but just then the difficulties presented themselves.

Shall we apply this to ourselves? Do we find that we have a desire to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit to go out after Christ, and that, it may be from unexpected quarters, our way is blocked? In Rebekah's case the difficulty arose in her home-circle. They sought to detain her, to put the claims of nature before the claims of Isaac. May not Christian parents do this sometimes? They desire their children to have a special education and they select a certain school

without regard to its anti-Christian atmosphere. They are eager for their success in their professional, commercial, industrial or other career, and spiritual interests become a secondary consideration. They consider there are none in the little company with which they meet with whom their family can associate, and they encourage them to mix in circles where Christ is unknown. In other words they put the ambition of nature before the claims of Christ. "Let it be so," they say in effect, "for a few days, at the least ten; AFTER THAT——?" And "after that" they are swamped by the world, and parents' hearts are broken as they reap the harvest of their own sowing.

We would appeal to our dear young readers, let no one and nothing hinder you from responding to the Holy Spirit's call; following His leading; and going out in company with Him to reach Christ where He is. The ultimate decision rested with Rebekah. She was asked "Wilt thou go with this man?" (v. 58). What would that mean for her? Severing fond links; break-with old and loved associations; leaving the land of her birth; and going to be the bride of a man whom she had never seen. The die was cast; her choice was made; without hesitation "she said, *I WILL GO.*" If we had asked her: "Why do you leave 'country, kindred, father's house'—everything, to take an unknown track, and to sojourn in a strange land?" We believe

she would have replied in one word:
"ISAAC."

We once remarked to a young lady, who was going to the colonies to be married, "Will you not feel strange leaving your home; your friends; your native city; your interests and all else; and going to a strange land where the place, the people, the customs and everything will be new to you." She quickly replied, "But HE is there," and that made all the difference. It was not the new land nor the promise of wealth that attracted Rebekah; it was Isaac. Have we not read?—"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter i. 8); and can we not, as we read it, substitute we or I for "ye"? The inheritance is all right (v. 4), but it is *Himself*.

Now they set out on their journey. The servants fell in behind, but the servant took Rebekah as his own special charge. She knew not one step of the way, He knew every step, and under his protection she had no cause for fear. Can we not imagine how, as they journeyed on, that servant would tell her more about Isaac until as they reached the journey's end she must have felt that already she knew Isaac well and loved him much. We have already observed that the work of the Holy Spirit as He conducts us across the desert is to

take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us, as well as to show us things to come (John xvi. 13-15). We are, as subject to Him, safe from all the pitfalls and snares of what is to us, but not to Him, an unknown track. He will if we allow Him, disclose to us more of the glories of Christ; and reveal His incalculable wealth, making us long to see Him face to face.

They reached the end of their journey. Isaac came forth at eventide, lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming (v. 63). Rebekah lifted up her eyes, saw Isaac, lighted off the camel, took a veil, and covered herself (vv. 64-65). What a moment for Isaac! What a moment for Rebekah! The servant's work was done, he reported his mission, and handed over the bride to the bridegroom.

Again it is "Eventide;" we are nearing the end of the journey; it may be at any moment now our adorable Lord will come forth; will lift up His eyes; we shall lift up our eyes; and shall we not in presence of the dazzling blaze of His glory want to take a veil and cover ourselves?

But the story does not end there "Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife: and *HE LOVED HER*" (v. 67). His

wealth might be great and his power might be great; but greater to Rebekah than all else would be the love of his heart. We do not touch on the beautiful dispensational teachings of chapters xxii, xxiii, xxiv, because space forbids, nor is that our object. We await that day when He, whose bride are we, will conduct us into the Father's house; will love us with a love with which none but He could love us; and resplendent with His beauty, we shall be for the joy and delight of His heart through God's eternal day.

“O day of wondrous promise!
The Bridegroom and the bride
Are seen in glory, ever:
And love is satisfied.”

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

CONFESSION'S REWARD.

OVER fifty years ago a well known preacher of the Gospel was holding meetings in the neighbourhood of Lowick, Northumberland, and many souls were being saved through his ministry. There was a lime kiln near by, where a number of carters were waiting their turn to draw supplies of lime, amongst whom

was a young 'convert who was very timid and afraid to confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

Whilst those men were taking their frugal meal in a place connected with the Kiln, a young man came in, and commenced mimicking the preaching, seeking to bring contempt on the preacher. In his endeavour to make fun at the expense of the preacher he quoted some of the expressions he used, one of which was, "Ye must be born again." The timid young convert looked up and said quietly, "Yes, and if *you* are not born again, you'll be lost"; when to his surprise, the other bolted out more quickly than he came in. Besides this, all the others arose one by one and departed, leaving the young convert master of the situation, having the place wholly to himself.

What power is in the Word of God when used by the Spirit, although feebly expressed. It convicted those unconverted men, so that they went away; and on the other hand what joy it brought to the one who had been so much afraid, driving all fear from his heart; so that ever after confessing the name of Jesus was his joy and delight, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; for the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (Romans x. 10, 11).

He was thus rewarded for taking a simple and definite stand for his Lord and Master.

Dear young believer, wherever you may be, let your light shine, and confess His blessed Name and you shall not be disappointed.

W. DUNS.

WHERE DOES THE BELIEVER WALK ?

(1 *John i.* 5-7.)

WHERE does the believer walk? The answer is, In the light, and nowhere else. The unbeliever walks in darkness and nowhere else. The believer walks in the light. In 1 John i. 5-7 the apostle John is not occupied with what is abnormal. He is not taken up with *how* the believer walks, but *where* he walks.

What then is meant by walking in the light? It undoubtedly hinges on what is meant by God being in the light. Verse 7 begins, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light." In the Old Testament God dwelt in thick darkness. He was unrevealed in His fulness. Something was known of God, but full revelation waited for the coming of Christ. Now God is revealed. He is in the light. He, "Who

only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy vi. 16) has been pleased to reveal Himself as Father, Son and Holy Ghost—*one* God.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18). God is in the light and believers come into the light of the revelation of God in Christ. The believer is brought into a realm of knowledge that is completely hidden from the unbeliever.

In that realm of knowledge (the ability to enter into it lying in the new nature communicated by God in sovereign grace and wisdom) believers have fellowship one with the other.

The "if" of verse 7—"if we walk in the light as He is in the light"—is the "if" of argument, and not of doubt. I say, *If* it is fine tomorrow we will go for a country walk. That is the "if" of doubt. Our going for a walk depends upon the weather, which is very uncertain. A father says to his son, "If you are my son, you will behave yourself in a way that is creditable?" He is casting no doubt on the relationship, but using it as an undoubted fact and as a lever whereby to exhort his son to better ways. So in our verse. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light," there follows an undoubted conse-

quence, believers have fellowship one with another.

Then follows a wonderful statement. How can believers be in the light? How can they arrive there? How can they be maintained there? The answer is, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." That is to say, the precious blood of Christ cleanses the believer from the guilt of sin once and for ever.

It may be urged, How can sins be cleansed away before they are committed? Should not the believer fly daily to the blood for daily cleansing? Does not the very form of the verb, *cleanseth*, point to this?

This form of the verb is very common in John's writings. Take as an example, "He that *cometh* from above is above all" (John iii. 31). This does not mean that Christ is coming, coming, coming day by day; but that He is characterized as the One, who came from above. "He that *believeth* . . . hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). This does not set forth a series of daily believings, but rather that a man is characterized once and for all time as believing. So with our word, "*cleanseth*." It sets forth the characteristic power of the precious blood, that it cleanses, not piecemeal day by day, but rather "*from ALL sin*," once and for ever.

This gives a believer a safe standing in the presence of God. Righteousness is for ever satisfied. But on the other hand, if walking "in the light as He is in the light" is intended to set forth *how* the believer walks, we can well ask the question, what believer walks in the light as God is in the light? What believer can walk or does walk up to that standard? Surely none. If it were a question of *how* the believer walks, not one would live to take two steps in God's awful presence. But God is love as well as light, and the precious blood sets forth the demand of light, since it is the provision of love meeting that demand.

And surely the greatest incentive and encouragement to walking according to the light is the knowledge that we walk in the light, and have fellowship one with the other, on the solid righteous foundation of the precious blood, settling once and for ever for the believer the demand of that light.

But though these words set forth *where* we walk rather than *how* we walk, may we be more concerned as to *how* we walk in the light. Thank God, the believer never walks in the darkness. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians v. 8).

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Philippians i. 1-30).

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

THE portion that now comes before us might be termed the Epistle of Christian experience. It is not characterized by the unfolding of doctrine, as are the epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians: any doctrine that it contains is brought in incidentally and not as the main theme. It is characterized by a spirit of great intimacy—for there was a very strong bond of affection between Paul and the Philippian saints—and by many personal details being given. Thus it comes to pass that in it we are given an extraordinary insight into the Apostle's inner spiritual history that is most edifying. We are permitted to scrutinize his spiritual experience that we may understand what proper Christian experience is, and discover how marvellously it worked out in a man of like passions to ourselves. Under the most disadvantageous and depressing circumstances it was a triumph.

In opening, Paul does not present himself as an apostle, but just as a bondman of Jesus Christ. Hence we are not to regard the experience which he is led to relate as being something apostolic, and there-

fore beyond the reach of ordinary Christians. On the contrary it is the experience of a bondman or servant, and we all are that. He addresses himself to those at Philippi who could be spoken of as "saints in Christ Jesus." Being *in Christ* they were set apart for God. They had bishops and deacons in their midst, but even so these are not mentioned in the first place. These men holding office in this local assembly had a place of importance and honour, but they were not lords over God's heritage, claiming in everything the first place. Moreover, instead of there being one bishop presiding over many churches there were several bishops in this one church.

Immediately after the opening salutation Paul puts on record his joyful remembrance of the Philippian saints. They had been peculiarly marked by fellowship in the Gospel. They had had Paul very much in their hearts (for so verse 7 should read) and they had stood by him as partners, all of which was proof of the work of God within them. God had by His Spirit begun a good work in them, which had been evidenced in this way; and what God had begun He would carry to completion, which would be reached in the day of Jesus Christ.

Evidently they were marked by a great love for the Gospel and hearty fellowship with it in a practical way, and not only with *it* but also with *Paul* who was its am-

bassador, and so they were partakers of his grace. And they were partakers not only as to the confirmation of the Gospel by the wonderful results it produced, but as to its defence against all adversaries, and as to the bonds in which the ambassador lay. Many there are who are eager to partake in the confirmation, and possibly in the defence, who are not so eager when bonds and afflictions are in evidence. Bonds are the test, and a readiness to partake in that connection is a surer proof of the work of God within than much erudition as to Christian doctrine.

Verse 8 assures us how fully Paul reciprocated all the affection of the Philippians, and indeed exceeded in it. Verses 9 and 10 show us that which was the desire of his heart for them, even that they should increase continually in love, intelligence, discrimination, purity and fruitfulness. There was much about them which was delightful, but the Apostle's desire is summed up in the words, "yet more and more."

While the work of God *for* us has been accomplished once and for ever by the Lord Jesus, the work of God *in* us by His Holy Spirit is a progressive thing. That we should abound more and more in love is evidently the principal thing, for as we do our knowledge and powers of discrimination will increase. More and more we shall discern what is excellent and delight in it,

~~and keep ourselves clear of all that would tarnish it, and consequently be filled with those fruits which are produced by righteousness to the glory and praise of God. Love is indeed the Divine nature. In that nature we are to grow as the result of God's work in us, which will continue to the end of our sojourn here, and be brought to fruition and into display when the day of Christ arrives.~~

When we reach verse 12 we find the Apostle beginning to refer to his own circumstances; but not as complaining or occupying our thoughts with them, but rather as showing how the God who is above all circumstances had made them work out to the furtherance of the Gospel.

What a blow it must have been to the early believers when Paul was imprisoned by the iron hand of Rome. A sudden extinguisher seemed to drop on his unparalleled labours and triumphs in the Gospel, and it must have appeared to be an unmitigated disaster. Yet it was nothing of the kind but rather the reverse, and in the succeeding verses we learn the way in which God had overruled it for good.

It was distinctly to the good that things had so fallen out as to make it manifest that Paul's imprisonment was wholly on account of the Glad Tidings. From the highest circles in Rome to the lowest it

had been made perfectly clear that his bonds were on account of Christ, and not those of an ordinary malefactor.

It was even more to the good that the most of the brethren had been stirred up in a right way by his captivity. Instead of being cast down and cowed by it they were moved to a fuller trust in the Lord, and consequently were more fearless in speaking forth the Word of the Lord. There was an unhappy minority who joined in the preaching from evil motives—for they were antagonistic to Paul and hoped to stir up more trouble for him—but at any rate they did preach Christ, and therefore God would overrule it for blessing.

Here then we get a striking glimpse of the inner life and spirit of the Apostle. His trials were very deep. Not only was his imprisonment likely to chafe his spirit, but the action of these envious and contentious brethren must have been irritating beyond measure. Yet here he is, calm, confident, gracious, without a trace of irritation in his spirit: a veritable triumph of the power of God. And the secret of it was evidently that he had learned to forget himself and view things altogether from the Divine side. What weighed with him was not how things affected himself but how they affected Christ and His interests. It might be bad for Paul, but if it was good for Christ then nothing further need be said, for *that* was the only thing that mattered to him.

As a consequence of this the Apostle could say, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." He rejoiced in the preaching of Christ, and he rejoiced in the assurance that all this which seemed to be so much against him would turn out to his own salvation; the Philippians helping by prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ being always available for him.

Verse 19 sets before us a present salvation and one which Paul himself needed and expected to get. The nature of it becomes clear as we consider verse 20. His earnest desire and expectation was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. The fulfilling of that desire would involve a salvation, for naturally we each aim at self-magnification and self-gratification through our bodies. Have we each discovered that to have the whole bent and tenor of our lives diverted from self to Christ is a wonderful present salvation? Have we ever prayed after this fashion?—

"My Saviour, Thou hast offered rest,
Oh, give it then to me,
The rest of ceasing from myself,
To find my all in Thee!"

Present salvation is found, then, in the setting aside of self and the exaltation of Christ, and not only salvation but also that which is really *life*. When the Apostle said, "For me to live is Christ," he was not announcing a fact of Christian doctrine but

speaking experimentally. It is indeed a fact that Christ is the life of His saints, but here we find that the fact was translated into the experience and practice of Paul, so that his life could be summed up in one word—CHRIST. Christ lived in Paul and through Paul. He was the Object of Paul's existence, and His character was manifested in him, though not yet, of course, in perfect measure.

If life meant Christ living in Paul, death meant Paul being with Christ. Hence he adds, "to die is gain." To every Christian death when it arrives IS gain, but it is very obvious that not many of us are in the abiding consciousness of that fact. When our loved ones who believe are taken from us, we console ourselves with the reflection that for them it means being with Christ, which is far better; yet we continue clinging to life in this world very pertinaciously ourselves. Have we ever been "in a strait betwixt two," as Paul was? The great majority of us would have no difficulty in deciding if the choice were left with us! We would elect at once for the alternative which is *not* spoken of as far better.

Death is gain, and Paul knew it to be gain; and he, be it remembered, had years before been caught up into the third heaven, though whether in or out of the body he could not tell. Whichever way it was, he was granted some foretaste thereby of the

blessedness of being with Christ. We may take the words, "far better," as being Paul's own verdict as the fruit of that wonderful experience, as well as the revelation, as from God, of a wonderful fact.

