

EDIFICATION

A MONTHLY
MAGAZINE

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

VOLUME VIII.

LONDON:

THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
5 Rose Street, Paternoster Square, E.C.4.

Made and Printed
in England by



CONTENTS.



About a Century ago	-	-	15
Abraham and Lot	-	-	175
Answer to a Correspondent		84,	139
Are we asleep?	-	-	288
"Begin to Possess"	-	-	292
Calamities	-	-	63
"Christian Conscience, A"	-	-	212
Church in relation to Christ, The	-		4
Church, the Bride of Christ, The	-		35
Closing Word, A	-	-	309
Coming of our Lord, The	-	-	94
Coming of our Lord, The	-	-	261
A Brief Sketch			
Deity of the Lord Jesus, The	-		269
Deliverance	-	-	169
Divine Love	-	-	29
"Do therefore this that we say unto thee"	-	-	185
Editor's Foreword	-	-	1
Encouragement	-	-	154

Essential Thing, The	-	-	-	45
Folly of Unbelief, The	-	-	-	123
Holy Spirit: His active witness, The				225
Holy Spirit: His passive witness, The				200
Life that pleases God, The	-	-	-	113
My Shepherd	-	-	-	312
Our Scripture Portion	19,	46,	72, 102,	
	128,	157,	186, 215,	
	240,	271,	297, 323.	
Rewarded Openly	-	-	-	319
Right Order, The	-	-	-	91
Should we forgive ?	-	-	-	197
Some Soul-difficulties examined	-	-	-	141
Sound Doctrine	-	-	-	66
Sowing and Reaping	-	-	-	180
“ Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, The ”	-	-	-	70
“ Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee ”	-	-	-	147
Two Cleansings, The	-	-	-	281
Two Guest-chambers				57, 85
Ways of God in Grace and Govern- ment, The	-	-	-	234
What is it to believe ?	-	-	-	253

EDITOR'S FOREWORD.

ONLY after considerable heart-searching and enquiry have we concluded that we should carry on this little magazine for another year.

Those who are aware of the small success, in the way of circulation, which has attended our efforts will not be surprised at this remark. There are very many magazines dealing with Scriptural subjects, and we have no desire needlessly to add to their number. We only proceed therefore from year to year, step by step.

Having decided to carry on, if the Lord so permit us, during another year, we start with a definite thought before us.

There is a good deal of yearning in the hearts of true believers. Their desires might perhaps be summed up in the one word, *revival*. But the yearned-for revival is being sought in many and diverse ways.

Many there are who feel that the all-important something is *Second Advent truth*. There is indeed great power connected with the fact of our Lord's return, if it be held as *a living hope*. 1 John iii. 3 plainly

states this. Yet this truth, even, may be perverted, and turned into a matter of signs for the curious, and into mathematical calculations for the ingenious, with very disastrous results; as has again, and in very tragic fashion, been exemplified in the past year.

Others again seek the all-important something in *new ideas* as to the faith of Christ. They are charmed with that which seems to them to be "new light," especially when the ideas are semi-philosophical, semi-metaphysical and all clothed in Scriptural phraseology. It is all quite *modernistic*, and looks like *going forward* in intelligence, while the rest of Christians are left stagnant, far to the rear. Progress of this sort has a very strong tendency to obsess people's minds, to the extent of leaving them very unexercised and unconcerned in matters of practical conduct. Moreover there is a "progress" as to which Scripture warns us in these words, "Whosoever *goes forward* and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God" (2 John 9. N. Tr.).

Not a few yearn for something *supernatural*, something *miraculous*, akin to those things that happened in the Apostolic age; something that would, so they feel, rehabilitate a weak and powerless Christianity in the eyes of the world. We can quite understand their longings; but we know right well, as instructed by the Word, that there

is another mighty source of signs and wonders, who is not of God, but wholly and diametrically opposed to Him. We know too that all that has been presented to the public as supernatural and miraculous in recent years has been very much open to question, and has as a matter of fact been very much questioned. We know further that, in the past, far from becoming a witness *to* the truth, such movements have ended in becoming a scandal *against* it.

What do we yearn for? We yearn for something very simple, very unexciting; something that does not, we fear, fill many of the Lord's people with enthusiasm. Something that is *profound*, though simple.

We desire *an unfolding of the whole truth of God*, without any pet themes or specialities. We desire that unfolding to be with increasing clearness and light. But even more greatly we desire it to be with very greatly increased pungency and power: that kind of pungency that carries it right down into the conscience and heart, that causes it to have a powerful formative effect in life and conduct.

The need of the moment is, we believe, not so much that we should extend the *area* of our knowledge and intelligence in the things of God, as that we should be characterized by greater *depth*, that we

should be far more really governed, and altered, by what we already do know.

In this small magazine we can do but little towards this desirable end, but may we, both editor and contributors, be helped of God to do the 'little we can, as this year runs its course.

THE CHURCH, IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

Genesis ii. 18, 21-24.

(From Notes of Addresses).

WE have been meditating a good deal on the Gospel and kindred subjects, truths which affect us in our individual Christian life. Now I should like to say a little on the other side; not what the Lord is to us, but *what we are to the Lord.*

The first things that generally engross Christians, are the blessings they get from Christ, but there is another side, full of blessing for us too, and that is, what Christ will get from us. In our early career as Christians we are very much like babies. When a baby gets hold of anything, it always goes to its mouth, and so the first thing we do when we get hold of the Word of God is to seize everything for ourselves.

We consider how it fits us, or how it suits our case. But there is another side. There is an objective before God, and that is that we should be brought into association with Christ, not only that we should be saved from hell, which is the initial step.

When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, he began to unfold again to them the wonderful scheme that God had in His mind with regard to them and him. He had indicated it before to them, as God had indicated it to him by dreams, and they scoffed at the whole thing and laughed him to scorn; and worse than that, their hearts were filled with hatred and envy against him. But when we find these men suppliants in the presence of Joseph, with what different ears they listened to the same story that Joseph first indicated when he told them his dreams. Having made himself known to them and set their hearts at rest, they and he were at leisure to open, we may say, the book of God's purpose with regard to him and them.

The very first thing God does with us is to bring us to Himself. The first operation of the Spirit of God is to awaken needs within us in order to make us appreciate Christ. It is when the Lord Jesus Christ is known as the One that has met our desperate need, when all the needs of the conscience are met, when the soul is saved, when the kiss of reconciliation has been put

6 THE CHURCH, IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

upon our cheeks, when we find ourselves at home and at rest and at peace with God, then we are at leisure, and He is free to unfold this wonderful scheme that is in His mind with regard to us and our association with Christ. It is a wonderful thing that we should be able to say,

“That Thou should'st be so much to me,
And be the God Thou art;
Is darkness to my intellect
But sunshine to my heart.”

Yet it is more wonderful if we turn it round (with all apologies to the author) and put it in this way,

“That I should be so much to Thee
And Thou the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect
But sunshine to my heart.”

That Christ in all His greatness and glory should be so much to me, is not nearly so surprising as that I, in spite of all my weakness, defilement and sinfulness, should be so much to Him.

You will have observed no doubt in reading the Song of Solomon, the advance that the bride makes. She first says, “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” Then she goes on to say, “I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.” The first thing she appreciates is the thought of what He is to her; the second stage in the growth of her soul is what she is to Him, and then she winds up with the third expression, “I am

my beloved's, and his desire is towards me." She finds out this fact, that she has become necessary to his joy. Don't let it take your breath away, my dear fellow believer; it is enough to do it; but *you and I are positively necessary to the joy and glory of Christ.*

Nothing could exceed the importance of seeing the unique place that the Church occupies in the thoughts of God in relation to Christ. Angels never stood in that relationship, and never will. It is the peculiar position into which the Church is called, and let me say in passing what I mean by the Church. It is that which is called in the end of Ephesians i., "the Church which is His body," and it embraces in its scope every blood-washed and Spirit-sealed believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever you find a Spirit-begotten, Spirit-sealed believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find one that forms part of the Church of God. It is the fact of his being born again, of his having trusted in Christ, the fact that he has been indwelt and sealed by the Spirit, that brings him to form part of the Church of God. That is the Church, no matter what the colour of your skin, no matter what name you may have labelled yourself, or allowed yourself to be labelled; no matter what your profession, if you are a bona-fide, genuine Christian according to Scripture, you form part of that which is called in Scripture the Church of God, the body of Christ.

I am not talking about your being saved from hell and going to heaven when you die, but I am talking about what has taken place by the Spirit's work since you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. By the fact of the Holy Spirit sealing you as His, you have not joined the Church, but the Spirit of God has joined you to the Church, and since you form part of the Church, you could not leave it. That is the only Church that Scripture recognises, or that I want to know anything about. Any other "church" that you may join is an organization that has no support from The Book. The Church to which the Spirit of God joins you, is the only Church that God recognizes.

That Church is destined to a very wonderful future. It is destined to be the associate of Christ, the companion of Christ throughout the ages of eternity, and as I look into your faces, though you may belong to every denomination in the town, that makes no difference to me, I think of you only as related to Christ in this way. May I say this, that in the Scriptures, the Church comes before us under various names, each name having its own significance. Sometimes it is called the Body of Christ, in relation to Himself as the Head of that Body, which brings before us the thought of unity, the unity of all the members together, and all being governed by one Head. That is the thought of the body of Christ. It is that in which Christ expresses Himself, that

in which Christ's character is to be seen. Sometimes it is called the House of God, sometimes it is called the Temple. All these terms have their own significance.

But there is another title which the Church bears, she is the "bride" of Christ. The Church as the Body of Christ is spoken of as the great mystery, that which was never revealed before. That which was hid from all ages and generations, says the Apostle Paul in the closing verses of Romans, is now made manifest. It does not say it was hidden in the Scriptures. No, it was "hid in God," and this mystery, which was not made known since the world began, is now made manifest. The first time the Apostle Paul speaks of the Church is in the Epistle to the Romans. Romans is the Gospel epistle, where we have the great foundation truths of the Gospel. The result of the Gospel is that we are brought to partake in that wonderful structure on earth which is known as the Church, and which bears also the character of the Bride.

In point of fact, the Church did not exist until Pentecost. When the Lord Jesus Christ was here, He said, "I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18), and He began to announce that fact when John the Baptist had been murdered. If His harbinger met such a cruel death, what could He expect? Hence He began to intimate to His disciples that they should no longer speak

10 THE CHURCH, IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

about Him publicly as the Christ. Why? As Christ, He had the title to the Kingdom; but what was now before Him was the Church. There was another title He was going to be known by—"The Son of the living God." That is the rock upon which He was going to build His Church. It was not Peter. Peter was not the one upon whom Christ was going to build His Church. No. He was going to build the Church upon that solid, impregnable, invulnerable rock—Himself, as the Son of the living God. He was the living Stone. He was going to be taken by God out of the ground into which man threw Him, and to be raised up again, the living Stone, and on that foundation He was going to build His Church, which is His Body. That building began at Pentecost.

In the Old Testament are found wonderful analogies, illustrations and figures of the Church. Genesis, which has been described as the seed plot of the Bible, in its second chapter, gives us an indication of this very truth. It is not a little remarkable that in Genesis where the Spirit of God is using types or figures of the Church, He nearly always uses the figure of the bride. Not the body, not the house, not the temple, but the bride.

In Genesis ii. we have God taking the initiative, in bringing Eve to Adam. It

says, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him," that is, a counterpart. There is God taking the initiative.

I need not tell you that Adam the first, was only a figure of Him that was to come—Adam the last, who was alone. There was a time when the One we know and love as Saviour and Lord, was alone. He was alone in the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Then there came a time when He stepped from the glory throne to the earth, and He was yet alone. There was never a man on the face of the earth like Him. He was alone, when every other man was built differently. Every other man was bent on doing his own will, going his own way, doing his own pleasure and gratifying his own wishes. Here was a Man that was bent upon going God's way and doing God's will and gratifying God's wishes and accomplishing God's pleasure. This Man was the Lord out of heaven; the other was of the earth, earthy. We, as the children of Adam's race had come one way; He had come another way. He was a Man of an entirely different order, and you find Him here on earth alone.

You remember the Mount of Transfiguration, when it always seems to me that the very glory of God stooped to imprint upon His brow the kiss of Divine satisfaction;

there, at the close of His earthly career, the glory came down and He was glorified. Peter, who was with Him, ignorant of what He was saying, said, "Let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses and one for Elias," that is, let us put them all on a dead level. What happened? A cloud came and Moses and Elias disappeared. And then there came a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." What was that? God the Father, protecting the distinctive glory of God the Son. Peter, in his ignorance, would fain have put him on a level with those two wonderful servants of God. But God would not have it so. When the cloud was gone and Moses and Elias had gone too, it says, "Jesus was left alone." If He had gone from that mountain top to heaven's glory, He would have gone alone.

The Lord Himself said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Had He not died, He would have been alone for ever. But He would not be alone. In order that He might have His companion He left the glory Mount for the Mount of suffering. He wended His way straight up to Jerusalem, in order that He might have companions through the ages of a coming Eternity. He did not seek for them in the serried ranks of angels. No. He sought for them amongst the simple of Adam's fallen race.

I want you to notice that Eve was taken out of Adam. She was not a separate creation. God did not create something new. He did not create a fresh being. No. She formed part of Adam himself. It was out of his rib that God formed the woman. She derived her origin from him. Don't overlook that fact. She had his life and nature, you may say, for she was derived from him. God's purpose with regard to Adam having this bride was one thing, but how this purpose was to be realized was another thing. When we come to the realization of that purpose, we find Adam has to fall into a deep sleep, and out of the side of Adam when he was fallen into this deep sleep, God built this woman, and when he awoke out of his sleep, she was presented to him.

There could not have been any Church of God on earth united to Him had there not been that deep sleep into which He fell—the sleep of death. But He went down into death and the result is, that God is now able to present to Him one, who is destined to be His bride and to share with Him the Father's love, to share with Him His throne, and to share with Him His glory. She is *of* Him as to origin. She is *in* Him as having the same life and the same nature. She is united *to* Him, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, part of Himself.

Hebrews ii. puts it in this way, "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sancti-

14 THE CHURCH, IN RELATION TO CHRIST.

fied are all of one." John xii. puts it in this way, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit"—many grains, but of the same order and character as that which falls into the ground. If you sow wheat, you will not get oats. If you sow wheat, you will get a crop of wheat. We are told in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which speaks of this, "Husbands, love your wives; even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church." That is the mystery, he says. He was not speaking about man and wife, but of Christ and the Church. The close union of the bride and bridegroom is that which God by His Spirit has used to show the union that exists between the Church and Christ.

This is something more than being saved from hell, something more than going to heaven when we die. The full display remains for the future but there is a Bride on earth to-day and she is in the company of the Holy Ghost for the moment. Christ presents Himself as the Bright and Morning Star. There is a response in the heart of the bride to the Lord Jesus Christ as He is presented to her as the coming Bridegroom, the Bright and Morning Star. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come."

ART. CUTTING.

ABOUT A CENTURY AGO.

ONE day in the winter of 1832-3, four Indians appeared in the streets of St. Louis with a request that no white man had ever heard before. They came, they said, from the Land of the setting sun; and they wanted the white man's Book of heaven.

The commander of the military post at St. Louis, who was a Roman Catholic, received them with the greatest kindness and hospitality. They were shown the Roman Catholic church, the pictures of the saints, etc., yet they were steadily denied their oft-repeated request for a Bible. Two of the Indians died at St. Louis from the fatigue of their long journey from Oregon.

The other two, home-ick and disappointed, prepared to return. The commander made a banquet for them, and bade them God-speed on their journey. One of the Indians was called upon to respond. No just idea of the circumstances can be given, or of the impression it produced. We can only give the English version of his speech, which, like all translations, loses much of the force of the original.

"I came to you over the trail of many moons. You were the friend of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came with one eye partly opened for more light

for my people who sit in darkness. I go back with BOTH EYES CLOSED.

How can I go back blind to my people? I have made my way to you with strong arms, through many enemies and strange lands, that I might carry back much to them. I go back with both arms BROKEN AND EMPTY. Two fathers came with me, They were the braves of many winters and wars. We leave them asleep by your great water and wigwam. They were tired in many moons and their mocassins wore out. My people sent me to get the white man's Book of heaven. You took me to where they worship the Great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there. You showed me images of the good spirits and pictures of the good land beyond, but the Book was not among them to tell us the way. I am going back the long, sad trail to my people of the dark land. You make my feet heavy with gifts, and my mocassins will grow old in carrying them, yet the Book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people, after one more snow, in the big council that I did not bring the book, no word will be spoken by our old men, or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in *darkness*, and they will go on the long path to other hunting-grounds. No white man will go with them, and no white man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words."

A young man present was so impressed with the touching address that he communicated with some friends in the East, giving them an account of the strange visit, and the pathetic appeal of the Indians for a Bible. His letter was published in the *Christian Advocate* of March, 1833. Many Christians were aroused to their responsibilities, and shortly afterwards, after a toilsome and dangerous journey of many months, a little band of faithful-hearted servants of Christ landed at Oregon, and the first gospel sermon was preached on the Pacific Coast, at Vancouver, on the 28th of September, 1834.

The above is not fiction, but a plain statement of facts; and we call your attention to it that your sympathies may be stirred up, and you yourself led to think of the millions still enshrouded in heathen darkness. Shall we fold our hands in sleepy indifference while myriads of our fellow-creatures have *never even heard* of a Saviour's love?

Perhaps you are young, and for various reasons may not be able to carry the gospel in *person* to the "regions beyond;" but if you love Christ, and are walking with Him, many ways of helping on His interests in the gospel will suggest themselves. You may have the privilege of ministering of your substance to those who have gone forth "taking nothing of the Gentiles" for Christ's name sake. (3 John 7, Hebrews xiii.

16). Again, much may be done by earnest believing prayer. The great question is, Are you, am I, according to the measure we have received, serving Christ as we have opportunity and ability?

Remember His word to you, while you watch and wait for Him, is, "*Occupy till I come.*" What does it mean? Perhaps it means that you should win those unconverted companions of yours for Christ. Nothing tells so powerfully on the unsaved as the quiet testimony of a consistent life. It may be those pleasure-seeking individuals who live near you are inwardly groaning under the burden of sin. If you only had their confidence, what a tale of misery they could pour into your ear. Make it your earnest, prayerful endeavour to gain them for Christ.

Shall I tell you how to qualify for the mission-field? *Graduate at home.* Let your school of divinity be the *fireside circle.* Let your friends, neighbours, and acquaintances know that the Saviour you serve has a heart large enough to take in even those who, with an *open Bible in their hand,* stalk *religiously* down the broad road to hell.

If you are faithful to Christ in the sphere where God has placed you, rest assured, dear young Christian, you *will preach* with life and lip, not because it is your duty to do so, but because you cannot help it. If

your heart is wholly set upon Christ's interests, be sure that, in His own time and way, He will conduct you to that corner of the field where you will be of most service to Him.

SELECTED.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION

(1 *Corinthians i.* 1-25.)

To be of any profit this article must be read in conjunction with a Bible, opened at the above passage,

WE now enter upon the epistle which above all others deals with matters concerning the local assembly, and the order which by Divine appointment should be observed in it. The church, or assembly, of God in Corinth was a large one, as we gather from Acts xviii. 10. It had within it some very unsatisfactory elements, as is not unusual in such a case, and these elements were introducing ways and habits and even doctrines, of a sort which were common enough in the Corinthian world, but which were absolutely foreign to the nature and spirit of the assembly of God. Partly perhaps it was due to the ignorance of the Corinthian saints, for they had written a letter of enquiry to the Apostle Paul, who had brought the Gospel to them, as to certain matters, as is indicated in verse

1 of chapter vii. Still Paul not only answered their questions but also brings home to them in most vigorous language their grievous errors both in behaviour and doctrine. This he did not in annoyance or anger or sarcasm, but, "out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . with many tears" (2 Cor. ii. 4). Hence the powerful effect which his letter produced, as evidenced in 2 Corinthians vii. 8-11.

Having to write in this corrective strain Paul very naturally emphasizes at the outset the apostolic place of authority which he held from God; and further, he associates with himself one of themselves. Sosthenes came from Corinth (see, Acts xviii. 17), and apparently was converted after the beating he got from the Greeks as chief ruler of the synagogue, having supplanted Crispus, who was converted somewhat earlier.

Two important facts confront us in the second verse. First, that only those who were sanctified in Christ, who were saints by the call of God, and who called upon Jesus as Lord, composed the church of God at Corinth. Second, that though the epistle was written primarily to the assembly at Corinth, yet secondarily ALL who called upon Christ as Lord were in view, no matter where they might be located. The same Lord was "both theirs and ours," and hence all saints were under a common Authority.

We do well to note with care the first fact, for the word, *church*, is used with a variety of meanings to-day. We may get an idea of its true meaning according to Scripture from this verse. None but true believers are saints, sanctified in Christ. It is on the other hand a fact that some may professedly call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord without being true believers, and this accounts for passages in this epistle where Paul takes them up on the ground of their profession and says things which implies that some among them *might* NOT be real. * Still, speaking generally, if a man professes faith he must be accepted as real, until proved to be otherwise.

We do well also to observe and digest the second fact, with its significance, and the consequences that flow from it. It quite definitely shows that though each assembly has its own local conditions, and state, and responsibilities, yet it cannot be dissociated from the whole—from the church of God in its universal aspect. The order which this epistle enjoins upon the Corinthians is equally enjoined upon all saints everywhere. The discipline which was to be effected at Corinth, while affecting Corinth *immediately*, had its bearing *ultimately* upon the whole church. The recognition of this fact will preserve us from the mistake of treating each assembly as though it were an independent and autonomous unit—from laying such stress upon the local assemblies as to

overshadow the fact of the unity of the whole church of God.

Paul's desire for the Corinthians was that grace and peace might be ministered to them. There was evidently a good deal of discord in their midst, which would have been eliminated had a larger measure of grace been amongst them. Yet the grace of God had been ministered to them in Christ, as verse 4 states, and that moved him to thanksgiving. Moreover, from the grace of God had sprung all the gifts that they possessed, while waiting for the coming of the Lord. The God who had called them to the fellowship of His Son is faithful as well as gracious, and consequently he was confident that they would be confirmed without blame to the end.

Notice how repeatedly the Lord Jesus Christ is named in the first nine verses, and how everything is attributed to, and referred to, Him. It is His Name, His grace, His testimony, His coming, His day, His fellowship. All this reinforces, and is intended to reinforce, the strong remonstrance of the Apostle which opens in verse 10. There were divisions, or parties, among them, leading to contention and strife. These parties struck a blow at the fact that they had been called to the fellowship of the One who is God's Son and our Lord.

When David was at Adullam, in the time of his rejection, men flocked to his standard

and he became captain over them. They entered his fellowship, for he was the central figure. Had he been smitten the fellowship would have ceased to be. We are called into the fellowship of One who also is in rejection, yet is infinitely greater than David. The One who is Captain over us is God's Son. The fellowship to which we belong is dominated by Him, without a rival.

In the light of this, how great is the evil of party-making or party spirit, even though honoured names be attached to the parties, or even the very name of Christ be adopted as a party label. From verse 6 of chapter iv., we gather that the Corinthians were actually forming their parties round gifted and able men in their own assembly, and that the Apostle avoided the mention of their names by inserting his own with Apollos and Peter. Thus he maintained the delicate courtesy which is characteristic of Christianity, and at the same time heightened the effect of his argument. Paul was their spiritual father, but even to say, "I am of Paul" is not admissible.

Divisions—i.e., schisms or parties—always lead to contentions. God's desire is that we should be united in one mind and judgment. Though at a distance, tidings of the sad state of the Corinthians had reached Paul's ears, and he dealt faithfully with them. At the same time he plainly stated whence his information came. The house

of Chloe could not lay information against them and yet remain anonymous, saying, "Don't let anyone know that we told you!" So also Paul himself avoided all vague and indefinite charges. He was quite explicit and definite in his statement, as indicated by the words, "Now this I say..." If such safeguards were always observed when charges must be brought, it would be well.

The questions of verse 13 are very much to the point. Christ is one. He only has been crucified for us. To His name alone have we been baptized. Paul was thankful that though so long at Corinth he had not baptized any of them, save two or three. In the commission given to the twelve (Matt. xxviii. and Mark xvi.) baptism had a prominent place. In his commission from Christ all the stress had been laid upon the preaching of the Gospel, and not upon baptism. It is possible of course that baptism was playing a part in these divisions and contentions at Corinth. Be that as it may, verse 17 makes it very clear that not baptism but the Gospel of the cross of Christ is the thing of all importance. And moreover, the cross must be preached in a way that does not nullify its meaning and power.

This brings us to verses 18 to 24, a great passage wherein the real force and bearing of the cross of Christ is revealed to us: the cross, that is, as passing the sentence of condemnation upon man, and of destruction

upon his wisdom; while at the same time it brings in the power and wisdom of God for the salvation of those who believe. The cross of Christ is the point at which in supreme measure the world took upon itself to join issue with God. It put the Son of God to death, a death of extremest contempt and shame. God accepted the challenge, and in result the cross also became the supreme proof of the folly of human wisdom, of the disqualification and repudiation by God of even the greatest and wisest of men. Because of this, Paul was sent to preach the Gospel in a way that gave no quarter to human wisdom.

Because of this, also, the cross stands as "the great divide" amongst men whenever it is faithfully preached. On the one side of it stand "them that perish," on the other "us which are saved." To which class any individual belongs may be discerned by observing that individual's attitude toward the preaching of the cross. To the one it is but foolishness, for they adhere to the world and its wisdom. To the other it is the power of God, and that unto salvation. God saves by the foolishness of the preaching. The point of this remark in verse 21 is not that preaching appears a foolish *method*—as compared with working, for instance—but that the actual message preached—the *word of the cross*—is foolishness according to human notions, but is wisdom and power according to God.

The world has its wisdom. When the Son of God arrived within its reach and scrutiny the world tested Him according to the accepted standards of its wisdom, denounced Him as acting by the power of the prince of the demons, and crucified Him. The wisdom of the world did not enable men to recognize God when they saw Him; the rather, they mistook Him for the devil. If that is the ripest fruit of the wisdom of the world then it is utterly worthless in the things of God, and condemned of God. And this is the case whether we look at Jew or Gentile.

Both Jew and Greek had their idiosyncracies. The one required signs, as the fruit of God's frequent miraculous interventions in their past history: only the sign had to be of a certain order to satisfy them. The other almost worshipped the human intellect, and wanted nothing that did not agree with current philosophic notions. To both Christ crucified was an offence. The Jew awaited the Christ, only He must be a splendid Being, and sensational according to their anticipations. The Greek would have welcomed a new philosopher to carry their speculations to a triumphant climax. Both were outraged by Christ crucified. Such a Christ was a hopeless 'stumbling-block to the Jew, and He appeared ridiculous beyond words to the Greek. *But there is no other Christ than the Christ who was crucified.*

And, through grace, *no other Christ is desired by us.* But then, we are amongst the "us which are saved." We are called of God, whether once we were Jews or Gentiles, and we can see that Christ really is both the power and the wisdom of God. He will bring to nothing all the mighty schemes of men in consummate wisdom and most decisive power and also establish all that God has purposed. At the same time His wisdom and power have wrought for our salvation. From the human standpoint the cross may be the foolishness and the weakness of God, but it is at the same time both wiser and stronger than men.

Now let us review these twenty-five verses that we may not miss the drift of the Apostle's argument in all this. The Corinthians were magnifying men—Christian men doubtless, and possibly very good ones at that—into leaders of parties in the assembly of God. This in effect struck a blow at the supreme and pre-eminent position of Christ; and it indicated that man, his powers, his wisdom, his gifts, had far too large a place in their thoughts. This in its turn indicated that they had but feebly realized the significance of the cross of Christ, which puts God's sentence of condemnation on man and his wisdom. Hence the Apostle's preaching of the cross, and hence his repudiation of mere human wisdom in the way he preached it.

The need for the preaching of the cross, in Pauline fashion, is not less in this twentieth century than it was in the first. Probably it is greater, inasmuch as never more than to-day was stress being laid upon the greatness and glory and wisdom of man. Never have men, even professing Christians sometimes, felt so pleased with their powers. Yet never has their lack of true wisdom been more manifest. The cross puts all into its real place. It makes everything of the Christ who suffered there. It makes nothing of man who put Him thereon. And that is right.

Have we learned and inwardly digested the meaning of the cross? Many millions in Christendom have turned it into an elegant symbol to be placed upon buildings devoted to religion, or even to be worn on the bosom, made in gold and studded with precious stones. Be it ours to have it engraved in "fleshy tables of the heart," in such fashion that we see through and eschew the tinsel glory of man, and seek ever and only the glory of Christ: that we are delivered from making much of any man, even the best of men, and above all from making much of ourselves. For us let it be Christ first, Christ last, Christ all the way through—Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

F. B. HOLE.

DIVINE LOVE.

DIVINE love is not to be mistaken for natural amiability, or sentimental gush. Divine love is begotten of the knowledge of God. It partakes of His nature for "God is love" (1 John iv. 8). Love "is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians iii. 14). "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7). This gives us the character of the love. There is no abatement of holiness and truth with God. These are upheld in all their integrity. The knowledge and power of this will preserve us from mistaking human sentiment for divine love.

The Apostle John brings before us the great manifestation of the love of God, in sending "His only begotten Son into the world that we might LIVE through Him," and that He might be "the propitiation for our sins" on the cross (1 John iv. 9, 10). As we realise this, love is drawn from our hearts to Him. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). And not only so, but as a consequence our love goes out to all God's people. "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him

also that is begotten of Him" (1 John v. 1).

It is quite remarkable that a whole chapter is devoted to love. We refer to 1 Corinthians xiii. The place where it occurs is striking. It lies between chapter xii, which takes up the truth of the assembly in its constitution and chapter xiv, which takes up the directions as to the assembly in function. 1 Corinthians xii is like the locomotive; chapter xiii, the oil that will cause the machinery to work smoothly; chapter xiv, the machinery at work. How necessary it is for us all to lay the lessons of that central chapter to heart.

We know of a Christian who reads 1 Corinthians xiii, every day of his life. We might do well to imitate his example. A cursory glance at the chapter shows how highly intelligent we may be in the things of God, how very active we may be in philanthropic work, and yet utterly miss the mark. If divine love is missing, our speech will be only empty sound, we shall be NOTHING before God, and our efforts, however strenuous and self-denying, be profitless in His presence.

The Apostle Paul gives great emphasis to all this, because he puts the truth before us in the first person. He begins, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love] I am

become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Evidently the subject matter of this speech is beyond reproach. He is not referring to unkind gossip or the like, but to speech of excellent matter, seeing he brings in the allusion to the tongues of angels. But if it lacks this divine love, it is empty and valueless, without edification.

The next verse presents us with an imposing array of wonderful qualifications. The gift of prophecy! The understanding of ALL mysteries! The mastery of ALL knowledge! The possession of ALL faith able to remove mountains! Surely anyone with all these qualifications must be a wonderful help. You cannot ask him a question, but he can give a clear and correct reply. His industry is amazing. No mystery but what he can unfold! Faith, too, that can surmount the unsurmountable is his. How remarkable !

Yet without love, this brother is NOTHING. How crushing! How exercising!

We have known some, who might in measure be described by that verse. Lacking divine love, with all their ability, their knowledge only became a scourge in the Church of God. Diotrephes, we expect, was one such. Such can open their lips on every occasion, and a stream of encyclopædic scriptural information flows forth. Their memory is wonderful! Their diligence praiseworthy!