When he says, "What I shall choose I wot not," we are not to understand that he was actually left to decide whether he was to live or die. At least, so we judge. He writes very familiarly and with much freedom to his beloved Philippian converts, and hence does not stop to say, "if the choice were left to me." He knew that it was not merely better but far better to be with Christ, yet he does not decide the point by reference to his own feelings. We see again that the only thing that mattered was, what was most calculated to further the interests of his Lord. He felt that what would be for the more help of the saints was his remaining amongst them for a little longer, and hence he had the confidence of so doing, as he says in verse 25.

Let us all be quite clear that the departure of what the Apostle speaks here has nothing to do with the coming again of the Lord. He refers to the intermediate, or "unclothed," state, to which he refers in 2 Corinthians v. 4. In that passage he shows that the "clothed" state—when we are "clothed upon" with our bodies of glory is in every way superior to the "unclothed." Yet in our passage we see that the "un-

clothed" state is far better than the best that we can know while still clothed in our present bodies of humiliation. What it all means in detail must of necessity be inconceivable to us in our present condition, but let us rest assured that blessedness beyond all our thoughts lies ahead of us.

It would seem pretty certain that Paul was justified in his confidence, and that he did "abide and continue" with them for a few years further with a view to their spiritual progress and joy, and give them cause for further rejoicing by his coming amongst them for a brief season.

Only there was one great desire which he had as regards them, and that equally whether he was absent from them or present with them, that they should conduct themselves in a way that was worthy of the Gospel. Not only were they to stand fast; they were to "stand fast *in one spirit.*" Not merely to strive for the faith of the Gospel, but to do so "*with one mind,*" and "*together.*"

Here is an apostolic injunction which may well strike very deeply and acutely into our hearts. It goes a long way to explain the lack of power manifested in connection with the Gospel, whether as regards its progress amongst the unsaved or as regards the stability of those who are saved. Standing fast, you notice, comes before the striving. And the word translated *striving* is one

from which we derive our word, athletics. It would seem therefore to indicate not so much a striving by word or argument in order to maintain the truth of the Gospel, as striving in the shape of actual labour on the Gospel's behalf.

In Romans xv. 30 and in Jude 3 we have the words "strive" and "contend," but there a different word is used, from which we get our word, agonize. The saints were to agonize together in prayer with Paul, and to earnestly agonize for the faith. Here we are enjoined to labour (or, athleticize, if we may coin a word) together for the Gospel, and at the beginning of chapter iv. we read of two women who did so labour together with Paul, for the same word is used there. If there were more *agonizing together* in prayer, and *athleticizing together* on behalf of the Gospel we should see *more* in the way of result.

As we proceed further in the epistle we shall discover that this oneness of mind and spirit is the main burden that was resting on the Apostle as regards the Philippians, for dissension is an evil which has a way of creeping in amongst the most spiritual and devoted Christians in various subtle ways.

When dissension is banished and unity prevails among saints the adversaries do not appear so alarming, and there is more readi-

ness to suffer. The fact is we never need be terrified by adversaries of an open sort. The very fact that they are adversaries is to them only a token of destruction when God rises up. And when He rises up it will mean salvation for His people. While we wait for His intervention it is ours to have conflict and suffering for His sake. The Philippians had seen it in Paul, as Acts xvi. bears witness, and now they heard of the same kind of thing befalling him in Rome.

Suffering for Christ and His Gospel is here presented as a *privilege*, granted to us as believers. If we were not so sadly enervated by the dissension and disunity that prevails in the church, on the one hand, and by the inroads of the world and the spirit of the world, on the other, that is the light in which we should see it. And how immensely should we thereby be blessed!

F. B. HOLE.

There is a distinction between being faithful and being Christ-like.

If love is wanting in my *faithfulness* it becomes *bitterness*.

I find it easier to count all things loss than to be counted loss myself.

“GATHERED TOGETHER.”

(From Notes of Addresses)

“**G**ATHER My people together,” has ever been God’s desire since He has had a people on earth. His intention always was to dwell among them, and on occasions He specially gathered them together. To this end He had the silver trumpets made, and there were those “holy convocations” of which Leviticus xxiii. speaks. Three times every year He called them together on a very large scale.

It is His delight to have His people together, and nothing more plainly declares it than the fact that at a much later day in their history, when things were terribly broken, He registers their gatherings and the theme of their conversations (See, Malachi iii. 16). In earlier days He had said, “Gather the people together, and I will give them water” (Num. xxi. 16). “Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words” (Deut. iv. 10). So He evidently loves the gatherings of His people. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell

together in unity!" (Psalm cxxxiii. 1). Blessing is connected with it in this psalm.

Scattering is the work of *the wolf*. Aloofness is one of the characteristic marks of a bad condition. The fact that the Lord calls us *His sheep* is significant, for there is no more gregarious animal than the sheep. Danger and fear specially drive them together, but apart from that they love to live together.

The Lord Jesus spoke of our being "gathered together in My name" (Matt. xviii .20). There it really is "TO My Name," that is, His Name is the *rallying point* during His bodily absence. We get our being "gathered together" and "IN His name," in 2 Corinthians v. 4. In His name, signifies as *representing Him*.

Christ is the centre of all God's thoughts and purposes, and He will actually be the centre of all God's people in glory. Meantime His Name is the centre of gathering for His people on earth. The fact that His Name is the gathering point indicates that He personally is not here. His absence has been occasioned by His rejection, and it is that which makes it necessary to have His Name as the rallying point while we wait for Him.

His Name—Jesus Christ our Lord—sets forth all that He is. It sets forth His character. Jesus, the Name given to Him when

He became Man, bespeaks His humanity, yet it means, Jehovah Saviour. Christ and Lord are titles acquired by reason of His work. “ God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ ” (Acts ii. 36). As Christ He is the anointed Man. As Lord He is in the place of authority, and all God’s rights are vested in Him.

Now a false Christ could never be the centre of a true circle, according to God. To deny His deity, or His humanity, or His work, or His authority, is to proclaim you have a false Christ, and hence to proclaim the falsity of any claim to be gathered together to His Name. Moreover, we must each be in right relations with Him. We may have a perfectly true centre, but even then we can only have a correct circumference as every part of it stands in true mathematical relation to the centre.

We cannot say at all times, “ We are gathered to His Name.” Indeed the Scripture does not speak of being “ gathered to His Name,” but of being “ gathered TOGETHER to His Name.” That is to say, the words do not describe a certain ecclesiastical position, but an actual coming together of God’s people. When actually gathered together with others it might be possible for us to apply such a word to ourselves. But only if we really gather in

the truth of, and in the character of, Christ's assembly.

It may help us to remember that a meeting of members of Parliament does not of necessity mean a meeting of Parliament. In the first case they meet as individual members in a voluntary gathering of some sort. In the second case the Speaker takes his seat in their midst, parliament is convoked, and they have collective powers of action which they had not before. A large number of members might have a meeting—300, let us say. That does not make their meeting a parliamentary session. They meet to gain information, to confer together and decide upon a course of action for themselves, but they can do nothing administratively. At a later hour exactly the same members may be assembled in the Chamber and the Speaker takes the chair. Now they become a corporate body, under one head. They now represent their constituents and can act on their behalf.

Now the assembly of God—according to His thoughts—is not merely a collection of believers, but a corporate body acting under one Head. It is composed of all believers united together under Christ. It fills a place in the purpose of God that nothing before ever did, and nothing in the future will ever do. An aggregation of individuals or "churches" does not meet the case.

There is no such thought in Scripture as a union of churches. A unity already exists—the unity which has been established by the Spirit of God between Christ, the Head in heaven, and His members on earth. Nothing can make it for it is already divinely made; and nothing can mar it, save as to its outward expression while still the church is on earth.

Before Pentecost the unity did not exist. Then it was just Christ and His disciples, and the gathering in the upper chamber was of the nature of a believer's meeting. The Holy Ghost came down, and He baptized them into one body, one living organic whole, vitalized by His life, energized by His Spirit, and to be directed by Himself.

If we would be truly gathered together to the Name of the Lord we must be very careful not to make His Name a kind of sectarian badge. That is what they were doing at Corinth. Some were Paulites, some Cephasites, others more pretentious than all, were saying, “We are of Christ,” as if they would make Christ the Head of a school of thought in contrast to, and better than, Paul's teaching.

If we would gather together according to the character of Christ's assembly, we must,

1. Yield to Him, and to His Name, the central place.

2. Be characterized by His love, reciprocating His love to us.
3. Be in subjection to His authority.
4. Respond to His claims, in the recognition of His supreme rights.

ART. CUTTING.

FOUR THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 16, 18; V. 10, 14.

I AM going to point out to you briefly certain things that you will find in this passage—things which helped to make the Apostle Paul the saint and servant of God that he was. We must not suppose that he had an easy path, any more than some of us. Perhaps, in the warehouse where you are employed, you have to rub shoulders with ungodly men. Many things happen, day after day, that try both your spirit and your temper, and you may sometimes wish you were in other circumstances, thinking that, if you were, your spiritual life would be more vigorous, that you would grow and get on faster in the things of God. But we are poor judges as to *that*, and we may well remember that if in a lawful position, we are where the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is all-sufficient for us.

Now, in fact, the Apostle Paul had a

very rough time of it, and he could say what we could not, at all events with the same fulness of meaning. Look, for instance, at verses 8, 9: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Think for a moment of what those terms suggest—troubled—perplexed—persecuted—cast down! And then glance at verse 11: "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." Now, of course, we cannot say that. The Apostle Paul's path was indeed a great deal rougher than ours. The storms of persecution for Christ's sake continually howled around him, and he tells us in Romans viii. 36 that he and his fellow-Christians were looked upon as so many sheep for the slaughter. So the apostle had much to endure, but he found in his pathway that Christ was all-sufficient.

Now, I shall speak particularly to those who, through grace, have made a start in the Christian life. Of course, the first thing for any of us is to know the Lord Jesus as our own personal Saviour. Nothing is more mischievous than for unconverted persons to try to live a Christian life. No one can lead a Christian life until he is a Christian. You must first be born again. You must know Christ as your Saviour, and receive at His gracious hands the forgiveness of your sins and the salvation of your soul,

and when you can say that Christ is yours, then you begin to live the Christian life.

But without further preface let me name some of the things that made Paul the saint and servant that he was. There are four in number. We shall find the first in verse 16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the *inward man is renewed day by day.*" Thank God, there is the inward man, born of the Spirit. The Apostle here speaks of it as being renewed day by day. And so I hope it is with us. The outward man, as we well know, needs daily renewal. Therefore we go to bed and sleep, and sit down, most of us, to two or three good square meals in the course of the day. Now, if the outward man needs to be renewed thus, so does the inward man. Somebody may say, "But how does the renewing take place? What contributes to it?" I believe two things. First of all, *prayer*, which is the very breath of the Christian. If we neglect the throne of grace—if we seldom bow our knees in prayer to our God and Father in heaven, you may depend upon it that we shall suffer great loss. But there is more. You will remember a verse in the end of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, "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; they shall walk,

and not faint." There is then a renewal that comes from waiting on the Lord. Now I believe that "*waiting on the Lord*" means more than simply bowing our knees in prayer to God in the morning, and again at night. We must also wait upon Him with His Word before us, to hear from Him, to receive through the pages of His blessed book some communication from Him whose words are spirit and life. You have but to read the first Psalm to see that the one who meditates upon God's truth is likened unto a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf never withers, and who brings forth fruit in his season.

May I, then, ask you to remember that the inward man should be renewed day by day? When God's redeemed people were journeying from Egypt to Canaan the manna fell every day, and every day they gathered it up. So must it be with us. May God graciously incline our hearts to pay frequent visits to the throne of grace. We can do so, you know, not only in our own bedrooms, but when we walk along the busy street, or when serving in the warehouse or office where we are employed. All the day long, though our minds be engaged with business, we can be in the spirit, if not in the attitude, of prayer, and God's Word may be treasured up richly in our heart and memory.

Now for our second point. You will find it at the end of the chapter, verse 18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Observe the contrast between things seen and not seen, and mark what is said about them. The things which are seen are temporal, they perish and pass away; it is the unseen things that are eternal. And the Holy Spirit is given to us Christians in order that we might enter into them. Now these were the things at which the Apostle looked. His eye was on the invisible. Men of the world would not understand this. They might say, "How can any one look at things that are not seen?" It is a mystery which they cannot explain. But it is simple enough to the Christian. We are called upon, then, to have the eyes of the heart fixed upon the unseen—upon the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. They are all revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit is given to us that we might know them. Let these, then, be that on which the eyes of our heart rest. Of course, we have to do our daily business, and do it well. A Christian servant should be the best of all servants, and a Christian master should be the best of all masters. There is no doubt about that, and thus, in our daily calling, we should glorify the name of our Lord Jesus. That

does not militate at all against what I have said.

The third thing that had a powerful influence upon the Apostle is named in verse 10 of chapter v. He had just been saying that he laboured, he earnestly endeavoured, he strove, he made it his chief business that, whether present or absent, he might be well pleasing to his Lord and Master. "For," adds he, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Now the Apostle was not only a saved man, just as you are, but he was also a servant of Christ, as we all are in our little measure. And so he said in substance, "I may not find that everybody will pat me on the back, and say, 'Well done,' and I do not make it my aim to win the esteem of men; my one ambition is to be acceptable to my Lord and Master in that day when I shall be manifested at His tribunal." So should it be with us, for *we* must all appear there, and our life pass under scrutiny—shall I say the judgment?—of our gracious Lord and Master. Perhaps somebody may say, "But how does that agree with what we get in John v. 24, where we are told that we shall never come into judgment?" Ah! we Christians will never come into judgment on account of our sins. It was for these that Christ died. The judicial ques-

tion is passed, blessed be God, but then our life will come under our Master's judgment and review. The Apostle did not lose sight of that. He was anxious that his life should receive His Master's approbation. God help us, then, to keep these three things in view: First, the inward man, renewed day by day; second, the eye of the heart on unseen and eternal things; third, we must all be manifested at the tribunal of our Master.

One other thing, and this is my last. Verse 14: "The love of Christ constraineth us." It is blessed to have the heart under the powerful influence of the love of Christ. Of all the mighty factors in the life of the Apostle, that was the mightiest. He says elsewhere, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And so he judged that if the Lord Jesus Christ had died for him, and he was, by God's grace, among them that lived, it became him not to live unto himself, but unto Him who died and rose again. It ought to be so with us. True, we do not move in the same circle as the Apostle; we have neither received his great gifts nor his call to service; but if your lot is cast in the humblest sphere, let us live and move in it to the glory of Him who died for us and rose again. How needful it is to remember that the name of the Lord Jesus is written upon us, and that at home, in business, in the church, or in whatsoever circle we have

to be, we are to carry ourselves so as to please our gracious Lord and Master. Those, then, are the four things brought before us in this passage, all of which contributed to make the Apostle Paul the saint and servant that he was, the last but not least, *the constraining love of Christ.*

W. B.

THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE.

I RECENTLY received a request for prayer for the gospel, which contained the following appeal:—

“I wish something could be done to wake up the meeting-people to *WORK*. They will patronise and approve and enjoy and possibly flatter you, but they will not *work*.”

These words were penned by a well-known, much-used and devoted servant of Christ, who had been preaching the gospel for many years. The pathos of them impressed me as I read them, knowing how true to fact they are in respect of all too many places, and as I thought upon them, I asked myself the reason for the apathy complained of. My mind turned to 2 Corinthians v. where two motives for earnestness are brought before us and I concluded that the absence of these largely accounted for it.

The Apostle Paul could say, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (v. 14), and if this does not, what indeed will make our lives earnest? Christ's death for all is brought before us, and believers rejoice in such an all-convincing proof of Christ's love to them, but the Spirit of God would have us to understand that, if Christ died for all, this fact is absolute demonstration of the solemn truth that all were dead Godwards, in other words that our life in this world was forfeited by sin against God; otherwise, why should Christ have died for all?

As believers, we gladly confess that Christ died for us, but to what extent do we realize that thereby we confess that we have no right to live to ourselves? This truth is very pointedly brought before us, for we read, "He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again" (v. 15). Surely then the sincerity of the confession that "He died for us" is only truly measured by the extent that we live "unto Him," in the power of the new life—eternal life—which is given to us by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ.

How hotly we would condemn the ingratitude of one who had been saved from a watery grave by a brave rescuer and who

afterwards only shewed a very apathetic interest in the one to whom he owed his life! And yet, does not the complaint at the head of this paper indicate how gross is the ingratitude which is all too general with Christians, on whose account Christ died?

Fellow believer, sit down and meditate on the words, "He died for ME." Think of what was your state to make so great a sacrifice necessary, think of the sin against God! think of the life without God! think of the hell that lay at the end of it! Then, consider the greatness of Him who died for you! of His sufferings in Gethsemane! of the effrontery of His unjust trial! of the agonies of His crucifixion! and above all, of His horror and anguish when He became the sin-bearer! It was what you deserved, what your sins merited. Do you believe it?

Now ponder on the greatness of His love that carried Him through all this *for YOU*, though the very anticipation caused Him such terrible agony of soul that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44). As these thoughts lay hold of mind and heart, do we not blush with shame at the selfishness of our lives and the coldness of our endeavour? My fellow-believer, meditate upon these wondrous proofs of Christ's love until your soul is so filled with and impressed

by it that you are constrained to "live unto Him." Then hearty and active fellowship with the gospel will take the place of mere approval, and you will have the joy of helping to bring souls to Christ.

Then there is another motive brought before us that would constrain us to urge men to turn to God. The apostle tells us in verse 10 that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Solemn enough this is for the believer as he thinks of his life coming into review and only that which is done out of love to Christ receiving approval at that day, but a thousandfold more solemn for the Christ rejecter, with whom there is nothing good and who will receive judgment for the bad at the great white throne on which Christ sits as Judge—He who died for all. No wonder then that the apostle declares that "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (v. 11).

Think of the doom of the one whose heart has been hardened by sin, who has been unresponsive to the pleadings of grace; let the terror of it lay hold of your soul as it did that of the apostle Paul, and you will not be able to refrain from active part and fellowship with those who seek to persuade men.

Does not the supineness complained of point to the fact that belief in this solemn truth has become feeble, that Christians have consciously or unconsciously been affected by the false doctrines of the "larger hope" or "annihilationism," so that the future of the unconverted causes no horror to the mind. What then do the sufferings of Christ mean? What His cry of anguish, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Why should Christ die for *all*, if damnation is not the future of the unrepentant sinner? Any weakening of the belief in the eternal punishment of the unsaved, must weaken appreciation of the greatness of the work of Christ and diminish zeal for the conversion of others. Hence the lukewarmness of those who might and ought to be fellow-workers in the gospel.

Let us face facts--*lack of conviction* is the root of the trouble. The love of Christ constrained the apostle Paul to a life of devotion to Christ and His interests, and the terror of the Lord impelled him to persuade men; let us then allow the thought of the doom of the lost, and still more the thought of the love of Christ who died for all, so to fill our souls that at least in our case, no devoted servant of Christ shall be able to complain of our lack of active support as he seeks to tell out the story of grace.

How encouraging would this be to the preachers. The apostle Paul so found it, for he writes, "I thank my God . . . for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. i. 3-5). May we give heed to the word, "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. i. 27).

A. F. POLLOCK.

This article can be had as a separate leaflet (under the title, *Apathy Results from Shallow Belief*) if any will circulate it. 7d. per doz. post free.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Philippians ii.* 1-16).

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

THE opening verse of chapter ii. appears to be an allusion to the supplies from the Philippians which had reached Paul by the hand of Epaphroditus. These gifts had been to him a very refreshing expression of the love and compassion that marked them, and of the true fellowship of the Spirit that existed between himself and them. As a result his heart had been filled with consolation and comfort in the midst of his afflictions. Whilst recognizing however, the immediate application of this first verse, do not let us miss its more general bearing. Christ is the source of

consolation; love it is that produces comfort; the Spirit of God, possessed in common by all true believers, is the fountain-head of fellowship. These facts abide in all ages, and for us all.

These things being facts, the Apostle uses them as a kind of lever in his exhortation. The "if," repeated four times in the first verse, has really the force of "since." Since these things are so, he begs them to fill up his joy to the brim by being likeminded and getting rid of the last vestige of dissension.

Experience proves, we think, that dissension is a work of the flesh which is amongst the last to disappear, and our passage shows how great was the desire of the Apostle that it might be removed from the midst of the Philippians. Note the variety of expressions he used in setting forth his desires for them.

First of all they were to be likeminded. It is obviously a great thing when believers all think alike, yet there is also to be considered the spirit that underlies their thinking. If that be wrong mere thinking alike will not guarantee absence of dissension. Hence he adds, "having the same love." Only love can produce that of which next he speaks, "being of one accord," or, more literally, "joined in soul," which in its turn leads to all minding one thing.

When we reach chapter iii. we shall find Paul saying "One thing I do." He was a man of one object, *pursuing* one thing, instead of frittering away his energies in the pursuit of many things. Here he exhorts others all to *mind* the one thing. Only the man, whose mind is centred on the one thing of all importance, is likely to be characterized by the pursuit of the one thing. It is not difficult to see that if we are all minding the one thing, under the control of the same love, there will not be much room for dissension.

Still, even so, the Apostle has yet more to say on this point. Verse 2 does indeed bring in the great positive elements that make for practical unity, but he will also labour to exclude the elements of evil that destroy it. Hence verse 3. It is very possible for us to do many things which are quite right in themselves in the spirit of strife, as we saw in considering chapter i., where we read of brethren preaching Christ "of envy and strife." Moreover, vainglory is an evil product of the flesh which lies very deeply ingrained in the fallen heart of man. How often have we done what was right enough, but with the secret desire of gaining credit and glory amongst our fellows? Let us give our consciences time to answer, and we shall feel the keen edge of these words.

Vainglory lies at the root of a vast pro-

portion of the strife and dissension that is distracting Christians, even those who otherwise are spiritually minded. The opposite of vainglory is that lowliness of mind that leads us to esteem others better than ourselves. *Lowliness* of mind moreover leads to that *largeness* of mind which is indicated in verse 4. If I am self-centred, aiming merely at my own interests and glory, I naturally am only considering my own things. If on the other hand I am Christ-centred, aiming at His interests and glory, I look also on the things of others. And if the things of others are really more for Christ's glory than my things are, I shall look more on the things of others than on my own.

At this point the Apostle seems to anticipate that the Philippians might wish to say to him, "You have exhorted us to be of one spirit, of one accord, of one mind. But how are we to bring it about? There is no denying the fact that differences of thought and judgment prevail amongst us. Whose mind is to prevail?"

His reply is, "Let this mind be in you."—the mind that was "in Christ Jesus." By "mind" here we have not to understand just a thought or opinion, but a whole way of thinking. Christ's way of thinking is to characterize us, and this is a very much deeper thing. If His way of thinking does

characterize us we shall be delivered from dissension even though we do not see eye to eye on every point. Verses 15 and 16 of chapter iii. show this.

What then was the mind that was in Christ Jesus? We may reply in the three words that occur in verse 8, "He humbled Himself." The fact is that the mind that was in Christ is the exact opposite of the mind that was in Adam. The Lord's own words in Matthew xxiii. 12 illustrate it. There was found in Adam the self-exalting mind, and as a consequence he fell into the depths. In Christ there was found the self-sacrificing, self-humbling mind, and, as we see in this passage, He is exalted to the supreme place.

We start from the supreme heights in verse 6. He was in the form of God. Our first parents were tempted to grasp at something far above them—at becoming as gods, as Genesis iii. 5, bears witness. That place was not for them, and their grasping at it was sheer robbery. But there was nothing of that with our Lord. In His case equality with God was not something to be grasped at. It was His to start with, for He was God. He could not be higher than He was. Before Him there lay but the alternative of staying as and where He was, or of coming down in humiliation.

Blessed be God, He chose the latter. Verse 7 is the beginning of this wonderful

story. Though originally in the form of God, He took upon Him another form, the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. This involved the making of Himself "of no reputation," or "emptying" Himself.

Years ago when the unbelieving critics of the Bible found themselves running into conflict with the words of our Lord, they invented the "*kenosis* theory" so as to be able to maintain their own denials of His words, while at the same time paying Him a certain measure of respect and homage instead of utterly rejecting Him as a fraud. *Kenosis* is a word coined from the Greek word used in this passage, with the literal meaning of "emptied," but translated, "made . . . of no reputation." The theory represents Christ as emptying Himself so fully of all that was divine that He became a Jew, just as ignorant as the majority of Jews living in His age. Hence the critic of the nineteenth or twentieth century, propounding this theory and fortified with modern learning, feels himself quite able to contradict or correct the Son of God.

Such is the *kenosis* THEORY—a web spun by the critical spiders out of their own unbelieving hearts; for *they* are the liars, and *not* the Son of God. A web which, sad to say, has served the devil's purposes only too well. Many an unwary fly has been trapped in that web. It has given them

some kind of a reason for thinking exactly what they wanted to think.

Now while we turn away with abhorrence from the evil theory, we must not overlook the fact that there is a true "kenosis," a true emptying, for this passage speaks of it. If we desire to understand what it means we turn to the Gospels, and there we see what His Manhood involved, just as we also see what His Godhead involved, *shining*, as it did, continually through His Manhood. Just two or three examples may be cited, to illustrate what we refer to.

Having become Man, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. Consequently instead of acting in the simple strength of His own Godhead He acted in the power of the Spirit. It was a case of God doing things *by* Him (Acts x. 38; Luke iv. 14; Acts ii. 22).

He is the Creator, as Colossians i. 16 so plainly states, yet in Manhood He stated that places in the coming kingdom were *not His to give* (Matt. xx. 23).

In keeping with this He disclaimed individual initiative or movement in His words and works. He attributed all to the Father (John v. 19, 27, 30; xiv. 10).

Considering these things we at once see that this true emptying, which was His own act, was in order that His taking the form of a servant might be a real thing. Were

it not for this we might have jumped to the conclusion that the words, "took upon Him the form of a servant," simply meant that He took a servant's place only as a matter of form, just as the Pope of Rome is said occasionally to assume the place of a servant in washing the feet of certain poor beggars. He does it in form, but they see to it that in reality it is accomplished in surroundings of elegance and splendour. When our Lord Jesus took the servant's form, He took it *in all the reality it involved*.

Verse 8 carries the story of His humiliation to its climax. If verse 7 gives us the amazing stoop from Godhead's fullest glory to man's estate and place, this verse gives us the further stoop of the Man, who was Jehovah's Fellow, to the death of the cross. All His life was marked by going downwards, it was marked by an increasing humbling of Himself until death was reached, and that a death of extremest shame and suffering—the death of the cross.

His way of thinking then was to go down, and that way of thinking is to be in us. Only as born of God and possessing the Spirit of God is it possible for us to think in that way. Thank God, it is possible for us so to think. Then let us do so. The obligation rests upon us. Let us accept it, and let us judge ourselves by it.

The three verses which detail His humiliation are now followed by three which de-

clare His exaltation according to the decree of God the Father. Still He takes everything from the Father's hand, and is granted a Name which is absolutely supreme. In this passage "name" is used, we judge, in the same way as it is used in Hebrews i. 4. No particular name is referred to, whether Lord, or Jesus, or Christ, or any other, but it refers rather to His fame or reputation. The once despised and rejected Jesus has such fame and renown that ultimately every created being will have to bow before Him and confess His Lordship. And when an assembled universe does Him homage, whether they do it with glad willingness or with grief under compulsion, all will be to the glory of God the Father.

In verse 12 the Apostle leaves this delightful theme and returns to his exhortation, which began with verse 27 of chapter i. He longed that their manner of life might be in everything in keeping with the Gospel, that they might be marked by earnest labour for the Gospel with oneness of mind, and courage in the presence of opposition. In the past, when Paul had been in and out amongst them, they had been marked by obedience to what was enjoined. Now let them be, if possible, even more obedient to his word since they were bereft of his personal help. Dangers threatened them from without, and there was this subtle danger threatening from dissension within, let them then with redoubled energy seek

to have and manifest the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Thus would they be working out their own salvation from all that threatened. Let them do it with fear and trembling, remembering their own weakness. Once Peter thought he could work out his own salvation without fear or trembling, and we know what came of that.

This evidently is the simple meaning of this much used, and abused, verse. Can we not each apply it to ourselves? We certainly can if we will. So may God make us willing to do so. We need not shrink from doing so in view of verse 13. We are to work out our own salvation, but it is God who works in us, to the willing and doing of His good pleasure. Let us note that. God works the willing as well as the doing, and the willing comes first. Thus God's work and our work are considered as moving harmoniously together. God's work must ever take precedence of ours both as to time and importance. Yet the thing is not presented in a way that would turn us into fatalists. Rather our working is mentioned first, and the responsibility as to it is pressed upon us. The fact that God works is brought in as an encouragement and incentive.

Thus, taught of God to love His will, we do it, and if the mind of Christ be in us we do it in the right way. Not grudgingly with murmurings and disputings, but as

harmless and simple children of God, bearing the character of God, whose children we are. Mankind has become a crooked and perverted generation and we are to be living in a way that presents the sharpest possible contrast. Only thus shall we be lights amidst the darkness of this world.

The word translated "shine," is a word, we are told, which is used for the rising or appearing of the heavenly bodies in our skies. This gives us a striking thought. We should appear as heavenly luminaries in this world's sky. Are we doing so? Only if we are altogether distinguished from the generation of this world, as indicated in the earlier part of the verse. Only then can we effectively hold forth to others the word of life.

There must be life as well as the testimony of our lips if the word of life is to be held forth. The word of testimony most frequently becomes the word of life to others, when it has first been translated into the life of the witness. If that were accomplished in the case of his beloved Philippian converts, Paul would have the assurance that his labours on their behalf had not been in vain. He then could anticipate abundant cause for rejoicing when Christ should appear and inaugurate His day. He could regard God's work in them, of which he had spoken in verse 6 of chapter i., as being carried to its crown and completion.

F. B. HOLE.

THE FOUR GREAT JUDGMENTS.

GRACE does not set aside government. The grace of God and His government go hand in hand. Indeed grace rests for its righteous foundation on government. God would not be God were it not so.

We, believers, rejoice in the wonderful grace of God. But what enhances it in our estimation is the manner of the grace. It is not a slipshod slurring over of man's guilt. "Grace reigns through **RIGHTEOUSNESS** unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans v. 21).