But all this knowledge, apart from divine love, will only prove lifeless matter, calculated to weigh down their hearers with a feeling of oppression. It lacks that something that only love can give. Without love it has no spiritual vitamins.

But now we come to what is self-sacrificing. This tests us more than speaking from the platform. To strip oneself of possessions to feed the poor, even to go so far as to give one's body to be burned in defence of the truth, is conduct that appears to be moved by something profound. Surely a person cannot go so far as this, and not be right. The Apostle tells us that all this can be done, and if divine love is absent, it is PROFITLESS; all smoke and no fire. How searching! How much of this has been witnessed in monastic circles. How much can be done from love of self, not from love of God!

Then some of the qualities of divine love are brought before us. We recognise them as we see them exemplified in the lives of Christians. Lives speak more loudly than lips. There is no more powerful Christian apologetic than the life that is truly marked by divine love.

Love suffers long, and is kind. Too often we suffer and—*hit back*. We suffer, and forget to be kind. We get upset over trifles.

Love envies not. If I love a person I shall rejoice in all that he has. I shall not envy his better looks, greater gifts, whether of mind, disposition or possessions, whether spiritual or material.

Love "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Self-love and divine love do not go together. Love is not vainglorious. Love is engaged with its object, and not with self. To praise oneself, to talk about oneself, is not a sign of love. Indeed the excess of self-occupation often betrays want of mental balance. There are instances enough in history, secular and ecclesiastical, to warn us against that.

Love "doth not behave itself unseemly." Love makes spiritual gentlefolk in actions and ways. Someone said to the late G. V. Wigram, "Mr. Wigram, there'll be no gentlemen in heaven." "On the contrary," he replied, "they will all be gentlemen there." We have known saints of very humble origin, with little or no education, and divine love has made them spiritual gentlefolk.

Love "is not easily provoked." It is not touchy. Love will put the best construction upon what is questionable. For instance you meet a brother in the Lord in the street. He takes no notice. Love would not be affronted at being apparently cut dead, but would believe that the brother

had not seen you, and would not have acted in that way if he had. In such simple things divine love helps.

Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth ALL things believeth ALL things, hopeth ALL things, endureth ALL things." How comprehensive are these "ALLS." Let us sit down and ponder over them. How far short we come in all these things.

Then we are told that love never ceases. Prophecy ceases. There will come a time when the last prophecy will be fulfilled. Then there will be no more prophecy. It will cease.

Tongues will cease. Tongues are only useful in a world that owes its diversity of tongues to the sin of the tower and city of Babel. One day there will be only one tongue spoken in the universe of God, one universal language. Then tongues will cease.

Knowledge as we have it now will vanish away. If everybody in the world were a Master of Arts with first class honours, the degree of M.A. as a *distinction* would vanish away. We only know in part down here. One knows this, another knows that, and we can therefore speak of knowledge, for it is *relative*. But there all shall know as they are known.

Our present position is likened to a child in comparison to a full-grown person, to our looking at objects as through a dim

window obscurely. In the future we shall see face to face. There will be no temple in the holy city, for God and the Lamb are alike the temple and the light of it. Then the "part," precious as it is, and known in this life, will leap at one bound into perfect knowledge.

This is where divine love will land us. Blessed prospect! Heavenly outlook! There are three great handmaids in the Christian path, faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love. Do we realise this as we should?

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE CHURCH, THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

Genesis xxix. 18-28.

Genesis xxiv. 2-6, 58, 61-67.

(*From Notes of Addresses*).

IF in Genesis ii. we have Eve as a type of the church, the bride of Adam, *by God's gift*, we find in Rachel, the bride of Jacob, one who typifies the Church as *the object of the Bridegroom's love*, and in Rebecca, the type of the church as *the object of the Spirit's interest*, led by the servant across the desert to the bridegroom.

We have considered Genesis ii. Let us now turn to the subject of Jacob and Rachel.

Very little is said of this case, but the love that Jacob bore to Rachel is the outstanding feature. It brings before us the Church in the character of a Bride but this time in relation to the love of the Bridegroom rather than the gift of God. Eve was God's gift to Adam, it is quite true. The Church is God's gift to Christ. For the moment, He has not got the Kingdom, but He has had given to Him a bride—the Church—and over and over again in John xvii., He speaks about us having been given by the Father to Him.

But there is also this side of the story, that the bride is the object of the love of the Bridegroom, just as Rachel was the object of Jacob's love. It says, "Jacob loved Rachel." He had served a double period for her. He had to render a double service for her, and when speaking of those seven years of service, it says, "They seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." There is an old saying that "love lightens labour," and there is truth in it. There was a love that lightened the burden of Christ. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame." It is true that our Jacob is serving a double period of service for us. He has served one period of service and He is now serving the second period before He gets His bride.

He served us well upon yonder Cross under the weight of judgment. "He loved

the Church and gave Himself for it." They said to Him, "Come down from the Cross and save Thyself and us." But He came down from the throne of glory to the Cross that He might save. Come down from the Cross *and* save, He could not. "Himself He cannot save," they said, and they never said a truer word. Let us take those words as they come hissing from their Pharisaical lips and weave them into a crown for His glory:

"Love's stream too deeply flowed,
In love Himself He gave
To pay the debt we owe:
Obedience to the Father's will
And love to Him did all fulfil."

We have the explanation of His doing His first bit of work. It was no rude Roman nails that kept the Saviour upon the Cross. It was not their fastening that kept Him there. It was love that kept Him there. "He loved us and gave Himself for us."

We may turn to Exodus xxi., where we have another figure of the same love. It is the Hebrew servant, and the law with regard to him, which is, that he has to serve six years and when those six years are over, he can leave. But, as the law ran, he had to go out as he came in. "If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married then his wife shall go out with him." It all depended on how he came in. "If his master shall have given him a

wife, and she shall have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself." Here, we have the parallel to Genesis, the one who has been given him by his master. What happened when the six years of service was over? The wife and children became the master's. What about himself? He must go out as he came in—alone. Go out without them? Leave the objects of his love and go without them? Yes. What a test!

But another clause is put in, a saving clause. What is that? "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free." Then there is only one thing for him. "His master shall bring him into the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever." He can then have the objects of his love for ever. That is just Luke ix. over again. The Lord had come to the end of His life of service, just before the Transfiguration. His years of service were practically over, and Moses and Elias came down to the mountain and talked with Him about His decease. If you have a Greek Testament, you will find that that word translated here "decease" is really the same word as that for the second Book of the Bible—Exodus. They spake concerning His exodus. Moses and Elias were talking to

Him about His going out. How did He come in? He came in alone, and He will have to go out alone, unless He is prepared to go to the place of piercing; and, Hallelujah to His blessed name, He went to the place of piercing, and every step of that journey from the glory Mount to the Mount of sorrow and death and judgment, was musical with this, "I love you, I love you, I will not go out without you. In order to have you Mine for ever, I will die for you." That is the Saviour we know and love. Oh, what love! There is no love like the love of Jesus.

He is serving us in the glory now. The yesterday of His love was "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it." The to-day of His love is "that He might cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church." The presentation of it is the to-morrow of His love. He is performing His second period of service now, that beloved Lord of ours. The Bridegroom is up there in the double character of an Intercessor and Priest, to sustain us in our weakness, and to undertake our case when we have sinned. He is an Advocate with the Father, and a Priest with God, to represent us there in the presence of God. Oh, what bitter tears we have had to shed. I have had to shed bitter tears many a time because I have not taken advantage of His service

as Priest, to support me, and have fallen on the road, and I have had to weep over the fact that I had to take advantage of His intercessory service as Advocate with the Father. And this is what He is doing, that He might cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and when that period of service is up, Christ will get His bride, His Rachel, the object of His affections.

We come now to the instance of Isaac and Rebekah. There is another person prominent in this case. The servant is called by Abraham and sent on a mission to seek a bride for his son, and his service seems to be the predominating feature. He says, "Where am I to look for her?" The answer was, "You must look for her amongst our own kindred. Don't choose a bride out of the nations, it must be one of our own kindred, one of our relatives." Don't you see, there must be no disparity. The Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Everything about us, that would have made Him ashamed to own us, He has obliterated by His death, in order that He might have us on new ground, in a new association and relationship, in a way in which He will not be ashamed to call us His brethren.

Well, the servant starts upon his mission. He is a fitting figure of the Holy Ghost in

His mission on earth to-day, seeking out in His blessed activities a bride for the true Isaac. Isaac was one who had been received from the dead. When you find the Holy Ghost recording the action of Abraham in offering up Isaac, He practically puts it down that Abraham did offer him and that he received him from the dead in figure, and that Abraham is positively put beside God in that respect. He is allowed to feel something of what God felt when He gave His Son. It says, "He did not withhold his only begotten son." What about Ishmael? He was of the flesh, and God did not reckon him. God looked upon Isaac, the child of promise, as the only begotten son, and He said that Abraham had practically offered his son, and had practically received him again from the dead. He is a type of the true Isaac, a representative of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The servant sent by Abraham is a figure of the Holy Ghost, the One sent by God to seek a bride for His exalted Son. The story is so sweet and blessed. The servant finds the bride and sets her up first of all with jewels of silver (silver is the redemption money) and jewels of gold (gold sets before us the righteousness of God); then he brings out the raiment, which represents the new character. So she is set up in redemption and righteousness, and in a new character. You and I, who form part of

the bride of Christ, have been established on the ground of redemption and on the ground of righteousness, and we are now to appear in the character of Christ Himself. The features of Christ are to be seen in us.

Then Rebekah's relatives make a challenge: "Wilt thou go with this man?" The challenge to us is, "Will you go with the Holy Ghost?" What is the Holy Ghost doing? Conducting the bride to Christ. What else? Attracting the affections of our hearts, which should be bridal affections, to Christ where He now is. It is the Holy Ghost's mission to carry us right across the wilderness to meet Christ, because we find that Isaac comes out to meet his bride. He meets them in the field.

There is another striking thing in connection with this, you never hear of one word that the servant speaks except about Isaac after he takes charge of Rebekah to bring her to Isaac. The Holy Ghost's mission is not only to bring us to Christ, but on the way to meet Him the Spirit of God would engage our hearts and affections with the Lord Himself. Later on, we find Isaac and Rebekah meeting and greeting each other, and the chapter winds up by saying, "He brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, . . . and Isaac was comforted." Here is a bride that is going to be a comfort to a bereaved heart.

Sarah represents Israel. She is spoken of as the mother of Israel. Just as a mother represents her family, Sarah represents Israel; and Sarah is dead. What does that mean? Isaac has lost his mother. So Christ has lost Israel for the time being. What has He got in place of the Kingdom and people? He has had a new company given to Him, the Church which is to be His bride, and which in the meantime, since He has lost Israel, is to be a source of comfort to His heart. What a privilege is ours to-day in the hour of Christ's rejection, when He has been deprived of His earthly rights, to administer a little comfort to His blessed heart.

Then when we turn to the end of the Bible we find the bride again. The bride, it says, is the Lamb's wife, and when it speaks of marriage, it does not say, "the marriage of the bride," but "the marriage of the Lamb." He is everything. The bride is looked at in association with Him. The Church as the bride of Christ will share His joy and His glory when she comes out in her bridal attire, arrayed as a bride adorned for her husband. It is not the dress that suits her eyes, it is not the adornment that would please her tastes. No. Everything is to answer to the tastes and pleasure of her husband. He is everything, and the bride is everything to Him.

What a unique place the Church fills in the thoughts of God, does it not? Here

we are, a poor, insignificant set of people, having often to bemoan our crookedness and waywardness, and yet to think that we are to be linked up with Christ, as that which is destined to be His bride, to sit with Him on His throne and share with Him. All His interests are ours, and ours His, both merged into one. So God puts one name on them, which covers them both. He puts the name of Christ now upon us, so that we are the bearers of His name.

So it is going to be with Israel, when she comes forth again, and Jehovah gets His earthly bride. His name is Jehovah-Tsid-kenu, and this is the name by which *she* shall be called. He is going to put His name upon her in that day of glory, as He has put His name upon us in this His day of rejection. There is union, and with union comes the thought of affection. Union of purpose, union of affection, we are united to Him. What a privileged people! Oh, what a fall the Church has suffered when we think of her high and holy destiny. What a frightful fall she has suffered, that we should find her hand and glove with the world, that has stained its hand with the blood of Him whose bride the Church is.

May the Lord give us more vitality and affection of heart for Himself, that we may look upon ourselves here, insignificant as we may be, as God's gift to His Son, that

we may look upon ourselves as the object of the Holy Spirit's interests and activity as He conducts us through this weary waste until He sets us down in the presence of the true Isaac, and we go to be His joy and glory for ever. May the Lord be praised for such a privilege. Amen!

ART. CUTTING.

THE ESSENTIAL THING.

RICHARD CECIL, wishing to impress on some young preachers the importance of ever making prominent in their testimony Christ and His atonement, related how he went to consult a physician, who, after hearing him describe his sufferings, said: "My dear sir, there is only one remedy for such a case as yours," mentioning a particular medicine.

Mr. Cecil then rose to leave, but the doctor said: "We must not part so soon. I have long wished for an opportunity of conversing with you." So they spent an hour together, mutually delighted with each other's society.

On returning home Mr. Cecil said to his wife: "I have been to the doctor's.

What an agreeable man he is, with such a fund of anecdote, such originality of thought, such a command of language."

"What did he prescribe for you?" Mrs. Cecil inquired.

There was a pause, then Mr. Cecil exclaimed: "I have entirely forgotten the remedy. His charm of manner and conversation put everything else out of my mind."

"Now, young men," said Mr. Cecil, "it may be very pleasant for you if your congregation go away saying, 'What eloquence! What original thought! What an agreeable delivery!' But *take care that they do not forget the remedy*—Christ and His atonement, Christ and a free pardon through His Name."

SEL.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION

(1 *Corinthians i. 26—ii. 16.*)

To be of any profit this article must be read in conjunction with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

HAVING unfolded the significance of the cross of Christ, the Apostle proceeds to show that its meaning had been corroborated by the effects it had produced. He appealed to the Corinthians to

consider their own calling, for *by the preaching of the cross* they had been called. But few among them had been reckoned amongst the wise or mighty or noble of this world. The very opposite, for these were all too prone to stumble at such a message. The rather God had chosen the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised, and even things which are not.

In each case the Apostle speaks of them doubtless according to that which they were according to human reckoning, and it was astounding that God should choose and use such as these for the confounding and bringing to nought of much that looked to them so wise and honourable. At the same time these words could no doubt be applied to that which the Corinthians really were in their unconverted days, and then the wonder is that they should have become what they now were, as the fruit of the Divine choice and workmanship. But whichever way we look at it the significance is the same. The practical effects of God's choice, and of His call by the preaching of the cross, were such as put no honour upon man. No flesh could glory in His presence. All glorying must be in the Lord.

The abundant reasons why we as believers may glory in the Lord are given us in verse 30. We are "in Christ Jesus," partakers of His life and sharing in His

place and acceptance. And we are *that* "of God," and not in any way of man. God Himself is the source of all this grace which has reached us. It is true of course that we *are* "of God," as is clearly stated in 1 John iv. 4, and it is as "in Christ Jesus" that we are of God. But that is, we believe, hardly the point in the verse before us, but rather that all is of God and not of man whether we consider what we *are* in Christ, or what we *have* in Christ.

The second "of" in the verse is more literally "from." The Christ who was crucified is made unto us these things from God. Wisdom naturally comes first, inasmuch as it is the point under discussion. We need it, for sin has plunged us into ignorance and folly. But then sin has equally plunged us into guilt and condemnation; hence we need righteousness. And into contamination and corruption; whence our need of sanctification. And into bondage and slavery; so that we need redemption. Redemption comes last, inasmuch as it is a term which includes the final thing, the redemption of our bodies at the coming of the Lord.

Thus the cross excludes *in principle* all glorying in man. God's work in connection with the preaching of the cross also excludes it *in practice*. We have only the Lord in whom to glory, if we glory at all.

When Paul was commissioned to preach the Gospel he was instructed to do so in a way that would endorse the message he preached. This he stated in verse 17 of chapter i. Had he as a matter of fact done as he was told? He had. And in the opening verses of chapter ii. he reminds the Corinthians of the spirit that had marked him in his approach to them, and the character of his preaching. Verse 1 gives us the style of his preaching. Verse 2 the Subject of his message. Verse 3 the spirit that characterized him. Verse 4 reverts to the style of his preaching, but adding where his positive power lay. Verse 5 shows us the end he had in view.

As to style, he was no orator well versed in the arts of moving men by excellent or enticing speech. All that he eschewed, relying only upon the Spirit of God and His power.

For theme he had Christ and His cross only. Emphasize in your mind the two words, "among you." He knew the tendencies of the Corinthians, with their great ideas as to philosophy and the human intellect. He would not meet them on their ground and be enticed into philosophic discussions of their choosing. He determined that among them he would know nothing but Christ crucified. Paul started his career with Christ glorified, yet he knew well that except they believed on, and laid hold of, Christ crucified, nothing of a divine sort,

would be done. The truth of a crucified Christ was that which laid in the dust all their pride and glory; and until man comes down into the dust he cannot begin with God.

And Paul's own spirit was in keeping with this. He did not arrive in their midst with a great flourish of trumpets, announcing himself as "Palestine's most powerful Preacher," or something of that sort, as is customary in this twentieth century. The very reverse. Weakness, fear, trembling, are the things he alludes to. He was acutely conscious that the flesh was still in him, that he might easily be seduced from single-eyed fidelity to his Master, and betrayed into something which was not of God. He knew the mighty power of the devil, entrenched in Corinthian hearts. Hence his fear and trembling. And hence again the room for the demonstrated power of the Spirit of God, and the casting down of the devil's strongholds in human hearts. Would to God that there was more room made for the working of that power to-day!

Then we might see more of converts who really have their faith standing not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Up to the end of this fifth verse the Apostle has mentioned human wisdom eight times, in every case to utterly discredit it. From this some might imagine that wisdom of every kind is to be discounted. Others

again might suppose that the Christian faith only appeals to the feelings and emotions, and hence has in it nothing worthy of the attention of a thinking man.

So, in verse 6, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the faith abounds in wisdom, only it is the wisdom of God, and not of the great ones of the earth. Moreover it is wisdom of a character that only appeals to "the perfect," to those who have graduated, or are full-grown. We may be believers, but as long as we are in any uncertainty as to how we stand before God, as long as we are in the throes of self-occupation over questions of deliverance from the power of sin, we have neither heart nor leisure to learn the wisdom of God as expressed in His counsels and purposes, which were once a secret but now are made known.

The word, *world*, in verse 6 is really, *age*. In another scripture Satan is spoken of as "the god of this age." The god of this age uses the princes of this age to propound the wisdom of this age, while blinding their minds so that they have no knowledge of God's wisdom which was ordained before all the ages. When the Lord of glory was here he so blinded their minds that they crucified Him.

This really is a tremendous indictment! The supreme Lord of glory was condemned to a death of supreme degradation and

shame, and that not so much by the ignorant rabble as by the princes of this age. The very superscription on His cross was written in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew. The Greeks were incontestably the intellectual princes of the age. The Romans were the princes in matters of military prowess and the arts of government. The Hebrews were princes without a rival in matters of religion. Yet all were involved in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. All thereby revealed their complete ignorance of God and all brought themselves beneath His judgment.

The princes of this age "come to nought." Very humiliating this! Not only is "the understanding of the prudent" coming to "nothing," (i. 19.) but the princes of this age themselves come to nothing. The final result, the sum total, of all the clever doings is *NOTHING*. The clever men themselves come to *NOTHING*. In contrast with this we are told by the Apostle John that "he that doeth the will of God *abideth* for ever" and again we have the Lord's words to His disciples that, "your fruit should *remain*." The believer, and the believer *only*, has power to engage in that which will abide to eternity. Let us consider this very attentively, and may our lives be governed by our meditations!

It is a marvellous thought that the wisdom of God, once hidden, but now made

known, was "*ordained*" before the ages unto our glory. Not only were we ourselves chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, but God's wisdom had our glory in view before the ages began, and all was then ordained. And what God ordains never fails of consummation when God's hour is reached. Our glory then is certain, and is connected with, and subsidiary to, Christ's glory. Christ's glory is the supreme thing, but our glory is as certain as His, and equally ordained of God.

That which has been ordained, according to verse 7, has also been "*prepared*" (verse 9), and the things prepared are altogether beyond man's reach, either by eye, ear or heart. We apprehend many things by using our eyes—that is, by *observation*. Many others we apprehend by using our ears, listening to what is handed down to us,—that is, by *tradition*. Other things we apprehend by the heart instinctively—that is, by *intuition*. We apprehend the things of God in none of these ways; but by *revelation*, as verse 10 shows.

The things prepared have been *revealed* by the Spirit. The "us" of that verse is primarily the apostles and prophets to whom the truth was first made known. The truth has reached the general body of saints through them, as we shall see in a moment. But in verse 11 we are made to think of the competency of the Spirit

to reveal, since He is the Spirit of God. Only the human spirit can really know human things. Just so, only the Spirit of God knows the things of God and is competent to make them known.

But believers have received the Spirit of God as verse 12 states. Thus it is that we have competency to apprehend the things of God. No research, no experiment, no learning, no intellectual powers, can give us that competency; only the Spirit of God.

Let us take this very much to heart, for we live in an age marked by research and experiment and intellectual activity and it is commonly supposed that the human mind is capable of dealing with the things of God just as it deals with the things of man. IT IS NOT. Hence the fearful spiritual blunders perpetrated by otherwise learned men. Highly qualified are they in human things: yet pitiably blind and ignorant of the Divine.

Are we all keen to know the things of God? We certainly should be. We have a personal interest in them. The things "ordained," "prepared," and "revealed" have been "*given* to us of God." Are we possessing ourselves, in spiritual understanding and enjoyment, of our possessions?

We may be, since the things revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets have been *communicated* to us in divinely ordered

words. This verse 13 tells us. The words "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," may be rendered "communicating spiritual [things] by spiritual [means]" (N. Tr.). Here the apostle definitely claims inspiration, and *verbal* inspiration at that, for his spoken utterances. Even more so then, if that were possible, for his written utterances. The inspiration claimed definitely relates to "words." If we have not got in the Scriptures (as originally written) *God's thoughts* clothed in *God-chosen words*, we have no inspiration of any real value at all.

The last link in this wonderful chain is "discerned." If we to-day do not discern God's things through God's word it will not avail us much that they have been ordained, prepared, revealed, given and communicated. They may be ours: *are* ours, if indeed we are Christians; but for practical blessing to-day, we must discern them. And the discerning on our part is by the same Spirit, by whom they were revealed and communicated.

For discerning, we need the right spiritual condition. The "natural man," i.e., man in his natural or unconverted condition, does not discern them at all. The "spiritual," i.e., the converted man, not only indwelt but also governed and characterized by the Spirit of God, alone can take them in. Possessing the Spirit we have the mind of Christ. Governed by

the Spirit the eyes of our hearts are opened to understand.

The word "judgeth," occurring twice in verse 15, is just the word "discerneth," as the margin of a reference bible shows. Read *discerneth* and the sense is clearer. It is only the spiritual believer who has spiritual eyesight to see all things clearly.

Long ago someone was complaining: "I can't see it. I want more light!" It was said in reply, "It is not more light you want; it is windows!" That was doubtless true. If we allowed the Spirit of God to clean up the windows of our souls we should soon see clearly.

F. B. HOLE.

DID THEY JUST HAPPEN?

It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat chopper together, states a writer in an American magazine. It may be that these millions of worlds, all balanced so wonderfully in space—it may be, that they just happened. It may be, by a billion years of tumbling about they finally arranged themselves. I don't know. I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery.

But this I do know: that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a washtub for the next seventeen billion years, and you'll never make a meat chopper!

TWO GUEST-CHAMBERS.

Read Luke ii. 7; xxii. 7-20.

IT is interesting to observe that the word translated *Inn* in Luke ii. 7 is the same as *Guest-chamber* in Luke xxii. 11. So that we are justified in reading the former

“There was no room for them in the Guest-chamber.”

We invite our fellow-believers to consider with us two guest-chambers: the world's and Christ's.

The word, guest-chamber, conveys the idea of some place that is more or less attractive, and where the host provides that which is likely to be pleasing to his guests.

The world has got its guest-chamber and probably most of us have been there at some time or other in our history. Satan is the host, but he so skilfully hides his identity, and he disguises himself so successfully, that he is not easily recognised. He caters for his guests in a most remarkable way. He knows their likes and dislikes, their prejudices and preferences. If religiously inclined, he can suit their requirements; if pleasure be their craving, he can supply it in abundance; if they lust after evil things they may have them. There is One however who is excluded and

that is Christ. *There is no room for HIM in that guest-chamber.* In other words, the world had, and has, no use, and therefore no room for Christ.

That is the reason why we who know Him, and who love Him, have no use for the world, and have no desire for the world's guest-chamber.

We have read those pungent words in James iv. 4: "*Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*" It seems as if God says "The world crucified My Son therefore it is at enmity with Me, hence those who are the friends of the world are My enemies."

In the same epistle, we read of Abraham, that he had the unique distinction of being called, "*The friend of God*" (ii. 23). That sturdy patriarch "believed God," having heard the call of "the God of glory." He said goodbye to Ur of the Chaldees, he bid farewell to the world's guest-chamber and lived a life consistent therewith. It was well worth while, was it not?

That was why the Christian girl refused the hand of a young man, estimable in every way, but he was a friend of the world and she was a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ. She realized how incongruous it would be for him to go to the world's

guest-chamber while she went to Christ's guest-chamber, and she decided to remain loyal to her Lord, even if it meant a lonely path, as the world would speak, rather than sacrifice the friendship of Christ for that of the world.

Similarly, that Christian young man recognized that he could retain the friendship of his old-time companion only by continuing to be found with him in the world's guest-chamber, which would be damaging to his own soul, and would tend to hinder his companion getting blessing. He cut that link, found his home in Christ's guest-chamber, and so unconsciously carried with him the fragrance of it that, instead of being found with his friend, his friend was in due time found with him, and thus they clasped hands in happy fellowship.

As a matter of fact, if we know the joy of the one, we have no desire for, and absolutely refuse to have anything to do with the other. We say to ourselves, "There is no room for my Lord in the world's guest-chamber, and where there is no room for Him, there is no room for me." Such are they to whom He delights to say, "YE ARE MY FRIENDS" (John xv. 14).

Now let us read again these verses in Luke xxii. It was the dark night of the Lord's betrayal. He had sent Peter and John on a mission of discovery. They

were to go to the city, when they entered it they were to meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, and they were to follow him into the house where he entered in. Next they were to "say unto the good man of the house, *The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples.*" In the corresponding account of this incident in Mark xiv. 14 we read in the very reliable translation by the late J. N. Darby. "*Where is MY guest-chamber where I may eat the passover with MY disciples.*"

Shall we allow these two expressions to be printed not only on our brain but on our heart:

"MY GUEST-CHAMBER"—"MY DISCIPLES."

What a triumph of grace! In the world that had a guest-chamber which had no room for Him, He had established a guest-chamber that had no room for the world. We imagine the men of the world did not know of its existence. If they had known, they would have looked upon it with contempt. Just a few obscure, unknown, humble men who in their eyes were of no account. Yes, but the Lord was there, and that, to them, made all the difference, and what a difference it made!

Let us survey the guest-chamber, and to do so rightly let us read once more verse 12. It is "large." There is room there for *all* His disciples, no one else. It may

be that all His disciples are not found there : that is their loss. He wishes them all to be there. Whether you trusted the Saviour last night or last century, He wants you there dear Christian friend. It is an "upper" room. In the world and yet separated from it. Away from the noise, the excitement, and the confusion of the world we find the divine Host and His guests.

Lastly, it is "furnished." Furnished with all that love could provide, and that would minister to the comfort, the joy, and the satisfaction of His guests. Do we not get a beautiful picture of it in the Song of Solomon, ii. 3, 4? Read the verses, and note: the guest speaks, and says, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste." That guest had reached what a beloved servant of the Lord used to call, "The region of satisfied desire." Adoring the Host, and feasting upon His bountiful provision, finding rest in His presence and in His company.

We read further, "He brought me to the banqueting house;"—might we paraphrase that "the guest-chamber"?—"and His banner over me was love." A warm, congenial, inviting, holy, and happy place indeed. But that is not all, for, read, please, verse 6, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." Where was the guest's head? On the host's

bosom. Do we not read in John xiii. 23. that in the Lord's guest-chamber, in that "large, upper room," there was a guest who "was leaning on Jesus' bosom," and, as he felt the throbbing of His heart, he was more conscious than ever that he was "one of His disciples, *whom Jesus loved.*"

Who would not esteem it an honour to be one of those of whom He speaks as "MY disciples?" Who would miss the joy of knowing that he or she was "One of His disciples, *whom Jesus loved?*" Who would not desire the luxury of being found in that which He calls "*MY GUEST-CHAMBER?*" The guests were, as we have remarked, a few humble men; but it is simply charming to visualize Him as He looked upon them, and, in accents of tenderest love, said, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." (Luke xxii. 28). He virtually said, "In a world that has had no room for Me, you have been My friends. I shall not forget that. You shall, in a coming day, in circumstances altogether different from the present, in a world of joy without end, eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, [My guest-chamber], I Myself shall serve you; [verse 27]; and, not only so, but you shall sit on Thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

What a Lord is ours!

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

(*To be concluded.*)

CALAMITIES.

THE following striking extract, from a letter dated 11th March, 1932, is from the pen of our aged and revered brother, Mr. A. E. Walker, who passed into the presence of his Lord and Master on 7th June 1933 in his 85th year. We feel it ought to have a wider sphere of usefulness than being confined to the one to whom it was addressed.

This is all the more so as many of those who are the Lord's have been called to pass through exceptionally trying circumstances as the aftermath of the Great War. Unemployment, stagnation of trade, have crippled many, and put them in very trying circumstances, not brought about by their own acts, which have greatly tested their faith.

How God delights to support His people in and through the trial the following extract testifies.

"Though you and I have troubles and problems, it is wonderful how the Lord grants to us both those mercies, such as *health*, which seem direct evidences and tokens of His kindness, so that we can go on, amid and in spite of the many difficulties that would hinder us, *but for Him*.

"His word has been wonderful to me. Do you know *once* during the War, we did not know *what* to do? No orders came

and no money !* I felt that if the Lord did not open the arm of the Red Sea for me, we could not go on.

"I was walking along the street one day, and suddenly the word, 'calamities' came into my mind, and I thought there was a promise somewhere about them. I looked it up and found the wonderful SHELTER Psalm,

'Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me : for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the SHADOW of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these *calamities* be overpast. I will cry unto God most high ; unto God that performeth all things for me' (Psalm lvii. 1, 2).

"I lived on that heavenly food, beloved brother, for a solid month, and then the wall gave way, and the way of salvation opened.

"Well, so we go on, and so we triumph through Christ, and shall thank Him for it all, and tell the story of His grace when we get home."

Our beloved brother has got home to tell the story of God's wonderful grace. We are left in the scene of pressure and trial a little longer, and we can say with deep gratitude and confidence.

GOD IS ABLE.