The cross is the outstanding testimony to the grace and government of God—*grace*, that would proclaim pardon to a guilty world; *government*, that would make the offer the result of the full settlement of sin at the cross. Were it not so, grace would rest on an utterly insecure foundation, indeed it would be no grace at all, and unworthy of the God presented to us in the Scriptures. It is the glory of the grace of God that it is founded on the immutable basis of absolute and divine righteousness.

For our immediate purpose we consider

1. The Judgment of sin at the cross,
2. The Judgment seat for believers,
3. The Judgment of the living nations,
4. The Judgment of the wicked dead.

1. *The judgment of sin took place when the Son of God died on Calvary's cross in the sinner's place (1 Peter iii. 18).*
2. *The judgment of the believer's life will take place between the time of the Lord coming FOR His people, and His coming WITH His people to set up His millennial kingdom on the earth (2 Corinthians v. 10; 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18).*
3. *The judgment of the living nations will take place prior to the setting up of the millennial kingdom (Matthew xxv. 31-46).*
4. *The Judgment of the resurrected wicked dead will take place before the dread tribunal of the great white throne (Revelation xx. 11-15).*

THE JUDGMENT AT THE CROSS.

Nothing can exceed this in solemnity. The cross is the centre on which all God's purposes turn. Behold the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, the Sustainer of all things, become Man in the wonderful condescension of His love to sinful men, dying on that cross! The very sun refused at high noontide to look upon His grief and anguish, as He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Grace, *grace* abounding, nay super-abounding grace, was there seen: *government* in all its stern inexorable demand for satisfaction was seen there also. Amazing scene that strikes us dumb with astonishment!

Once and for all and for ever was the sin question settled. "IT IS FINISHED," were the triumphant words of the Saviour ere He expired. The rent veil, the rending rocks, the earthquake, the opened graves of the saints that arose from the 'dead,—all attested the triumph of the Son of God. Heaven and earth and hades alike united in this amazing testimony.

The judgment upon sin at the cross took place that the believer might be for ever freed from that judgment. So we read the very words of the Lord Himself, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION [*literally* judgment]; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Will the reader please note carefully the Lord's emphatic words to the believer, "SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION"? Nothing can contradict these words. The reason we emphasize this will at once be apparent.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT FOR BELIEVERS.

We read,

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians v. 10).

On hearing this read for the first time, the young believer may ask, "How is it that the believer is to be judged, and yet the Lord with His own lips assures the believer that he will never come into judgment? Does there not seem a contradiction?"

We answer, The Lord's words stand good in all their blessed meaning, the fruit of the cross. The believer will NEVER COME INTO JUDGMENT. We can rest assured as to that. The Lord will be true to His own word.

"How then," we may ask, "does the believer stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and yet never come into judgment?"

The answer is very simple, The believer's *person* will never come into judgment, but his *deeds* will be manifested, *deeds* of the flesh will suffer loss, *deeds* of the Spirit will be rewarded. The *person* of the unbeliever will come into judgment at the great white throne. The *person* of the believer, according to the words of the Lord Jesus, will NEVER come into judgment.

When the judgment seat of Christ is faced by the believer, he will already be glorified in the presence of the Lord, be like the Lord and with Him for ever. There can be no possible doubt as to his position in the glory, for that depends on the finished work of Christ on the cross. "The blood

of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL sin" (1 John i. 7). "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them [*believers*] that are sanctified" (Hebrews x. 14). To bring the believer's person into judgment would be to go back upon the clear assurances of Scripture as to the efficacy of the atoning work of Christ. It would be a denial of the very character of God Himself.

An illustration may help to a clearer understanding of the matter. Some years ago the writer was in the city of Leeds. At that time the assizes were being held, no less a person than the Lord Chief Justice being the Judge. At the same time there was a large flower show being held in the city.

At the assizes there was a great murder case. When the jury retired to consider their verdict we can well realize the awful feelings that filled the prisoner's mind. The case was clear and there was a sickening dread in the prisoner's mind that the verdict must be "Guilty." Look at him as the jury return, and the foreman utters the dread word, "Guilty." He knows full well that his *person* is being judged, that in his own body he will have to bear the due reward of his dreadful deed.

Let your thoughts travel to the flower show. The moment has arrived for the Judges to begin their work. Everyone

knows that they are not there to judge the exhibitors, but the exhibits, not to judge the persons of the exhibitors, but their works. The word, *Judges*, does not raise any fears as to policemen, prisons, punishment, and the like, but we can well understand the feeling of the exhibitors as they watch the Judges eyeing their exhibits. They wonder if all the care and labour of weeks and months will receive a commendation, a well-done, a reward, or will all their labour go for nothing?

So at the judgment seat of Christ. In bodies of glory, with the flesh left behind for ever, there will be no question as to whether it is to be heaven or hell. The work of Christ has settled that once and for all for the believer, but it will be a question of the Lord giving us His own judgment as to all that we have done in our bodies on earth. How solemn and salutary is it to know all this!

It may be asked, Will our deeds *before* conversion come out for manifestation, as well as those after conversion. The answer is, "*the deeds done in the body*" will come up for review, and that covers the whole of our lives.

All the deeds of the believer will be brought into the light and be tested as 1 Corinthians iii. 11-15 shows us. Verse

15 of that passage proves conclusively all that we have been saying. It supposes a case where the deeds done in the body of the believer are burned by fire, and then it says, "But he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire." The believer is saved because the indestructible foundation is there, but how sad that so much that engaged his attention should be destroyed in judgment, and fire be really his salvation. It is not a question here of eternal salvation through the atoning merits of the cross, but governmental salvation from the entanglements that would hinder the soul from entering upon its heritage.

May not Lot be an example of being saved so as by fire? He made unholy links with Sodom. The fire came. To save his life he had to flee from Sodom. The entanglements were burned, and fire was in reality his salvation from Sodom with its unspeakable filth and wickedness. Lot was saved in his person, but his works were burned.

Matthew xxv. 14-30 and Luke xix. 11-27 set forth the rewards that are given to the faithful servants. Let it be stated that rewards are not meted out in reference to gift, but on the ground of devotedness. So we find the one, whose two talents earned other two, receiving the same reward as the one, whose five talents earned other five. What was committed to each differed in

amount, but there was equal diligence, in so far that each doubled what had been committed to his trust. The reward is not given in relation to the amount of gift, but on the ground of devotedness. The amount given to each depends on the sovereignty of the Giver, devotedness is the exercise of the recipient.

May the solemn light of the judgment seat of Christ for the believer exercise its salutary, purifying effect upon each one of us.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING NATIONS.

After the church has been caught up by the Lord Himself, the Spirit of God will be active in blessing among the Jews, and through their testimony among the nations. The coming of the Lord will be inexpressibly solemn for the vast amount of mere profession in Christendom, as illustrated by the position of the foolish virgins being refused admission to the closed door, the opportunity for salvation being over for ever for those, who professed Christianity, and were in the light of it, and yet refused it in its reality. Further, there will be the "strong delusion," according to 2 Thessalonians ii., affecting men's minds.

But God's grace will go out to the Jew. A remnant will be converted and will evangelise the nations in view of the return of the Lord to reign upon the earth.

Just prior to the setting up of His kingdom He will bring the nations to His judgment seat, as narrated in Matthew xxv. 31-46. Then the test will be how they have treated the message, the gospel of the kingdom. Those who have received it will be among the sheep, and go into everlasting life, that is the millennial reign of Christ, which in due time passes into the eternal state. Those, who refuse the message of the Lord's Jewish brethren, will be among the goats, and find their portion in everlasting punishment. Solemn thought indeed!

THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED DEAD.

In turning to Revelation xx. we find there will be two resurrections, one occurring BEFORE the millennium, at the second coming of the Lord, when all the believers, Old Testament and New Testament, will be raised, the living saints changed, and with the raised saints pass into the presence of the Lord.

The other resurrection will take place AFTER the millennium, after the last uprising of Satan, at the end of this sinful world's history. The heavens and the earth will flee from the face of Him, who sits upon the great white throne, and the wicked dead will stand before Him. On the very threshold of eternity will this last great assize take place. The books will be opened and the dead judged therefrom. Only one re-

sult will take place, they will be cast into the lake of fire for ever. All will be doomed, who stand there. Solemn indeed is this reflection, which should make us very zealous in the preaching of the gospel.

A. J. POLLOCK.

LOST OR SAVED ?

THIS is a question which is often raised with the unconverted. We wish to raise it with the converted.

One of our Lord's sayings is reported in each Gospel:—Matthew x. 39; Mark viii. 35; Luke xvii. 33; John xii. 25. The words used are not identical, for each evangelist reports a different occasion. It shows that the saying was often on our Lord's lips, and its importance is thereby enhanced.

But in one thing they all agree. They each say that if a certain course be taken there will be a *losing* of life. That course is variously described as, "finding," "saving," "seeking to save," and "loving," one's life, and in the fourth Gospel it is apparent that it is losing one's life "*in this world*," that is in question.

The young man starts out and his object is to find life in this world. He seeks money, pleasure, vice, intellectual pursuits, etc. If he succeeds in his pursuit he comes to

love it, and he is all for saving, or at least, seeking to save it. But inevitably death closes that chapter and his "life" is LOST!

On the other hand we may lose the "life" of this world for Christ, and for the sake of the Gospel. Christ may become to us of such surpassing excellence that we *hate* our life in this world, in comparison with Him. What is the result of that?

We "find" life—that life which is life indeed. We "save" it. We "preserve" it. We "keep it unto life eternal."

To pursue the life of this world is to lose it. To lose the life of this world in the pursuit of the things of Christ is to gain the life which abides to life eternal.

The Lord's words make the thing a strict *alternative*. It cannot be *both*. It must be *one or the other*.

Now one question is, *which*? We ask it of the Christian reader. Not, are you travelling to heaven or to hell? That question is of course settled if indeed you are a true Christian. But, what is the trend of your life? Are you foolishly wasting the greater part of your time pursuing the life of this world—with "lost," at the end of your pursuit? Or, are you losing the life of this world for Christ's sake and the Gospel's—with "saved" at the end of it?

Lost or saved? *Lost or saved?* LOST OR SAVED? Which?

The day of the judgment seat of Christ will plainly reveal which it has been for each of us.

THINGS GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER.

“As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”—1 PETER I. 15-17.

WE should be careful never to separate the practice of holiness from the doctrines of grace. They go hand in hand and are to be severed, no, not for a moment. This were antinomianism—“turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,” than which nothing is more abhorrent. Indeed, the grace of God which brings us salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. This is stated in a striking passage in Titus ii. 11-14. Let us never lose sight of it.

We do well to glory in the fact that it is by grace we are saved—not at the expense of righteousness, but in virtue of it, as the Cross of Christ abundantly declares. And we do well to avow, in the clearest language, that we have no confidence either

in our own holiness of life, or in our good works. These things, right in their place, are not a contribution on our part to the ransom price of our deliverance. Every shred of the glory of our salvation belongs to Christ alone. But while taking our stand thus on the ground of free grace let us not forget that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is only a delusion to think they will (Heb. xii. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 9-10).

God is holy and He expects His children to be holy also. "Be ye holy; for I am holy." Holiness is a characteristic feature of His family and one of the spots of His children. If needs be, He passes them under wise and loving discipline that they might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. xii. 10). He sits as a refiner, watching the process, purging away the dross, so that His image may be reflected more brightly in their life and ways.

But we still have "the flesh" in us, unchanged, not subject to God, and as bad as ever. It is not taken away as some dream. We have, indeed, been created anew in Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit dwells in us, but even this does not change for the better the nature of "the flesh," much less take it away. Thank God we are not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh. Would you know its works?

They are described in Galatians v. 19-21. Into any of the evils named there "the flesh" would plunge us if it had its way. And sometimes it succeeds. Then Satan triumphs and Christ is wounded and dishonoured. How grievous when a child of God falls into sin! David the king fell into it—at ease upon the housetop "at the time when kings go forth to battle," and his own soldiers had taken the field against the foe (2 Sam. xi.). Solomon fell into it when in his old age he suffered "outlandish women" to steal away his heart from the God of his fathers (Neh. xiii. 26). Uzziah fell into it when prosperity lifted up his heart with pride and made him forget the commandments of the Lord and the sanctity of the presence of God (2 Chron. xxvi. 16). Peter fell into it when, on being challenged, he swore that he did not know Jesus. So has it been with many others. Oh, the bitter anguish of it when the saint who has thus fallen is awakened out of his sinful dreams! He becomes conscious of his sin, of the dishonour done to the Lord whose name he bears, of the occasion he has given to the ungodly to fling taunts against the profession he once made. God is ready to forgive, but there are sins the scars of which are never wholly taken away on earth, even though the wrong-doer weep bitter tears, as Peter did.

Beware of tampering with sin, beware of allowing your mind to rest on it lest it lure

you to destruction. Achan *saw* the wedge of gold, the shekels of silver, and the goodly Babylonish garment among the spoils, then he *coveted* them, and then he *took* them, and hid them in his tent. He saw, he coveted, he took. Such were the successive steps in the pathway of ruin. But his sin found him out. There was no escape, and the end—"All Israel stoned him with stones" in the valley of Achor (Joshua vii.).

And there is Samson too. Man of faith though he was, he in an evil hour laid his head in the lap of Delilah and was shorn of the locks of his Nazariteship. In that same hour he lost his strength, though he wist it not, and fell into the hands of the Philistines, who put out his eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, made him grind in the prison-house and brought him forth to make sport for them on their high day. Alas for Samson! How are the mighty fallen! Oh, let us beware of the first step in the slippery paths of sin.

Do these lines meet the eye of one who has sinned—some secret sin, perhaps, unconfessed and unforgiven? I need not ask if you are happy. You cannot be unless your conscience is still in its stupor. If that be so, what a state is yours! But if conscience is aroused—if your sin is like a burning fire shut up in your very bones—if it haunts you day and night, then let

me ask, What are you going to do? There is One, whose name I need not mention, for you know it well, there is One, I say, whose love for you remains unchanged. He can help you and none other can. Sooner or later you must come back to Him. Let it be *sooner*, that the tender yearnings of His faithful heart may be the sooner satisfied. His door is open, go in and speak to Him about that sin of yours.

And that is what David did when, under the prophetic ministry of Nathan, his eyes were opened to see the enormity of his sin and his conscience was worked into an agony. He went into the secret place of prayer and his broken and contrite heart poured out to God its cries and tears. Read the 51st Psalm—you know it well—nevertheless take up your Bible and read it again; it will do you good. It may be like the lance of the surgeon thrust into the throbbing, burning, festering sore. Ah, it was heart-work with David, as his words plainly show—steeped as they were in penitential grief. Let it be so with you. Keep nothing back. Great as your sin has been, His grace is greater. And “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John i. 9). Precious words!

And in due time He will restore to you the joy of His salvation—in due time, I say,

for His perfect love is blended with wisdom that never errs. Forgiveness always follows confession, and you may have the comfort of it, but you cannot easily forget the grief you have caused Him who loves you and whose name you bear. Bitter herbs had to be eaten by the Israelites with the lamb roast with fire. But be not afraid. Leave yourself in His hand. There is none so firm, so tender, as His. Who knows, when those lost joys are restored, but what your mouth may be once more opened to teach transgressors His ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Him! So said King David, and you may be able to say the same.