We recall the quiet confidence of the

*Our brother was head of a manufacturing company. Many were dependent for their livelihood on the prosperity of his firm. We know how deeply our brother would feel for others, even more than for himself.

three Hebrew young men in the presence of the infuriated monarch, and with the knowledge that a burning fiery furnace lay before them. Listen to the quiet determination of their words :—

“ O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

“ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King.

“ But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up ” (Daniel iii. 16-18).

We like those words,

“ *But if not.* ”

How magnificently they were carried through the supreme test. Better than being saved *from* the fiery furnace was their walking unburnt and unscathed *through* the flames, that had destroyed the stoutest soldiers of the realm, who were deputed to cast them into the holocaust. Nay further, to walk in that furnace in the divine company of the Son of God was triumph indeed !

Our brother went through the fiery furnace of affliction, confiding, as he said, under the *shelter* of God's wings, finding a *refuge* there until

THESE CALAMITIES WERE OVERPAST.

A. J. POLLOCK.

SOUND DOCTRINE.

IN view of the apostasy which is every day becoming more evident, and the corrupt doctrine which infidel teachers are propagating on all hands, it behoves Christians, with more zeal than ever, to hold fast to sound doctrine. We are plainly warned of the fact that, "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 3); and, judging from what one sees all around, that time has come. But, just as apostates are turning away from it, Christians are exhorted to hold fast to it. Herein lies the difference between the real and the unreal.

Man, who follows the natural bent of his unregenerate heart, much dislikes a religion that restrains his vice and corrects his practice. On the other hand, he will not altogether reject religion, for it distinguishes him from the lower creation. His spirit goes upward; that of the beast goes downward (Eccles. iii. 21). He is a religious being; the beast is not. What happens is, he invents a religion that will not restrain his vice, nor correct his practice. He assumes a form of piety, but denies the power thereof. He turns the grace of God into lasciviousness. In brief, he brings divine and holy things down to the level of his corrupt and sinful nature. The teachers, to whom he lends his ear,

are avowedly of this adapted religion; and the doctrine which they teach, since it is diverted from practice, is spurious and unsound.

While the principle of adaptation is the rule among the religious unregenerate, who follow their own lust with a form of piety, it is not restricted to them. It may extend its baneful influence among Christians and affect them. Very easily they may take colour from the age in which they live. They only need to become lax in practice, and they soon slip down on the descending scale. When this is the case, the doctrine must suffer deterioration. As to this there need be no question; for when doctrine and practice cease to be shown in just proportion, the former of necessity loses its soundness.

If, by way of illustration, we take two vessels and place them on a level surface, connecting them underneath with a tube, then pour water into one, the quantity of water in each will be equal. This is the result of the known law that water rises to its own level. In normal Christianity doctrine and practice are equally balanced—never divorced, never disproportionate. The one is but the accurate expression of the other. Soundness of doctrine is seen in soundness of practice. We would not expect the hand of a clock to indicate differently from the working of its mechanism. We should not expect to see practice differ-

ent from doctrine ; they go together, inseparable and proportionate. This is normal Christianity.

The Apostles were careful to enjoin Christians to be watchful as to this. Doctrine and practice, faith and works, were never divorced, and never considered as separate things—always viewed as one inseparable, proportionate whole. In fact, James says, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (ii. 26). And Paul, exposing ungodly professors, says, in Titus i. 16, “They profess that they know God,” (this is doctrine); “but in works they deny Him” (this is practice). This, we may observe, is just the antithesis of what should be.

Without attaching undue importance to the meaning of words, in the discussion of principles, we would draw the reader's attention to the significance of the word “sound.” It means that which is whole or entire, in all its component parts, in contrast to that which is “corrupt,” or broken up in its component parts. Doctrine becomes corrupt when it is severed from practice. Its essential element is wanting and decay follows. Sound doctrine is maintained by setting it forth in practice. No better example could be given than Paul, himself. He said : “Those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do” (Phil. iv. 19). This

was sound doctrine. It was taught by him, and Christians learned it; it was given by him (authoritatively as Apostle), and they received it; it was clearly preached by him, and they heard it; and, best of all, it was *seen in him*, and they *saw it*. Doctrine and practice, in his illustrious case, were one inseparable and proportionate whole.

Now much is said these days about revival. Christians, generally speaking, want revival. How are they to get it? By prayer? This is not enough. Not only by prayer but also by coming under the power of piety in individual life. This cuts at the very root of the trouble. It would be very incongruous for Christians to come together for prayer as to revival in the Church, when they are lax in practice, carnal in walk, pleasure-living and easy-going in their individual life. *Begin at Jerusalem* we would say. God has always had His centre for operation. The centre from which revival will operate is the individual life of godliness. From here it will extend to the Church; from the Church to the world.

Sound doctrine maintained by individual Christians is the great centre from which all spiritual movement will take place. We do well to see to it that *we* are subject to the Spirit; that *our* doctrine is sound, as shown in life; that carnal ease, worldly pleasure, conformity to the age in which we live—all is eliminated from the life, and that

for us to live is Christ.

Then—but not *before* it—we may expect great blessing all round, and surely this is needed as never before! Israel's remnant had to *bring in* before God would *pour out* (Mal. iii. 10). We too will have to *bring in* before we can expect God to *pour out*. Dispensations may change; the principles of God's government never change.

J. HOUSTON.

“THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST.”

(Extracts from a letter, just received from a well-known Missionary, worthy of careful consideration by believers in the home countries.)

CHINA continues to be afflicted with a variety of serious public ills, including civil war, widespread poverty and distress, and also the prevalence of brigandage with other forms of crime and disorder in many parts of the country. Notwithstanding these somewhat diverse conditions, I am glad to say that the work of the Gospel has gone forward, new cities and districts being occupied by the Lord's servants. On the other hand, a certain number of centres have been captured by Communists, who, as you are aware, are anti-Christian to the point of robbery, violence and even murder, both of missionaries and of Chinese believers. I

would ask your special prayers on behalf of the latter, many of whom are poor at all times, and therefore can ill afford to be robbed, to say nothing of the hardship and strain involved in having to leave their homes in order to seek for safety from the hands of wicked men. . . .

Speaking for myself, the impression is increasingly strong in my own mind that those who are put in trust with the Gospel, whether Chinese or foreign missionaries, need above all to show forth its spirit and its principles in their conduct and their persons, as they go in and out amongst men. To preach Gospel and act law is fatal to the former. If we are to teach believers all things whatsoever the Lord commanded, as stated at the end of Matthew, then it is necessary that we ourselves should obey the same. The fact that our Lord's teachings regarding personal demeanour and conduct are in substance repeated in the Epistles is a weighty one.

It would be easy to cover sheets with instances of blessing due to the manifestation by the Lord's servants of meekness and willingness to suffer loss, rather than to murmur and dispute about these things. Some say we should "give to the deserving." Certainly, but that is not Gospel. If a man deserves it, then he has a right to it. The essence of the Gospel is grace and bounty in untold measure to the undeserving; yea, more than that, to those who are evil and enemies. It is only the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ which will enable the Lord's people out here so to do. That, I suppose, is also true in the home countries.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians iii.* 1—*iv.* 21.)

To be of any profit this article must be read in conjunction with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

IN the opening verses of chapter iii, the Apostle brings the Corinthians face to face with their true condition in very plain words. Enriched as they were "in all utterance, and in all knowledge," they may have imagined themselves to be worthy of high commendation. In point of fact they came under definite censure. They were not spiritual but carnal.

They were not *natural*, for "the natural man" is man in his unconverted condition. Nor were they *spiritual*, for the spiritual man is man enlightened and controlled by the Spirit of God. They were *carnal*, for the carnal man, as spoken of in this passage, is man, who though possessing the Spirit, is controlled not by the Spirit but by the flesh. Being carnal, Paul had hitherto fed them with milk not meat; that is, he had only instructed them in the elementary things of the faith, and had not said much to them of that hidden wisdom of God, to which he alluded in chapter ii.

The Corinthians however might resent Paul's charge against them and wish to rebut it. So Paul proves his point by again referring to their divisions under party lead-

ers, which generated envyings and strifes. In all this they were walking according to man and not according to the Spirit of God.

If the Apostle Paul wrote to us to-day, what would he say? What *could* he say, but the same thing with greatly added emphasis? The division of true saints into, or among, the many parties or sects could hardly go further than it has gone. We too might wish to rebut the charge. We might say—But are we not earnest? Have we not much light? Do we not expound Scripture correctly? The reply would come to us—While some say, I am of A—, and a few, I am of B—, while many say, I am of X—, and a multitude say, I am of Z—, *are ye not carnal?*

In so saying we are not unmindful of the fact that there are to be found some who are spiritually minded. There were some amongst the Corinthians, as a later chapter reveals. But this we do say, that they who *really* are spiritual will be the last people on earth who desire to stand out as exceptions, prominent and distinguished. They know that this would be the very way to help on the evil here denounced, for they would promptly find themselves made into leaders of parties! NO. Their spirituality will rather express itself in humility of mind, and that confession which makes the sin of all the people of God

their own. They will pray in the spirit of Ezra ix. Ezra said, "OUR iniquities are increased over our head, and OUR trespass is grown up into the heavens," though personally he had had very little share in all the wickedness, but rather was marked by a very exceptional piety.

The same humble spirit marks Paul here. He promptly disclaims for himself any place of importance, and for Apollos also. Evidently he had full confidence in Apollos, that in this matter he was wholly like-minded with himself, and therefore he could freely use his name. Whilst his omission here of the name of Cephas (Peter), is a witness to his own delicacy of feeling; since there had once been a serious issue between himself and Peter, as Galatians ii. bears witness.

Neither Paul nor Apollos were anything more than servants by whom God had been pleased to work. God was the great Workman. In this passage (verses 5 to 11) the Corinthians are viewed in a twofold way, as God's husbandry, and as God's building. Paul and Apollos were but "God's fellow-workmen." That is the force of the first clause of verse 9. They were not *competing* workmen, much less were they *antagonistic* workmen. They were *fellow-workmen*, and both belonged to God.

Each however had his own distinctive work. In the husbandry, Paul planted and

Apollos followed to water the young plants: in the building, Paul was the wise architect who laid the foundation, and Apollos built upon it. Their labours were diverse, but their object was one. This is emphasized in verses 7 and 8. Paul and Apollos in themselves were nothing, yet they worked each in his appointed sphere. And both were *one* as to their object and aim, though each should finally be rewarded according to their own labour. Thus among His servants does God maintain both unity and diversity, and there is to be no pitting of one against another.

application

So much for Paul and Apollos. But they were not the only labourers who had taken part in the work at Corinth. So at the end of verse 10 the application of the figure is widened out to embrace "every man," that is, every man who had put his hand to the work at Corinth. It applies of course equally to any man who puts his hand to any work of God, anywhere, and at any time. It applies therefore to us to-day.

The foundation had been well and irrevocably laid by Paul when he first visited Corinth and stayed for a year and a half. It had been the right foundation—Jesus Christ. The question now was as to his successors. Not so much *how* they built as *what* they built in. Was it substance precious in nature, and capable of standing

the fire? Or was it common in substance, and easily consumed? The day is coming when the fire test will be applied. Everything will be made manifest. The true character of all our work will be revealed. Not merely how much we have done, but "of what sort" it is. How searching is the thought that, "THE DAY shall declare it."

When *that* day sheds its light upon us and applies its test, it may leave our work standing. If so, we shall receive reward. God grant it may be so for each of us!

On the other hand, our work may be consumed and fall in ruins, yet we ourselves be saved, "so as through fire." When the three Hebrews passed through the fire, as recorded in Daniel iii, they and their clothes were wholly untouched: only their bonds were consumed. What loss for us if we come through the fire naked, stripped of all that with which we had clothed ourselves as the fruit of our labours here.

But further, there was evidently a doubt in the Apostle's mind whether all those who had wrought at Corinth were truly converted men. Hence the solemn warning of verses 16 and 17. Work may be done which is positively destructive in its effect upon the building. This raises a further important question. What is the *nature* of this building, which is God's?

The Apostle asks the Corinthians if they did not know that as God's building they had the character of His temple? In them as His temple God dwelt by His Spirit. This gave to them collectively a very sacred character. To do work which would "defile," or "corrupt," or "destroy," God's temple was terribly serious. If in the coming day any man's work is found to be of that destructive character, God will destroy him.

Apparently some who were going about in those days and doing, as Paul feared, this destructive work, were men who had a good deal of the wisdom of this world, and posed therefore amongst the saints, as very superior persons. This would account for the pungent words that fill verses 18 to 20. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. So let no man deceive himself on this point. And if the destructive workers still go about, deceived themselves, and deceiving others, let *us* not be deceived by them.

What woe and destruction must await the destructive critics, the semi-infidel modernistic teachers, of Christendom! Inflated by the wisdom of this world, they take it upon themselves to deny and contradict the wisdom of God. They may imagine that they only have to expect the opposition of unlearned and old-fashioned Christians. They forget the day that shall declare God's judgment—THE DAY!

Let us not glory in men. Some of those in whom the Corinthians had been glorying may have been men of quite undesirable type. But let us not glory in the best of men. On the one hand, no man is worth it, as chapter i showed us. On the other hand, as emphasized here, grace has given us a place which should put us far above glorying in a mere man. "All things" are ours. All things? That is rather a staggering statement. Is it really *all things*? Well, look at the wide sweep of verse 22. The best of saints on the one hand, and the world on the other. Life on the one hand and death on the other. Things present on the one hand and things to come on the other. All are ours.

How are they ours? Verse 23 answers that. They are ours because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. All things are God's. No one can dispute that, and there we begin. But then God has His Christ, who is the Heir of all things. And, most wonderful to say, the Christ proposes to practically possess Himself of His mighty possessions by putting His saints into possession. Even in Daniel vii. this is hinted at. The "Ancient of Days" takes the supreme throne. When He does, "One like the Son of Man" appears, and to Him there was given "dominion and glory and a kingdom." But that is not the end of the story, for we further read, "the time came that the saints possessed the king-

dom." Read that chapter before proceeding further.

So all things *are* ours, and we must never forget it. The remembrance of it will lift us above the world with its false attractions, above the wisdom of this world, above glorying in man, in even the best of saints. For the Corinthians, or for ourselves, to be glorying in man, is a more unsuitable proceeding than for the Heir to the throne of the British Empire to be glorying in the dustmen who serve the Borough Council.

The men of this world, and—sad to say—especially modernistic preachers, are often remarkably like "Muckrake" of Bunyan's great allegory. They have no eye for the things of heaven. They boast a purely earthly religion, which aims at producing a little more order amongst the sticks and stones and refuse of the floor. But Paul and Apollos? Who and what are they? May we not glory in them? They are but servants and stewards. And the fourth chapter opens with a reminder of this, and with the statement that the essential virtue of a steward is faithfulness. This again raises the thought of THE DAY, which is to declare all things, as the 13th verse of the previous chapter told us.

In verse 3 the words, "man's judgment," should read "man's day," and thus the con-

nection and contrast is made plain. In the light of "*the day*," Paul was not overmuch troubled or concerned about the judgment of "*man's day*," or even of the Corinthians themselves. Had they been in a spiritual condition he would doubtless have listened patiently to any criticism of himself which they wished to proffer. But they were carnal and consequently their judgment was of but little worth. Paul lets them know this.

Moreover Paul had a good conscience. The opening of verse 4 has been translated, "For I am conscious of nothing in myself; but I am not justified by this." How good it would be if we could each speak thus: if we were each so true to what we have learned of the mind of God that we are not conscious of anything amiss. Yet even a Paul had to admit that this did not justify him, for he is to be judged not by *what he knew*, but by the Lord and *what He knows*. So have we all; and there is a vast difference between the standard erected by our consciousness and that erected by the omniscience of the Lord.

What does the Lord know? Let verse 5 tell us—one of the most searching verses in the Bible. When the Lord comes He will usher in the day, and the beams of its light will have X-ray properties. This verse is written, not in view of the enormous evils of the world without, but of the actions that take place within the Christian circle.

Oh! what painful episodes—in their uncountable thousands—have taken place amongst the saints of God. Many of them more or less private in nature; some of them public and ecclesiastical. We may form our judgments, and even become violent partizans; and all the while there may be dark corners hidden from our eyes in which *hidden things* are secreted. There may be secret motives in hearts, altogether veiled from us. All is coming out in the light of the day. The final court of appeal lies in the presence of the Lord. His verdict may irrevocably upset all the verdicts of the courts below. So, if we feel ourselves wronged, let us have patience. If inclined to take some drastic action, let us take great care. Search well the dark corners lest there be some hidden things which should see the light. Search your own heart lest a wrong motive lurk there. Think twice and thrice before launching the thunderbolt, especially if it be an ecclesiastical one which may affect many.

The last clause of verse 5 is rather, "then shall each have praise from God." That is to say, the point is not that every man is going to be praised, but that each who *is* praised will have his praise *from GOD*, and not from some few of his fellow-creatures. The Corinthians had their party leaders. They praised this one extravagantly, and these they condemned; and *vice versa*. It was all worthless. God give us

grace to avoid this kind of thing. The only praise worth having is praise from God.

Verse 6 shows us that the real party leaders at Corinth were other than Paul or Apollos, probably gifted local leaders, or even visiting brethren of Judaising tendencies, to whom he alludes more plainly in his second epistle. Paul avoided the use of their names, but he wanted all to learn the lesson, not to be puffed up for one as against another. No one has any ground for boasting, however shining their gift, for all that they have they have received from God.

Now this glorying in man is of the spirit of the world. And if the world creeps in at one point, it will soon creep in at another. So it had at Corinth. They were full and rich, and reigning like kings, having a real "good time," while their Lord was still rejected, and the apostles of the Lord were sharing His rejection. There is a tinge of holy sarcasm in that word, "I would to God ye did reign, that we also [Paul and his companions] might reign with you." The saints will reign when Christ reigns, and the apostles will not be missing from their thrones.

What a picture of the apostles, as they were then, do verses 9 to 13 present! Comment it not needed. We only need to

let the picture be engraved on our minds. Paul painted the picture not to shame us but to warn us. But without a doubt we shall be both warned and shamed. He was a spiritual father to the Corinthians and not merely an instructor, for he had been used to their conversion. We, too, as Gentiles, have been converted through him, though indirectly, and he is our instructor through his inspired writings. So let us also take him as our model, and imitate his faith and devotedness.

The closing verses of our chapter show that some amongst the Corinthians were not only running after party leaders, and worldly in life, but they were conceited and puffed up. To such the Apostle writes very plain words. For the moment Timothy had come to remind them of what was right and becoming, but he anticipated coming shortly himself. When he came in the power of God's kingdom, of God's authority, these conceited brethren might measure themselves against it, if they so desired.

Did they desire it? How effectively it would puncture their inflated pretensions! Would it not be better to humble themselves before God, and enable Paul to visit them in a far happier spirit?

And will it not be well for us all to be searched and humbled as we close this chapter?

F. B. HOLE.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Is it scriptural for a Christian to ask for mercy? If so how do you reconcile Hebrews iv. 16, with Romans xi. 30?—CREETOWN.

IT certainly is scriptural for a Christian to ask for mercy. The scripture you refer to, Hebrews iv. 16, shows this, as also do such scriptures as 2 Timothy i. 2, and 16. Are we not all very conscious that we need the sovereign favour and help of God continually, and that without any thought of merit on our side?

There is no contradiction of any sort between the two scriptures that you cite. The point that is discussed in Romans xi, is the mystery of God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles. Until the rejection of Christ all God's public dealings were confined to Israel, though here and there He showed mercy to individuals from among the Gentiles, as, for instance, Ruth and Naaman. Now, for the time being, Israel is set aside as being unbelieving, and mercy has been extended to the Gentiles, in sending forth to them the Gospel. Paul had been specially called for this work, as verse 13 of the chapter shows. The whole chapter deals with dispensational truth.

We must distinguish, then, between what is *dispensational* and what is purely *personal*. By reason of the change of dispensation mercy has been extended to the Gentile nations. As a result of that we, and an innumerable company from the Gentiles besides, have obtained mercy, even as Paul the Jew did. (1 Timothy i. 13). But even so, in a thousand details of daily life we need mercy from God. So let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may get it.

TWO GUEST-CHAMBERS.

(*Read Luke ii. 7; xxii. 7-20.*)

Concluded from last month.

IT was a never-to-be-forgotten occasion. How significant, and how full of meaning, are the words: "*And it was night*" (John xiii. 30). It was night for the blessed Lord, for the cross was immediately before Him; it was night for the disciples, for they were about to lose their Master; and it was night for the world, for it had definitely refused "the Light of the world." Outside that Guest-chamber Christ's enemies were plotting for His life; the powers of darkness were let loose; and the patrons of the world's guest-chamber were determined to get rid of the Christ of God.

Let us again repair to that upper room and visit Christ's Guest-chamber. Note the calm, peaceful tranquility of that hallowed place. Observe the gracious influence of His presence who was the Host, and who, even under such circumstances, could speak of "MY PEACE" and "MY JOY" (John xiv. 27; xv. 11). We view that wonderful scene; we wonder and we worship. For His guests there was the transition from the old to the new. They ate the passover

for the last time, and they partook of the Lord's Supper for the first time. They no longer wanted the shadow now that they had the substance; they said goodbye to type for now they had the reality; they bid farewell to ritual for now they had the simplicity of that which He Himself inaugurated.

Think now of a few details. "When the hour was come He sat down" (verse 14). This may have a spiritual significance, but we feel sure it conveys a practical lesson. What is more deplorable than to see believers coming late to the precious feast of remembrance on the Lord's day. If this obtained in the six working-days how many trains would be lost; how many situations would be lost; how much trouble would result in business etc.; and what an undesirable reputation we should acquire. At the appointed time the Lord is there, and if we are late we keep Him waiting. Generally speaking our spiritual state can be judged by our punctuality, or otherwise, when we respond to His invitation to meet Him in His Guest-chamber.

They ate the passover. Within twenty-four hours of that time it would be possible to say "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians v. 7). Then, the Lord's Supper. It will be noticed how closely the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, follows the description in verses 19, 20,

when he writes to the believers in Corinth (1 Corinthians xi. 23-26).

How simple it all was! No robed priests; no elaborate service; no ornate furnishing; no person, no thing, no sound, to come in between the guests and their Host. HE took bread, HE gave thanks, HE brake it, HE gave it to them, HE said: "This is MY body which is given for YOU: this do in remembrance of ME." So with the Cup, He said: "This cup is the new testament in MY blood, which is shed for YOU." How touching are the words "MY body for YOU," "MY blood for YOU." He the eternal Son of the eternal God who had come into a body that He might give it; and that He might shed His blood and that—"for YOU."

Who is He? None so great, so glorious, so wonderful as He? Who are we? Poor, miserable, good-for-nothing sinners. Yet for such as WE, who were of no account, HE gave His body, and HE shed His blood. When we think of that, how *can* we refrain from answering to His dying request, repeated from the glory; "This do in remembrance of Me."

A footnote to 1 Corinthians xi. 23-25, in the translation to which we referred last month, says:

"The word translated 'remembrance' has an active significance of 'recalling,' or 'calling to mind,' as a memorial. 'For the calling Me to mind.'"

So we remember, recall, our precious Lord as He was when in death whilst we rejoice to surround Him by faith as He is in resurrection life and glory. We can well understand how the chief butler to the king of Egypt, when he saw Joseph in his glory, would remember, recall, him as he was in the prison.

A lady-missionary was about to come home on furlough, standing outside the Mission Station, waiting to say goodbye, a native boy put a small knife in her hand, and the interpretation of what he said as he did so is: "To see me by." We have no doubt that every time that lady looked at the knife when she was in the homeland, she would visualize that boy as he was when he gave it to her.

May we not, with reverent and adoring hearts, recall our blessed Lord as He was when He gave Himself? Then follow Him where He is and as He is, hail Him in the midst, the Host in His Guest-chamber; commemorate His death on the one hand, celebrate His victory on the other hand; and lay at His feet the tribute of worthy praise.

Thank God, the simple scene of Luke xxii. can be, and is, reproduced to-day. A quiet room, nothing to take the eye off Himself; nothing to keep the ear from hearing His voice the music of which surpasses

all that man can supply; no one to occupy the place that belongs to Him and to Him alone.

“For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew xviii. 20. New Trans.)

He Himself gathers, His Name is the rallying point, He takes His place in the midst. It is ours to answer to His call; to own His Name; to acknowledge His Authority; to rest in His presence; to bask in the sunshine of His love; to listen as He sings praise in God the Father's ear and to join the singing that He leads. What a Guest-chamber! What a Host! Who would miss it?

The question may be asked: “Is the thought of the guest-chamber limited to the first day of the week?” By no means. If we do not know anything about being there on the other six days, we will neither be morally fit for it, nor will we enjoy being there on the first day. In the Gospel according to John we have the guest-chamber, as we have been considering it, in chapters xiii. and xiv. Chapter xv. shows us the Lord Jesus and His disciples in the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, in the darkness of night, in the chilling atmosphere of the world; His foes awaiting the moment for their attack; He urged His loved ones—“Abide in Me.”

We have to pass through the same world; it is still night; the enmity of men has not diminished, we need expect no quarter from the world if we are true to Christ. We would grow faint, and give in, and retreat, were it not that His Word comes to us, "Abide in Me." As we do so, we shall find ourselves in His Guest-chamber, the experience of the guest recorded in the Song of Solomon, chapter ii, to which we called attention in our first paper, will be ours.

The Guest-chamber of Luke ii. 7, was in no sense a home. Jesus was refused admittance there. That of Luke xxii. sets forth that which has been the home of Christ's disciples right down through the ages; which is our home now, praise His Name, and which shall be our home till He translates us to the Father's House. Whether in His Guest-chamber on earth, or in the Father's House, *there* is and *there* will be our home because our blessed Lord Jesus is there and "Where Jesus is 'tis Heaven there."

May the Lord grant that we may find our joy in being guests in His Guest-chamber till we see Him face to face; and

"There with unwearied gaze
Our eyes on Him we'll rest,
And satisfy with endless praise
Our hearts supremely blest."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

THE RIGHT ORDER.

IN most well-known languages the conjugation of the verb, to be, begins as follows:

*I am,
Thou art,
He is,*

In the Hebrew language however the order is as follows:

*He is,
Thou art,
I am.*

It has been well pointed out that this illustrates in a nutshell the philosophy of the Greek world and of the Hebrew.

The Greek was cultured, his language commanded universal admiration for its flexibility, its beauty, its power of expressing subtle shades of meaning. But the Greek was PAGAN. He had no real sense of God. The fall of man had left him self-centred. It is no wonder then that this famous verb in their language should begin with *I*—I AM, with themselves. The best of their ancient philosophers began there. In many cases for practical purposes they stopped there.

But man has relations with his neighbours, and civilized countries have their government and their code of living, which recognize to some extent our duties one to another. So we come to "THOU ART."

How often the most advanced get no further than that. They render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and forget to render to God, the things that are God's.

But even in heathen Greece there were philosophers, who searched after God. They might begin with, "I AM," with self, they might branch out to "THOU ART," and think about their neighbour, but there were some too who long for something further and groped after God. Socrates was one such.

We turn from the philosophy of the Greek to that of the Hebrew. How was it that their verb, to be, began its conjugation unlike any other well-known language? The answer is found in Scripture. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans iii. 1, 2).

Long before Socrates was born Abraham had the vision of the God of glory and became the father of the faithful for all time. Things were shaping in him and his descendants, in the ways of God, for the revelation of His holy word. Six centuries roll by, and we see Moses writing the inspired words that in time produced the Pentateuch. David wrote many psalms, prophets added their part. The Israelites

were blessed with the presence of God in their midst and the knowledge of the Most High.

We sometimes wonder how language first came into existence. One can only come to the conclusion that at first it was the miraculous gift of a benificent Creator to our first parents. Was it the Hebrew language? We cannot tell.

But in the order of the beginning of the conjugation of the verb, to be, in the Hebrew language we can trace the influence of the revelation of God. The Israelites nationally were not, as a race of people, any better than their neighbours. How is it then that even in the structure of their verb, we see traces of something higher than in philosophic Greek? It is not through their knowledge of God and the influence of the Scriptures?

How significant the order of their verb:

He is (God)

Thou art (My neighbour)

I am (Self)

If we put God first, our neighbours second, and self last, we are on good ground. How happy would things be if all acted on this model.

When this was pointed out to a Hebrew scholar of 40 years' standing he exclaimed that he had never noticed the beauty of the order before. Yet, it was there all the time.

At any rate, if we learn a lesson from this order, these few lines will not have been written in vain.

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE COMING OF OUR LORD.

OF all the scriptures of the New Testament which treat of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ there is none that deals with it more explicitly and with such fulness of detail as 1 Thessalonians iv. 13, 18. In speaking of the Second Coming of our Lord I do not refer especially to that side of it which Charles Wesley celebrates in his majestic hymn—

“Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train.
Hallelujah!
Jesus comes and comes to reign!”

That He will thus come at the appointed hour we do not doubt. And this passage in its earlier verses expressly alludes to it, as we shall see. That is what may be called the *second* part of His coming; there is an anterior part of which the saints at Thessalonica had heard but little, possibly nothing at all. They were not ignorant of the fact that the Saviour would return. That great truth was an integral portion of

the gospel which they had received and wherein they stood. And in receiving it they had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus our Deliverer from coming wrath. All this is stated in so many words in the closing verses of chapter one, which we shall do well to read. From this we learn that the gospel which Paul preached unto them did not end with a Saviour who had died for their sins, who was risen and in glory. *He was coming again* to deal with His foes, to establish His kingdom, and then His saints should have their part in His glorious reign.

But this prospect was not so clear to their minds as it may be to ours, and it gave rise to questions which they felt themselves incompetent to answer. What about those who fall asleep meanwhile? Would they not be great losers? How could they share in the glory of His kingdom if they were not on earth when He came? For we must not suppose that as yet they knew the truth of the resurrection from among the dead. It is more than probable that they did not. That Christ was risen they knew very well, but that others should be raised even as He, was another matter. And so the Apostle writes to set their mind at rest. He lets them know that "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with

Him." No doubt about that. They shall come with Christ and share His glory when the day of His glory dawns.

And then follows a new revelation—something they had never heard before. And what he is about to tell them is invested with all the authority of "*the word of the Lord.*" This in itself should place us in the position of reverent and attentive hearers anxious not to miss a syllable, but to profit to the utmost by the communication he is now to make. First of all he would have them know that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise take precedence of those who fall asleep. No advantage will accrue to us. Blessed though it be to remain till the Lord returns, it will confer nothing upon us. Indeed, "the dead in Christ shall rise *first.*" It will be theirs to feel the first touch of that divine power which will conform both them and us to the image of our Lord (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

More than one thing may be noticed here. It is the Lord Himself who shall come for His saints. When the purposes of God begin to ripen for the restoration of Israel to the land of their fathers, it is *the angels* who shall be sent forth to gather His elect from the four winds of heaven (Matt. xxiv. 31). Those celestial beings shall be His servants to set in motion everything that will be needed to accomplish that sure and great result. But in our case no angels are in view. None but the Lord is seen. And it is into the air He descends. That will be the meeting-place between Him and His heavenly saints. Then His glorious voice shall be heard that calls the dead in Christ from their graves. What an answer there will be from every part of this wide earth where the dead in Christ now lie! *The body sown in weakness shall be raised in power, sown in dishonour it shall be raised in glory, sown a natural body it shall be raised a spiritual body* (1 Cor. xv. 42-44). Then shall be heard that triumphant challenge, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Nor is that all. "We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"How bright the resurrection morn

On all the saints will break!