It is good for us all to remember that "if we call on the Father"—if we invoke His holy name and are indeed in His family, then are we under His government. He judges according to every man's work. This is not the final judgment, for into that the believer never enters. From judgment in that sense he has been set free by the atoning work of the Saviour. In such a connection "the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son." But the Father does judge among His children—encouraging, correcting, rewarding according to His unerring wisdom. And "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"—words not to be passed over too lightly. It is an undeviating principle in

the ways of God. If a man sows to the flesh, of the flesh he reaps corruption—sorrow, distress and other ills. So it was with David. His sin was forgiven, but the sword never departed from his house. So with Solomon—adversary after adversary arose and disturbed the peace of his kingdom. So with Uzziah, he was smitten with leprosy, which clung to him all his after life. But if a man sows to the Spirit, of the Spirit he reaps life everlasting. Blessing after blessing shall flow into his cup, not in the shape of material things perhaps, but blessings such as are given by the Holy Spirit of God. May grace be given to us to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear—not slavish fear, but holy, filial fear that will lead us to watch and pray lest we fall into sin, grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and bring upon ourselves the discipline needed for our correction.

W. B.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Philippians ii. 17—iii. 9.*)

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

HAVING set before the Philippians the supreme example of the Lord Jesus, who was “obedient unto death,” and having exhorted them to obedience which would mean the doing of God’s “good

pleasure " from the heart, the Apostle again alludes to his own case in verse 17. Though he had expressed his anticipation of still continuing amongst them for a season (i. 25.) yet here he contemplates the possibility of his speedy martyrdom. Some people set great store by their "impressions" and elevate them to a certainty and authority almost, if not quite, equal to the Scriptures. This is a mistake. Paul had his "impressions" as to his future, and we quite believe them to have been justified by the event. Yet even he, apostle as he was, entertained the thought that the event *might* falsify his impressions.

The word "offered" in verse 17 is "poured forth" as the margin shows. Paul uses the same word in 2 Timothy iv. 6, when his martyrdom was impending. He alluded of course to those drink offerings which the law enjoined. A "fourth part of a hin of wine" was to be poured over certain sacrifices, before the Lord.

This being so, two very striking things confront us in verses 17 and 18. First, he calls the gifts of the Philippians, sent out of their poverty by the hand of Epaphroditus, "the sacrifice and service of your faith." That is, he considers them to be the *major* sacrifice. His own martyrdom he considers as a small quantity of wine poured over their sacrifice as a drink offering: i.e.

as the *minor* sacrifice. An extraordinary way of putting things surely! We should have reversed the matter, and thought of the self denial of the Philippians as a drink offering poured over Paul's great sacrifice as a martyr.

Why did Paul esteem things in this way? Because he was looking not "on his own things but . . . also on the things of others" (ii. 4). He was a striking example of what he had urged on the Philippians, and of the worth and excellence of the mind which was in Christ Jesus. There was no affectation about Paul, no paying of mere compliments. Delighted with the grace of Christ as seen in his beloved converts, he meant what he said.

The second striking thing is that he actually contemplated his own martyrdom as calculated to provoke an outburst of rejoicing, for himself and for the Philippians—mutual rejoicing. A most unnatural proceeding truly! Not natural, but *spiritual*. The fact is, Paul REALLY *believed* what he had said as to departing and being with Christ. It really IS, "*far better.*" He knew that the Philippians so truly loved him, that in spite of grief at losing him, they would rise above their own feelings to rejoice in his joy. We are afraid that we often turn Philippians i. 23, into a pious platitude. It was much more than that to Paul.

Still he was not anticipating martyrdom just at that moment, as he had already told them, and so he contemplated sending Timothy to them shortly, that he might help as to their spiritual state and also that through him he might hear of their welfare.

Now of those available just at that moment no one was quite so like-minded with himself, and so zealous for the good of the Philippians. The mass, even of believers, were characterized by seeking their own things rather than Christ's. Timothy was a happy exception to this. He was a true son of his spiritual father. The mind that was in Christ was also in him. We are afraid that this seeking of our own interests and not Christ's is sadly common amongst believers to-day. No servant of God can so effectually serve the saints as he who moves amongst them seeking nothing but the interests of Christ.

So Timothy was the one he hoped to send to them before long, and indeed he hoped to be released and able to come himself. Still he wished for some speedier means of communication with them in acknowledgment of their gifts and so was dispatching back to them Epaphroditus, who had been their messenger to him, and who now became the bearer of the epistle we are considering.

We are now, verses 25-30, permitted to have a glimpse of the kind of man this

Epaphroditus was, whom Paul calls, "My brother and fellow-workman and fellow-soldier" (N. Tr). He too was like-minded, and we at once see that when just before the Apostle had said, "*I have* no man like-minded," he had meant, "I have no man amongst those who have been my immediate helpers and attendants in Rome." Epaphroditus was a Philippian and so not in view in the earlier remark.

Many there were, and *are*, who, though to be acknowledged as brothers, can hardly be spoken of as workmen or soldiers. Epaphroditus was all three, and not only so but a workman and a soldier thoroughly "fellow" to Paul. They worked and warred together with identical objects and aims. Could such testimony be rendered to anyone to-day? We believe it *could*, inasmuch as the New Testament informs us so fully as to the doctrine, manner of life, and service of Paul this pattern servant of God. At the same time we are afraid that in actual practice *it is rare*. Every believer is called to be a worker and a warrior. The trowel and the sword should mark us all. But do they? And are we characterized as "fellow" to Paul in our use of them?

In carrying out his service and journeying to Paul, Epaphroditus had nearly died of sickness. Twice over do we find the expression, "nigh unto death." God indeed had had mercy upon him, and averted this

great sorrow both to Paul and the Philippians, yet he had not regarded his life for the sake of the work of Christ, and hence was to be honoured.

So in Epaphroditus we see another who followed in the steps of Paul and Timothy, even as they followed Christ. The mind that was in Christ Jesus was found also in him, for not only did he venture his life in order to serve his Lord, but when he had been so sick that he was near to death, he was "full of heaviness," not because of his own malady, but because he knew his brethren at Philippi had had news of his sickness and would be sorely grieved on his account. This was a fine case of a man not looking "on his own things, but . . . also on the things of others." It was unselfishness indeed!

There was rejoicing then both for Paul and for the Philippians as regards Epaphroditus; but as we enter upon chapter iii. we find where the truest and most permanent rejoicing lies for the Christian. God may, and indeed often does, give us to experience His mercy and make our hearts glad, yet on the other hand often He has to pass us through the valley of weeping. But even if circumstances are permitted to move against us, and sickness end fatally, the Lord Himself remains the same. Our rejoicing really lies in Him. "Rejoice in the Lord," is the great word for us all.

In thus writing the Apostle might be repeating himself, yet the happy theme was not irksome to him, and it was safe for them. No servant of God need be afraid of repeating himself, for we take in things but slowly. Repetition is a safe process in the things of God.

Our rejoicing however must be "in the Lord." There are those who would divert us from Him, as is indicated in verse 2. In saying "dogs" the Apostle probably alludes to men of quite evil life, akin to the unclean Gentiles. By "evil workers," to those who while professedly Christian were introducing what was evil. By "the concision" he refers to the Judaizing faction, in contrast with whom are the true "circumcision" of which verse 3 speaks. The word translated "concision" means a mere *lopping off*, in contrast to the complete cutting off of death, which was figured in circumcision. The Judaizers believed in lopping off the uglier excrescences of the flesh but would not have that bringing in of death, "by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11.), which is the truth of Christianity. The object before the Judaizers was "that they may glory in *your flesh*" (Gal. vi. 13). Men cannot exactly boast in the grosser manifestations of the flesh, so they aim at lopping them off in order to encourage more aimable and aesthetic manifestations in which to make their boast. But it is boasting in the flesh nevertheless.

Verse 3 speaks by way of contrast of what believers are, if viewed according to God's thoughts of them. We are the true spiritual circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, who boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in the flesh. We accept God's sentence of condemnation upon the flesh, and find our all in Christ. Then it is that in the energy of an ungrieved Spirit we are filled with the worship of God.

But what a lot of time is usually spent in learning not to trust the flesh, and in passing a "vote of no confidence" in it. What experiences often have to be gone through! The kind of experiences we refer to are detailed for us in Romans vii., and the lesson is one that cannot be learned theoretically, merely, it must be learned experimentally. There is no need that we should take a long time to learn the lesson, but as a matter of fact we usually do.

Paul's own case, to which he now refers, —verses 4 to 7—shows that the lesson may be learned in a very profound way in a very short space of time. If ever a man was exemplary in a fleshly way, he was. Nowadays people are said to *die*, "fortified with all the rites of the church." We may say of him that for some years he *lived*, fortified with all the rites and ordinances and advantages and righteousness of Judaism. If ever educated and religious flesh was to be trusted, it was to be trusted

in Saul of Tarsus. He was filled with religion and filled with the pride which was generated by his belief that all was so much gain to him.

But in that tremendous revelation, which occurred on the road to Damascus, all was reversed. He discovered himself to be outrageously wrong. His fancied advantages he discovered to be disadvantages; his religious flesh, to be rebellious flesh. All that he had counted on, trusted in, prided himself upon, came down about him with a crash. Christ in His glory was revealed to him. All that had been esteemed gain by him, he now counted loss for Christ. His confidence in the flesh was gone for ever. As soon as the three days of his blindness were over, his boasting in Christ Jesus began. In those three days his great lesson was learned.

And the lesson was learned solidly and for ever. Verse 7 speaks of the conclusion he reached on the Damascus road. "I *counted*"—the verb is in the past. Verse 8 carries us on to the day when he wrote this epistle in a Roman prison. "Yea doubtless, and I *count*"—the verb is in the present. The point reached at his conversion is confirmed and even deepened, thirty years or more later. Only now he can say what in the nature of things he could not have said at his conversion. For thirty years he had been growing in the knowledge of

Christ, and the excellency of that knowledge commanded him. Compared with *that* all things were but loss, and the depth and ardour of his devotion are expressed in the glowing words—“*Christ Jesus MY LORD.*”

Nor was this counting of all things but loss merely an attitude of his mind, for he adds, “for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.” It is one thing to count all things as loss, and quite another to actually suffer the loss of all. Both were the experience of the Apostle. He was not unduly disturbed when he lost everything, for he had already esteemed everything as loss. Moreover, in Christ he had infinite gain, in comparison with whom all else is but refuse.

It was not that he hoped to “win Christ” as the result of giving up all things, after the fashion of those who give up possessions and retire into monasteries or convents in the hope of thereby securing their soul’s salvation. It was rather that, having found such surpassing worth in Christ, such excellence in the knowledge of Him, he was prepared as to all things to suffer *loss* in order that he might have Christ for his *gain*. It was a remarkable form of profit and loss account, in which Paul emerged an infinite gainer.

All Paul’s gain then could be summed up in the one word—CHRIST. But of course

all this was based upon being "in Christ," and standing before God in that righteousness which is by faith in Him. Apart from that there would be no having Christ as one's gain, nor preparedness to suffer loss in this world.

How striking, in this 9th verse, is the contrast between "*mine own* righteousness" and "the righteousness which is *of God.*" The one, were it possible to attain to it, would be "of the law." It would be something purely human, and according to the standard exacted by the law. The other is the righteousness in which we stand as the fruit of the Gospel. It is "of God;" that is, *divine*, in contrast to human. "It is "through the faith of Christ;" that is, it is available for us on the basis of His intervention and work as presented to faith in the Gospel. And it is "by faith;" that is, it is received by us on the principle of faith and not on the principle of works of law.

Have we all taken this in? Are we rejoicing that we stand in a righteousness which is wholly divine in its origin? Do we realize that all the things of the flesh in which we might boast are so much loss and that all our gain is in Christ?

These are weighty questions that demand an answer from us each.

F. B. HOLE.

CHRIST IN THE LIFE.

EVERY one who makes any profession of Christ is an object of close scrutiny.

Those who are scrutinizing his way of living do it unobtrusively and generally without comment. Often it is done for the purpose of detecting signs of insincerity or failure; but sometimes it is for the honest purpose of ascertaining the reality of the power of Christ in the life of him who confesses Him. Thus, whether we desire it or not, and whether we are conscious of it or not, we are living epistles, known and read of men. What are they reading with those watchful eyes in your life and mine? What conclusions are they drawing from what they read there? And what influence are those conclusions exerting upon their attitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let me relate a little personal episode which will strikingly illustrate what I mean.

A few years after I had come to a knowledge of the great salvation which has been wrought by the crucified and risen Son of

God, I heard of the death of the beloved wife of a friend, a man much older than myself. I highly esteemed him, and looked up to him as one of the most eminent and honoured lawyers in the country, and entertained affectionate regard for him because of kindness and help extended towards me when a law student, and in the early days of my practice. I was away from home when this news reached me, and though I did not know whether or not he was a Christian, I ventured, in writing him a note of sympathy, to quote those words of comfort given to us in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18.

I met him subsequently, and he at once referred to my letter, and expressed a desire to talk to me on the subject upon which it touched. This led to several long conversations. He was without faith, and had been endeavouring to find in the opinions of learned men a resting-place for the mind, and an answer to the profoundest questions which the heart raises. Consequently he was in a truly pitiable state of uncertainty, pointing out that one writer said one thing, and one another, and that no one seemed to have any solid foundation for his opinions.

I most earnestly urged him to turn from conflicting human opinions to the Word of God, assuring him with all the conviction that was in my own soul that we had God's

own Word for everything that was important for us to know. I also endeavoured to show him, by that unfailing Word, that eternal life was given to all who believed on the crucified and risen Son of God. It was quite evident that the impression my testimony made upon him was due to the fact that I had strong convictions, and could rest unquestionably upon the revealed Word of God. After this much had been gained, he put to me this question: "Did your acceptance of Jesus Christ make

ANY ACTUAL DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE ? "

What a searching question! And how clear it was that I could bring no help to that distressed and darkened soul had I not been able to assure him that, as the result of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, my life had been completely changed, that old habits of life and habits of thought had fallen away, that old things had lost their power to attract and to satisfy, and that, in short, the result was entrance into a new creation.

He went on to say that he had been watching church-goers for forty years; that he could not see that the profession of Christianity *made any difference in their lives*; that their manner of living could not be distinguished from those who made no such profession; and he cited the case of a man very high in the councils of the

nation, a personal friend of his, who was prominent in one of the largest churches of the city, but whose manner of life gave no evidence of being influenced in any way by his profession of Christianity.

Consider what this means—that a man of the highest culture, a close observer of men, living in the centre of the national life of this (so-called) Christian land, could ask, after watching professing Christians for forty years, whether believing on the Lord Jesus Christ *made any difference in one's life!* What sort of Christians were these? For whom were they living, that after so long a study of their ways this keen observer was forced to the conclusion that Christianity was, for all practical purposes, a sham—a mere form of godliness without the corresponding power? (2 Tim. iii. 5).

I never saw that man again. A few days after this conversation he, too, was called away, and I do not know whether or not he had found refuge in the atoning blood of Christ. But I am sure that the same question is being asked by millions of others in this and other lands where there is a profession of Christianity. Eyes are fixed upon each one of us who names the name of Christ. They are eager eyes, hungry eyes, the eyes of imprisoned and perishing souls; and while these observers may make no comment, they are asking

within themselves, "Does it make any difference in one's life?"

What answer do they get to that question as they regard your life and mine? What are they reading day by day, and what conclusion are they reaching? The answer will be found in the answer to that other question: "Unto whom are we living—unto self or unto Him?"

P. M.

THE WORD OF EXHORTATION.

(From Notes of Addresses)

THE Epistle to the Hebrews, taken as a whole, is evidently of the nature of an exhortation. This we judge from the closing words, "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in a few words." It is also seen in the fact that again and again we get sentences beginning, "Let us . . .," and that is pre-eminently an hortatory expression.

"*Let us . . . !*" This is one of the most powerful forms of exhortation because there is in it an encouragement to mutual purpose and action as between the exhorter and the exhorted. The successful officer in an army is not the one who stands aloof from his men, saying from a plane of superiority, "Go on!" but one who associates himself with the men that he would carry

along with him. Crediting them with having the same desires as himself, he says, "Come on!" Not, "You go and do it," but, "Let us go and do it." There is no incentive in the former but there is a powerful one in the latter. Nothing encourages to activity like the example of one who will take the initiative and give a lead at a critical moment.

So in this epistle the writer constantly encourages to faithfulness and boldness and courage in just this way, and nowhere more strikingly than in verses 19 to 25 of chapter x.

Another word which is like a key to the epistle is the word, *having*. It occurs several times in these particular verses. He had in view folk whose hands were hanging down and whose knees were feeble, and who were in danger of weariness and fainting fits. So he incited them to courage, not only by linking their weak faith to his own spiritual energy, and saying, "Let us hold fast," but by reminding them of all that they possessed by the grace of God. It is good to observe the connection between "having" and "let us" in these verses.

Having is what may be called one of the present tenses of the spiritual life. We are apt to associate Christian life with *had*--something once possessed in the past, or with *shall have*--something to be possessed

in the future; and so we may lose the blessing and power of *having* in present possession. Spiritual wealth, like every other form of riches, does not consist in mere possession, but in knowledge and use. Grace needs to be appropriated to be operative; hence closely connected with the "having" (appropriation) is the "let us" (operation). If we have it, then let us act on it.

In these verses we have the words, "Let us," used in connection with the three Christian graces, faith, hope and love. But all is based upon our "*having* boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and our "*having* an High Priest over the house of God." The one perfect offering perfects in perpetuity the sanctified, and the Holy Ghost is here to witness that all our sins, which had caused so great a distance, have been removed; and He who removed them has gone into the holiest, as a great Priest over God's house.

As a result the first exhortation is, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Here we have our *upward* attitude. The blood of Jesus is our title. Where the blood has gone we may go. If the blood is on the mercy-seat and in the holiest of all, there we may approach, and that not as though it were a venture and there were a chance of our being refused, but with all boldness. Faith perceives the perfect value of the blood of Christ and gives us a full assurance.

And further, we have what we may call a moral fitness to be there: "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Now a man is what his heart is. We do not know a person until we know his heart, for "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." When God's heart was made known, God was made known. Our hearts—we ourselves—have been cleared from an evil conscience by the sprinkled blood, and we have come under the washing of regeneration—we have been born again. We have a new nature given that we may enjoy the place of nearness, that it is ours to enter into.

So let us approach. It is not something which we do once for all, but something that is to be constantly done. The holiest of all is the very presence chamber of God. In the tabernacle it was that inner shrine that had practically but one bit of furniture, though it could be looked at in its three parts, ark, mercy-seat, and cherubim. There the ark was seen in its own setting and circumstances, and not as wrapped in its coverings and travelling with Israel through the wilderness. . So when we draw near to the holiest Christ comes before us, not as coming down in His great grace into our circumstances, but as dwelling in His own circumstances. It is one thing to have the Lord with me in my every day pathway,

and another for me to know Him in His own surroundings. We are to draw near and have that joy.

When we do thus draw near and take our place inside the veil, it is as those who are associated with Christ, as sons before the Father. We do not come as merely being saved sinners, but rather as those that He is not ashamed to call His brethren, as His friends to whom He makes known all His Father's will and purpose. Nor do we come as suppliants, making known our need, but rather as worshippers with something to offer. In Hebrews iv. 16, we read of our coming as tried saints in the wilderness journey—coming for what we can get, and getting it. There Christ is the High Priest sympathizing with us in our infirmities. Here He is the Priest over the house of God, the Minister of the Sanctuary, sustaining us in our praises and presenting our worship to God.

The second exhortation is, "Let us hold fast the confession of the hope unwavering" (N. Tr.). This we may speak of as the *forward* attitude of the Christian. What is the hope? In Acts xxvi. 6, 7; xxviii. 20, we find Paul speaking of "the hope of Israel." Their hope was the realization of all that had been promised by God to their fathers, in the way of earthly blessing. The hope before us is the expectation of enter-

ing into all the wealth of heavenly blessing to which we have been called in Christ. We are addressed in chapter iii. as "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." God has called us to His eternal glory, and our blessings are heavenly and spiritual. We hope for association with Christ in heavenly glory.

The confession of the hope is, our heavenly calling boldly confessed and declared: not a mere passive profession but a decided and active confession. Some people speak under their breath when divine things are in question, and one would gather that they are half apologetic for being Christians at all. What is contemplated here is far from that, for we are to "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (iii. 6). We are not only to hold to the hope and be recognized as Christians but to be filled with the boldness and gladness which the hope gives.

The kind of thing which should mark us is illustrated in chapter xi. We are shown how some of those Old Testament worthies were governed, not by the things amongst which they walked day by day, but by the wonderful promises which God had made, to be realized outside their present surroundings. They saw them afar off; they were great realities to them; they embraced them—that is, they appropriated them by faith—and they confessed that they sought a

heavenly country, which made them strangers and pilgrims on earth. Then comes a very remarkable statement concerning them—"God is not ashamed to be called their God." We often say, "Our God," but are we as bold in our confession of our heavenly calling as they were? What if our confession of the hope should be so feeble that God should *be ashamed to be called OUR God?*

In contrast with this we find the Apostle, at the end of Philippians iii., deploring those whose God was their own belly and who were minding earthly things. We may not have gone as far as they. We may not be utterly carried away by the world nor have done anything outwardly gross which would warrant our being excluded from Christian fellowship, yet we may become self-centred and earthly-minded and walking on so low a level that those who are not Christians at all may keep company with us and not be distinguishable. The Philistines filled Isaac's wells with earth (Gen. xxvi. 15). How often when we would approach God in the holiest do we find that our wells of praise are choked with earth!

This exhortation to hold fast the confession of the hope was never needed more than it is to-day. When the hope is realized at the coming of the Lord we shall find ourselves actually in heaven. In the meantime

we may draw near in the holiest and even now get a foretaste of heaven; and we may give to God through the Lord Jesus a foretaste of what He shall have, when as we sometimes promise Him,

“Yet Saviour, Thou shalt have full praise,
We soon shall meet Thee on the cloud.”

The third exhortation is, “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” This deals with the attitude of the Christian *within*. The Christian circle is to be the abode of love. It is not “let us criticize one another!” Criticism is a great danger. A dear old servant of God used to say, “Directly the spirit of criticism gets into a company it is fatal to its prosperity and unity.” We are to consider one another, making allowance, not for sin, but rather for each other’s needs, taking circumstances and difficulties into consideration. And mark the words, “one another!” This does not merely mean that you must make allowances for me, but I for you, and you for me.

In this way we shall provoke to love and to good works. Again and again we hear people saying, “How provoking!” Yes, but what does it provoke—love or temper? There is a consideration of others that will incite them to love and good works, and the way is to go ahead and take the initi-

ative in it when others will follow. The rendering of Romans xii. 10, in the New Translation, is, "As to honour, each taking the lead in paying it to the other." This it is easy to do, if we esteem others as more excellent than ourselves.

If this spirit prevailed amongst us we should find it a panacea for the sorrows that afflict the people of God. In that atmosphere rivalry could not breathe, and division would die. We may depend upon it, the big, tall, fleshly "*I*" is at the bottom of these troubles, whether in ourselves or in others. "*I* am not getting the attention *I* ought to get. *I* am not appreciated as much as *I* feel *I* ought to be. *I* have not the place *I* think *I* should have!" This is not the thought, nor the language, of one who is obedient to this verse.

Besides this mutual help and encouragement there is public identification with the people of God in their confession of the hope before the world. There are collective privileges and responsibilities as well as individual ones. So we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, "as the manner of some is;" or, "as the custom is with some" (N. Tr.); or, "as some habitually do" (Weymouth). Have we not to-day to bow our heads with shame and confess it is habitual not only with *some* but with *many*.

How encouraging it is for us to meet with, and greet, each other. It is indeed good and pleasant "for brethren to dwell together in unity . . . for there the Lord commanded the blessing" (Psa. cxxxiii.). Not one of us then is able to say, "I have no need of thee." The result of this unity is divine blessing, and we may say the converse is true: no unity, no blessing!

There are seasons when we may assemble together for the purpose of exhorting and encouraging one another. It is spiritually natural for us to do so; for not only are we of the body of Christ and of the house of God, but we belong to the one flock with one Shepherd, and to the one family with one Father. As sheep we have the gregarious nature. There is one great bond that unites the family, and that is love. It is natural for members of one family to cleave together.

Then it adds, "So much the more, as ye see the day approaching." As the day approaches we find the dangers and difficulties abounding and increasing, and therefore so much the more we ought to be together. Don't we know the different feeling we have when we come away from a hall that has been well filled with saints bent on helping and encouraging one another, from that which we have when the saints are cold and the hall mainly empty?

Compare the company that is present on Sunday mornings with that which turns out on weeknights or to a prayer meeting!

You may tell me that I don't understand the practical difficulties. Well, if I don't, the Lord does, and He bids us encourage one another by often getting together, and as the day approaches and difficulties increase, more and more often assembling. So let us do it.

ART. CUTTING.

THE STORM AND THE CALM.

(*Mark iv. 37-41*).

THE Sea of Galilee was proverbially a stormy lake. The wind coming down from the mountains would suddenly and unexpectedly raise a storm, often dangerous to the fisherman on the lake.

It was so in this case. The disciples pushed off from the shore in fine weather, having for Companion, their Lord and Master, the Son of God. Then we read, "There arose a great storm of wind." The waves rose at the bidding of the wind, the water of the lake leaped into the tiny craft till it was water-logged.

Is it not the experience of many, perhaps of all, that in some time of our lives, per-

haps more times than we like to think, a great storm arises. Troubles come. It may be ill-health, and no prospect of betterment. It may be financial difficulties, and how many have experienced this during these years of stringency since the war. It may be shame comes into our families. A thousand and one distressing things may come into our lives and homes. It may be the weakness of old age, the ever-shortening tether that has only one ending, unless the Rapture takes place.

The storm arose on the Sea of Galilee. But the Master was on board. How could the frail barque sink if the Lord of life was there? At any rate He was at hand, and that was the great point. Asleep on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship, His very attitude of repose, though the wind howled round and the waves filled the boat, was enough to rebuke the fears of His disciples.

Arc we any better than the fishermen of the Sea of Galilee? Do we instinctively turn to the Lord in our troubles? How often we try to put things right in our own strength and fancied wisdom, and only turn to the Lord when we are at our wit's end. Can we not trust the Lord? I have known saints of God, who have had wonderful opportunities of getting on in the things of God, saints who have sat under the choicest

ministry for years. And yet when the storm arose I have heard them say with anguished lips, "Has the Lord forsaken me?" We may not blame them, for we know how frail we are ourselves, but we may well seek to strengthen each other's faith.

The frightened disciples awoke the Master with the cry of reproach, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Then, **HE AROSE!** What a moment! We can almost see His loved form, stretched to its height; we can almost hear His voice, rebuking the wind and saying to the sea, "Peace be still."

He arose! Like wild hounds called to heel by their owner, so the wild waves sank to rest at His command, the wind ceased at His rebuke, and "there was a great calm." "There arose a great storm—there was a great calm." What a contrast! What a lesson!

When the Lord steps in in connection with our tribulations, difficulties and sorrows He can turn the storm, great as it may be, into a great calm. We may not find our outward circumstances much altered. For instance, old age cannot be avoided. But God can and will make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear the trial. A way of escape, not out of the trial, but in the trial, so that in our spirits we may be able to rise above it, and glorify God in it.

When the disciples saw the mighty power of the Lord, they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, "What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" Aye, more than a man! What man could command the wind and the sea? How powerless is man in the presence of the elements, let loose in all their fury. The tornado moves on in irresistible force. Nothing can withstand it. The sea rages. No human power can curb its frightful power. How puny man is made to feel in the presence of these elemental forces! No, the disciples found themselves in the presence of the Eternal Son of God, "God manifest in the flesh."

And yet they were not afraid of the sleeping form when they awoke Him with their cries for help. Might they not come to the conclusion that our Lord tabernacling in flesh was in order that Divine power might be at the disposal of man for his blessing? And so we can turn to One, who is God and Man,—God in Divine power and might, Man in human sympathy and kindness; nay, disclosing the very kindness of God, divine sympathy and kindness.

May we not trust Him? "THERE AROSE A GREAT STORM . . . HE AROSE . . . AND THERE WAS A GREAT CALM."

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Philippians iii. 9-21).

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

WE may gain very considerable insight into the character of a man if we are made acquainted with his real desires and aspirations. The passage before us gives us just that insight into the character of the Apostle Paul. His desires seem to range themselves under three heads, all found in the great sentence which runs through four verses. There is no full stop from the end of verse 7 to the end of verse 11.

First, he desired to win Christ. Second, to be found in Christ, in a righteousness which is wholly divine. Third, to know Christ, and flowing out of that to know an identification with Christ, in resurrection, in sufferings, in death. We are conscious at once that this third aspiration has great depths in it. We might truly have Christ for our gain, and for our righteousness, and yet be very poor and shallow in our knowledge of Christ. "That I may know HIM," seems to have been the very crown of Paul's desires.

But then, did not Paul know Him? Certainly he did, as indeed every believer knows Him. He knew Him in fact in very

much larger measure than most believers know Him. Yet there is such an infinitude in Christ, such depths to be known, that here we have the Apostle still panting to know more and more. Have we not caught at least a little of the Apostle's spirit? Do we not long to know our Saviour better--not merely to 'know about Him, but to know Himself in the intimacy of His love?

Our knowledge of Christ is by the Holy Spirit, and primarily through the Scriptures. Had we been on earth in the days of His flesh, we might have been acquainted with Him for a brief season "according to flesh." But even so we should have to say, "yet now we know [Him thus] no longer" (2 Cor. v. 16, N. Tr.). When His disciples spent those brief years in His company they had indeed a most wonderful experience, yet at that time they had not received the Holy Spirit and hence they understood but very little for the moment. It was only when they had lost His presence among them, but had gained the presence of the Holy Spirit, that they really knew the significance of all they had seen and heard. All that we know of Christ objectively is presented to us in the Scriptures, but we have the indwelling Spirit to make it all live in our hearts in a subjective way.

If the knowledge of the true living Christ, thus objectively presented to us, is brought subjectively into our hearts by the

Spirit, it leads to a third thing; an acquaintance with Him in an experimental and practical way. To this Paul alludes in the latter part of verse 10. The order of the words is significant. The historical order in the case of our Lord was, sufferings, death, resurrection. Here resurrection comes first. Neither Paul nor any of us can contemplate sufferings or death save as we are fortified by the knowledge of the power of His resurrection. His resurrection is the pattern and pledge of ours. Indeed our resurrection altogether depends upon His.