The Lord Himself will then return,

His ransomed Church to take.

Our Lord Himself we then shall see,
Whose blood for us was shed ;
With Him for ever we shall be,
Made like our glorious Head."

To the man of the world all this may seem like an idle dream, the child of an unbridled imagination. "What!" he may exclaim in incredulous tones, "would you have us believe that at some unknown moment, possibly near at hand, not only the dead shall rise, but every living Christian shall be caught away to heaven as you say Elijah was? Impossible! How could such things be?" Similar questions were asked by the Sadducean school of old. And the Lord pointed out to them the source of all error, doubt, and unbelief—they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matt. xxii. 29). Now the Scriptures cannot be broken. Every word shall stand. And as for the power of God, it can do all things. Impossibilities vanish away, they flee from the presence of God's almightiness. With Him nothing is impossible. The Hand that fashioned all worlds and holds them firmly compacted together—the One who gives life and motion and being to every creature in the vast universe—whose wisdom, power, and glory are seen in the infinitely small as in the infinitely great, He is able both to raise the dead and take away the living—changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. xv. 52). Amid these august mysteries of the Christian faith the humble believer walks with steady step

and unreeling brain. He knows that his Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is able to do everything, and on His sure word he rests.

And if it be "the dead in Christ" who shall be raised, so all who are "*in Christ*" shall be caught up when the Lord comes. Not one of them shall be left behind. There are those who would fain persuade us that only some of the dead in Christ shall hear His voice and come forth—those who when on earth attained to a high degree of personal sanctity and to a lofty standard of devotedness—these only. The rest, though they shall have a place in the *eternal* kingdom, shall have no part in Christ's *millennial* reign. They were not faithful, they shall be excluded. And as regards the living saints, only the very true and loyal-hearted shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. All others will be left to go through the great tribulation. With such views we have no sympathy, we believe they lack the support of the Word of God. If we mistake not they originate partly in the failure to observe the difference between the coming of our Lord *for* His saints and His appearing *with* them in glory, and partly through not seeing the unique place the Church holds in her calling and hopes as distinct from the redeemed of a past dispensation and of one yet to come. For there will be another when the Church period ends and God begins to fulfil His

counsels concerning Israel and all the families of the earth.

“Israel’s race shall then behold Him,
Full of grace and majesty ;
Though they set at nought and sold Him.
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree ;
Then in glory
Shall their great Messiah see.”

But to return. As to the resurrection, it is said, “Christ the firstfruits; afterward *they that are Christ’s* at His coming” (1 Cor. xv. 23). So in 1 Thessalonians iv. “*the dead in Christ* shall rise first.” There is in neither passage the slightest hint that only some of these shall be raised. And as to the living it is said, “We shall be changed.” “We . . . shall be caught up.” Beyond doubt, the “WE” of both passages is broad enough to embrace every saint who is alive and remains unto the coming of the Lord. Were it otherwise, were our part in that glorious event to depend on *our* faithfulness rather than on *His* grace, who among us could cry, “Come, Lord Jesus”? Who with any just sense of his own imperfections, both as a saint and a servant, would be confident that he would be “caught up” if it rested on what he had been? Such a theory tends either to bondage or pride, and is destructive of the finest spiritual affections which have our precious Saviour as their object.

Nor can any tell when this great event will take place. The day is fixed and writ-

ten down in the Counsel Book of the Eternal, but no man on earth knows it. It may be to-day or to-morrow or the day after. None can tell. Therefore we should ever watch. And so we shall if Christ be deeply loved. For this watching and waiting for Him is much more a question of the heart than of the head. Clear views have their value, but they are worthless and cold as a winter day if they stand alone. Two children may know that mother—long absent—is coming home to-morrow. One is as sure about that as the other, but one of them intensely longs for the hours to pass because she intensely loves. And mother, too, in whose affections both children have their place, she longs for the meeting-time. O Christian, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and kept by His mighty power, are you waiting for your Saviour to come? Has the Morning Star arisen in your heart? Are you standing on the hill-top watching for the daybreak and the first silver streaks of the morning? "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. . . . Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 17, 20).

"'Tis Thy heavenly bride and Spirit,
Jesus, Lord! that bid Thee come;
All the glory to inherit,
And to take Thy people home.
All creation
Travails, groans, till Thou shalt come."

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians* v. 1—vi. 20).

To be of any profit this article must be read in conjunction with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

AS we read the opening verses of chapter v., we see that the Corinthians quite deserved the rod of which Paul spoke, as he closed chapter iv. There was a very grave case of immorality in their midst. Corinth was a licentious city, and the standard of morality amongst the Gentiles was deplorably low, yet even they avoided the particular sin which had been perpetrated by this professing Christian. The thing had not been done in secret. It was known on all hands.

But though it was a matter of common report the assembly at Corinth had taken no action. That was bad enough, but they aggravated their indifference by their conceit. Possibly they might have pleaded that as yet they had no instructions what to do in such a case. But this, if true, was no real excuse, for a very small measure of spiritual sensibility would have led them to mourn for the dishonour done to the Lord's name, and also to pray that God would interfere by removing the evil-doer from their midst. Instead of this they were "puffed up" with a foolish and baseless pride.

In verses 3 to 5 we see the holy vigour and decision which marked Paul, in contrast to the supine indecision of the Corinthians. They should have been gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and acted in the putting away of the wicked person from among themselves, as indicated in the last verse of the chapter. They had not done so. Paul steps into the breach, judges and acts with Apostolic authority, though associating the Corinthians with his judgment and act. Such an one as this he would deliver unto Satan, for even Satan may be used for the disciplining of a guilty saint.

Apparently the utmost limit to which Satan can go is the destruction of the flesh. In the case of Job he was not allowed to go to that limit, though he grievously tormented his flesh. But if the flesh be even destroyed and death supervene, it is in order that the spirit may be saved in the coming day. This, you see, supposes that the one coming under this extremest form of discipline is after all a real believer.

But there was another fact overlooked by the Corinthians, which showed the wrong and folly of their boastful spirit. They were like a lump of dough in which a little leaven had been placed. Now leaven has well-known properties. It ferments, until the whole lump is permeated by it. Thus

they could not rightly look upon this sin of one of their number as being a thing in which they were not involved. The very opposite. It was indeed the "old leaven," the very thing that had been rampant amongst them in their unconverted days, and would be very certain to spread amongst them again if unjudged. Hence they were to purge it out, by putting the wicked person away.

The effect of so doing would be to render them practically "a new lump, as ye are unleavened." They really were a new and unleavened lump, as regards their place and condition before God; and they were so to act that they might be in practice what God had made them to be in Christ. Let us all seize the underlying principle of this, for it is the principle on which God always acts in grace. The law did indeed demand that we should be what we were *not*. Grace makes us to be what is according to God, and then calls upon us to act in accordance with *what we are*. You may apply this in a multitude of ways. You are always so to act, "that ye may be . . . as ye are."

The Apostle uses a figure, of course, in speaking thus of leaven. But it is a most appropriate figure. Israel's passover feast had to be eaten without leaven, and was followed by the feast of unleavened bread. Now the passover pointed forward to the

death of Christ as its fulfilment, and the church during the whole time of its sojourn here is to fulfil the type of the feast of unleavened bread by eschewing all evil, and walking in sincerity and truth.

Just as Israel had to sweep all leaven out of their houses, so are you and I to sweep all evil out of our lives. And beside this there are certain cases in which assembly action is demanded by the Word of God. Such cases in the matter of moral evil are those mentioned in verse 11. The transgressor may be a "man that is called a brother." Just because he has professed conversion he has been found inside the assembly and not without it; and because he is within he comes under its judgment and has to be put away. This putting away is not just a formal and technical excommunication. It is an action of such reality that all the saints were no longer to "keep company" in any way with the offender. When dealing with the men of the world on a business basis we cannot discriminate in this way as to their moral characters: but if a professed Christian is guilty of the sins mentioned in verse 11 we are to have done with him, and not own him as a Christian at all for the time being. Time future will reveal what he really is.

This chapter shows very clearly that while an evil-doer might be dealt with, while the

apostles were alive, on the basis of apostolic authority and energy, the normal way is by the action of the assembly gathered together in the name of the Lord. Its jurisdiction only extends over those who are within it. Those who are without must be left to the judgment of God which will reach them in due season.

There was another very grievous scandal amongst these Corinthians, to which Paul alludes in chapter vi. It was less grave perhaps than the foregoing, but apparently it was more widespread. Some amongst them were quarrelsome, and dragging their disputes into the public law courts. Thus they launched their accusations and aired their wrongs, whether real or imaginary, before the unbelievers.

Here again spiritual instinct ought to have delivered them from such an error. It was virtually confessing that they had not one wise man in their midst with the ability to discriminate and judge in such matters. Thus they were noising abroad their own shame.

And further than this, they were proclaiming their own ignorance. Verse 2 commences with, "Do ye not know?" and five times before the chapter is finished do we find the question, "Know ye not?" Like many other carnal believers the Corinthians

did not know nearly as much as they thought they did. If truth *governs* us, we *really* know it. Mere intellectual knowledge does not count.

They ought to have *really* known that "the saints shall judge the world." This fact had been stated in the Old Testament. "The Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. vii. 22). Had they really known it they would not have dragged one another into heathen law courts. If we really knew it, we perhaps should avoid certain things that we do. A still more astonishing fact confronts us in verse 3: though here the change from, "the saints," to, "we," may indicate that the judging of angels is confined to the apostles.

Be that as it may, these verses open up before us a vista of extraordinary authority and responsibility, in the light of which things pertaining to this life can only be spoken of as "the smallest matters." In keeping with this estimate, is the instruction that if such questions are brought before the saints for judgment, those least esteemed in the church are to hear the case. We notice that it does not say that *all* the saints are going to judge in the coming age. Perhaps all are not, and so those least likely to be judges then are to be judges

now. Such is the estimate which Scripture gives of the relative importance of the things of the coming age as compared with the things of this age.

It is quite evident, then, that if one Christian has an accusation of unrighteousness to lay against another, he must lay his case before the saints and not before the world. There is however something better than *that*, as indicated in verse 7. Better than *all* is it to meekly suffer the wrong, leaving the Lord to deal with it, and work repentance in the wrong-doer. Worst of all is it to do the wrong and defraud even the brethren.

If one called a Christian acts fraudently, serious questions are raised in view of the fact that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The first question we ask is—Is he a true Christian after all? God alone knows. We stand in doubt of him. A true believer may fall into any of the terrible evils enumerated in verses 9 and 10, but he is not *characterized* by any of them, and through repentance he is eventually restored. Those characterized by these things have no part in the kingdom of God, either here or hereafter. They are consequently clean outside the fellowship of the assembly of God.

Some of the Corinthians had been sinners of this type, but their conversion had in-

volved three things—washing, sanctification, justification. Washing signifies that deep and fundamental work of moral renovation which is accomplished by the new birth. Sanctification is a setting apart for God, now to be for His use and pleasure. Justification is a clearance from every count that otherwise would lie against us; a judicial setting right, so that we stand in righteousness before God. All three are ours in the Name of the Lord Jesus—that is, in virtue of His sacrificial work; and by the Spirit of our God—that is, by His effective work in our hearts. We might have been inclined to connect the washing with the work of the Spirit exclusively, and the justification exclusively with the work of Christ. But it is not so stated here. The objective and the subjective go hand in hand.

We might also have been inclined to have put justification in the first place. But washing comes first here, since the point of the passage is, that the believer manifests an altogether new character. The old filthy characteristics are washed away in the new birth. And if they are manifestly not washed away, then no matter what a man may profess he cannot be accepted as a true believer, or in God's kingdom.

Verse 12 commences a fresh paragraph, and introduces another line of thought. Meats are mentioned in the next verse, and

we shall have more concerning that matter in chapter viii. It was a burning question amongst the early Christians. In such matters as that Paul was not under law. Yet even so what is quite lawful may be by no means "expedient," or "profitable" (see margin). Moreover even a lawful thing may have a tendency to enslave, and we are not to allow ourselves to be brought under the power of anything, but rather hold ourselves free to be the bondslaves of our Lord and Saviour. How often one hears it said concerning a debated point—"But it is not forbidden. What is the harm of it?" And the reply has to be in the form of another question—Is it profitable? We want things which have not only the negative virtue of having no harm in them, but also the positive virtue of having profit in them.

This last paragraph of the chapter contains very important teaching as to the body of the believer. As yet our bodies are not redeemed, and consequently are the seat of various lusts, and they must be held as dead. Still we must not fall into the error of treating them lightly. Three great facts concerning them are stated in this passage.

First, they are "members of Christ." (ver. 15). Though not yet redeemed, they are going to be redeemed, and the Lord claims them as His. So really are they His that it is possible for the life of Jesus

to be made manifest in our bodies. (See 2 Cor. iv. 10). They are members in which is to be displayed the life of Him who is our Head.

Second, the body of each believer is "the temple of the Holy Ghost." (ver. 19). Our old life has been judged. Sin in the flesh, which formerly dominated us, has been condemned; and now the Spirit indwells us as the energy of that new life which we have in Christ. Every believer should regard his body as a shrine wherein dwells the Holy Spirit, which he has of God. God has taken possession of his body in this way: a fact of tremendous import.

Third, we have been bought with a price, (ver. 20) body as well as soul. The price that has been paid is beyond all our computation, as we know right well. The point we might overlook is that it covers the purchase of our bodies.

Now note the implications of these facts. How can we make the members of Christ the members of an harlot? Again, how can I treat my body as if it were exclusively my own? We are not our own. We are Another's, spirit and soul and body. Hence, "glorify God in your body," is the word for us. The whole idea of the unconverted is to gratify and glorify themselves in and through their bodies. Be it ours to gratify and glorify God.

What a lofty standard is set before us in these things! We may feel that it is indeed high and that we do not attain unto it. Still we would not have it altered. A great present blessing lies here, and also a great pledge of future glory. If already our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, how sure it must be that the redemption of our bodies is coming. Then the *Holy Spirit* will have a temple perfect in *holiness*. Meanwhile He promotes holiness in us, and that is for our highest blessing.

Finally, glance at verse 17. This verse flatly denies the idea that our union with Christ lies in the Incarnation, which idea lies at the root of much ritualistic error. The union lies not in flesh but in spirit. This is one of the cases where it is a question whether to begin the word spirit with a capital or not. The Spirit, who indwells us, is the Spirit of Christ; and by Him we are one spirit with the Lord. What a marvellous fact! Ponder it well.

F. B. HOLE.

With faith as the plumb-line, the leaden weights of life will find their use, for they will provide a test to keep us true.

THE LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD.

(From Notes of Addresses)

IF we speak of the life that pleases God, I am sure there is awakened within each of us the response, "This is the life I would like to live!" This is the thing that gives the Gospels their charm. They set before us just the life that does please God. Yet it has often been remarked that though many people do not read the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, they do make considerable study of "the Gospel according to YOU." So what is wanted is not Christianity in theory and profession, but in fact and practice.

I want to point out a few features of the life that pleases God as they seem to be emphasised in the case of five typical persons in Luke's gospel, all of them widows. Many times they have encouraged me, and as many times rebuked me, and always set before me some of the features of the life that pleases God.

We hear much to-day of meetings for the deepening of spiritual life, and the statement itself suggests that the opposite exists. Who has not been made to feel how very

shallow is the life of many professed Christians, and in all probability we have not to look far away from home to become painfully conscious of it. In this way I think that we may liken the Christian life to a river. Sometimes it is seen at the flood, and at other times it shows that it has suffered from a drought, in that the "rain from heaven" has not been falling in its basin. Hence it is that what is needed, to deepen and to fill it, is some refreshing heavenly rain which has been sadly missing.

Every river has its Source, its Tributaries, and its Outflow. It is thus I would like to speak of the river of Christian life as it flows through this desert land where no water is.

First then ITS SOURCE. For this we must turn to Luke vii. 12, where we find an illustration of the blighting effects of sin in *one* of its consequences. We are in danger of limiting sin's consequences to physical death and the subsequent judgment of God as the penalty of guilt. We find that Scripture does not limit the thought of death to what is physical. It has also a reference to what is moral and spiritual. Sin not only made man amenable to physical death but it severed him from the fountain of life when it severed him from God, and plunged him into moral death and darkness. Darkness and light, death and life

are two of the sharpest contrasts that nature affords. *Darkness* is *ignorance* of God, and *death* is *separation* from God ; and thus the Spirit of God depicts the condition of sinful man away from God. God has manifested His love in such a way that we may be brought out of darkness into light—the revelation of God ; and out of death into life—the life of God. Hence we find the apostle John stressing one of these points, “ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him,” (1 John iv. 9) and Peter emphasizing the other, “ Him, who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” (1 Peter ii. 9). To do this Christ had to go into the place of darkness and death.

No stronger word could be used than that man is dead, spiritually and morally, as regards any relation to God. He has been also alienated from the life of God. There is not one movement spiritually or morally Godward from man, any more than there is any movement in man who is physically dead, otherwise the terms have no meaning. To say that every man has in him naturally a desire after God, is to deny this fundamental fact and to show evidence of incipient Modernism ; for that form of infidelity is built on the idea that man is capable of searching after God, living the Christian life, by the practice of what is

called the ethics (or moral teachings) of Jesus. Christ only came, they say, as a great world teacher to give moral lessons and to set before man a higher ideal of life, without any idea of his first needing the life, in order to live. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God *hath not life.*" (1 John v. 12). The very fact that it is necessary to be born again to have any link with God proves the fact of man's moral and spiritual death. It was in view of this that Christ said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, *ye have no life in you.*" (John vi. 53). If I have not appropriated that precious death for myself, I have not the life to live. This brings us back to the interesting point that, when Jesus raised the young man out of death into life, He touched the bier first. He identified himself with his death, and then He spoke the life-giving word, and then the man sat up. The Son of God is the source of all life, and thus of the life that pleases God.

Hold fast to this. Don't be surprised if incipient Modernism is found making an attempt to get into the true Christian circle. It will not be the first time that evil has "crept in," and it is easier to let it creep in than to clear yourselves of it. "I am come that ye might have life" is part of the mission of the Lord Jesus, and that would be entirely unnecessary if man

had life already and only needed better environments and higher ideals, which the life of Jesus would supply. It is in John's gospel that we have the subject of life spoken of. Sins are very little referred to in that gospel. It is man's condition rather than his guilt that is taken up.

Then—THE TRIBUTARIES. Luke iv. 26 supplies us with the first of these, the widow of Sarepta. Here we have not life given, but life *sustained*. Elijah was to have removed from him every visible and providential means of supply. Sight and sense were no more to govern him as to how his life was to be sustained. There is absolutely nothing in this world that can sustain the life that pleases God. Then when God supplies us with what we need, the very constancy of the supply has a tendency to make us depend more on the supply than on the Supplier, and we become unexercised and less dependent. We soon become a kind of spoon-fed, arm-chair Christian, going to meetings with the expectation that somebody will do something for us ; and if they don't, then like children we go away and whine. Now the brook is drying up, and soon this visible means of ministry be gone. What shall we do now ? Seek for another to lead us and feed us—some creature spring ? “ Arise and get thee to Zarephath. . . I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.” What had she ? Just a little meal at the bottom of

a barrel and a drop of oil in a cruise. What a pathetic figure of helplessness and need ! She had herself lost her own visible means of supply, but she was a woman who could make a cake of what she had. Meal and oil were not her food alone, but she had to make them her food ; and slender as her means were, she was prepared to pass on the little she had, and she was astonished to see the meal and oil increase under her hand. It does not tell us that the barrel became ultimately full and that the cruse began to overflow, for God does not give us a store, lest our eyes get again on the gift rather than on the Giver.

The meal and oil are an old association. We read of it in Leviticus ii. where it sets before us Christ, as the bread both of God and His people. God got His portion out of that meal offering and then the priests got theirs. I think at least we may learn that only that which *comes as food to our own souls* can we pass on to others, in a way that will profit them. There is a fearful danger in trafficking with unfelt truth, truth that has never affected ourselves, something we have taken in mentally and simply disgorged.

We must learn to make our own cake before we can pass it on to others as food for them. "I will speak of the things which I have made touching the King." (Psa. xlv. 1). There of course it was in

His praise, but it was something that the writer had made, something he had got for himself. Oh ! how much deeper would the stream of praise grow if we were to speak of the things that we had got and enjoyed in our own thoughts of the King. I often fear that it is a mark of spiritual poverty, if not indolence, when the hymn-book is too freely used, so that we have to fall back on what some one else has made touching the King. It is not that we are not thankful to enjoy what others have made, but we ought to be more exercised about making a little food for ourselves out of the Meal and the Oil we have in Christ and the Holy Ghost. We should then have a little to pass on to others. If the Lord gives us a sweet little morsel, out of the meal-barrel of the Word, about Christ, let us at once make a cake of it, turning it to account for ourselves, and pass it on to some one else ; and we shall find that there is quite enough left for ourselves. The meal and the oil is just the ministry of Christ to us by the Holy Spirit so that we may make it our own. That is a very different thing from coming to get a new subject to preach from. It is getting that which has come as real delight and food for our souls, so so that we are anxious to pass it on.

What a wonderful tributary to feed the life that pleases God. God is not pleased with a life that does not grow—a river that dwindles instead of deepens, wastes in-

stead of widens. If we were honest with ourselves and the Lord would we not with shamefacedness face the fact that most of us are sufferers from an arrested development? Last words are lasting words, and Peter's last words are "Grow in grace." Let us count that day lost in which we have learnt nothing more about Christ.

The Second Tributary is in Luke xviii. 3—the importunate widow. God very largely uses *prayer* to deepen and widen the river of the life that pleases God. He speaks in Colossians i. of our "increasing in [or by] the *true knowledge* of God." It is in our circumstances that we have practically to learn Him. In the meal it is Christ, here it is God. This is the prayer life, that has to do with God. Importunity is born of the pressure of circumstances and the knowledge that there is only one source of supply. We are not to gather from this incident that God is reluctant to give, or that He gives to get rid of us without caring for us. It is rather that we should be assured of the fact that he can make the hardest hearted person do His will, though he may think he is doing his own will. (see, Prov. xxi. 1). Here we have to learn that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. He has before to-day made the flinty rock to yield waters for His thirsty people, and He can make the flinty heart of man do his will, for He can turn it whithersoever He wills. It is not exactly that

prayer changes things, we are so ready to put these things down to our prayers. It is God that changes things in answer to our feeble cry. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. In that way prayer does avail to bring about a change of things.

In the desert God will teach thee
 What the God that thou hast found.
 Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
 All His grace shall there abound.

It is by such experiences I begin to know God. It is then I am able to say, "My God shall supply all your need."

Lastly THE OUTFLOW. And first, there is the widow of Luke xxi. 1. The outflow of a life that pleases God is in its evident devotion to His interests. The life that pleased God was the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the very darkest day of His nation that scripture was filled in Him, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." He was consumed with zeal for that which stood for God's interests at that time. Here is another moved by the same spirit. She had cast in all her living. That is, she surrenders her all, her life, to God's interests. She could have sung more truly than most of us,

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

We are then allowed to have a little peep at the Judgment seat of Christ and hear the Judge's own approval of that feature of the life that pleases God. He said, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all."

Second, there is Luke ii. 36. Here we have the only widow whose name is mentioned. "Anna, a prophetess . . . of the tribe of Aser." She departs not from the temple. Why? Had not Malachi said, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple." (iii. 1). Anna was one that looked for the coming of the Lord, with constant expectancy in her old heart. She belonged to the Happy tribe (Aser means "Happy"), and I should say, from what we learn of her, that she was of that happy sort. She was a woman that served God day and night with fastings and prayers. She knew the people who were looking for the Lord, and to them she spoke of Him.

Two things also marked her—she was in time and in tune. At the instant old Simeon had finished she was there to take up the thanksgiving. Prayer, praise, testimony marked this dear old woman who was looking for and longing for the Lord's coming as the Comforter and the Redeemer of Israel. These are things that mark the outflow of the river of the life that pleases God.

Now the question with us is how far the life that pleases God finds its answer in our own lives. At any rate I think we can gather from these widows of Luke what should mark such a life. There is a divine intention surely in grouping all these widows together in one Gospel. They are certainly very typical women. May we at least have some exercise spring within us, so that we may see that our lives are a pleasure to Him. People may say "We *must* live ordinary lives. This life is not to be lived save by specially favoured people." These were *widows* remember, and their surroundings were not more easy than yours. Besides there is no *must* about it. There is no reason at all for our living as Christians, if our lives do not answer His purpose as those that please God.

ART. CUTTING.

THE FOLLY OF UNBELIEF.

WAS Moses quite right in sending the twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan? Had we only the thirteenth of Numbers' to guide us we should say undoubtedly he was. Its opening verses seem to place the point beyond dispute, for there we read that "Moses by the commandment of the Lord sent them." But when we turn to Moses' account of the

matter in Deuteronomy i. 22 we see that the thought of sending men to search out the land originated with the people. They asked Moses to send them, and it pleased him well. So they were sent.

Why should the people have wished the land to be searched? Had not God spoken of it as a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey? Did they doubt it? And had they forgotten that God had promised to bring them in? Was it not unbelief and the fears that flow from it that prompted them to ask Moses to send the spies?

However that may be, it put them to the test. The twelve men finished their appointed task and returned with their report. It was a good land, said they, "flowing with milk and honey." But that added nothing to their present stock of knowledge. And then they learned for the first time that the men of the land were taller than themselves—that their cities were walled up to heaven, and the spies had seen the giants there! And now what would the people do?

It would have been infinitely better had they not known this. Better if they had waited till they had to meet the foe, strong in the faith that however tall and mighty, God would give them the victory over them.

But now their eye saw the foe before they had to meet him, and the cities with their towering walls made their hearts melt, so that they sighed and wept and groaned all through the live-long night!

Is it not always so when we are not content to let the morrow take care for the things of itself? "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We know this and yet we constantly forget it. We peer into the future—we try to find out what the morrow or the next day may bring. And then our timid faithless hearts beget a thousand fears. We see nothing but giants and cities walled up to heaven and feel that we are but grasshoppers. Then God is forgotten, His past deliverances are not remembered, unbelief holds her dark dismal carnival, and our craven hearts shiver and shake, as if our God were like the gods of the heathen—unable to deliver!

But among the twelve were two men of faith—Caleb and Joshua. They sought to still the people and said, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Brave words and true! Nevertheless they were not believed. The only answer the people gave was this: "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God that we had died in this wilderness. . . . Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt" (chap.

xiv. 2, 3). Who would have supposed that the sending of the spies would have led to this? What an exposure of their hearts! How little they had learned to trust in God, to believe in His faithfulness and saving power. It looks as if God had no place at all in their thoughts. Had He utterly forsaken them, cast them off and left them to fight their own battles? If so there would be some show of reason in what they said. But such was not the case. And when again those men of faith faced the multitude and said, "The people of the land are bread for us . . . the Lord is with us: fear them not," the whole congregation bade stone them with stones!

What a warning against unbelief. What an example of the evil and folly of not moving along with God, step by step, never doubting that we shall ever find God's grace sufficient, no matter what we have to face on the morrow. Sufficient unto the day are its battles and its burdens, its sorrows and its cares. Strength for to-day we may expect, strength for the morrow when to-morrow comes, but not before. What if we have to fight with giants, what if the cities be walled up to heaven and we are but grasshoppers? Is not God for us? Is He a grasshopper? Is there anything too hard for Him who has made heaven and earth? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us

all things?" Let us chide our needless fears and trust in the living God.

And God took them at their word. Had they said, "Would God we had died in this wilderness"? In the wilderness they should die. All the men, from twenty years old and upward, who had murmured against the Lord, their carcasses should fall in the wilderness. For forty years they should wander in the desert till death had claimed them everyone. But Caleb and Joshua and the little ones of those unbelieving men who had said their children should be a prey—these would God bring into the land which their fathers had despised (chap. xiv. 28-31). Such are the just ways of God, such His holy government.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. x. 11). Why should we fall into their sin? Why should we limit God, as if His ear could ever grow heavy that it could not hear, and His arm be shortened that it could not save? He has brought us hitherto. Blessed be the Lord, there hath not failed one word of all His good promise (1 Kings viii. 56). Let us then trust Him for days to come. But let it be one day at a time, and let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus when He said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth. . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought

for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 32-34).

"So for to-morrow and its need
I do not pray ;
But keep me, guide me, hold me, Lord—
Just for to-day."

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians vii.* 1—*viii.* 13).

To be of any profit this article must be read in conjunction with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

FROM the first verse of chapter vii. we infer that Paul sat down to write this epistle in reply to a letter of enquiry, previously received from the Corinthians. Only, when he did so there were graver and more urgent matters to be first disposed of, and these fill up chapters i. to vi. He now turns to deal with their enquiries ; and we find the words, "Now concerning," repeated at the beginning of chapters viii. xii., and xvi. They had evidently written raising questions as to marriage, things offered to idols, spiritual gifts, and collections.

Chapter vii. is almost entirely taken up with marriage, though in verses 17 to 24 instructions are given as to the secular callings that believers may be in, inasmuch as similar principles apply in both cases.

It looks as if the enquiries as to marriage had been occasioned by the fact that Paul, who was their spiritual father and example,

had no wife himself. Most of them had been pagans, and hence their thoughts as to this great institution of God had been utterly astray and corrupted. The Apostle seized the opportunity to put things on the basis intended by God, while maintaining that there might be a few who, like to himself, could live above the claims of nature and forego marriage, because so fully claimed by the Lord and His service.

Clearly then, for the believer the normal thing is that marriage should take place, and all its duties and responsibilities be observed. It is contemplated in verse 5 that husband and wife may separate for a season, in order more fully to be at the Lord's disposal, but that is to be done mutually, and with prayer, lest the adversary should gain any advantage by it.

In verses 10 and 11 the Apostle enforces the instructions already laid down by the Lord. In verses 12 to 16 he gives further instructions in view of complications that often arise when the Gospel has reached one partner and the other is left unconverted, at least for the moment. If a Jew, male or female, contracted a matrimonial alliance with one of the surrounding nations there was nothing but defilement for both them and their children. This is made very plain in such chapters as Ezra ix., and Nehemiah xiii. With the Gospel this is reversed, as verse 14 shows us. The

sanctification and holiness) spoken of is not intrinsic of course, (but relative. If there be but a believing wife, God acknowledges the household as set apart for Him. The unbelieving partner may so hate the light that has come into the home that he will not stay there. But if he will stay there, and the children who do stay there—they enjoy the privileges that the light confers, it is to be hoped to their ultimate salvation.

These instructions may appear to us to be of but little interest. That is because we live under the abnormal conditions which Christendom has created. Had the church maintained its proper character, as a circle of light and blessing, surrounded by the darkness of this world, yet separate from it, we should more easily see the point of it all. Those preaching the Gospel among the heathen and seeking sympathetically to help their converts in the problems that arise, find here the guidance that they need.

In the matter of one's earthly calling, as in marriage, the path for the believer is to accept the existing situation, only bringing into it a new power, to the glory of God. We are to abide in the calling in which we were called by the Gospel, only it must be "with God." (ver 24). If we cannot have God with us in it, then we must abandon it.

Having given these instructions to the married, Paul turns in verse 25 to "virgins"

and the instructions concerning them continue to verse 38. Then the two verses that close the chapter give a brief word of guidance to widows.

It seems pretty clear that in this passage the word, "virgin" is used in an unusual sense—as covering the unmarried of either sex. The Apostle's teaching may be summarized in this: that marriage is good, as is every divine institution; it is wholly right and permissible; yet that to remain in the unmarried state is better, if it is maintained in order to be more wholly at the Lord's disposal for His interests. If such do not "attend upon the Lord without distraction," their celibacy may only cast a snare upon them.

Now let it be noted that this is the point of view maintained all through the chapter. If the married couple separate it is to be as giving themselves to fasting and prayer. If in a mixed marriage the converted partner goes on peacefully and patiently with the unconverted, it is as seeking the Lord's glory in his or her salvation. If the slave, being converted goes on humbly and contentedly with his menial occupations, it is because therein he abides with God. If the "virgin" remains unmarried, it is because he or she aims at being without worldly care, only caring for holiness and the service of the Lord. If the widow remarries, she does so "in the Lord;" which means, according to His will and direction.

See, then, how this chapter, which some might feel inclined to skip as being of no particular interest, not only contains instructions as to marriage, valuable in themselves, but also enforces the great point that for the Christian the claims of God and His service take precedence of all else. We are to recognize that, "the time is short," or, "straitened:" the word used means contracted as to space, and is only used in one other place in the New Testament, viz., Acts v. 6., in reference to Ananias being "wound up" for burial. Alas! how often we do not recognize that we are living in a straitened time, when the issue has been narrowed up by the death and resurrection of Christ, and hence we should hold all that we possess in the world with a light hand, ready to quit at a moment's notice.

Before passing on to chapter viii., let us glance more particularly at verses 6, 10, 12, 17, 25, 40. Some of the expressions used in these verses have been seized upon by those who would deny, or at least weaken, the inspiration of Scripture.

The force of verse 6 is, "I speak as permitting, not as commanding." Certain things in connection with marriage are commanded, others permitted. This is simple enough.

Verse 10 refers to some of these commands; only Paul recalls that there was

nothing new about them, for the Lord Himself had so commanded, when here amongst men.

On the other hand, beginning with verse 12 the Apostle does give commands which had not previously been issued by the Lord. The time to issue them had not come until the problems that they meet had been created by the Gospel being widely preached. There is no difficulty in this, for what the Apostle commanded, and ordained in all assemblies, as stated in verse 17, was of full authority. There is no difference *as to authority* between commands coming from the lips of the Lord when on earth, and those coming from Him in heaven, through the lips or pens of His apostles.

In verse 25 Paul carefully guards the instructions that follow, lest they be used as absolute commands to the casting of a snare upon some (ver. 35). They are but his judgment, yet judgment of a very spiritual order, for, as the last words of the chapter significantly say, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God." The application of these Spirit-given instructions all depended upon the spiritual state of those who heard them. Hence Paul was inspired to issue no command but to give his judgment.

These fine distinctions are very striking, and indicative of the wisdom of God, and

of the reality and scope of divine inspiration. Instead of weakening it they confirm it.

The opening words of chapter viii. are really, "Now concerning," for evidently the Corinthians were perplexed as to the right course to adopt in relation to things offered to idols, and had mentioned the matter in their letter to Paul. No such problems confront us, yet we shall find the instructions laid down of much value, for our guidance in many a problem that does confront us.

Before coming to the point, however, the Apostle puts in parenthetically a word of warning. The Corinthians prided themselves upon their knowledge. Yet knowledge is a small and poor thing compared with love. Knowledge, if by itself, only puffs up, whereas love builds up. Moreover, at best all our knowledge is partial. It has strict limitations. We do not really know anything with a full and absolute knowledge. If we imagine that we do we only show thereby that we as yet know nothing as we ought to know it. Whereas if we love God we can rest assured that we are known of Him. And that is the great thing.

With verse 4 the Apostle commences his instructions. And first of all, what is the truth about the idols themselves? The truth is that they are nothing in the world. Deluded men may venerate these strange

objects and treat them as gods, but we know them as but the work of men's hands, and that there is no other God but one. In thus speaking Paul was not overlooking the fact that demons and their power lay behind the idols, for he alludes to this sinister fact in verses 19 and 20 of chapter x.

Pagans may venerate many gods and lords, but to us they are nothing. We know but one God and one Lord. There is the Father, the Originator and Source of all, and we are for Him. There is the Lord Jesus, the great Administrator in the Godhead, and all things, ourselves included, are by Him. This being so we may utterly decline to recognise the idols of the heathen in any way, and so treat all meats as alike—whether offered to idols or not.

However, as verse 7 says, this knowledge is by no means the portion of all. There will always be found many in the ranks of believers who are unable to view such matters in the calm, dispassionate light of pure knowledge. They do not rise above their feelings and other subjective impressions. Once these knew that the meat had been so offered, they could not get away from the feelings engendered by it. They had "conscience of the idol" and it troubled them continually. Their conscience was weak, for it was not fortified by that clear and happy knowledge which Paul enjoyed, and being weak it was de-

filed. How was the situation to be met? What was the stronger believer to do?

The answer is very instructive. The Apostle firmly maintains the freedom of the stronger brother. It really is a fact that meat does not commend us to God. Our practices may differ. Some may eat and some not eat. But there is no advantage in the one, nor is there any coming short in the other. There is neither plus nor minus in the question, *as before God*.

But *as among ourselves*, in the Christian circle, there is something to be considered. Apparently some of the Corinthians, strong in their knowledge of the nothingness of idols, went as far as sitting at the meat in the precincts of the idol's temple. This was carrying their knowledge to a great length, and running the risk of becoming a stumbling-block. Some of the weaker ones might be tempted to copy them, wishing for a larger liberty, and having done so become stricken by an accusing conscience, and perish. The perishing has nothing to do with the salvation of the soul. It means rather that the weak brother would be put out of action and destroyed as to his spiritual state, and consequently as to his testimony and service, by his weak conscience being wounded. No believer who falls under a cloud, owing to a defiled conscience, is of any use in the wars of the Lord.

Some of us might feel inclined to say, "Oh, but he is after all only a weak brother, and consequently of very little account as a servant or soldier of the Lord." If we should speak thus we should be guilty of forgetting that he is one of those "for whom Christ died," and therefore of immeasurable value to Him. This is the true light in which to view our brother. So dear is he that to sin against him is to sin against Christ.

The Apostle never forgot those words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And we must never forget them. The truth enshrined in them confronts us in a number of scriptures. Those who would strike a blow at Christ to-day, strike at His saints. Those who would serve Christ to-day, care for and serve His saints. That which is done to even the least of His brethren He will accept as done to Himself. God grant that we may not forget this. Real devotion to Christ is far more truly and effectively expressed by devoted service to His cause and people than by much outpouring of devotional and endearing language, either to Him or concerning Him.

Paul's own attitude is tersely summed up in the last verse of the chapter. Rather than be a cause of stumbling to his brother he would never eat flesh again. He would practice self-denial, and cut out of his life what was perfectly lawful, with a view to

his brother's good. This is the fruit of divine love being at work. Would to God we had much more of it working in our hearts !

There is one further remark to be made as regards this chapter. Verse 6 is sometimes quoted by those who would deny the deity of the Lord Jesus. They make the point that since "there is but one God, the Father," and Jesus Christ is spoken of only as "one Lord," it must be incorrect to speak of Him also as God, even though other scriptures clearly do so.

Without a doubt, in this verse deity is attributed to the Father alone, and dominion as Lord to Jesus alone. It has however been very aptly remarked that, "The deity of Christ can no more be denied because the Father is here called 'one God,' than the dominion of the Father can be denied because the Son is called 'one Lord.'" To this we may add,—or the deity and dominion of the Spirit be denied, because He is not mentioned at all.

The fact is, of course, that the Godhead is being presented in contrast with the many gods and lords of the pagan world ; and in the Godhead the Son is He who has taken the place of Lord. Read the verse as limited by its context, and there is no real difficulty.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

There has been some little difficulty in connection with the subject of glory, as found in John xvii, especially verses 5, 22 and 24. Would you try to help in explaining the difference between these three verses?
—GATESHEAD.

YOUR question relates to matters of extreme profundity. Anything that we can say by way of reply must of necessity be shallow and imperfect.

Verse 5 plainly shows that before the Son entered into manhood, before ever the world was, He was in a glory indescribable to us, which was His jointly with the Father. It was the glory proper to "the form of God," (Phil. ii. 6), and hence He left it when He took upon Him "the form of a servant." But now, His work finished, He is about to go back to the Father, and He requests that He be glorified with that original glory along with the Father. The thing that strikes us with wonder is that He was carrying back into heaven His Manhood. In coming forth He came into Manhood. In going back He is the Son in Manhood, and as the Son in Manhood He is glorified along with the Father in the original glory of Deity. Wonderful indeed!

Verse 22 speaks of a glory that has been given to Him of the Father, which is of such a nature that He in His turn can give it to others, and has done so. This, most evidently, is a glory to be distinguished from that of verse 5. If verse 5 is the glory of Deity, this is the glory of redemption. In His humiliation, and by redemption He has acquired a glory which is peculiarly His own, and yet communi-

cable. All this, which He has won, He shares. All those who are His, sharing in the benefits of His redemption, are to share in the glory won as the fruit of redemption. He speaks of it as an accomplished thing,—“I HAVE GIVEN them.” It is ours already by deed of gift, though our actual entrance into it lies yet in the future. Wonderful grace!

Verse 24 indicates that while there is a glory of His in which we share, there is also a glory of His which we shall only behold. This obviously must be so as regards that glory of Deity, which is His. We believe that it is so equally as regards the glory which He has acquired as the result of His work. He is pre-eminent in His Manhood also: pre-eminent in redemption's glory.

He has truly given glory to us, who have believed on Him by means of the apostolic testimony, but He has done so somewhat after the manner in which the sun gives glory to the moon. The sun loses not one whit of its glory by that which it imparts. The moon constantly speaks to us of the supreme glory of the sun, and is at its brightest to us, when fully beholding the splendour of the sun. So we are to behold His glory, in glory. That which was glimpsed for a brief hour on the mount of transfiguration is to be realized in full splendour throughout an eternal day.

Who can understand what this means? We rejoice to sing,

“All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored,”

but the reality itself must transcend all human words.

SOME SOUL-DIFFICULTIES EXAMINED.

(Being an answer to a correspondent written years ago.)

YOUR kind letter reached me in due course. I am glad to know that my little booklet, *The Witness of the Spirit*, gave you some pleasure, though it may have failed to meet all your spiritual difficulties. And if I deal with some of these in my present letter I am hardly sanguine enough to believe that it will clear them all away, though I shall be thankful if it removes any of them.

It was a great pity that in your earlier years you fell into the mistake of supposing that *conversion* meant our becoming holy all at once. Such is not its meaning. Indeed, it does not mean our becoming holy at all. Conversion is very strikingly described in Acts xxvi. 18, where the first step in it is likened to an opening of the eyes. Now this figure of speech is still in common use among us and we know very well what it means. If we say that our eyes have been opened as to some one's character, we wish it to be understood that our thoughts concerning him have undergone a complete change. It is pre-

cisely the same in reference to conversion. Our eyes are opened and our self-complacency is immediately broken up. But this opening of the eyes leads to other things. The soul turns from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And then it is that we receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified. Nor are we left in the dark as to the means. It is, as the Lord Himself says, "by faith that is in Me."

Now, in looking back, many truly converted persons have doubted, at times, whether their conversion was real because they did not find in themselves the holiness they looked for. The happy change they expected did not come, nor is it coming even now. To their dismay they realize that their old and evil nature remains as it ever was, and so they are sorely tempted to believe that their conversion was nothing more than an empty dream. It may have been thus with you, and perhaps it is so still. But it cannot be too earnestly insisted upon that no holiness on our part, however great the measure of it, can give us any just ground of confidence towards God. Could we become as holy as the angels that stand before His throne it would be very great presumption indeed to believe that our sins were forgiven and our acceptance with God assured because of *that*. Holy self is no more to be trusted than sinful self. To rest our hopes on

such a ground is but to build on sinking sand.

Now the gospel of God addresses itself to me as a sinner, unholy and unthankful. It speaks to me as one who has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. It does not ask me to be good, to be holy, to love God and to serve Him in order to inherit its priceless blessings. But it tells me of Christ, the Son of God, once slain but now alive again and in glory. It bids me believe in Him, and it assures me that in believing I shall receive immediate forgiveness of sins and be relieved from every charge of guilt. Do you beg to be told in what passages of Holy Scripture all this is found? I answer, in Acts x. 43 and xiii. 38, 39.

I may be asked, How can such things be? and, Who is this Christ and what has He done that simple faith in Him should yield us so much blessing? In replying I would speak of His eternal glory with the Father before all worlds, and pass on to tell the story of Bethlehem and of Calvary, of the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, yet stricken and forsaken of God when on the cross of shame and woe. And I would further tell how He endured all this that the throne of the Majesty in heavens might be vindicated from every suspicion of indifference to evil. Oh, how loudly does Calvary declare the utter impossibility of sin escaping the judgment of

God! But now, by reason of that great Offering, the forgiveness of sins is preached to men, no matter how many and great those sins may be. There is full remission through the blood—and God is *just* and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26).

In all this there is nothing about our holiness, nothing even about the work of the Holy Spirit in our conscience and heart, essential though it be in its time and place.

But there is a further thing. And now I crave your earnest attention. What about *me*, the sinner? Forgiveness I have, through grace, and I know it. But myself—the guilty man whose corrupt nature no grace can ever change—what is to be done with him? Why, he too has come under the judgment of God in the person of Christ in the hour of His death upon the cross. Therefore it is said in Romans vi. 6: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him.” We have died with Christ. His death is not only the putting away of our sins, but the ending of our life’s history as of Adam’s stock. And now we are no longer “in Adam,” but “in Christ,” and possess a new life, altogether distinct from the old, a life of which Christ is the blessed Source. And “if any man be in Christ,” what then? A new creation! (2 Cor. v. 17)—not the old made better, for that it never can be. It is indeed a *new* creation.

And so we can look up into heavenly glory and see Christ there, no longer the Bearer of our sins, for He has borne them and put them away for ever. He is there in the cloudless and everlasting favour of God. And we are "in Him," accepted in the Beloved, far, far removed from the reach of all condemnation, free from it even as Christ Himself is free; and the favour in which He rests on us likewise. This is blessedness indeed!

Nor is this all. Christianity gives us an Object to displace self in all its insidious forms and to close our hearts against the allurements of the world. It is Christ in glory. Beautifully is this set forth in Galatians ii. 20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The Son of God, the eternal Lover of my soul, enters into my life, engages my affections, and thus controls and moulds me. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to have Christ now filling our vision, the Christ of the Scriptures, whose glory makes every page of that wondrous book glow with a beauty that is all its own! The heart now delights in Christ, not for what it gets from Him, but on account of what He is in Himself. And as we search the Scriptures and meditate upon them prayerfully, joyously, and with the Holy Spirit

as our Teacher, beauty after beauty becomes unveiled, and we learn with Paul to count all else but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. This is happiness! This is life!

Do you really think that if we had the assurance of forgiveness and of our acceptance with God we should have nothing then to pray for? Why, this is but the beginning of our praying and praising life. The God whom we know in Jesus Christ our Lord reveals Himself under the tender name of Father, whose interest in us is so great that He numbers the very hairs of our head. He encourages us "in everything" by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make our requests known unto Him (Phil. iv. 6.) "*In everything.*" Mark well those words. There is nothing that concerns us, be it little or great, that we may not pray about. And we are bidden to cast *all our care* upon Him, for He careth for us (1 Peter v. 7). Prayer is one of the sweetest Christian privileges. Surely it is an amazing thing that creatures such as we should have access at all times to the living God, to whom we may present our fervent supplications without fear of being rebuked for coming too often or for asking too much!

And if our prayers are not always answered in the way we wish: if in His perfect love and wisdom He sees that it would be

better for us not to have the thing we crave: should we therefore cease to pray? God forbid! This would betray a sadly rebellious spirit, and show that we believed our will to be wiser and better than His. But if in prayer we have confidence in His love, then are our hearts and minds guarded about on every side by His own peace. He knows, He loves, He cares. There the heart rests and sings its song of praise.

I close this letter with the earnest hope that you may soon enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ sets His people free. If you think we can help you further, do not hesitate to write again.

W.B.

“SURELY THE WRATH OF MAN SHALL PRAISE THEE.”

(*Psalm lxxvi.* 10.)

WE can trace the truth of the above statement in the Scriptures, as well as in the happenings of the present time, in so far as they are in the line of the fulfilment of Scripture.

For instance take the Scriptural case of Joseph. As a lad of seventeen he twice had remarkable, God-given dreams, foreshadowing a wonderful future. His brethren

were envious. "Jealousy [envy] is cruel as the grave" (Song of Solomon viii. 6).

And so it turned out. Joseph's brethren threw him into a pit to die. They took his coat of many colours, dipped it in the blood of a goat, to deceive the old father at home that his loved son had been torn to pieces by a wild beast. God however, preserved his life, and he was sold into Egypt as a slave.

Years rolled by. Joseph, now about thirty years of age, is making himself known to his brethren. We all know the story leading up to this point. Joseph was flung into an Egyptian prison because he refused to yield to the seductions of a temptress. Then by a strange combination of circumstances he is brought before Pharaoh, interprets that monarch's remarkable dreams, and in the course of a few hours exchanges the languishment of the prison for a place of power, rule and organization, second only to Pharaoh himself.

The biting famine comes. Joseph's brethren are driven to Egypt for supplies of food. Joseph makes himself known to them in the memorable words, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis xlv. 5).

Their wrath had sold Joseph into Egypt. God used their sin to utilize Joseph as the

super-organizer of the day to the saving of countless lives. There could be no condoning of the terrible sin of Joseph's brethren against their brother, but it must have been very consoling to their accusing hearts to find that God had used the wrath of man to praise Him.

Take the most wonderful example of all. The greatest crime this world has seen, or can see, is the murder of the Son of God. One, who only displayed love, whose life was spent in undoing the works of the devil, was done to death by the insensate hate of the religious leaders of the nation. But God has used man's blackest sin as an occasion for shewing His great love to man. The cross was the occasion of man's sin, the cross was the very place where atonement was made, which enables God in perfect righteousness to forgive sin. This is the instance above all others where God has made the wrath of men to praise Him.

Take two instances from modern times. We know how the fulfilment of prophecy centres round the Jew. As it has often been said, the Jew is the barometer of the world. We also know how the Scripture prophesies that the Jews will return to their own land in unbelief, pass through the great tribulation, and a remnant acknowledge the Lord as their Saviour and Messiah.

God anticipates events. Things that happened many years ago may in the light

of present day happenings be found to be divinely ordered with a foreknowledge that is startling to us. For instance, the Jews are largely congregated in the heart of Europe as the following table shows:

Germany contains about	643,000	Jews
Poland	2,829,000	"
Russia	2,626,000	"
Roumania	834,000	"
Hungary	473,000	"
Czechoslovakia	354,000	"
	<hr/>	
	7,759,000	"

France has only 165,000 Jews; Great Britain, 300,000; Italy, 46,000; Japan 500.

Yet the United States has 3,800,000, and New York city alone contains 1,750,000 Jews, one to every three or four of the population. How is this? We think it is a prominent illustration of our text that God makes the wrath of man to praise Him.

In 1880, that is over half a century ago, Russia passed some cruel laws, called the May Laws, which forced hundreds of thousands of Jews out of the country. Multitudes of them sought asylum in the United States. There they have taken root, and have become captains of commerce, and have made themselves wealthy. To-day they are in a position to help their poorer countrymen to settle in Palestine. Surely God foresaw all this, and has made the wrath of man to praise Him.

Take a second case at the present time. The re-peopling of Palestine by the Jews was proceeding at a comparatively slow rate. About 5,000 a year were admitted. One morning the civilized world was startled by the news of the stringent laws passed by Hitler against the Jews. A wave of intense anti-Semitism swept over Germany. The Jews, who were able, quickly fled from the country. The trains running to Holland and other parts, the ferry boats running to Denmark and Sweden were filled day after day with fleeing Jews. Many committed suicide.

It was their very prosperity that was their ruin. Numbering only three per cent of the population in Germany, yet the Jews accounted for about eight per cent of the legal, medical and other professions, besides their share in the manufacturing and commercial life of the country.

The whole of Jewry felt very insecure. In 1931 the immigrants to Palestine numbered 5,000. In the first half of 1932 the number had risen to 15,000, and it was expected the second half of 1932 would witness a further 25,000 to 30,000 finding a home in Palestine. It is stated that three times as many Jews went to Palestine from Poland in 1932 as in 1931. Moscow contains 250,000 Jews. By a new passport decree 150,000 of these are threatened with expulsion. It is said on good authority that 3,000,000 Jews are eager to settle in

Palestine. No wonder! They feel how insecure they are in the lands they have long dwelt in. Palestine is the only land they can lay claim to. If they leave Germany or Russia or Poland, other countries will refuse them asylum. So Palestine is the spot they are seeking refuge in. Verily God makes the wrath of man to praise Him.

Finally God has been preparing for all this. The Dead Sea, 46 miles long by 8 to 10 miles wide, super-salted, has for centuries been a scene of desolation. No fishes can live in its waters, no bird can fly over its dreary wastes, no herbage grows round its shores.

But in these later years a change has taken place. We cull the following extract,

" THE DEAD SEA ALIVE AGAIN.

This is the description given of the new activities in the region of the Dead Sea. From its bitter and imprisoned waters mineral salts are being withdrawn. The lorries containing them are every day carrying them from the Dead Sea to Jerusalem. There they join the railway, from there are carried by sea to Europe, and more especially to England. For thousands of years the Dead Sea and its valley have been an abomination of desolation. Under the stimulus of modern British enterprise its potash helps to make other desert places blossom like the rose. Other mineral salts besides potash are in the recesses of the dark waters, and

the men of this century can make use of them for medicines and for a dozen industries. The Dead Sea, fifty miles long, ten broad, is at some places 1,300 feet deep."

Dr. Thos. H. Norton, Editor of *Chemicals* computes the value of chemical deposits in the Dead Sea at 253 billion pounds. The contents are computed as follows:—

Potassium Chloride	2,000,000,000	metric tons.
Sodium Chloride	11,000,000,000	metric tons.
Magnesium Chloride	22,000,000,000	metric tons.
Magnesium Bromide	980,000,000	metric tons.
Calcium Chloride	6,000,000,000	metric tons.

How is it that all this fabulous wealth has lain unknown for centuries and has now startled the world by its late discovery? We believe this has been allowed of God, so that when money is needed in vast sums to finance the ever-increasing rush of population into the country it is forthcoming.

In the light of all these happenings can we not see events shaping as the fulfilment of Scripture? Do not our hearts thrill as all this tells us that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh? God makes the wrath of man to praise Him.

A. J. POLLOCK.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

THE teaching of paganism was that various deities were presiding over the destinies of men. Consequently they believed that, if they were not prosperous in any particular, the reason was that the god that governed the matter had been offended and needed to be propitiated. Thus we find that again and again great sacrifices were made to the gods of peace, of war, of fertility, etc., etc.

In regard to every phase and department of their lives there was a god calling for propitiation. All the gods of their imagination appeared to be always against them and ever needing to be made favourable by sacrifice. They knew nothing of a God who loved them.

The hearts of men are ever the same, and hence though to-day they boast loudly of their advancement, which is manifest in certain directions, they are rapidly going back to that benighted condition of things. The modern god that so many consider is the god of "luck ;" and the various charms and mascots that are the vogue are witnesses to the spell that he casts upon them. We have only to read 1 Samuel iv., to see how the people of Israel tried to turn the Ark of God into a mascot that should ensure success to them ; and how God refused to honour His Ark in that way, though He

honoured it very effectually a little later in the land of the Philistines.

When we turn to the New Testament we see how God stooped in His grace to encourage the once darkened minds of His people. He takes up things which they long desired, and sought in vain from their false gods, only to show them that *in Himself alone* was their *all-sufficiency*.

In just one chapter—Romans xv.—we get abundant proof of this, for therein God is presented to us as the God of patience, of consolation, of hope, and of peace. No thought of any need of propitiation enters there, for we who once were enemies have been reconciled to Him.

How much we need patience for we are in a scene which is very contrary to us. Things continually transpire which cross our wills, and this demands patient endurance on our side.

Then again consolation (that is, comfort and encouragement), is something that we need to have continually supplied. In verse 4 we find the means by which both patience and consolation are supplied. We have hope “through patience and comfort of the Scriptures.” So if we neglect the reading of the Scriptures and meditation therein, we do so to our great loss.

But faith must be in very active exercise or we get nothing. Hence we read, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Our hope is only secure if it is centred in God. "Hope thou in God," was the Psalmist's word. We read also of how David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Knowing God as the God of patience, consolation and hope, we cannot fail to know Him as the God of peace, for when He giveth quietness who then can make trouble? Trouble may be made but it will not affect us, for God keeps in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on Him.

Seven times over is God spoken of as the "God of peace:" once in our chapter, and again xvi. 20; 2 Corinthians xiii. 11; Philippians iv. 9; 1 Thessalonians v. 23; 2 Thessalonians iii. 16; Hebrews xiii. 20. When the Lord was on earth He made Himself known as the Fountain-head of peace for His disciples saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation:" but also, "In Me ye might have peace." (John xvi. 33). Peace then should mark all the children of God, for He is not the Author of unrest, disquiet, confusion, but of peace.

What a great matter it is that though we are in the midst of the enemy's country we may be preserved in perfect peace. It

is the triumph of divine grace when this is so. It is one of the great characteristic blessings of God's kingdom or rule—"Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the 'Holy Ghost.'" (Rom. xiv. 17).

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians ix.* 1 — *x.* 14).

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

CHAPTER VIII closes with Paul's considerate willingness to forego his undoubted rights, if thereby he might save one of his weaker brethren from a spiritual disaster. Chapter ix. opens with a very forcible assertion of his apostolic position and its privileges. The two things are entirely consistent, but he knew only too well that the adversaries of himself and of his Lord would attempt to score a point off him in this matter. They would insinuate that this gracious consideration of his was merely a piece of camouflage, intended to disguise the fact that he was no real apostle at all, but just an unaccredited upstart. The Corinthians had evidently been impressed by the pretentious claims of the adversaries, and their minds somewhat warped as a consequence. Hence Paul had to speak plainly as to his divinely-given authority.

He was indeed an apostle; and he had full liberty as to the matters just discussed. He had not been with Christ in the days of His flesh, as had the twelve, but he had seen the Lord in His glory. Moreover the Corinthians themselves were the fruit of his apostolic labours. Verse 2 delivers a crushing answer to any among them who, influenced by the adversaries, were inclined to question his apostleship. Why, they were themselves the proof of the validity of his work! To throw doubt on the reality of his work was to throw doubt on the reality of their own conversion. At the end of his second epistle he reverts to this argument, and he amplifies it. See xiii. 3-5.

Hence, if any wished to cross-examine him on the point, he had an answer that could not be gainsaid. His adversaries thought any stick good enough to beat him with. Again and again he did not eat or drink this or that out of consideration for others. He did not, like other apostles, have a wife to help him and share his travels. He and Barnabas had travelled and laboured unceasingly, without those breaks for rest which others enjoyed. And further, instead of being chargeable to others in respect of his bodily needs, he had laboured with his own hands for a living and taken nothing from anybody at Corinth. Every one of these things was seized upon in the endeavour to discredit him. As a matter of

fact they were heavily to his credit; for each was within his rights. He was foregoing things that were properly his, as a man and as a servant of the Lord, because of his utter devotion to his Master's interests.

Paul was thus forced to speak of his own case. But the Holy Spirit who inspired him took occasion to lay down what is the Lord's will and pleasure as regards those whose whole time, by His call, is devoted to the Gospel, and the service of God's holy things. It is ordained that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." That evidently is the normal thing. If any who thus labour have means of their own and do not need such help, or if any are found who though needing it are great enough, like Paul, to do without it, that is another matter. Only there is just this difference, that there is no virtue in the declining of help by those who have enough: the virtue is when those who have nothing forego their rights.

The principle that the Apostle lays down is supported by spiritual reasoning in verse 7. But then it was not merely the word of a man—even of a spiritual man: the law spoke in exactly the same way. The little piece of legislation, which seems so strangely interjected, in Deuteronomy xxv. 4, established the principle in connection with a humble beast of burden. Moreover it was also enforced practically in connection

with the temple service and Jewish altars. Finally, it was definitely so ordained by the Lord Himself for the present moment. Matthew x. 10, and other passages in the Gospels show this. The principle then is overwhelmingly established. Let all who love the Lord be very careful not to neglect any true servant, called by Him to His service. If we do so we shall be flying in the face of His word, and consequently be great losers ourselves.

In passing, let us notice that the way in which Deuteronomy xxv. is quoted here leads us to expect that we shall find in the law, both enshrined and illustrated, many a principle of conduct which the New Testament enjoins upon us as well pleasing to God. There is nothing surprising in this for God Himself is ever the Same. We shall however find new principles of conduct in the New Testament which are not found in the Old. Just one word of caution is needful. Keep a tight rein on the imagination when thus searching the law. The dreamy mind can produce seeming analogies, which though piously intended, are nothing but fancy running riot!

The last clause of verse 10 is somewhat obscure. The New Translation runs, "and he that treads out corn, in hope of partaking of it," which makes it quite plain. Only the application is, that he who labours to share with us *spiritual* things must not

be debarred from sharing in our *carnal* things—things that have to do with the needs of our flesh.

Has ever another lived during the church's history like unto Paul—entitled to so much, yet claiming so little? His mind was to suffer all things rather than be the least hindrance to the progress of the Gospel. He would rather die than fail as to this. Blessed man! No wonder he could exhort the saints saying, "Be imitators of me."

See, too, how tremendously real to him was the call of God to preach the Gospel. He knew that a "dispensation" (or an "administration") was committed to him, and it was woe to him should he be wanting in it. It might have been displeasing to him and against his will, as it was against Jonah's will to preach to Nineveh; but then necessity was laid upon him. He would have been compelled to serve through a good deal of woe, even as Jonah was. Of course it was not distasteful. He gloried *in* it, though in doing it he had nothing to glory *of*. And doing it willingly he knew that his reward was sure. It was part of his reward to be able to preach the Gospel without charge. How lovely to be able to declare the salvation which is "without money and without price," raising no questions as to money or price in return for preaching it!

But the Apostle's zeal for the Gospel carried him further even than this. He was perfectly free. He lay under obligations to no man. Yet in calculating love he made himself servant to all that he might gain "the more," or, "the most possible." He was out to win as many as possible, so, within the limits of the will of God, he adapted himself to those he sought to win. He specifies four classes, the Jews, those under law, those without law, and the weak. He accommodated himself to each class as he approached them, but of course without doing anything contrary to the revealed will of God. Testimony to this is found in the short parentheses which occur in verses 20 and 21.

The parenthesis in verse 20 does not appear in our Authorized Version. But it should be there. "As under the law (not being myself under law) that I might gain them that are under the law." In verse 21 the parenthesis is quite evident, being printed in brackets. In the New Translation it is rendered, "not as without law to God, but as legitimately subject to Christ." This signifies that when Paul approached the man under law, he observed the conventions which the law imposed, so as not to offend their susceptibilities—everything in fact, so long as it did not deny the fact that he himself was not under the law. When he approached the man without law he did so on *that* basis. Only he was

always careful to let it be seen that he himself was not a lawless man but rightly subject to the Lord. It is evident then that the Apostle really studied the people that he approached, and their idiosyncrasies, so that he might avoid everything which would needlessly prejudice them against the Message that he brought. He was far removed from that mistaken spirit that would say, "God can save and take care of His own elect," and as a result almost hurl the Gospel at people's heads, without much care as to the result.