As the Apostle realized in his spirit the power of Christ's resurrection, he looked upon "the fellowship of His sufferings" as something actually to be desired. He even desired to be conformed to His death! Until the Lord comes we can only know the power of His resurrection in an inward and spiritual way, yet the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death are of a very practical nature. Paul would taste of suffering in the cause of Christ and after the pattern of Christ—suffering which should be of the same order as those sufferings which Christ Himself endured at the hands of men. He would even die as a witness to the truth, seeing Christ thus died. He actually desired these things.

Let us each take a few quiet moments to interrogate our own hearts. Do we desire these things? We fear that to ask

the question is to answer it. A few of us might be able to say, "I believe that through the Lord's grace I could face these things if called upon to do so. But desire them? Well, no." The fact that Paul did desire them is an eloquent witness to the wholly exceptional degree in which Christ personally had captured his heart, and the power of His resurrection had filled him with a holy enthusiasm. The fact is, he was like a well-trained athlete running in an obstacle race with a mighty enthusiasm for reaching the goal. The earlier verses have told us how he had flung away seeming advantages as being hindrances to his course. These verses tell us that he would be detained by no obstacle, he would tear his way through the barbed wire of suffering and plunge into the watercourse of death, if in such fashion he might reach his goal.

Now this is just the force of verse 11. The Authorized version would almost make it appear that resurrection is an attainment for us, with a measure of doubt as to whether we ever get there. A better rendering is, "If any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the dead" (N. Tr.). He would get there any way, through no matter what obstacles, even through sufferings and martyrdom. And not merely is it resurrection, but resurrection out from among the dead; that is, the first resurrection, of which Christ is the firstfruits. It is while waiting for

that resurrection that we are to know the power of His resurrection from among the dead, and so be walking here as those who are risen with Christ.

Verses 12 to 14 show us that the thought of a race was present to the Apostle's mind in writing. The word, "attained in verse 12 is really "obtained" or "received" as a prize. He wished no one to think that he had already received the prize, or that he was perfected. The position rather was that he was still pursuing it. Christ Jesus had laid hold of him, but he had not yet laid hold of it. Still he was ardently in pursuit of it, stretching out like an eager athlete towards the prize of God's calling on high in Christ Jesus.

The word "high" simply means "above." The same word is used in Colossians iii. 1, where we are bidden to "seek those things which are above." The prize, of the calling to the things above, is surely that full and perfect knowledge of Christ Himself, which will be possible for us when our bodies are changed and fashioned like unto His body of glory at His coming.

Paul thirsted to know Him yet more deeply, as we have seen, while still he ran the race with the prize of a full knowledge of Him at the end. His desire was so intense that it made him a man of one thing. He was marked by concentration and in-

tensity of purpose, suffering nothing to divert him from his aim. This feature, of course, goes far to explain the amazing power and fruitfulness that characterized his life and ministry. The weakness and lack of fruit that so often marks our lives and ministry may be very largely traced to exactly opposite features in ourselves—lack of purpose and concentration. Time and energy is frittered away on a hundred and one things of no particular value or moment, instead of the one thing commanding us. Is it not so? Then let us seek mercy from the Lord that in an increasing measure we may be able to say, "One thing I do."

This really is very much what verse 15 says. Paul rejoiced in the knowledge that others beside himself could be spoken of as perfect or full-grown in Christ: they would be like-minded with him in this matter. Others again had hardly made the same spiritual progress, and consequently might view things somewhat differently. These are exhorted to walk in the same way according to their present attainment, with the assurance that God would lead them on until they saw things in just that way in which they had been revealed to the Apostle himself. We need to take these two verses very much to heart, for they exemplify the way in which the more spiritual and advanced believer should deal with those of lesser attainments than himself. Our natural

tendency is to look down on these who may be less advanced than ourselves, to despise them or even to attack them because of their lack of conformity to that which we see to be right. This tendency is specially pronounced when the advance, upon which we rather pride ourselves, is more a matter of intelligence than of real spirituality.

Verses 15 and 16, then, reveal the spirit of a true pastor in Paul; and in verse 17 we find that he is able to refer them to his own life and character as an example. One is reminded of the words in which one of the poets has described the pastor. He

“ . . . allured to brighter worlds,
And led the way.”

In verses 15 and 16 we see Paul alluring his weaker brethren to brighter worlds. In verse 17 we see him leading the way. Example is, as we know, an immense thing. Paul could say to the Philippians as he did to the Ephesians at the close of his ministry, “I have shewed you and have taught you” (Acts xx. 20). With him there was practice as well as doctrine.

For this reason he could call upon his converts to be “followers” or “imitators” of himself. He was to be an “ensample,” that is a type or model for them, and this was the more necessary since even in those early days there were many walking in such fashion as to deny what is proper to Christi-

anity, though evidently they still claimed to be within the sphere of Christian profession. Here we have brought before us not immature believers, as in verse 15, nor believers in a very perverse frame of mind, as in verse 15 of chapter i., but adversaries whose end is destruction. These are exposed with great vigour of language.

We must not fail to notice the spirit that characterized the Apostle in denouncing them. There was nothing petty or vindictive about him, but rather a spirit of compassionate grief. He wept even as he wrote the denunciation. Moreover, his care for the Philippians was so zealous that he had often warned them before as to these men.

His exposure falls under five heads.

1. They are enemies of the cross of Christ. Not perhaps of His death, but of His cross—of that cross which has before God put the sentence of death on man, his wisdom and his glory.

2. Their end is destruction. This alone would make Paul weep as he thought of them.

3. Their God is their belly; that is, their own lusts and desires governed them: desires often of a gross nature, though, we suppose, not always such. Always however, in some shape or form, self was their god.

4. They gloried in that which was their shame. They had no spiritual sensibilities at all. Everything in their minds was in-

verted. To them light was darkness and darkness light: glory was shame and shame was glory.

5. Their minds were set on earthly things. Earth was the sphere of their thoughts and their religion. They carried on the tradition of those of whom the Psalmist spoke, saying, "They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth" (xvii. 11).

And that tradition is still being carried on vigorously. The generation of earth-minders still flourishes. It has indeed multiplied amazingly within Christendom. The unbelievers who fill so many pulpits that are supposed to be Christian, and control the destinies of so many denominations, have an incontestible claim to this un-apostolic succession. The cross of Christ as pouring contempt on man's pride and abilities they will have none of. Man—that is to say, self—is their god. They glory in things, such as their descent from the brute creation, which if true would only be to their shame. Earth fills their vision. Believers of the old-fashioned, New Testament type they ridicule as being "other worldly." They are altogether for this world.

Now, "our conversation is in heaven." It is really our commonwealth, our citizenship. Our vital associations are there, not here, as the enemies of the cross would teach. Heaven is our fatherland, and to

heaven, as a matter of fact, we are going. But before we get there a great change as to our bodies is needed, and that change will reach us at the coming of the Lord. Our bodies of humiliation are going to be transformed into the likeness of His body of glory, and the working of His mighty power is needed for its accomplishment.

So our attitude is that of looking for the Saviour, who is coming forth from the heavens, to which we belong. He is coming as One who wields a power which will enable Him to ultimately subdue all things unto Himself. Is it not a touching thought that the very first exercise of that power of His is going to be in the direction of subduing the poor bodies of His saints, whether living or in the graves, into conformity to Himself? Then in His likeness we shall enter upon all that our heavenly citizenship involves.

So, we look for the Saviour. Let us keep the eyes of our hearts directed to the heavens, for the next move of decisive importance is coming from thence.

F. B. HOLF.

Never count a temptation so triumphed over, so beaten off, that it will never assault you any more. Satan has been called Beelzebub, or the god of flies, some tell us, because he will not take a repulse, because he comes back again and again, because it is impossible so to drive him away that he will not return.

“SOLEMN NONSENSE.”

FOR many years the Higher Critics have pursued their way, unsettling the faith of multitudes, as they have proved to *their* own satisfaction that the Bible is not what it claims to be; that the Books of Moses for instance were not written by Moses, but by a number of authors, whose names are unknown, and who have left no other traces of their handiwork; that Isaiah has not written the whole book that bears his name, but that it is a composite work of several authors, afterwards edited here and there to its present form, etc., etc.

Many have wisely disbelieved in their methods and refused their “assured results.” Bishop Welldon spoke of them as “bordering on insanity,” and well he might. But up to now there has been no present-day example to prove the reliability or otherwise of their methods.

That example has now arrived. We propose to give it very briefly.

A literary lady in Canada, Miss Florence Deeks, wrote the story of the part women have played in history, calling it *The Web*, and lodged her manuscript in the keeping

of the Canadian branch of the well-known publishing house of Macmillan.

A few months later appeared the *Outline of History*, by Mr. H. G. Wells, published also by Macmillan, but from their London office.

When Miss Deeks read the *Outline of History*, and compared it with her history, *The Web*, not yet published, she was convinced that Mr. Wells must have had access to her manuscript in some way or other, and had reproduced her ideas and incidents and many of her phrases. In short, that Mr. Wells had been guilty of distinct plagiarism. Thereupon she consulted eminent counsel. Seeing there was no proof forthcoming that the manuscript of *The Web* had ever been in Mr. Wells' hands, or that he had seen any portion of it or any extracts made from it, a means of convincing a court of law that plagiarism had really happened must be discovered.

A happy thought struck someone. Why not employ the methods of the Higher Critics? Why not get an expert, who had wide experience of such methods to employ them on this occasion? So Professor Irwin, M.A., D.B., Ph.D., now occupying the professorial chair in the Department of Old Testament Languages and Literature at Chicago University, was appointed to the task. See him with Miss Deeks' manu-

script and H. G. Wells' *Outline of History* side by side, diligently comparing the one with the other, and drawing his conclusions. That he sensed the importance of his effort is evidenced by a quotation from a signed statement, filed in court by his own request. In answer to Miss Deeks' request that he should subject *Outline of History* to "the Higher Critical" methods, he wrote:—

"I consented in considerable measure because this is the sort of task with which my study of ancient literatures repeatedly confronts me, and I was interested to test out in modern works the methods commonly applied to those of the ancient world."

So he diligently pursued his task, and at length formulated his "assured results" in much detail: these results proving, as he claimed, that Mr. Wells had access to Miss Deeks' manuscript, that he had made free use of it, and had been guilty of considerable plagiarism.

Miss Deeks then brought action against Mr. H. G. Wells, the author of *Outline of History* and the Macmillans as publishers, in a Canadian court, claiming \$500,000, or about £100,000 damages.

This court gave a verdict in favour of Mr. Wells. Miss Deeks, not satisfied, carried the case to a Higher Court. Again the

verdict was given in favour of Mr. Wells. Still not satisfied Miss Deeks appealed to the highest tribunal in the British Empire, The House of Lords, London. Again the case was given in favour of Mr. Wells and the Macmillan Company of Canada.

At these trials it was sworn on oath that Miss Deeks' manuscript had never been in the hands of Mr. H. G. Wells, that it had remained in secure custody in the safe of the Macmillan Company in Toronto, that no copy of the manuscript either in whole or in part had been made, that in short no leakage of information had taken place, and that Mr. H. G. Wells had no knowledge whatever of the manuscript.

At the first trial Judge Raney in his written summing-up said,

"The defendants were not, I think, called upon to offer any evidence to refute Professor Irwin's fantastic hypotheses, but Mr. Wells and the Macmillan Company of Toronto preferred to offer evidence."

This means that if no evidence had been given by Mr. Wells and the Macmillan Company, the court would still have given the verdict in favour of the defendants, that Professor Irwin's "Higher Critical" methods were so unconvincing that the judge

described his evidence in scathing language as made up of “ fantastic hypotheses.”

At the second trial four Judges of Appeal sat on the case. *All* agreed in dismissing the appeal. The Hon. Mr. Justice Riddell, a well-known legal luminary, known throughout Canada and the United States, wrote:—

“ I have no hesitation in agreeing with the learned trial Judge in the utter worthlessness of this kind of evidence—it is almost an insult to common sense.”

Again before the House of Lords the verdict for the defendants was unanimous.

What must Professor Irwin, M.A., D.B., Ph.D., have felt when he heard such strictures being passed on the results in this case of his “ Higher Critical ” methods, as ;

“ Fantastic Hypotheses.”

“ Solemn Nonsense.”

“ Almost an insult to common sense.”

“ Utter worthlessness of *this kind* of evidence.”

“ Comparisons without significance.”

“ Arguments and conclusions alike puerile.”

“ Not even two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff.”

“ Hard to understand how anyone, party or witness, could imagine that any court could accept or be influenced by it.”

Professor Irwin was in a better position to come to "assured results" in this case, for he had both documents in question before him, and both of recent date; whereas in the case of the Bible, the critics deal with very ancient documents, many of them written in dead languages.

If Professor Irwin's "assured results" in this modern case, could be characterized by such remarks as in the above list, a smashing blow has been dealt against the Higher Criticism of the Scriptures, from which it cannot recover.

The hand of God is behind the blow, we verily believe.

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

WE believe that Scripture is given by inspiration of God. We do not believe it possible that this Book—world-wide and eternal in its character—could have been written by holy men unless they were moved by the Spirit, who searcheth the deep things of God, and guided by Him who was, and is, and is to come. We believe Scripture to be inspired. And our faith in the inspiration of Scripture has its basis and root in our faith in God Himself. It is because we have experienced the divine power of the truth Scripture contains, and because

in the reading of Scripture we have heard the voice of God ; it is because God speaks to us in this written word that we believe it is God's. This faith is a conviction, an inward beholding and seeing, a knowledge which far transcends in light and strength, in certainty and firmness, all human evidence and argument. We cannot communicate this faith to our neighbour ; we can only testify of it. But on no lower ground can we build the assertion that Scripture is God-inspired ; not on the testimony of the Church, not on the evidences of the historic faithfulness of the record, the fulfilment of prophecy, the effects of the sublime teaching on human minds, valuable as all these are. The inspiration of Scripture is an object of faith ; and faith can only rest on the word of God, the testimony of the Spirit to the soul.

When we are asked : " Is this inspiration verbal, or does it refer only to the divinely revealed truths and promises ? " it is not necessary for us to enter into distinctions which Scripture itself does not make. It is impossible for us to form a theory of inspiration. Even of that influence of the Spirit of which we possess personal experience in our own conversion and daily renewal, it would be impossible for us to frame a theory ; for the work of the Spirit is mysterious. We cannot trace the beginning or end of His path (John iii. 8) ; His intercession is " with

groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26); we cannot explain His indwelling in the heart; and as His love is infinitely tender, entering into our deepest and most individual peculiarity and need, so it is impossible for us to analyse His constant vivifying influence, guidance and rule. If it is thus with the work of the Spirit, of which we have experience, why should we attempt to form a theory of inspiration of which none of us have experience? Most probably the prophets themselves could give no other reply to our inquiry than the statement which Scripture contains:—The Spirit of the Lord came upon them; they spake not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit, who reveals truth and spiritual reality to holy men, moves them also in speaking; influencing also the words, so that they are correct and adequate expressions: the spoken and written word is an adequate manifestation of the word inwardly revealed. To separate thought and word, matter and manner, is at all times a very difficult and perilous thing. Hence, as Martin Luther said against the rationalists of his day, "Christ did not say of His Spirit, but of His words, *they* are spirit and life." Scripture is *God's* word; it is a gift, and a revelation of Himself. It is God's *word*, the revelation of eternal and spiritual truth in a written record.

The language of Scripture, accordingly, is perfectly unique. It possesses an indescribable something which is not found in any merely human writings. The Spirit who seeth all things in their depth and reality, and who knoweth the end from the beginning, speaks here in a way so profound and comprehensive that the wisdom and experience of all ages cannot exhaust His meaning. And yet is it with such simplicity and definiteness, that all childlike hearts find guidance and consolation in their daily path of duty and trial. The style of Scripture betokens its inspiration. Here is a depth, a solemnity, a heart-winning sweetness and familiarity which we meet nowhere else. Here is the voice of One who speaketh with *authority, and communicates to us out of an inexhaustible fulness what is profitable to us in our present condition.* The Scripture is to other books as Nature is to the works of art, as the ocean is to the lake. The Scripture sees all things from a great height, and breathes the atmosphere of eternity. In the best human books, in the loftiest poetry, in the most fervent and devout utterances of man, there is always something unreal, artificial, self-conscious; something morbid and necessarily ephemeral. Scripture is the only true, real, eternal Book.

The Apostles and the Lord Himself teach us that the *record* of Israel's history and of God's dealings with Israel is under the

special and infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost. It must be evident from the preaching of the Apostles to Jews and Gentiles, and from the epistles they addressed to the churches, that they believed Scripture inspired in the fullest sense. They regarded the men by whom the Word was written as the instruments, but the Lord, and more especially the Holy Ghost, as the true Author of the whole organism of the Jewish record.

And further: as in music not only the notes, but also the pauses, are according to the plan and mind of the composer, and instinct with the life and spirit which breathe through the whole, so the very omissions of Scripture are not the result of chance, or of the accidental ignorance of the writer. They are according to, and in harmony with the wisdom of the eternal Spirit who is the true Author of the record. The Holy Ghost teaches by not stating these points.

I may also add a word on the manner of quotation. Scripture passages are quoted by the Lord in the gospels and by the Apostles not always with verbal accuracy. They do not in every case give an exact repetition of the expressions used by Moses or the prophets. This appears at first sight a difficulty, and not in harmony with the doctrine of inspiration. But on investigation it will be found to confirm this truth;

for here also the Spirit is revealed as the Spirit of truth and liberty. The original meaning of the Spirit is developed with increasing clearness and fulness. The Lord and His Apostles quote the Scripture according to the deepest and truest meaning of the inspired Word, and according to the new requirements of the dispensation and the condition of their hearers.

Above all, remember that the Lord Jesus, our one and only Master, the Son of God, who is the Truth, honoured, confirmed, and fulfilled the Scripture. Remember how Jesus referred to Scripture when He was teaching the people, or refuting gainsayers, or resisting and conquering Satan, or instructing and comforting His disciples. Remember how He appeals to Scripture as the ultimate judge, declaring as an axiom that the Scripture cannot be broken. Remember Christ's references to Scripture on the cross, and when, in the conviction of His having fulfilled all that by the Holy Ghost was written of Him, He uttered that great and blessed word, "It is finished." And after His resurrection, appearing unto His disciples and witnesses, He opened unto them the Scriptures, beginning with Moses, unfolding unto them His suffering, and giving and commanding them to preach, *because* they understood now the Word. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day," and thus

preach repentance and remission of sins in His name.

On the testimony of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles, I receive the Scripture as God's word. Not as a critic dare I approach this Book as if it were an ordinary book, which I may hope to master and fathom. It is above me, and I cannot exhaust its fulness. It knows me, even the hidden things of the heart, and judges me, bringing me into contact with the all-seeing God (Heb. iv. 12, 13).

But while I thus stand in awe, beholding the grandeur and infinite depth of the Scripture as one organic, Spirit-built, temple, and the beauty, perfection, and exquisite skill which characterize the most minute part of this structure, I feel at home as in a peaceful and fragrant garden. I am not paralysed by the divine perfection and the infinite depth of the Word. For such is the love, such is the perfection of God, that from a child I may know the Scriptures, and be made wise by them unto salvation. And while it may be given to me in some favoured moment to take a comprehensive view, and to behold somewhat of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, I know that every word of God is pure, every word He has uttered is perfect. Thus I possess the whole in every little fragment; though weak, ignorant, and limited, I have perfect

peace and the light of life. And often I find the truth of that saying of Luther's, so characteristic of that great lover of the Word, "In Scripture every little daisy is a meadow."

SAPHIR.

THE TOILS OF LIFE.

DOWN in the plain of Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah, King Solomon made the vessels for his temple (2 Chron. iv. 17); and down in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground, a greater King than Solomon is engaged in making vessels for a yet more splendid Temple.

It is worth remembering, because one of the oddest features of Christian experience is our querulous habit of questioning the wisdom of the King. We say: "Please, Lord, I find it too hard to be a Christian just here. If You would only let me get out of these horrid clay-pits it would be so much easier to be out-and-out!"

Fortunately for us the King knows what He is about, and He does not listen very seriously to our whimperings.

He has plans laid for each life. One is to be a flesh-hook, another a shovel, and another just a pot; not very exciting in

themselves, but designed to be instruments for the sacred uses of God and the King in the Holy Temple.

The tragedy of a thousand lives is that the crisis of surrender has never been faced. What of your life? Have you got there yet? Have you ever looked into the face of your Lord, and said, "Have Thine own way"? Then again the tragedy of a thousand more is that they say it (and sometimes keep saying it), but they say it sentimentally, and when it comes to sticking obediently in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground of life, they object.

In the plain of the Jordan, there will always be sin and pain and death, but it is among these very things that we can best perfect a holy life in the fear of God. In the clay ground of human frailty there will always be those irritating folk who grind our nerves, there will be disappointments and dulness, drudgery and folks who nag; but these things are:

"Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its beat,
Try thee, and turn thee forth sufficiently impressed."

So when the toils of life close round us, apparently marring our hopes, and tempting us to whine and run away from our circumstances, let us deliberately worship God and renew our glad surrender to the

King, refusing to object, and praying in the spirit of the Master Himself, who grappled with the horror of sin and death, and hell itself (things we need never face, for He has faced them).

“Not my will, but Thine be done.”

SETON POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Philippians iv.*)

We still remind our readers that unless they have the Scripture itself before them and constantly refer to it, they are not likely to derive help from this article.

THERE are two words in the first verse which direct our thoughts to what has gone before: “Therefore” and “so.” We are to stand fast in the Lord *therefore*; that is, because of, or in view of, what has just been stated. Well, what has been stated? Our heavenly calling, our heavenly citizenship, our expectation of that body of glory, fashioned like unto Christ’s in which we shall enter into our heavenly portion. No uncertainty here! And no disappointment when the moment of realization comes! We may well stand fast in the Lord!

But we are to stand fast *so*; that is, in like manner to the way in which Paul himself stood fast as delineated in chapter iii. We are to be “followers together” of him,

and have him "for an ensample," as he told us. If we too find in the knowledge of Christ an excellency that far outshines all else, we shall indeed "stand fast *in the Lord.*" Our affections, our very beings will be so rooted in Him that nothing can move us.

As we have previously noticed the adversary was attempting to mar the testimony through the Philippians by means of dissension. In verse 2 we discover that at the moment the trouble largely centred in two excellent women who were in their midst. The Apostle now turns to them, naming them with the entreaty that they be of the same mind *in the Lord.* The three words emphasized are of all importance. If both came thoroughly under the domination of the Lord, having their hearts set for Him as Paul's was, differences of mind, which existed at that moment, would disappear. The mind of Euodias as to the matter, and Syntyche's mind, would disappear and the mind of the Lord would remain. Thus they would be of the same mind by having the Lord's mind.

Verse 3 appears to be a request to Epaphroditus, who was returning to Philippi bearing this letter, that he would help these two women in the matter, for they had been in the past devoted labourers in in the Gospel along with the Apostle him-

self, Clement and others. If they could be helped the main root of dissension would be removed.

With verse 4 we come back to the exhortation of the first verse of chapter iii. There we were told to rejoice in the Lord. Here we are to rejoice in the Lord *always*; for nothing is to be allowed to divert us from it. Further, he emphasizes by repeating the word, that we are to *rejoice*. We are not merely to believe and to trust, we are also to rejoice.

This leads to the consideration of things that would hinder our rejoicing in the Lord. The harsh unyielding spirit that always insists on its own rights is one of these things, for it is a fruitful source of discontent and self-occupation. In contrast thereto we are to be characterized by moderation and gentleness, for the Lord is near and He will undertake our cause.

Then again there are the varied testings and worries of life, things which have a tendency to fill our hearts with anxious care. In regard to these prayer is our resource. We should mingle thanksgivings with our prayers, for we should ever be mindful of the abundant mercies of the past. And the scope of our prayers is only limited by the word, "everything."

This scripture invites us to turn everything into a matter of prayer, and freely

make known our requests to God. There is no guarantee, you notice, that all our requests will be granted. That would never do for our understanding is very limited and consequently we often ask for that which, if granted to us, would be neither to the glory of our Lord nor to our own blessing. What is guaranteed is that our hearts and minds shall be guarded by the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding. Again and again when Christians have passed through trials, from which they had in vain requested to be exempted, we find them looking back and saying, "I am a wonder to myself. How I could have passed through so heavy a trial, and yet have been lifted above it into such serenity, I cannot understand."

"The peace of God," must be distinguished from "peace with God," of which we read in Romans v. 1. That is the peace in relation to God, which comes from the knowledge of being justified before Him. This is the peace, in character like unto God's own peace, which fills our hearts when having committed everything to Him in prayer, we trust in His love and wisdom on our behalf, and consequently have anxious care as to nothing.

It may also be helpful to distinguish between prayer as presented in this passage and as presented in John xiv. 13, 14. There

the Lord was speaking more particularly to the Apostolic band, in their character as the representatives that He was leaving behind Him in the world, and He gives them plenary powers as regards prayer in His Name. The force of "in My Name," is "as My representatives." This praying in His Name is a tremendously responsible and solemn thing. Every cheque drawn really in His Name on the Bank of Heaven will be honoured. Only we must be very careful that we do not draw cheques for purely personal purposes of our own, under cover of drawing in His Name. That would be a kind of misappropriation of trust funds! And let us remember that in the Bank of Heaven there is a penetrating vision which can infallibly discriminate between the cheque which is genuinely in His Name and the one which is not.

Still, though there are a thousand and one matters in our lives that we could hardly present to God in prayer as being directly connected with the Name and interests of Christ, yet we have full liberty to present them to God, and indeed are bidden to do so. As we do so we may be in the enjoyment of the peace of God. We may be anxious as to *nothing*, because prayerful as to *everything*, and thankful for *anything*.

Anxious care being driven out of our hearts there is room for all that is good

to come in. Of this verse 8 speaks. One can hardly exaggerate the importance of having the mind filled with all that is true and pure and lovely, the highest expression of which is found in Christ. Our lives are so largely controlled by our thoughts, and hence it says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7). Hence to have our minds filled with what is true and just and pure is like a high road leading to a life marked by truth and justice and purity. We have of necessity to come into contact with much that is evil, but needlessly to occupy ourselves with it is disastrous, and a source of spiritual weakness.

But if the supreme and perfect expression of all these good things was found in Christ, there was also a very real exhibition of them in the life of the Apostle himself. The Philippians had not only learned and received and heard them, but also seen them in Paul, and what they had seen they themselves were to do. To *DO*, notice, for the excellent things that fill our minds are to come into practical display in our lives. Then indeed the God of peace shall be with us, which is something beyond the peace of God filling our hearts.

With verse 10 the closing messages of the epistle begin, and Paul again refers to the gift which the Philippians had sent him. That gift had been a cause of great

rejoicing to him in his imprisonment. He knew that he had not been out of their thoughts, but they had not had opportunity to send help until this occasion of the journey of Epaphroditus. It had now arrived most opportunely; yet his joy was not primarily because it relieved him of privation, (as the beginning of verse 11 shows, but because he knew it meant more fruit towards God, which would be to their credit in the coming day, as verse 17 shows.

Speaking of want or privation leads the Apostle to give us a wonderful insight into the way in which he faced his sufferings and imprisonment. These tragic circumstances had become to him a fountain of practical instruction, for he had learned to be content. To be content in present circumstances, no matter what they be, was not natural to Paul any more than it is to us. But he had learned it. And learned it, not as a matter of theory, but in experimental fashion by passing through the most adverse circumstances, with his heart full of Christ, as we see in chapter iii. Hence he was able to face changes of the most violent sort. Abasement or abounding, fulness or hunger, abounding or acute privation, all was the same to Paul, for Christ was the same, and all Paul's resources and joys were in Him.

In Christ Paul had strength for all things, and the same strength in the same way is

available for every one of us. If only we exploited all that is in Christ for us we could do all things. But Paul did not simply say, "I could," but rather, "I can." It is easy to admire the wonderful fortitude, the serene superiority to circumstances which marked the Apostle, and it is not difficult to discern the source of his power, but it is another thing to tread in his steps. That is hardly possible except we go through his circumstances, or similar ones. Here it is that our weakness is so manifest. We conform to the world, we lack spiritual vigour and aggressiveness, we avoid the suffering, and we miss the spiritual education. We cannot say, "I have learned . . . I know . . . I am instructed . . . I can do," as Paul could. It is just as well that we should candidly face these defects that mark us, lest we should think that we are "rich and increased with goods," that we are picked Christians of the twentieth century, and consequently as to "spiritual intelligence" almost the last word as to what Christians ought to be.

The Apostle then was not in any sense dependent on the gifts of the Philippian saints or of others, and he would have them know it; yet though this was so he assures them, and that in a very delicate and beautiful way, that he was fully alive to the love and devotion both towards the Lord and himself that had prompted their gift. He recognized that the Philippians peculiarly

shone in this grace, and had done so from the first moment that the Gospel had reached them. They had thought of him in the past, when no other assemblies had done so, both in Macedonia and Thessalonica, and now again in Rome.

The devotion of the Philippians in this respect was heightened by the fact that they were very poor. We are enlightened as to this in 2 Corinthians viii. 2. They also had been in much affliction themselves, and they had experienced much joy in the Lord. All this is very instructive for us. Oftentimes we are unsympathetic and stingy because our own experiences both of suffering and spiritual refreshment are so very shallow.

Having received of their bounty through Epaphroditus, Paul would have them know that now he had a full supply and was enjoying abundance. But their gift had not only met his need, it was in the nature of a sacrifice acceptable to God, like to those sacrifices of a sweet smelling odour of which the Old Testament speaks. This was a greater thing still.

But what of the Philippians themselves? They had further impoverished themselves, further reduced their already slender resources by their gifts in favour of an aged prisoner who could in no wise reciprocate or help them. Paul felt this and in verse 19 he expresses his confidence as to them. God would supply all their need. Notice

how he speaks of Him as, "My God,"—the God whom Paul knew and had practically tested for himself. That God would be their Supplier, not according to their need, nor even according to Paul's ardent desires on their behalf, but according to His own riches in glory in Christ Jesus. It would have been a wonderful thing had God engaged to supply them according to His riches *on earth* in Christ Jesus. His riches *in glory* are more wonderful still. The Philippians or ourselves may never be rich in the things of earth and yet be enriched in the things of glory. If so we shall indeed respond, in attributing glory to God our Father for ever and ever.

It is interesting to note in the closing word of salutation that there were saints found even in Caesar's household. The first chapter told us that his bonds had been manifested as being in Christ in all the palace, and if in all the palace even to Caesar himself, we suppose. But with some of his attendants and servants things had gone further than that, and they had been converted. In a great stronghold of the adversary's power souls had been translated from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Such triumphs does grace effect! How fittingly comes the closing desire, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

F. B. HOLE.