Fancy the Apostle becoming as weak to the weak—talking in very simple and elementary terms for people of small intellect! No easy task that for a man of giant intellect! Yet he did it. This is the holy art which every really devoted and efficient teacher in a Sunday School has to learn. They need to become as a child to gain the children. This does not mean that they become childish. No, but they should become child-like, and study the mind of a child. And the one end in view is, *salvation.*

When we come to verse 24 we can see how the Apostle's thoughts began to expand and take in the whole spirit and character which should mark the servant of the Lord. We are viewed as athletes contending in the games, whether running or fighting. Hence we should be marked by zeal, directness of purpose, and a temperate, self-denying life in all things. The athlete, whether

in the Grecian games of two thousand years ago, or in the contests to-day, is careful not to let his body get the mastery of him. The very opposite. He masters his body, brings it into subjection to a very strict regime, even buffets it with continual exercises. And all this to the winning of a crown that quickly fades. Let us aim at the same things, only of a spiritual sort, that we may be invested in due season with a fadeless crown; for, alternatively, it is possible to ignore these things, and though a very eloquent preacher to others, to be rejected oneself.

Our chapter ends upon a very unpleasing word, "castaway," or, *rejected*, or *reprobate*. A good deal of controversy has raged around it. Many have seized upon it to prove that the true believer may yet be rejected, and lost for ever. Others realizing that other passages plainly negative this, have sought to explain it as simply signifying disapproved and rejected as to service, as to receiving a prize—disqualified, in fact.

We believe, however, that the true force of the expression is seen if we allow the word to have the full and weighty meaning which is proper to it, and read it in connection with the first twelve verses of chapter x. In our version the first word of the chapter is, "Moreover." It appears however that really the word is simply, "For." This indicated that what follows directly illus-

trates the point in question. "For . . . all our fathers were under the cloud . . . but with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." The great mass of Israel had the externals of their holy religion, yet they totally missed its vital power, having no faith. They did not keep under their bodies but gave themselves up to their lusts, and miserably perished. From this point of view they were types of people who, though well fortified in the profession of the Christian religion, are yet not true believers and perish.

The meaning of "castaway," seems clearly fixed thus by the character of its context. But the difficulty remains—why did Paul speak of himself in this way? Why be so emphatic, "I MYSELF should be a castaway"? The answer is, we believe, that in so writing Paul had in view not only the Corinthians, whom he had just been blaming for great laxity of life, but also—and perhaps mainly—the mischief-making adversaries who had been leading them astray. These adversaries were unquestionably men who were lax self-pleasers, the very opposite of such as keep under their body, though great preachers to others. Yet Paul did not name them directly, any more than he directly named the leaders of parties earlier in the epistle. Then he transferred the matter to himself and to Apollos. Here he does not even bring

Apollos into the matter, but just transfers it to himself alone. It is after all a very common figure of speech. Many a preacher has said, "When I owe a year's rent, and cannot pay a penny of it, then . . . so and so." The good man never owed any rent in his life, but to illustrate his point he transfers the matter to himself. Delicacy forbids that he should transfer it to his hearers, and suggest that they had rent which they could not pay.

Paul had no doubt about himself. In just the verse before he had said, "I therefore so run, *not as uncertainly.*" But he had many grave doubts about the adversaries, and some about the Corinthians. And he made his warning the more effective by applying it to himself. The mere fact that one is a preacher guarantees nothing.

In the same way outward privileges and rites guarantee nothing, as is witnessed by the history of Israel, summarized in the opening verses of chapter x. They had things that answered to baptism and the supper of the Lord, and yet they were overthrown and destroyed. And in all this they were "ensamples," or "types," for us.

In their passage of the Sea we have a type of baptism. At that point they definitely committed themselves to the authority and leadership of Moses; just as in Christian baptism, which is in the Name

of the Lord Jesus, we are definitely committed to *His* authority and leadership. Though neither cloud nor sea actually touched them, they were *under* the one and *through* the other.

Verse 3 refers to the manna: verse 4 to the rock of which they drank in Exodus xvii, and Numbers xx. Both one and the other were "spiritual," for both were supernatural: and both were types of Christ. But in spite of these peculiar privileges, which were common to all Israel, the great majority of them were overthrown in the wilderness. This sad fact is referred to again in Hebrews iii. and iv., and there it is pointed out that the root of the whole trouble was that they had no faith. Our scripture tells us that what they did have was lust, and idolatry, and fornication, and the spirit of tempting God and of murmuring. Where faith comes in these evil things go out.

Now the Spirit of God has recorded these things for our warning. The true believer is marked by confidence in God, and the more simple and absolute his confidence the better. But it is correspondingly true that he is marked by no confidence in himself, and the more deep his self-distrust the better. It is when we think that *we* stand that we are in danger of a fall. It is quite another thing when a saint has confidence that "God is able to make him stand" (Rom. xiv. 4).

And not only is God able to support us, but also He keeps a watchful eye upon us in His faithfulness, not permitting us to be tempted beyond a certain limit. The temptations that confront us are "common to man," or such as "belong to man." They are not of some superhuman sort. And again there is with them an issue, or way out. "Way of escape," might lead us to suppose that we may always expect some way by which we may escape the temptation altogether. It is not that, but that God always sees to it that there is a way through by which we may emerge unscathed at the other side. Temptation may be like a long dark tunnel, but there is always visible the light of day at the further end.

Having issued this tremendous warning, the Apostle gives it a very personal turn in verse 14. The whole of chapter viii was taken up with the matter of idols, and of meats offered to them; and now this verse brings us back to that point. That chapter asserted the liberty of the believer in regard to meats offered to idols. This verse counter-balances the matter by stressing the enormous evil of the idols themselves. Idolatry is not merely to be avoided; it is to be fled from, as an utterly abhorrent thing.

Let us in every sense of the word keep ourselves from idols.

F. B. HOLE.

DELIVERANCE.

THE subject of deliverance well deserves our prayerful study. So much depends on it. In fact, those who know little of it are often seriously hampered in their course, and consequently make poor headway. They become entangled with the world, or distracted with the all-too-common evil of self-occupation. And, not unlike the children of Israel, they *wander along*, rather than *walk along*, with the result their pathway is drawn-out and tortuous, instead of being straightforward. It took the children of Israel forty years to do a journey that could have been done in eleven days, and then they did not enter the promised land. This speaks for itself. And the example of their disobedience and lusting is held up to us as a solemn warning (See, 1 Cor. x.), which proves that the flesh is unchanged.

The work of Satan is to embarrass Christians and keep them in a state of bondage. He cannot frustrate God's purposes of blessing for them; but he can hinder them from entering into the practical enjoyment of these purposes. To this end, he uses his power and wiles.

The great channels, through which he works to carry out his evil intent, are the world and the flesh. The world is outside, and serves as a force of attraction; the flesh is inside, and answers as a point of contact. Together they form his ground of action.

But if we are severed from this ground, we are in a position of safe deliverance. We are like the bird of which the proverb says, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the *sight* of any bird" (Prov. i. 17). That is to say, we *know* the ground on which he can attack us, namely, the world and the flesh, and we can keep off it. This annuls his malice, and secures our deliverance. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18). This is the simple and straightforward way of deliverance.

But it may be asked, if deliverance is so simple and straightforward, how is it that the majority of Christians cannot learn it save through many and bitter trials, often extending over the best part of their life? There are two ways in which we can learn; that is, by faith, or by experience. The former is always simple and straightforward; the latter, complex and tortuous. Why did Caleb go into the promised land? Because he believed God. Why were the others debarred from going in? Because they disbelieved God. In exactly the same

way, there are Christians who enter into all the purposes of God for their rich and abundant blessing, by faith; and there are those who fall short of these purposes, by unbelief. To the former, everything is simple and straightforward, for there is nothing between Egypt and Canaan but a straight course. To the latter, all is involved and winding, for there is a desert intervening, in which they spend much time in humiliating experiences, going back in heart into Egypt, or in being occupied with themselves, only to find untold sorrow and disappointment.

In view of this, we may well say, a thousand pities we have to learn so much by experience! How much better if we learned more by faith! But the condition of each one must determine whether it is to be by faith, or by experience, and upon this we will venture a few remarks.

When the eye is single, the whole body is full of light. This is easily understood, because there is nothing between the eye and its object. If, however, this singleness is lacking, and that something else is sought along with faith's object, it follows that there is duplicity, and a wavering from one to the other, with hopeless inconstancy and indecision. And we know "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." If Christians, through unbelief, seek something of the world, of themselves and of Christ, they will find that they spoil their enjoy-

ment of all. The double-minded man gets *nothing* from God. Of Lot, in Sodom, it is said, he "*vexed* his righteous soul from day to day." And the children of Israel, who lusted after Egypt and its store, died in the *desert*; that is to say, neither in Egypt, nor in Canaan. These all speak of sad experiences, and a sad end!

But if we enquire, what lies at the root of all? What gives occasion to this condition of duplicity? There must be something hidden deep down in our nature which insidiously asserts itself, to prevent faith from acting with single eye? Alas! there is. It is the flesh, otherwise the "I" in us. And until that "I" is crucified, we need never expect any progress in our heavenward pathway. It will always deceive us, for it leads us to confide in *it*, and not in *God*. Thus faith is done away with. "I" does not need faith; it is self-sufficient, because it is "I."

When the question of Israel's obedience was raised, they at once said, "All that the Lord hath spoken *we* will do." Here is an example of self-confident "I." It was not a question of what *God* would do, in which they would humbly confide, but of what *they* would do, and that in self-confident boasting. This was fatal. *They put themselves under law, and the consequences of this act are narrated in their history of failure.*

But it may be said that Christians do not put themselves under law. The man in the seventh chapter of Romans surely proves that they may do so. The whole of that remarkable chapter is one long argument to show that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. While we know that God never puts Christians under law, He may allow them to go under it in their consciences, in order that they may learn some salutary lessons. Still it is not in keeping with His direct dealings with them, as the objects of His grace. The "I" has been allowed to assert itself; and, like Israel, they have been allowed to take the way of their choice, in order to learn about it. And what can they learn about it? Just this, that there is no good thing in it. That is all we can learn about "I." "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." When we reach this point, it is then time to look away from "I" to another, even Christ, in whom there is nothing but good.

So long as "I" is busy *doing* something for God (that is, under law), grace and faith are held in abeyance. Then the Christian's life is introspective. Just as if his eyes were turned the wrong way, he becomes occupied with himself. Law tells him what he has *to do*, and throws him back *on himself* to do it. He meets with certain failure, and tries, and tries, and tries again . . . Like the impotent man at Bethesda,

he may spend the best part of his life in trying, only to find sorrowful disappointment. In the end (when this is reached), the cry goes forth, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then, and only then, are the Christian's eyes turned from himself, looking for some one else, implied in the "who" of his anxious query. A very desirable point is reached, for he turns away from "I" and seeks a "who" entirely outside of himself. Thus grace and faith come into view—the fundamental principles in Christianity.

Grace never tells the Christian *to do anything* for his deliverance; it tells him *all is done*. Faith never occupies the Christian *with himself*; it always occupies him *with Christ*. Resting in a perfect work that *is done*, and occupied *with the glory and perfection* of the One who did it, the soul is delivered—has a stable foundation on which to rest, and an Object of superlative beauty, and unchanging delight, for its occupation. Thus we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The lifted-up serpent in the wilderness provided Israel with two things—the remedy for the raging plague amongst them, and an object, outside of themselves, at which to look. Here we see the great principles of grace and faith. Grace provides the remedy; faith appropriates it. Thus it ever

is. So also, in Romans viii, we have God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (that is, as Antitype of the brazen serpent), and on account of sin, condemning sin in the flesh. This is the end of "I." "I," which is bound up in the flesh, goes under the stroke of judgment. This is the truth about "I." When we know it, then we are finished with it; and the rest of our time is spent for the will of God.

It is well, not only to sing, but to enter into the truth of, the following verses:

Thy life is now beyond the grave;
 Our souls Thou hast set free;
 Life, strength and grace in Thee we have,
 And we are one with Thee.

O teach us so the power to know
 Of risen life with Thee;
 Not *we* may live while here below,
 But *Christ* our life may be.

J. HOUSTON.

ABRAHAM AND LOT.

NOW *the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee . . . So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him*" (Gen. xii. 1, 4).

That Abraham heard the voice of God there can be no doubt. Living as he was

on the other side of the flood with Terah his father and serving other gods, there came to him, in unmistakable language, a voice, clear and distinct, "*Get thee out.*" He was to leave his present surroundings and all that pertained to them and go to a land that God would shew him.

Has this no voice to us to-day? Is there not a call to get out? Are there not such things as environments, associations which are not in keeping with the divine mind? Is Christendom to-day, the well-ordered house of God that obtained at the beginning? Is it not a scene of confusion, disorder and self-will? Are not things very much like what obtained in the time of the Judges? "And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, *every man to his tribe and to his family*, and they went out from thence *every man to his inheritance*. In those days there was *no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (xxiv. 24, 25). Self-will and indifference to the rights of Christ abound. What is the divine call?—"Get out!" But to whom does it come? To those who walk in the steps of their father Abraham.

Is my reader a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ? Then you are a son of Abraham, and called to walk in his steps. The word of God comes to you. Are your associations

such as can stand the search-light of the word of God? If not—"Get out." You will never improve them by staying in them, for rather the reverse will happen—"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." You yourself will be affected and that for the worse. In New Testament language the word is: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). If you have never been exercised before, may the Lord exercise you now!

Abraham obeyed the call and "went out, not knowing whither he went." Perhaps you say: "I am aware of many things in my particular associations which are not scriptural; neither is scripture consulted on such matters. I am often disquieted but if I come out—where shall I go?" Three men were once in conversation together. One was disquieted because his minister had developed modernist ideas and was preaching them from the pulpit. He asked what he should do of the second man, who in his turn asked the third—a simple, plain, Bible-loving Christian. Quickly came the answer with no additional arguments to back it up: "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (Prov. xix. 27). Abraham obeyed because God spoke to him. Fellow-Christ-

ian, if you have heard his voice, bidding you come out, obey and leave the consequences with Him. He will certainly shew you your way as you proceed.

There may be some reading this article who have heard and obeyed the divine call and are tempted to go back. Let such remember what is written, "And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned" (Heb. xi. 15). Return to your old associations you may. But can you; dare you; will you? Who called you out? The Lord Jesus said, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (John x. 3, 4). Will you turn back from such a Shepherd? Surely the rather, the language of your heart will be, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

"Keep us Lord, oh! keep us cleaving,
To Thyself and still believing,
Till the hour of our receiving
Promised joys with Thee."

"Lot went with him." Did Lot hear the divine call?—we are not told so. He simply went with Abraham—an associate, and nothing more. His subsequent history proved what he was. Personally a "just

man" whose righteous soul was vexed because of the filthy conversation of the wicked, but nevertheless, only an associate of Abraham. He could not and did not retain the true pilgrim character and when the test came he disclosed the thoughts of his heart and went after the well-watered plains of Sodom and finally was saved, "but so as by fire."

May I ask my reader, Are you but an associate with those who—through grace—are seeking to maintain a separate walk with God?—the men and women of conviction, who know *where* they are, and *why* they are where they are—who have truly gone "outside the camp" and are bearing the reproach of Christ. Are you where you are, merely because you have been brought up with those who have heard and obeyed the divine call? or because something about them has attracted you? That savours more of a Lot than an Abraham! Take heed! Get down before God at once: seek His face, prayerfully: study His word with holy diligence and give yourself no rest until you reach *a divinely given conviction*. Oh, for men and women of *conviction* and *spiritual backbone!*

Is anything too hard for the Lord? He, who has called us out, can maintain us. Let us seek to be true to our Lord: true to His claims upon us: true to the divine

ground upon which His written word puts us. Let us hold fast, and strengthen the things that remain. Our Lord is coming, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11).

"Hold the fort for I am coming,
Jesus signals still;
Wave the answer back to heaven
By Thy grace we will."

J. H. EVANS.

SOWING AND REAPING.

ONE of the most searching verses in the Bible is Galatians vi. 7: "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." It is a verse of universal application and has been verified in tears and blood by untold thousands. Nor is the Christian exempt. Indeed, whilst the truth is of universal application it is specially written to warn saints, for the Scripture goes on to say, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Christians, who sow to the flesh, will assuredly reap corruption; those, who sow to the Spirit, will reap life everlasting.

There are a few startling examples in the Scriptures of sowing and reaping to which we may well pay heed.

Jacob deceived his blind old father. Attired in skins of goats, put on his hand and upon the smooth of the neck, he personated his brother Esau, and robbed him of his birthright.

Did God forget? Years rolled by. Jacob is the father of an army of stalwart sons. They are jealous of their young brother Joseph. They sell him as a slave into Egypt. "They took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood" (Genesis xxxvii. 31), and declared to their old father that an evil beast had devoured his son. Jacob deceived his father. His sons deceived him.

The King of Egypt, fearful of the growing numbers of the children of Israel, ordered their male children to be cast into the river, thus to destroy the race. The Egyptian nation further afflicted the Israelites with grievous burdens, their lives were made bitter with hard bondage. When blow after blow fell upon the guilty nation did they realise that *God* was requiting them? Their bodies, their possessions, came under the awful government of Divine wrath. Last of all Pharaoh, who had ordered the death of the male children, found his own eldest slain by the hand of God in his own palace. Every Egyptian house had one dead, and there was "a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more" (Exodus

xi. 6). What a sowing! What a reaping! Pharaoh did not escape, nor the guilty nation.

What must have been the feelings of that wicked warrior, Adoni-bezek, when he said, "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died" (Judges i. 7). Note, when Adoni-bezek went through the ordeal of having his thumbs and his great toes cut off, thereby being greatly crippled, he ascribed what had happened to him to *God*, "God hath requited me." The boomerang, that he had often flung at others, had hit himself. This is ever so.

David's adultery has been the butt of the godless and the sceptic. They forget to mention Psalm li. that psalm of penitential confession showing that David was immeasurably superior to his critics. Alas! David added to his sin the crime of practical murder, when he gave orders for Uriah, the Hittite, the wronged husband, to be put in the forefront of the battle. Was there no reaping from this sad episode?—though he indeed got forgiveness, confessing his sin, as set forth in Psalm li.

Did not the prophet Nathan with accusing finger say to David, "Thou art the

man," as he narrated the parable of the rich man with flocks and herds robbing his poor neighbour of his one little ewe lamb, whereby to entertain his guests? Did he not tell him he should have to restore fourfold, because he had done this thing?

Listen! "The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David" (2 Samuel xii. 15), and it died. His son, Amnon, forced his sister, Tamar, and was murdered by another son, Absalom. Absalom, the murderer, brought back in unrighteousness, rose in rebellion against his father, went into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel, and was himself slain by the hand of Joab, the very man who sought his return unrighteously. Surely David in God's government reaped what he had sown.

Haman, the satrap of Persia, filled with rage against Mordecai, made a gallows, fifty cubits high, on which to hang the man he blindly hated. When his iniquity came to light, Harbonah, one of the king's chamberlain's told Ahasuerus of the erection of this gallows, and what use it was intended for. The king promptly ordered Haman himself to be hanged thereon. We read, "So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified" (Esther vii. 10).

The last instance we would adduce is that of Judas, the traitor. What a privilege was

his to company with the Lord during the three and a half years of His public ministry. Yet for a paltry thirty pieces of silver he betrayed his Lord with a kiss. What was the sequel? His betrayal put our Lord on the tree. We read, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians iii. 13). *Judas hanged himself on a tree*—did it by his own act, driven by an intolerable urge of remorse. He sowed, he reaped, a warning beacon for all time.

Finally there is a striking verse in Revelation xiii. 10, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." This verse is prophetic of what will happen to the great persecuting power of the last days, especially the head of the great Roman Empire. It will be found that he who leads into captivity, will himself go into captivity, that he who kills will himself be killed.

How good is it, if we sow to the Spirit, and of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Our Lord says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke vi. 38).

“DO THEREFORE THIS THAT WE SAY TO THEE.”

(Acts xxi. 23).

LET us remember, if we have been cast for the Lord's name out from a place, where we have been under the authority of the governing power, not to re-enter it, so that we may not again be placed in the position from which we have been freed. The relationship has been broken by the authority itself, and if we have left it by the will of God, by returning we place ourselves anew under abandoned authority; and if this be contrary to that of the Lord Jesus, under which we came when liberated from human authority, we re-establish over us the authority which had been destroyed, and thus strife begins between the authority of Christ over us, and that which we have abandoned. It is impossible to go on well thus. We were free under the authority of Christ, free to do His will; and we have returned to the authority which prohibits obedience to Christ.

For example, suppose that a son or a daughter has been driven from home for the Lord's name; by this act the parents have renounced their authority. If this son returns to his father's house, he places himself under paternal authority, and what can he do when his parents oppose the faith of Christ? He is powerless; and moreover, has so lost his liberty, as to renew over himself the authority which opposes that of Christ, has given up the latter to return to that which is contrary to it. J. N. D.

(From "Meditations on Acts," chap. xxi).

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians* x. 15—xi. 19.)

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

UP to this point in the epistle the Apostle had addressed the Corinthians on the ground of their responsibility, and therefore assumed that there might be some amongst them who were unreal. At verse 15 he changes his view-point somewhat and addresses them as "wise men." Not every true Christian could be so designated, we fear; and it is certain that no unconverted person could be. He speaks to the true members of the body of Christ, who possess His Spirit, and hence are capable of judging concerning that which he is now going to bring before them. Verses 16 to 22 contain reasonings, the spiritual force of which should come home to us.

The simple primary meaning of the cup and the loaf, of which we partake in the Supper of the Lord, is the blood and the body of Christ. This was quite evident from the moment of the original institution, as recorded in three of the Gospels. But there was a further significance, underlying the primary meaning, which does not come to light until we reach the verses now before us: that is, the thought of "communion" or "fellowship." This holy ordinance is not merely an occasion appealing

to the deepest instincts of personal and individual piety; it is an occasion of communion, springing out of the fact that we who partake of the one loaf are as much one as is the loaf of which we partake.

But let us at this point carefully distinguish things that differ. The one loaf signifies the body of Christ which was given for us in death. The fact that we believers, though many, *all partake* of that one loaf signifies that we are one body. We are one body by a Divine act—see xii. 13. Partaking all together of the one loaf does not make us one body, but it is the sign that we are one body. And to that sign Paul appeals to enforce his point.

The point he enforces is this, that communion is involved in the Supper of the Lord: not merely communion *with* one another, but the communion *of* the blood and body of the Lord. There is nothing here to foster superstition. That which we *break* is bread. That of which we *partake* is bread. Yet in drinking and in partaking we have communion *in that which the cup and the bread signify*; and shall be held responsible in regard to *that*, as is plainly stated in the next chapter, verse 27. This is exceedingly solemn truth—truth, which all too often is overlooked.

In verse 18 the Apostle shows that there was a fore-shadowing of this truth in the case of Israel, inasmuch as the priests were

permitted to eat certain parts of certain offerings, and in the case of the peace offering even the offerer had certain parts to eat. Details as to this are given in Leviticus vi. and vii. If these chapters be read it will be seen that restrictions were laid upon those who eat. All defilement had to be kept far from them just because they were thereby in communion with the altar of God, and all that it signified. Had they taken liberties with their holy food and treated it unworthily, they would have come under serious consequences.

The same thing was true in principle of the idol sacrifices of the Gentile world. The idols they venerated represented demons; and these demons were but subordinate officers of Satan. By their sacrifices they entered into the communion of demons. Now such a communion as this the child of God is to flee at all costs.

Verses 16 to 20, then, set before us three communions, the Christian, the Jewish, the heathen; centred respectively in the Table of the Lord, the Altar in the midst of Israel, and the idol sacrifices of paganism; and expressed in each case by the act of eating. In this passage Israel's altar is not in question so it is merely introduced as an illustration; and left at that, (to be referred to further in Hebrews xiii. 10). The issue here lies between the communion of Christ's death and the communion of demons.

These two are totally, fundamentally and continuously opposed. It is impossible to be a participator in both. "Ye cannot," says the Apostle, twice in verse 21.

And supposing someone ignores this "cannot" and is bold enough, having partaken of the Lord's table, to partake of the table of demons—what then? Then, he provokes the Lord to jealousy for the sake of His Name and glory. The Lord will not give His glory to another, and the offender will come into sharp collision with the Lord Himself, and taste the bitterness of coming under His dealing in discipline, possibly unto death. Disciplined of the Lord he will soon discover that he is not stronger than He, and come face to face with the toilsome road of repentance, which is the only way that leads to recovery.

In the mercy of God we are hardly endangered by "the fellowship of demons." But, because of that, let us not lightly dismiss this truth from our minds, for the principle of it is of much wider application. If we partake of the Lord's table it is necessary for us to set a watch lest we partake also in things that are inconsistent with it and its holiness. If we are in the communion of the blood and body of Christ, we shall find it great enough to exclude all other communions. We shall keep clear of communions that can only entangle us, and may possibly defile us. We fear

that the implications of this truth are often ignored. It is all too possible to partake of the cup and of the loaf without giving much thought to the solemn obligations that are connected therewith. We can have no fellowship with evil things.

This serious matter disposed of, there remained the questions as to meats which had been offered to idols, to which the Apostle had previously referred. He digressed from it at the beginning of chapter ix., and he returns to it in verse 23 of our chapter. The pagan world was so full of idols that most of the animals, whose carcasses were offered for sale in their markets, had been killed in connection with idol sacrifices and ceremonies. Supposing the Christian bought his food in the "shambles," or "markets," and if he was eating in the house of someone who did not believe, and hence had no feelings on these points, what was he to do?

In this connection Paul makes the statement twice over, "All things are lawful." That is he sets us in a place of liberty. Yet he reminds us that by no means everything is either "expedient," (that is, "profitable") or "edifying;" and moreover that we are not merely to consider what is good for ourselves, but what is good for others. The two-fold test that he mentions is capable of a thousand applications. Again and again situations arise as to which we have not only to raise the question, Is it

lawful? but also, Is there profit in it? and, Does it tend to building up? And further we have to consider the profit and the building up of *all*. If we ordered our lives by that standard we should be cutting out a good many things of a doubtful and unprofitable nature.

We may well thank God for the liberty which is ordained in this passage. It would have been an intolerable burden to the early Christians if they had been responsible to track out the history of every bit of meat they bought in the markets, or consumed in the house of some acquaintance. For us to-day, living under conditions which are highly complicated and artificial, it would be ten times worse. It is evidently God's will for His people that they accept the conditions in which their lot is cast, and pursue a simple path through, without inquisitively looking for sources of trouble, whether meat be in question or any other matter.

If, on the other hand, without any special inquisition, one becomes aware of defilement, as in the case supposed in verse 28, then it is to be carefully avoided. In so saying the Apostle reasserts what he had stated at the end of chapter viii.

This leads up to the very comprehensive instruction of verse 31, a statement which covers the whole of our lives. In all things we are to seek the glory of God : just as

the next verse adds that we are to avoid giving offence to man. Indeed, taking this passage as a whole we may observe five valuable points which offer us guidance as to whether any course may, or may not, be according to the will of God. That which is according to His will (1) is lawful, (2) is expedient or profitable, (3) is to the edifying or building up of oneself or others, (4) is to the glory of God, (5) gives no occasion of stumbling to any. Often the question is asked, How may I get guidance? Well, here is some guidance of a very sure and definite sort. Are we always so willing to be guided when we get the guidance?

Verse 32 classifies mankind under three heads. Notice how distinctly "the church of God" stands out from both Jew and Gentile. The Old Testament classified men under two heads, Israel and the Gentiles. The Church, a body called out from both Jews and Gentiles, only appears in the New Testament. Though we have thus been called out from the mass of mankind we are to consider men, seeking their highest good, even their salvation. This was Paul's way even as it was the way of Christ. And we are to be imitators of Paul. Verse 1 of chapter xi. should be treated as the last verse of chapter x.

The fresh paragraph begins with verse 2, which stands in very direct contrast with verse 17. The Apostle had referred to

the institution of the Lord's Supper in chapter x., as we have seen; and there had been grave disorders in connection with it, demanding very heavy censure. However there were certain matters as to which he could praise them. So first he utters a word of praise. Certain "ordinances," or "directions," had been given to them, and they had remembered Paul and observed them. So even in this we see the Apostle exemplifying what he had just been saying. He sought the profit of the Corinthians by praising them before he blamed them, and in this he followed Christ, for it is exactly His way, as exemplified in His messages to the seven churches in Revelation ii. and iii.

But even here there was something as to which the Corinthians were ignorant. It seems that they observed directions given as to the behaviour of men and of women in connection with prayer and prophecy, without understanding the truth that governed those directions. That the man should engage in these spiritual exercises with uncovered head, and the woman with covered head, was not a mere whim, an arbitrary order. On the contrary it was in accord with the Divine order, established in connection with Christ. Three headships are mentioned in verse 3.

The highest of these springs from the fact that in becoming Man, that He might assume the office of Mediator, the Lord

Jesus took the place of subjection. Isaiah had prophesied the coming of Jehovah's Servant, who would have the ear of the learner, and never swerve from His direction: that is to say, Jehovah would be His Head and Director in all things. This was perfectly fulfilled in Christ; and the fact that He is now risen and glorified has not altered the position. He is still the Servant of the will of God (though never less than God Himself) and the pleasure of Jehovah is to prosper in His hand to eternity. So the Head of Christ is God.

But then Christ is the Head of the man, as distinguished from the woman. A certain order was established in creation since "Adam was first formed, then Eve." That order is stated also in verses 8 and 9 of our chapter. She shared in his place and his distinctions, and even in the days of innocence headship was vested in Adam. Sin did not alter that headship, neither has the coming in of God's grace in Christ. So Christ is the Head of man, and of every man. And the head of the woman is the man.

Every member of the human body is directed from the head. So the figure is very simple and expressive. It is a matter, in one word, of *direction*. The woman is to accept direction from the man. The man is to accept direction from Christ. And Christ accepts direction from God, and does

so perfectly. For the rest, it is done very imperfectly. The great mass of menfolk do not recognize Christ at all; and at the present time there is a great uprising of womenfolk against the direction and leadership of men, and that—significantly enough—especially in Christendom. Still none of these things alter that which is the divine ideal and order.

Now if any believer, man or woman, has to do with God and His things, whether it be in praying (i.e., addressing oneself to Him), or in prophesying (i.e., speaking forth words from Him), there is to be the observance of these directions as to the uncovering or covering of the head, as a sign that God's order is recognized and obeyed. Verses 14 and 15 further show that it is in keeping with this that the man has short and the woman long hair.

There is no contradiction between verse 5 of our chapter and verse 34 of chapter xiv., for the simple reason that there speaking in the assembly is in question, whereas in our chapter the assembly does not come into view until verse 17 is reached. Only then do we begin to consider things that may happen when we "come together." The praying or prophesying contemplated in verse 5 is not in connection with the formal assemblies of God's saints.

It was when the Apostle turned to deal with things that were transpiring in con-

nection with their assemblies that he found himself bound to blame them. They came together to no profit but the reverse. In the first chapter he had alluded to these divisions or schisms in their midst, and it was when they came together that they were so painfully manifest. They still came together in one place. Things had not reached such a pass that they refused to meet any longer as one, and met in different buildings. Yet there were internal splits or fissures in the assembly, with all their disastrous effects.

Tidings of this had reached Paul's ears and he tells them plainly that he partly believed it, for he knew their carnal state. The word "heresies," in verse 19 means, "sects," or "schools of opinion;" and they are mentioned in Galatians v. 20, amongst the terrible "works of the flesh." If saints are found in a fleshly condition, heresies crop up as sure as they are alive. Hence, says the Apostle to the fleshly Corinthians, "there *must* be heresies among *you*." These heresies may have the effect of making manifest those foolishly "approved" by men: they will certainly reveal those who refuse this party making, and hence are "approved" of God.

What must be the judgment of the Spirit of God as to us to-day, in view of the way in which schools of opinion are flourishing in the church of God?

SHOULD WE FORGIVE ?

MATTHEW xviii. 21, 22, clearly teaches that we should. Peter, impetuous and always ready to ask questions, says, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Seven times seems a big stretch, denoting a forgiving spirit. But our Lord replied, "I say not unto thee, until seven times : but, until seventy times seven."—four hundred and ninety times—a prodigious number.

Did our Lord mean that we should forgive up to exactly four hundred and ninety times, and that would mark the extreme limit? Surely not. It is a number that no one would equal in a particular case. It just means that we should go on forgiving. Long before four hundred and ninety acts of forgiveness were registered there would be no counting. No, it sets forth an attitude of mind, very foreign to the flesh that cries, "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exodus xxi. 23-25). The law principle we can understand as men in the flesh; fatal as it would be for our blessing, if that were all. But grace, how slow we

are to understand it, and still slower to practice it, though we owe everything to it!

Scripture, however, let it be carefully noted, indicates *a condition*. An easy going forgiveness would do grave moral injury. We read, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him: And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke xvii. 3, 4).

There is a condition necessary to forgiveness, and that is *repentance*. That is, indeed, the principle of divine forgiveness. There is no forgiveness with God except through repentance. It is very evident that one who trespasses, and who is not repentant, has no desire for forgiveness, is not in the right spirit to receive it. Repentance is the moral foundation on which forgiveness can be rightly given and rightly received.

The attitude of the injured one should be that of forgiveness—a forgiveness forthcoming the moment repentance takes place. The attitude of the injurer should be that of repentance.

This is, indeed, a very serious matter. In the prayer of Luke xi. 4, we read, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." That means our attitude to others has a serious relation to ourselves. Doubtless in this

passage forgiveness is looked at from a governmental standpoint. And it is just on the lines of government that the matter assumes very serious proportions. Do I forgive? Then I can call upon God to forgive me. Am I hard and unforgiving? I shall reap what I sow. We see it in the parable of Matthew xviii. 23-35. The man who owed ten thousand talents, a sum approaching two million pounds, was forgiven his debt. Relieved of this terrible incubus, he discovered a fellow-servant who owed him one hundred pence, a paltry sum. He seized his fellow-servant by the throat, and demanded payment, throwing him into prison, there to stay till the debt should be paid.

When the servants, shocked by all this, informed their lord, he was righteously wroth, delivering the wretched man to the tormentors till all should be paid. Little did the unrighteous fellow know that he was throwing a boomerang, that would hit himself, and hit him hard. "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew xviii. 35).

Have we not been forgiven far more than ten thousand talents, more than tongue can say? Shall we be hard and unforgiving? If we are, we shall find we injure ourselves more than those we are harsh towards. It

is a very serious matter. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians vi. 7). Sowing to the flesh, corruption is reaped.

Righteousness on our part consists in acting towards others according to the way God has acted to us.

All this is very practical. Let us practise it, helped by the Spirit of God, for we cannot do it in our own strength.

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS PASSIVE WITNESS.

John xvi. 7-11.

(From Notes of Addresses).

IT was on the memorable night of our Lord's betrayal, and during that close and loving "upper room" conversation He had with His beloved disciples, that He cheered their hearts with two very wonderful promises. One He spoke of as the promise of His Father. He promised that, though He was going away, there should come another Comforter and He should abide with them for ever. After three and a half years of His sweet company, they had

now to say farewell to Him: but when the Comforter should come, there would be no saying good-bye; He would abide with them for ever.

The original word, *paraclete*, translated by our word "Comforter," might with equal correctness be translated "Advocate." An advocate is one who stands by your side and supports you. Up to that time He had done this with those beloved men: now He says, I am going to send Another to stand by your side, and He shall be your comfort and stay and support.

Beside that, there was a second promise He made, and that was to comfort their sorrowing hearts in view of His departure. He says, "*I will come again* and receive you unto Myself." Thus He made two promises under those solemn circumstances, in order to comfort their sad hearts. One, that there should come down no less a person than God the Holy Ghost, to be their Comforter; and the other that He Himself was to come again. The first of those promises was fulfilled within eight weeks of His making it. The fulfilment of the second, we are still waiting for, but the one is as certain of its fulfilment as the other.

In the verses I have read in John xvi., you have the Lord speaking of that moment.

It was expedient for them He should go away. We can hardly understand that. We should have thought it would be much better if He had remained with them; but no! Another could not come until He had gone. You see from that there can be no such thing as the Holy Ghost being on earth until Christ had gone to Heaven. So in John vii., it says, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." He connects distinctly the coming of the Holy Ghost into this world with His ascension to heavenly glory. It was not until He took His seat there that the Holy Ghost came.

The Holy Ghost had acted from heaven upon individuals on earth before that. Peter tells us in his 2nd epistle, that holy men of God had spoken as they had been moved by the Spirit. That is one thing. But for the Holy Spirit to be here personally is another; and if you were to ask me to give you in a short sentence the great distinguishing feature of the present dispensation in contrast with any other, I should say it was the personal presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. That is the thing that marks Christianity off from all other dispensations.

If it was an important event in this world when God the Son came into it, if it was a very great privilege that day, think you it is any less a privilege in this day when God the Holy Ghost comes into this world? Has

it ever dawned upon you that this world is the scene of the visit of two divine Persons? One has been here, fulfilled His mission, and gone. The other has come, is fulfilling His mission and is about to go. The first of those Persons I refer to is often spoken of as "the second person of the Trinity," God the Son. The other, is God the Holy Ghost.

I think we need to utter a word of warning just here. It is a faulty expression, but we all generally understand the meaning of it, when we speak of the First, Second and Third Persons of the Trinity. It might lead some to think that the Second Person was an inferior Person to the First, and the Third was an inferior Person still to the Second. No! that would be a mistake. No such thought must occupy your mind as that. That is not the force of the expression, commonly used though not found in the Bible—the Three Persons of the Trinity. We simply say that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. It is God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Ghost. I need not tell you the latter two are being pretty widely denied at the present time. They will admit that Jesus was a Son of God, but in the next breath tell you, so are you. They will not admit He is God the Son, nor that the Holy Ghost is God; and even those who are prepared to admit the presence of the Holy Spirit, often think of Him as only a

gracious and powerful influence in this world. But He is more than an influence. He exerts an influence, but the One who exerts an influence is more than the influence He exerts. There are not two persons and an influence in the Trinity, there are three persons in the Godhead, that Holy Trinity of God, the Father; God the Son; and God, the Holy Ghost. Outside that you are anti-Christian, I do not care what your name is. To deny those three things is to deny three vital truths of Christianity.

You may say, "Well I do not understand the Holy Ghost being a Person. I can understand Christ being a Person, He was a Man; we shall see Him and He can be heard and handled." Let me speak just here very clearly. The Lord Jesus Christ did not become a Person in the Trinity when He became a Man. He was that before ever He became a Man. In that wonderful inscrutable mystery, divinity and humanity were brought together. He brought His divinity into His humanity, but He is still God over all blessed for evermore. And the Holy Ghost is God, equally with the Son. And I say, if it was a blessed, yet a solemn and serious thing for the world to receive a visit from God, the Son, it is equally serious and equally blessed that God, the Holy Ghost should come.

In our Sunday School days we were taught to appreciate the privilege of this

world having received a visit from God the the Son. We used to sing

“I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with Him then.”

Wouldn't you like to have been here then? I would. I would have liked to have heard some of those expositions He gave to the sorrowing disciples, seen some of the wonderful things He did. Some men have journeyed thousands of miles just to tread where His feet have trod, and they can tell you all about Palestine and say it was a privilege to be found there. If that is a privilege, how serious a business it was for this world when He left. If it was a great privilege for the Holy Spirit to visit this earth (and it *is* a privilege: whether we are alive to it or not, is another thing) don't you think it will be an awfully solemn moment for this world when God the Holy Ghost leaves it? If I might use the figure of a dove, which is so often used in Scripture, I think I am not far away from the mark when I say, the Heavenly Dove is to-day pluming her wings to take her flight. The Holy Ghost is going to leave this world, as well as God the Son.

Pentecost was the day when the promise made in the upper room got its fulfilment. Ever since then God the Holy Ghost has

been on earth, unseen by mortal eye, not incarnate, in bodily form, as was God the Son, but here verily. He has a mission in regard to this world. He is here first of all as a witness. We read of that in the end of the previous chapter. Here it tells us three things He has come to do. In the 8th verse, "When He is come He will reprove [or convict, or convince, as the margin says] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin because they believe not on Me ; of righteousness because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." That is the one side of His mission here as witness. His mission here is carried out in two forms. The one is passive, and the other active. This I believe is the *passive* side of His work.

We use the word conviction when a man has been convicted of his sins. That is, it has been borne in upon him, and if it is a divinely wrought conviction, it is always by the Holy Ghost. He has been brought to real deep sorrow and anguish and repentance about his sins. We are convicted of what is wrong. The word is hardly used in that sense in this connection, because it says the Holy Ghost has convicted the world of righteousness. We do not require to be convicted of what is right, we are convicted of what is wrong. I am only stating that to show you there is another way in which this word may be used.

This word translated "convict" is a difficult word to express accurately in English. It is more of a legal term, used in the law courts. It is the bringing forth of evidence that will convince certain people of the true character of the prisoner at the bar and of his actions. It is the presentation of evidence that brings conviction. You do not suppose that every prisoner that stands before Judge and Jury is convicted in his own heart. The witnesses go into the box and testify on their oath, but do they convince their man? Is that their business? Not at all. They are bringing evidence forth to convince others about the real case of that man. Whom are they going to convince? Not the prisoner at the bar, but the men in the jury box. The result of that may be that the man is convicted of his crime; not that he is conscience-stricken about it, but that the witnesses have brought demonstration to those men in the jury box that certain things are true about the prisoner.

I use the figure reverently—Put the world into the prisoner's dock, the Church of God into the jury box, and let the Holy Ghost enter the witness box. What is He doing? Bearing witness to those in the jury box as to the true condition and state of the world. The world itself does not care anything about the presence of the Holy Ghost. It ignores His presence and is convinced of nothing. But He brings forth witness that

demonstrates the true nature and character of the world on the three counts—sin, righteousness, judgment. And mark, it is not sinners, it is not individuals, it is the whole world. The Holy Ghost is here bearing witness to this world's sin ; and how is that? "Because they believe not on Me." The crowning sin of this world is not drink, betting, gambling, murder or uncleanness, the crowning, damning sin of this world is the absolute refusal of Christ. This world stands charged with the rejection and refusal of Christ. Is any reader unconverted? You are hand and glove with the world that lies under that charge—"of sin because they believe not on Me."

It is just as though the first question the Holy Ghost might raise when He come into the world is, "Where is Christ?" "He is not here." "Where is He, for He was here?" "He is dead." "How came He to die?" "We murdered Him, and He was buried in a borrowed sepulchre." It means this world lies guilty of the death of the Lord Jesus. Just as God came on the scene in those early days and said "Cain, where is thy brother." Do you think God is not going to raise the question with this world "What have you done with My Son?" I will tell you what they did with Him. They rejected Him saying "We will not have this Man to reign over us." Think of that! Threw the love gift of God the Father back into His face and said, "We will not have

Him ! " Heaven said " Then we will ! " God has absolutely reversed everything this world has done. God and the world came into collision over the death of Christ, and the Holy Ghost's presence here is a witness that Christ is risen, and the world condemned as sin.

What about righteousness ? We have been looking at what is wrong. Sin is here, and that is patent because Christ was rejected by this world, not merely by wicked Jews. It was man's heart that had no room or time for Him. Now we look for something good. It is no use looking here for righteousness. The only righteous One that ever trod this earth has been refused, not allowed to live more than thirty-three and a half years. If you want to see righteousness you will see it, not in what the world has done for Christ, but in what the Father has done for Him. He has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and if you want an expression of righteousness, you will see it there. God says,—You shall have your rights, My Son. He puts Him at His right hand, crowns Him with glory and honour.

Sin is here, and righteousness is not here. What about judgment ? It is come. He says, the prince of this world is judged. Most who read the verse read it as though it said, " To convict the world of sin, righteousness

and judgment *to come*." It does not say that. As the world stands in the dock, that heavenly Witness is demonstrating three things, to those who have eyes to see, and hearts to feel, and faith to believe. Sin is here, and that is evident, because Christ has been rejected. Righteousness is not here, and the world is judged, already judged. The point is not the judgment is coming, but that the world lies under God's judgment. The execution of it may be to come, but the world is a judged system, and if you get hold of that witness from the Spirit of God, it will stop you trying to improve it. The church is not here in order to improve the world. It is here for no such purpose. The fact is, it is unimproveable. The sentence has been passed, that the prince of this world is judged, and if the prince is judged, it is all over with the world. The prince of this world is Satan.

I was driving with a gentleman in his motor car only a few days ago and we passed a church building. He said, There has been a wedding here. I said, Who has been married? He said, I do not know. Well, how do you know there has been a wedding? I do not need any one to tell me that, all the confetti about the church gates tells the story. There was nothing active about that confetti. Its presence told its tale. The mere presence of the Holy Ghost on earth apart from His activities tells an awfully sad story. What is that? Sin is

here, righteousness is not here, and the world is already doomed. According to the Lord's own words in John iii., "He that believeth on Him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already," and this world is lying under the doom of judgment. Would to God, beloved Christians, our hearts were more touched by that. Do not let us be seeking to improve the world, let us be seeking to get some poor sinners out of it before the first thunder clap of God's wrath is heard.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected, and they shouted on earth, "Away with Him ! " I think the language of Psalm xxiv., could have been uttered in Heaven. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in." When this world slammed its door in the face of Christ, heaven opened hers, and they have never been shut since, Praise God ! People sing, "The gate stands ajar." It never did, and never will. It was left wide open for the blessed Lord to enter, and it has been left open ever since. You could have understood twelve legion of angels coming down through those open doors and sweeping with destruction this guilty world. But not so : rather God the Holy Ghost came through those open doors, bringing the glad tidings of the grace of God : and ever since then the gospel bells have been ringing where the thunders of God's judgment are going

to be heard presently. But that is connected with His active work, whilst we have been considering what He does passively.

ART CUTTING.

“A CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE.”

(*Editor's Note*:—The following extract impressed us as we read it. Feeling that it contains a very wholesome word of admonition, we ask our readers to give it their careful attention).

“**T**HIS is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.”—John xv. 12.

“My Commandment.” So our Lord Jesus has commandments for His disciples ! This reflection may cause surprise if we are uninstructed and unthinking. Grace and favour are the notions most easily connected with Him. It almost shocks to be asked to think of His having claims and making demands upon us. “Commandments” suggest Moses rather than Christ. Many have not learned that there is also “the royal law,” “the law of liberty” (James ii. 8 ; i. 25), “the law of Christ” (Gal. vi. 2). The need to know the Redeemer as our Lawgiver is a vital one. It is true, blessedly true, that we have been redeemed from under the law of Moses, but it is equally true, and also blessedly true, that we have

been placed under law to Christ. It can never be too strongly emphasized that we have not been saved by law, but that glorious statement needs to be accompanied by another, namely, that we are saved unto law. License is, of all things, the most foreign to the spirit of the new life in Christ.

“My Commandment.” Here our Lord speaks of one, elsewhere the word is plural, “My Commandments,” (John xiv. 15, 21). His commandments are many, scattered throughout the New Testament; sometimes spoken by His own lips; sometimes by the lips of His apostles. How many, I wonder, of our Lord’s own commandments could the average Christian repeat? The commandments of Moses we know. The Decalogue is in the memory of us all. Why then this strange ignorance of Christ’s commandments? Is Moses our Lord? Is it of more importance that we should keep the “law that gendereth to bondage” than the “law of liberty”? Or, is mere morality the ideal of our Christian life? Can it be that we have not yet descried those heights of Christian sanctity which beckon us to their ascent? Such heights as, for example, are caught sight of in such commandments as, “Resist not evil”; “Love your enemies”; “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth”; “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”; “Be ye therefore perfect, even as

your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Here are some summits in the range of Christian ideal, and it seems an utterly impossible position to be under the Grace of Christ and at the same time aspire to nothing higher than the law of Moses. He who gives us grace must also be allowed to give us His commandments.

It startles us when we realise that the conscience of Christians, frequently, is hardly a Christian conscience at all. Its light is, not Christ, but Moses. . . A Christian conscience, one fears, is surprisingly rare. The ready and crushing proof is in the open fact that transgressions of the Ten Commandments shock us ; transgressions of the commandments of Christ stir us but little, if at all. A murder ! Robbery ! Adultery ! We hold up our hands in horror. No one, of course, complains of such sensitiveness. It is right ; it is good. But where is equal sensitiveness when the commandments of Christ are broken ? Why are we not shocked when we meet a believer who stubbornly refuses to forgive the brother who injured him ; or when two sit down to eat bread and drink of the same cup, but who have not spoken to each other since something happened years ago ? and why are we not shocked when brother is angry with brother, or when believers, violating the law of their separation, hobnob with that enemy of Christ—the world ? Is Sinai, then, of more

importance in our eyes than Calvary? In which school was our conscience educated? Is there not urgent need that we should change its teacher, so that it may become truly a Christian conscience, sensitive to every commandment of Christ and shocked by every violation of the same?

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians xi. 20—xii. 13.*)

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

IT is quite clear from the 20th verse that the Corinthian saints, though very numerous, were still meeting together in one building. They came together “in the church,” as verse eighteen puts it; but those words have no reference to a building of any kind, but rather to the fact that they came together “in assembly;” that is in their church or assembly character. And when they did so these sects, or parties became painfully manifest, and also their proceedings were very disorderly; so disorderly in fact that the apostle refuses to recognize their feasts, which they called, “the Lord’s supper,” as being truly the supper of the Lord at all. They are not he says, *the*

Lord's Supper, but *each one* taking *his own* supper.

There is, we believe, a double contrast here. First, between "the Lord's" and "his own." They treated the matter as if they were the masters of it and hence could arrange it as they pleased and generally do as they liked. This led to outrageous disorder at Corinth—some getting nothing, and others getting so much of the wine as to be drunken. Similar gross disorder may be avoided to-day, but have not many assumed that they are masters of the situation when this holy ordinance is in question, and so felt themselves perfectly free to alter it to taste?—free to turn it into a mass, or a sacrifice, free to have it ornate, or choral, free to confine its ministrations to a priestly caste and have it so frequently as to be almost continuous, free to have it only once in several months, or to abolish it altogether.

But there is also the contrast between the Lord's supper which is a matter of *fellowship*, as chapter x. has just unfolded, and "every one" (or "each one") taking his own supper: that is, making it a purely *individual* matter. Even supposing that saints come together and observe the ordinance quite faultlessly, as regards all its externals, and yet treat it as a *purely personal privilege*, eliminating from it in their mind the thought that we do it as one body, they have missed the mark. It is not

each one acting and eating for himself: it is rather all acting together.

Now the only remedy for disorder in connection with the Lord's supper—even in apostolic days, be it noted—was to go back to the original institution in its spirit, its significance, its orderly simplicity. Paul did not argue on the subject. In verses 23 to 27, he simply reverts to what had been instituted by the Lord Himself. And he did so, not as having received authentic information from the other apostles who had been present, but as having received the ordinance directly from the Lord, by divinely-given revelation. This revelation confirms the account already given by the inspired evangelists, and clarifies its meaning. Much that passes as an "orderly" and "beautiful" celebration or observance of this institution is simply *disorder* in the divine estimation. Any "order," however ornate or beautiful to human eyes, which is not *the divine order*, is *disorder* in the Divine eyes.

God has been pleased to give us four accounts of the institution of the Lord's supper, and the fourth through Paul has its own peculiar importance, inasmuch as it makes it quite clear that it is to be observed by Gentile believers as much as by Jewish, and also that it is to continue "till He come." The materials used are of the simplest—the bread, the cup,—everyday

sights in the homes of those days. The significance of the materials was very profound—"My body," "the new testament in my blood." And the whole spirit of the ordinance is "remembrance." We are to remember Him in the circumstances in which once He was, *in death*, though we know Him as the One now glorified in heaven.

The supper of the Lord then begins with remembrance of Him in death. Much will flow out of this remembrance and we cannot fail to be conscious of *blessing* (it is, "the cup of blessing") and consequently *bless God* in return. But we must penetrate beneath the symbols to that which they symbolize. We must discern the body and blood of Christ; and discerning this, we shall be preserved from treating these holy things in an unholy or unworthy manner, as the Corinthians had been doing. The Lord did not hold them guiltless, and they were eating and drinking judgment (see, margin) to themselves. They were guilty in respect of dishonour done not merely to a loaf and a cup, but to the body and blood of Christ, symbolized by the loaf and the cup. This is the plain force of verses 27 and 29.

What then should we do? When the Lord smote Uzzah in judgment because he treated the Ark of God as though it had been an ordinary object (see 2 Sam. vi.)

David was displeased and left the Ark severely alone for a time. This was a mistake, which afterwards he rectified by honouring the Ark, and treating it as had been commanded by God. Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, in verses 28 to 30, exactly agree with this. God had interfered in judgment amongst them, many were weak and sickly and some had been removed by death. But this should not make them refuse to observe the Lord's supper further. The rather it should make them examine themselves and partake in a spirit of self-judgment. There had been *abuse*, but the remedy for this was not *disuse* but rather a careful *use*, in obedience to the design of God.

The closing verses of the chapter give us an example of God's chastening by way of retribution. They were being disciplined because of wrong committed. God chastens His children that they may not be judged with the world. And if only we judged ourselves we should be preserved from the evil and hence not need the hand of God upon us. Let us mark that! How excellent is the holy art of *self-judgment*; and how little practised. Let us cultivate it more and more. By it we should be preserved from innumerable errors. The Corinthians evidently neglected it and much was wrong with them. The Apostle had corrected the most glaring of their errors when they partook of the Lord's supper.

There were others, but these could wait until he visited them in person: so he closes the chapter by saying, "the rest will I set in order when I come."

The Corinthians came together in assembly not only to partake of the Lord's supper but also for the exercise of spiritual gifts, especialy that of prophecy. In those days there were found prophets who were enabled by the Holy Spirit to give inspired utterances in the assembly. In this way God gave authoritative instruction and guidance while as yet the New Testament scriptures were in the making, and so not freely in the hands of believers as they are to-day. There was however a great danger in connection with this.

When God raised up prophets in Israel's history, Satan promptly confused the issue by raising up many false ones. In the days of Ahab there were 850 false to one true! The adversary followed the same tactics in the early days of the church and introduced into the public assemblies of saints men who gave inspired utterances truly, but inspired not by the Holy Spirit but by demons. Hence the test laid down in verse 3 of chapter xii. The confession of Jesus as LORD is the test. Many testimonies could be adduced, proving that this test always is effective. It infallibly works. In modern spiritist seances demons will

often utter sentiments which are apparently high class and beautiful, but they will never acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

Moreover, in the pagan world it was supposed that each demon had a special line of things in which he operated: one was the spirit of healing, another the spirit of prophecy or divination, and so on. The Apostle instructs the Corinthians therefore, in verses 4 to 11, that all the gifts of a divine sort which may be manifested in the church, proceed from one and the self-same Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit is one: the manifestations of His power and working are many. Whether it be the Spirit (verse 4) or the Lord (verse 5) or God (verse 6) diversity proceeding from unity is the feature. Gifts are connected
 1
 with the Spirit: administrations with the
 2
 Lord: operations with God. 3.

Now the gifts or manifestations of the Spirit are expressed through men in the assembly of God. No one man possesses all. Occasionally one may possess many. More usually he possesses but one. But whether one or many what is possessed by each one is intended not for the sole benefit of the possessor but for the profit of all. The better rendering of verse 7 is "But to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit." (N. Tr.) The Corinthians were evidently acting rather like children; assuming that the spiritual gift conferred was

something like a new toy, to be used and enjoyed for their personal pleasure and distinction. It was not ; but rather a gift conferred on one member for the benefit of the whole body.

Hence, having enumerated the different gifts, and again emphasized that all proceed from the same Holy Spirit, being bestowed at His sovereign will and discretion, the apostle passes in verse 12 to the one body, for the benefit of which all is given. The human body is used as an illustration. It has many members and yet is an organic unity. Then he adds, "so also is the Christ"—the definite article, "the," is in the Greek original.

This is a remarkable expression. It is not Christ personally ; but rather that the one body—the church—being the body of Christ, His name can be called upon it.

The church then, as Christ's body, is an organic unity, just as the human body is. It has been formed by an act of God in the energy of the one Spirit. It is important that we should remember this, since by this fact its integrity is guaranteed. It cannot be violated or destroyed by man or by Satanic power, though the visible manifestation of it during its sojourn on earth may be, and has been, marred. The thing itself, divinely formed, abides, and will be perfectly displayed in glory.

The action of the Spirit in forming the one body is described as a "baptism." In baptism a man is submerged and figuratively buried. The one body was formed, and we are brought into it, on this basis; namely, that we as natural men, as children of Adam, with all our personal peculiarities and angularities, have been submerged in the one Spirit. Hence all our natural distinctions have disappeared in the one body. There was no greater national distinction than Jew and Gentile; no clearer social cleavage than bond and free. But these distinctions and cleavages, and all others like them, are gone in the one body. In the light of this how foolish and sinful were the parties and schools and cleavages among the Corinthians: ~~how puerile their strivings for personal distinctions and profit!~~ And how foolish and sinful and puerile are similar things which disfigure Christians to-day!

Let us take it to heart. We have forgotten the real force and meaning of that baptism by which we have found our place in the one body. Thank God, I am in the one body, but I am there on the basis of having my old "I" submerged. And you are there as having your old "I" submerged. And every other member of the body is there as having the old "I" submerged. And there is no other way of being in the one body but by having the old "I" submerged. If we all were really in the truth of this, what a change would come over the outward

aspect of all things, amongst the saints of God.

But not only have we all been baptised in one Spirit into one body, but we each severally and for ourselves have been made to "drink into [or, of] one Spirit." This seems to be an allusion to John vii. 37-39. Each member of the body has personally received or imbibed of the one Spirit, so that He characterizes and governs each. Unity is thus produced in this two-fold way. Each has been submerged *in* the Spirit; and the Spirit is *in* each by a personal imbibing.

Verses 12 and 13 then, give us what has been brought to pass by God Himself in the energy of His Spirit, and consequently human failure does not enter into the matter. It is the ideal thing, but it is not, because of that, idealistic and unreal. It is not just a beautiful idea to be left in the airy region of mere ideas. No, it is an actual existing fact by Divine act; and faith perceives it and acts accordingly. If we do not perceive it we cannot act accordingly.

Let us then have faith to perceive what has been brought to pass by the Spirit's act, and what we have received by drinking of one Spirit; and may our whole life in relation to Christ Himself and our fellow members be influenced thereby.

F. B. HOLE.

THE HOLY SPIRIT : HIS ACTIVE WITNESS.

Luke xiv. 16-24; xv. 8-10

(From Notes of Addresses)

LET us now consider the active side of the Holy Ghost's presence and mission. You may have wondered why I read from Luke xiv. and xv. in connection with such a subject. But His active work is brought before us here in a very striking though parabolic way.

The Lord being invited to a Pharisee's house He noticed that every one was seeking the chief place, so He made the remark, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Do not let it be a kind of complimentary feast that may be returned to you. Make it for needy people. And one of them that sat with Him said, "Blessed is He that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God," as much as to say, that kind of thing is more like heaven than earth, more like God than man. And the Lord then gives this parable to show that grace is not appreciated as you might think.

A certain man made a great supper, and when the supper was ready, he sent out a servant. Now there are three Persons in the Trinity, and you may find them in the parable, as in the next one in Luke xv. God the Father, to Him belongs the initiative, the origination of purpose and counsel. To God the Son belongs its administration, the carrying out of those purposes and counsels. To God the Holy Ghost belongs that all-pervading power that works in fellowship with both the Father in His purposes, and the Son in His activities. Only He works in the individual who becomes the subject of His activities, and so the Spirit's work is called *subjective*. The Father designs this great supper. It was made ready at tremendous cost. It was a great supper because it had to meet a great need, and it was made at a very great cost. What was the cost? Who was the One to carry out that design? It was planned by God the Father; prepared and made ready by God the Son at His own personal cost, when He gave His precious blood to make the Gospel a righteous possibility; and proclaimed by God the Holy Ghost.

A supper is the last meal of the day. You have often heard that said in gospel preaching. In eastern countries, the final meal was the most important one. They could not eat a heavy meal in the middle of the day, they waited till the cool of

the evening. It was not a complimentary feast, but a meal spread for needy people. It has been spread at great cost, and when everything was ready there came forth a Servant. God the Holy Ghost has come down to make the Gospel known, and here you find Him in the character of a Servant.

Did you ever notice the difference between Matthew xxii. and Luke xiv. ? In Luke xiv. it is *a Servant*. In Matthew xxii. it is *servants*. In Luke xiv. every one the Servant brings in stops in, but in Matthew xxii. there is one of the servants who brings in a man and he has to be thrown out. In the Servant in this parable it is God the Holy Ghost. Who are the servants then? Men, such as myself. You can easily deceive me and make me believe you are converted, when you are not, but you cannot deceive the Holy Ghost.

Here is the great Servant, and He brings the invitation and says, "Come." That is the golden gospel message right through the Bible. In some of the big palatial residences they have what they call visiting days and allow you to see the luxury in which they live. They throw certain rooms open for public inspection and they have the green, the blue and the yellow rooms, the great dining hall, and the drawing rooms, and when they have shown you round, they bring you to a place and say, "This is the road out." They do not want *you*.

They do not mind you admiring their luxury, but they do not want you. That is the difference between Luke xiv. and what they do. The door has been flung open and a way has been made by God the Son, and He has prepared this Gospel supper and God the Holy Ghost has come from heaven and says, "God wants *you*."

Why is it the gospel *supper*? Because the gospel is God's last provision for the need of sinful men. If you do not get a seat at that supper table, there is no second chance. Christendom is getting its last chance. God has no more suppers. You may be sending your money to convert the swarthy-skinned African and the yellow Chinese, and I will tell you what they are doing. They are accepting the invitation and taking their seat at the supper table, and you may be missing it. What a serious consideration. The house is going to be filled. Take care is not filled without you. A flat-headed Hottentot may sit in the place you might have occupied. God has decreed it is to be filled, and the Holy Spirit is here to carry out that wonderful work. That is His active work; not satisfied with giving invitations, but compelling them to come in. His grace is rebuffed, they make excuses. There is a Trinity in the Godhead bent on blessing man, and there is a trinity of excuses to get out of the blessing. A terrible thing happens. God excuses them. Peter tells us the

Holy Ghost brings the message down from heaven, and you have been making excuses to evade it. Look! If God puts one word against your name to-night, "excused," you are done for. There is no second blessing for you.

How does He compel people? I used to think it meant we had to compel people to come into the meetings. You know how hard that is. That it not what it means. It is not we who are doing the compelling but the Spirit of God. Do you know why I came to Christ? Because I could not stop away. It was the same love that spread the feast that sweetly forced me in, or I had perished in my sin. If you want an expression of divine compulsion you will find it in Luke xv. The prodigal son came back to his Father. He started off thinking he was going to have a good time and do without his Father, but it ended in misery and he came back. It was not a sentimental reason, or a religious one that brought him back. He came back because he could not stop away. Compulsion had been at work. A famine was in the land and he came, being driven at the bayonet point of dire need. Want like an armed man came upon him and he was compelled to go home.

There was something else. At the other end of the line there was a little bit of knowledge he had of the grace of the

Father. He thought there would be a little bit to spare for him, so that with what knowledge he had of love of his Father, and behind him the pressure of want, that prodigal son had been forced home. He was compelled because he was starved out, and that is what happens with most of us. John Bunyan wrote to the effect that, "No ship ever yet entered the harbour of free grace unless driven in by the storm, and no sinner ever came to Christ unless driven by sheer need and drawn by God's grace." What a good thing God did not take my, No, as my final answer, but he went on pursuing me until I said, I will yield, I can hold out no more. I was under compulsion. When the prodigal son came home he got all the wealth. He began to be in want in the far off land, but that want ended when he came to the Father's house. That is the way the Spirit of God compels.

Now we come to Luke xv., the woman sweeping the house. Woman is constantly used in Scripture as a figure of the Church. She is called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and when the Lord wants to show the true behaviour of husband to wife, in Ephesians v., He likens it to His own behaviour to His Church. So the woman is a figure of the Church, and in the Church the Holy Ghost is dwelling. It is the Holy Spirit using the Church of God to carry on the search when God the Son is gone. The Shepherd after the sheep is God the Son

seeking for lost ones. He is gone, His work is finished, but the Holy Ghost is come down and the search is being carried on.

What happens? She is using instrumental means. She has a light. A candle is always a figure of testimony; and she has a brush. The brush is what we might call providential means. What is the brush for? To *uncover*. What is the light for? To *discover*. To what end? That she might *recover*. How does the brush work? In many ways.

I will tell you a little incident I very often tell in the gospel. A young wife got converted at one of my meetings. Calling on her one day, I said "Is your husband converted?" "No, Charlie is not converted but he doesn't think as he used to." I said, "How used he to think?" "He used to think when we were dead we were done with." Cheap infidelity! I said, "What has altered Charlie's views?" She paused a bit and then swallowed a lump in her throat and said, "We had 'one little girl. She was the very darling of his heart, his very idol. One Saturday night I had washed her, and said to Charlie, Here she is, give her a goodnight kiss. After he had kissed her he said, 'I hope we're not making too much of you.'" Thursday afternoon you might have seen a procession from outside Charlie's house and you could have

followed it to Brighthouse Cemetery, and a little casket held all that Charlie counted dear. She had gone. What happened? The sweeping brush had come into the house and swept the baby out to get at the Mother and Father. The brush had brought things to light. Then she said, "When the funeral was over, Charlie sat there and I sat here, and neither of us spoke for some time. At last I said, 'Charlie, do you think our Alice is done with?' And with some big sobs he said, 'No, I hope we shall meet her again.'" What had happened? The sweeping brush had knocked a hole in the bottom of Charlie's infidelity, and uncovered the need in the mother's heart, and there was a conversion there soon after. I wish I could tell you of Charlie's conversion, but at any rate he had lost his infidelity if he was not converted. Sometimes God smashes a man's business to get at him. I saw a man in the hospital with his back broken, and he said God had to do that to get at his soul.

With regard to the piece of silver, the light falls on it and it is found. I think it is a little figure of repentance, owning the truth of God about yourself. You say, O God, I own my guilt. What has happened? The light of God's testimony against me, I have flashed back to Him in the form of repentance, owning the truth of God about myself.

The light strikes upon the silver coin, flashes back to the eye, and it is found. God uses means to bring us into the light in His own sovereign way, and the Spirit of God uses it, drops in a little bit of the Word of God, and the end is, there is joy in heaven over sinners repenting. That is the active side of the mission of the Holy Ghost. It is impossible for you to be in fellowship with the Holy Ghost without being evangelical. I defy you to put your hand into the hand of that great Servant, that great Missioner from heaven, God the Holy Ghost, the Servant of Luke xiv., without going where He goes, and you will look for what He is looking for in the highways and byways. The worst of society may be found by the Holy Ghost. That is His mission on earth. May God grant that you and I may be kept in close fellowship with God the Holy Ghost on earth in the pursuit of this mission. He has come down through the open door of heaven, bringing the gospel of forgiveness and salvation.

As long as the Church of God is here the Holy Spirit will be here, and as long as He is here the Gospel day will go on. Don't you believe the lie that the Gospel day is over, it is nothing of the kind. The Holy Ghost is here and is working today, and may God give you and me grace to work in the fellowship of the Father and

the Son and the Holy Ghost. It is the Father who planned it, the Son who prepared it, the Holy Ghost who proclaims it. Father, Son and Holy Ghost rejoice together. He says, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad." May the Lord help us to be in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

ART CUTTING.

THE WAYS OF GOD IN GRACE AND GOVERNMENT.

THE wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years formed no part of God's purpose concerning them. Those eventful years came within the range of His foreknowledge, as all things do, but they were not appointed by His immutable decree. When God made His purpose known to Moses there was no mention of the wilderness, but only the divine intention to bring the people out of Egypt and into "a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8). Nor did they doubt that God would fulfil His promise when they sang their triumphant song on the banks of the Red Sea. They supposed, so we may believe, that He would lead them by a straight line to take possession

of the land. "The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Exod. xv.). Such was their song and such their expectation. Why then were they led about for the space of forty years? Why did they wander from place to place till all the men that came out of Egypt with Moses—every one over twenty—had fallen in the wilderness and found a grave there? The reason is given in Numbers xiv—an evil heart of unbelief, *that* was the cause.

The spies had gone up to search out the land. Forty days had been spent in that fateful task. And when the people heard of the giants and cities walled up to heaven, their hearts melted within them and they cried, "Would God we had died in this wilderness!" And their murmurings against God were heard, and by the mouth

of Moses He sent this solemn word to them: "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do unto you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised" (Num. xiv. 28-31). These words plainly show the reason of their wanderings in the pathless desert all those forty years.

In this we have an illustration of the holy government of God among His people—chosen, redeemed and called to Canaan. And we do well to remember that we, too, are under the same government. True, He is "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus" (1 Peter v. 10). True, we are His children, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ but those who are the subjects of such amazing favour are, none the less, under His rule, which, though tempered with mercy, is not feeble and infirm. For those forty years the Israelites had to bear their iniquities (Num. xiv. 34)—that is, the conse-

quences of them. God was gracious unto them : " In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old " (Isa. lxiii. 9). All true, but still they were led about till every one of that " evil congregation " had been swept away by the relentless hand of death. " Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap "—an undeviating principle, wrought out in our individual history and in that of the Church at large.

But it was not to dwell upon this sorrowful though salutary side of the story that we took up our pen to write. There is another phase of it which is full of strength and encouragement. If the journey which they began that day was to go on for forty years God would go with them and not forsake them—the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night should never be taken away till their pilgrim days were done. This was grace indeed! Moreover, He would be their guide, He would choose their resting-places and determine for them the length of their stay. They had but to follow the pillar, to tarry when it tarried, and to move when it moved, whether it were by day or by night. " Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness : the pillar of the cloud departed

not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go" (Neh. ix. 19). Such was Nehemiah's confession, such his witness to the gracious faithfulness of God towards His erring people.

Nor was that all. He would not fail to give them, day by day, bread from heaven and they should eat "angel's food," and He would give them water for their thirst. They should lack nothing. All through those forty years their clothes should not wax old, neither should their feet swell with their weary marches across the heated desert sands (Neh. ix. 20-21). Moreover He would make their varying experiences—the ups and downs of their daily life—to be the means of teaching them many a lesson of untold value—

"In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found,
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound.

"On to Canaan's rest still wending,
E'en thy wants and woes shall bring
Suited grace from high descending,
Thou shalt taste of mercy's spring."

They should learn that man doth not live by bread alone, and that God, in humbling them and proving them, had it always in His heart to do them good (Deut. viii.).

And finally, when their journeyings were coming to a close, and Balak, King of Moab, hired Balaam to come and curse the people, God caused Balaam to utter the most beautiful things concerning Israel (Num. xxiii.-xxiv.). Instead of cursing, he had to bless them altogether. They should not be reckoned among the nations, said he, for they were Jehovah's peculiar treasure. "He had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither had He seen perverseness in Israel." In His sight they were clothed with all the beauty of the spreading valleys and gardens by the river-side, and as cedar trees beside the waters. And out of Jacob should rise a Star and a Sceptre—One that should have dominion. Such were the glowing words God put into Balaam's mouth. He Himself might chasten them as a father does his son, but He would not suffer the enemy to curse or to hinder the accomplishment of His designs.

These are the ways of God in government and grace. How admirable they are! If on the one hand they impart seriousness to the soul as we behold the inflexible principles of His rule, on the other they encourage, and inspire with undying hope the heart that trusts in Him. However low the Church has fallen and become an unfaithful witness to her Lord, however much she may have brought upon herself the chastening hand of God, let it be con-

fessed in sorrow and abasement, and let us look up to Him with unwavering trust. If at times His hand is against us, because of our folly and sin, His heart never is, nor will He allow His counsels to be frustrated by the failures of His poor people. All that He has predestined for them shall surely be theirs, for what He has purposed He is able to perform.

“ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come ” (1 Cor. ix. 11).

W.B.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians* xii. 13—xiii. 13)

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

IF verse 13 teaches that all true believers have been baptized into one body, the next verse again emphasizes the corresponding truth that the body is composed of many members. The *unity* which God has established in the one body must not be confounded with *uniformity*. Uniformity is largely stamped upon man's work, especially in this our day, but not upon God's work. Man invents machines which

turn out articles by the thousand or the million exactly uniform in all respects. In God's handiwork we see the utmost diversity in unity—unity in the most marvellous diversity.

In verses 14 to 26, the human body is taken as an illustration of this, and the point is worked out with great fulness of detail. The Apostle evidently felt it to be most important that the matter should be clearly understood. And why so important?

The answer to this is, we judge, that he knew the inveterate tendency of human hearts. It is so natural, even to believers, to love a little party all intent upon the same thing; in which all can settle down amiably and comfortably and without friction to enjoy themselves, in connection with that upon which all are intent. Then of course others, whose thoughts or activities or functions are so widely different, can be dispensed with; and the schism or division, of which verse 25 speaks, supervenes.

The illustration of this point, given in verse 21, is very striking. The eye is the organ of sight, the hand the organ of work. Some believers are "seers" marked by intelligence and spiritual insight. They revel in an understanding of the things of God. They give themselves to study and contemplation, and probably have very little

time for active work. Other believers are very active workers: they put their hand to many a hard task in the interests of their Lord. Indeed they work so hard that their danger is lest their labour becomes un-instructed, and hence astray from the will of the Lord. Now the danger is that the "eye" may say to the "hand" I have no need of thee. It is not suggested that the "hand" may say this to the "eye". Practical experience proves that it is usually the intellectual, far-seeing brother who is tempted to speak thus to the brother who is far less intelligent but a far harder worker, rather than *vice versa*.

Again, the head and feet are placed in contrast. Not only seeing, but hearing, smelling and tasting are confined to the head. Only one of the five senses is distributed over the body. If the head is to exercise its functions it needs quietude and repose. But the feet are instruments of motion. The head wishes for what is still and stationary that it may be enabled to observe and hear and think, but the feet are all for that activity and movement that will disturb it. The head may be strongly tempted to say to the feet, I have no need of you!

In the human body every member is necessary, for God has tempered it together. He has given more abundant honour to those parts which might be esteemed with-

out honour, and given abundant comeliness to what might appear uncomely. Medical science seems to be accumulating proofs of this, by showing how obscure glands, which formerly no one thought much of, are really of great importance, exercising such a control that if they cease functioning the body dies. So it is in the body of Christ, and hence the members are to have the same care and interest in one another. If one is affected, either for good or ill, all are affected.

Observe that all through the illustration the human body is contemplated as the work of God. Verse 18 states it, and again verse 24 mentions it, and thereby schism is excluded. Again in verse 21 it does not say that the eye *should* not say to the hand, I have no need of thee, but that it *cannot*. In just the same way the one body of Christ is viewed as the fruit of God's work. It is what God has established; God's work which can never be undone by man.

Observe on the other hand that though it is God's work it is not because of that an idealistic thing, removed from the sphere of present and practical life, without any bearing upon the church in its present condition. The very opposite, for the Apostle at once proceeds to give just that present application.

That application begins in verse 27. The definite article "the," is not in the Greek, and is better omitted even though it produces clumsy English. He did not say, "Ye are *the* body of Christ," for that would have indicated to these saints at Corinth that they were the whole thing, and might have led to the further supposition that they were merely the one body in Corinth. Then there might be the one body in Ephesus, and so on, until the contradictory and inconsistent idea of there being many "one bodies" might have been reached. He said, "~~Ye are~~ body of Christ," that is, they were of the body of Christ and bore the "body of Christ" character in Corinth, each of them being a member in particular.

They were members, then, of Christ's body, and from that he turns, in the next verse, to speak of how God had set some of these members in the "church," or "assembly." We do well to differentiate in our thoughts between the body of Christ, formed by Divine act, and the assembly as found in this world, whether locally at Corinth, or in its totality. But while we differentiate we must not divorce the two, since the action of the members takes place in the assembly, and their action is to be governed and regulated by the truth just set forth as to the body.

The "gifts," or "manifestations" of the Spirit, which were granted to some of the

members, are detailed in verse 28. The order of them is to be noted. Apostles come first, diversities of tongues come last. The Corinthians, who were carnal, set great store by the more spectacular gifts, as do many carnally minded believers to-day. To speak in an unknown tongue was to them evidently the most desirable thing of all. Their estimate was however a mistaken one. The gifts are divided according to the sovereign will of the Spirit. No one gift was given to everybody. As a rule each individual had one distinguishing gift.

Seven questions are found in verses 29 and 30. They are asked but not answered because the answer is obvious. Uniformly the answer is, No. Notice the sixth question, since there are those who insist that no one has properly received the Holy Ghost if they do not speak with tongues. But, "do all speak with tongues?" The answer is, No. Yet they had all been "made to drink into one Spirit."

What then is to be our attitude in regard to the various gifts? We are to desire earnestly the better, or greater, gifts; that is, such as prophesying, or teaching, as is evident from the opening verses of chapter xiv. These are better because they are for wider and more general profit, and the gifts are given to each for the profit of all. And there is a way of more surpassing excellence by which this end may be reached.

This way is the way of "charity" or *divine love*, as unfolded in chapter xiii. The Apostle turns aside for a moment from the main line of his theme to stress the surpassing excellence of that love which is the very nature of God Himself.

Chapter xiii. has become famous. Its extraordinary power is acknowledged not only by Christians but by a multitude of others. Foremost men acclaim it as marvellous, one of the literary wonders of the world, without perhaps at all appreciating the real drift of its teaching. What is it that it really says? The opening verse of chapter viii. has told us that it is love that edifies. This chapter expands that fact and shows us in the first place that the most shining gifts, if without love, are of no value; and in the second place that love is the force, even when gifts are present, that really accomplishes everything.

The first three verses contemplate gifts which may be possessed and exercised without love. If they are, the sum total of all that they effect and produce is, Nothing. Speaking with tongues is mentioned first, as that was the particular gift that was becoming rather a snare to the Corinthians. But that is followed by prophecy, which later is eulogised by the Apostle as first in importance; and that by knowledge and faith, and by the practical benevolence that nowadays goes by the name of "charity";

and that again by self-sacrifice of a very remarkable kind. What tremendous assertions are these which Paul makes !

A brother rises in the assembly and speaks words of peculiar sweetness and thrill, though quite unintelligible to us. We discover that he has actually made a Divine communication in a language of heaven, which angels use. How marvellous ! How we should gaze at him ! Yes. But if he has done this without love he might as well have brought an old brass pan into the meeting and hit it with a poker, for the good he has done, as regards the Lord's interests in the assembly.

And here comes another who has astonishing knowledge and understanding. He not only penetrates to the heart of Divine things, but he can communicate to others what he knows by reason of his prophetic gift. Also he has faith of an almost miraculous power. Yet he has not love ! We are not told that he is like a clanging piece of brass, for it is possible that we may gain some help and understanding from what he says, and some inspiration from his remarkable faith. What we are told is, that he himself is nothing. If unspiritual ourselves we might imagine him to be a giant. Really he is less than a pigmy. He is *nothing*.

And supposing a third appears, who resolves, "I shall dole out all my goods in

food," (N. Trans.) and is prepared to give his body to be burned! Why, we should feel inclined to exclaim, What a reward he will have in the coming day! ' But alas, he has not love. Then it will profit him *nothing*. The absence of love has rendered valueless the whole thing. In the light of these facts, negative though they are in their bearing, of what surpassing value is love!

Now we are to contemplate more closely the features that characterize love. First comes a very positive feature. It suffers long (or, has *long patience*) and is *kind*. Could anything surpass the long patience and kindness of God's dealings with rebellious man? No. Well, God is love. And in the measure in which we manifest the divine nature, we shall manifest long patience and kindness towards men generally, as well as towards our brethren.

This one positive feature is followed by negative features. Love is marked by the total absence of certain hideous deformities of character and behaviour, which are perfectly natural to us as men in the flesh. Paul strings them together. Here they are: (1) Envy of others: (2) Vaunting oneself, or vainglory, or as it has been translated, being "insolent and rash": (3) Being puffed up or inflated with one's own importance: (4) Unseemly behaviour which follows hard on the heels of an inflated mind: (5) Self-seeking: (6) Touch-

ness, easily taking offence and provoked to anger: (7) Thinking evil, that is, quick to impute evil to others: (8) Rejoicing in iniquity, that is, glad to be able to point out iniquity in others, and to denounce it. The string that runs right through these eight things is, *love of self*.

Alas ! alas ! how often are these features discernible in ourselves, and yet we are saints of God. It is all too easy for us to be like ships stranded on the dirty mud flats of self-love. What can lift us off ? Nothing but a mighty inflow of the tide of Divine love. When saints forget themselves in the uplift of that tide most wonderful transformations are effected.

Verse 6, which mentions the eighth negative feature also introduces us to the second positive feature that is mentioned. Love *rejoices*, for it is indeed a joyous thing, but its joy is in or with the truth. Love and truth go hand in hand, and truth is joyous and full of gladness for our hearts.

Further positive features follow. Four are mentioned in verse 7. Love bears, or *covers*, all things. It never condones unrighteousness of course, yet it never finds its pleasure in publishing other people's misdeeds. It rather *believes* all that it can discover of the truth ; it *hopes* that all that may be lacking will be supplied in due course ; it *endures* meanwhile every deficiency that may exist. It is evident that

the expression, "all things," four times repeated, must be understood as limited by its context. For instance, he who believes "all things," in an unlimited way, would simply be landed into a morass of uncertainties and deceptions.

The seventh positive characteristic of love is that it *never fails*. This is at once seen if we look at it as seen in all its fullness in God Himself. If Divine love had failed, every region, that ever had been touched by sin, would have been lying in the hopeless blackness of everlasting night. In the presence of sin's great catastrophe Divine love did not waver or fail. It designed rather the way of righteousness whereby the situation should be much more than retrieved; men blessed and the Divine Name triumphantly vindicated. True, it may appear for a time to fail. But God has a long outlook and plans by milleniums rather than days. Love always wins in the end. And so it does when Divine love works in and through feeble saints such as ourselves. It may appear to be defeated a hundred times over, but it is not: in the end it wins, it does not fail.

Now this cannot be said of even the greatest of gifts. Prophecies may fail, in the sense of being done away with, having served their purpose (the word "fail" is not the same as "faileth" which occurs just before). Tongues shall cease; they will not be needed in a coming day. Knowledge

even shall "vanish away," (same word as translated "fail" in connection with prophecies). What this vanishing away means is shown in the next few verses. Our knowledge and prophesying—even that of a Paul—is in part. Presently in regard to both knowledge and prophecy, perfection will be reached and, when it is, all that is partial will fail and vanish away; just as the moon fails and vanishes away in the light of the sun.

The Apostle further illustrates this point by his own childhood. When a child he spoke, thought, reasoned, as a child. When manhood was reached he was done with what belonged to childhood's days. The application of this illustration is in verse 21. The contrast lies between now and then; between our present condition, limited as we are by flesh and blood, though we are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and the heavenly condition into which we shall enter when we are in the likeness of Christ, even as to our bodies. *Now* it is seeing as through a glass obscurely: *then* knowing according as we have been known.

Spiritual gifts are indeed wonderful things, but we are apt to over-estimate them. Wonderful as they are, they are but partial, even the greatest of them. Take note of this ye gifted men! Your knowledge and your prophesyings, even when in the full energy of the Spirit, are but partial. They are not the full and complete thing. If you

do not remember this you might become arrogant in your knowledge. If you do remember it you will be humble.

We are very thankful for the knowledge and the prophecies, yet we know that all of it will vanish away in the blaze of that perfect light into which we are going. There are things that abide, and the greatest of them is LOVE.

Sometimes we sing,

“When faith and hope shall cease,
And love abide alone.”

That may be true, but it is not what is stated here. On the contrary it says, “Now *abideth* faith, hope, charity, these three.” The contrast is between the most shining gifts which *pass* and the *abiding* characteristics of Divine life in the saints. The more we approximate to what is carnal, the more likely we are to be dazzled by mere gifts. The more we approximate to the spiritual, the more we appreciate faith, hope, and love. And the more we shall see that love is the greatest of all.

It will be found ultimately that the greatest saint is not he of the most striking gift, but he or she that most truly dwells in love, for, “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John iv. 16).

No gift counts for much except it is controlled and energized by love. LOVE is indeed the more excellent way.

F. B. HOLE.

WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE ?

" Dost thou believe on the Son of God ? "
(John ix. 35).

" He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life " (John iii. 36).

WHAT is it to believe on the Son of God, and what is involved in that simple exercise of faith ? Some may think this is a purely elementary question, only fit for babes in Christ—a question that any tyro can answer off-hand. In that case it should not be hard to give it a clear and definite reply. But alas ! it is easy to assume that we know when really we do not. Such a mistake any of us may make, and even those who believe themselves to be better versed in Scripture than most of their fellow-Christians are liable to fall into it. And so I venture to entreat any who entertain this comforting belief about themselves, and all others, not to dismiss the question as if it called for no second thought. Let them search and see what the Holy Scriptures say about it—as was the custom in old days

—and then inquire how far their latest views agree with that unerring guide.

I make bold to emphasize this advice. There is need of it. So many assertions are made nowadays and received on the bare word of the one who makes them. No scripture is brought forward in their support. No inquiry is made to find out whether they are warranted by the Word of God or not. And if one has courage to ask for chapter and verse he will possibly be regarded with suspicion and distrust. Never mind. Let such a one go on asking for Scripture proof and not be content until he gets it.

Now to our question, *What is it to believe on the Son of God?* Let us look at John i. 11-13. Here the Evangelist states with the utmost brevity that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." What a tale those few words tell! *He* came, the Hope of Israel—the Messiah—the Fulfiller of all the glowing promises made unto their fathers—and *they received Him not!* They searched the Scriptures and thought that in them they had eternal life. Their sacred writings—read every sabbath day in the synagogues—were His witness-bearers, and yet they did not—would not—come unto Him that they might have life (John v. 39, 40). On the contrary, they pronounced His claims false, denounced Him as a blasphemer, and insisted in

Pilate's judgment hall that he should be crucified. Was ever story so tragic? *But some did receive Him*—they were the poor of the flock—and to these He gave the power, the right, the privilege to become children of God, even to them that believed on His name. Here, then, we plainly see that to receive Him, and to believe on His name, are equivalent terms. The one who receives is the one who believes, and the one who believes is the one who receives. To receive the rejected Saviour, to believe on Him, to confess Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to be numbered among God's children. And all such are born of God. It is no little thing, then, to believe on the Son of God, the Eternal Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, and in so doing we receive the right to be the children of God—that is, to take the place of such, distinctly and definitely.

In chapter ii. 23 of John's Gospel we read of others who believed on His name when they saw the miracles which He did. "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." How was that? At first sight this seems strange indeed—they believed, and yet He stood aloof! He did not trust them, no, not for a moment. Were they not sincere? There is no reason to doubt their sincerity. How, then, is the fact to be explained that "Jesus did not commit Himself to them?" What is the solution

of this enigma? It is found in this—that their belief was based on external evidence. They believed because they saw the miracles. Such credentials they could and did accept. But their belief went no further. It moved in the intellectual sphere and left conscience and heart untouched. It was reasonable, it had much to say for itself, but it was a belief of which an unregenerate man was capable. Such is the faith of thousands in this day. They call themselves Christians, and never suspect that their profession is nothing but an empty shell—a house “swept and garnished,” but having no living inmate! To believe on the Son of God means very much more than that.

To receive Him under every name by which He is revealed, the Way, the Truth, the Life—to receive Him as the Lamb of God, the Bearer away of the sin of the world—as the Son of Man lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life—as the Son of God, the proof and manifestation of God's love to sinful men—as the Bread of Life whereof if a man eat he shall live for ever—as the Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep—as the Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures and who is now risen again and is in glory—to receive Him thus, to hearken to His words which are spirit and life—this is to believe on Him to the saving of the soul,

and to life everlasting (Heb. x. 39; 1 Tim. 1. 16).

We do not mean in speaking thus that Christ in all these various ways appears in the vision of the soul at first. When the awakened jailer at Philippi was bid to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he should be saved, it was as a Saviour, the only refuge for the lost, that he believed on Him. And so with all of us. But from that happy moment Christ was his and he was Christ's. Now, the Christ of the fathers in the family of God is the Christ of the babes, the Christ of "Paul the aged," who had finished his course and had kept the faith, is the Christ of the Christian of yesterday. There are no two Christs. Growth in the knowledge of Him is another matter, but the One in the knowledge of whom we grow is ours *at the very start* of our Christian course.

If any thus receive Christ, if they thus believe on Him, do they not receive forgiveness of sins? Are they not justified from all things, and sealed with "that Holy Spirit of promise"? Undoubtedly it is so if Scripture is to be believed (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Eph. 1. 13). But in the teaching of the Apostle John those who thus receive Him have another thing, namely, *eternal life*, and they are owned as God's children (John i. 11-13; iii. 36). Are, then, these different terms—forgiveness, justification,

eternal life, etc.—of equal value? Do they all mean the same thing? No indeed. Some of them are richer than the rest, but *in having Christ we have them all*. They are ours, though we have to learn their worth and meaning afterwards. Let us take pains to be clear as to this. We fear that some who once saw what we are saying plainly enough are letting it slip and even doubting, if not denying it. They tell us that “we do not get eternal life by believing—that faith is the title to it.” Nothing more. But we cannot recall a single passage of Holy Scripture which puts it in that way. And we earnestly ask those who speak this new language, whether we only acquire a *title* to Christ when, through grace, we believe on Him, or is He, indeed, ours then and there? Can we have Christ and not eternal life? Ignorant we may be, having everything to learn. But if I know that Christ is mine—the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me—am I not warranted in saying that eternal life is mine and that I have it in having Him? Does it not say in 1 John v. 12., “He that hath the Son hath life”? Surely so, and it cannot be for our mutual comfort to deny it, or in any way to becloud the blessedness of it, in the soul of the youngest believer.

But let us not hold the truth in terms only—content to know that eternal life is ours without seeking to understand that

great phrase in all the fulness of its many meanings. This is where some come short. They are sure that eternal life is theirs, and if believers on the Son of God they have the warrant of the Word of God for saying so, but when you ask them to tell you something about the life they have, they are not able to say much, if anything at all. And what they do say seems to show that they see no difference between the new birth, forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life. In their eyes they all have but one meaning. Now babes in the family of God may be excused if they can say but little. We do not expect them to distinguish between things that differ, or to express in accurate terms all that which they truly enjoy according to their measure. A babe in its mother's arms knows what it is to love and be loved long before its infant lips can frame a sentence or utter a single syllable. But we must not remain babes nor be satisfied with the knowledge of the truth in terms, but go on to possess it in the faith of our souls. Then it becomes substance to us—real riches—and our inward and outward life pass under its mighty influence. When a child is born heir to a crown and kingdom, he knows nothing of his birthright and his high estate. The nursery, the cradle, and his nurse's knees are the things the child knows most about. But we expect him to grow in understanding, and when at length he comes

to realize who and what he is, his whole life, so to speak, undergoes a great change. And so, if life, eternal life, is communicated to the soul at the earliest dawn of its spiritual history, let the one who knows that he has it, in that he knows that he has Christ, go on to learn more of it in its ever-expanding meaning. Life is a profound thing, eluding all definitions and full of ever-multiplying wonders. And if this be true of creature-life as we see it in the world around, how much more is it true of eternal life, in which the knowledge of the Father and the Son and of those unseen and eternal things which God has prepared for them that love Him has so large a place (John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 9-12). It is in harmony with this that Christians who are rich in this world, and who have within their reach all that money can buy, are enjoined to lay hold of that which is life indeed (1 Tim. vi. 19), while Timothy, that choice servant of the Lord, is exhorted to flee these things, to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of eternal life.

Let us then be on our guard lest we make knowledge and experience the measure of the blessing wherewith we have been blessed. *In having Christ we have all*, for every blessing is treasured up in Him. At the same time we must take care not to be like a man who holds parchment deeds that prove him the undoubted owner of rich estates, yet who never takes trouble either

to survey or to enjoy them, but leaves them lying idle, and yielding no wealth either to himself or to anyone else. It is the diligent soul that shall be made fat, and unto him that hath shall more be given.

W.B.

THE COMING OF OUR LORD.

A brief sketch of the prophetic Scriptures.

THOSE who are looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ are Christians, who know that He has been here and was crucified upon the Cross of Calvary for our sins; that He rose again from among the dead and has ascended into Heaven, where He now lives, the glorified Man, Christ Jesus, who is, and ever was and ever will be, "over all, GOD blessed for ever."

If He had never come as a Man into this world and accomplished the mighty work of redemption, we should have no Saviour to-day and still be in our sins, without hope and without God in the world. How much therefore we have to thank Him for.

When Satan caused our first parents, Adam and Eve, to sin (Genesis iii.) God, in His love, came seeking them, but they, in their guilt, tried to hide themselves away from God. Sin and the knowledge of our

guilt always make us fear God. But God called them forth, and then they heard Him tell Satan that ONE—the Seed of the woman—was coming who would defeat him, though it would be through suffering.

After that, God made known, in His ways and His words, who that wonderful Person who was coming, would be. What He would do and also the blessing that would result to all men and the whole creation through Him. This is told to us in the various parts of the Old Testament.

But from Genesis onwards—from the moment sin came into the world—men and women who were taught of God, looked for the coming of Him who would be Emmanuel (God with us). They could not, however, understand what was the meaning of the sorrows that this great Person was to suffer, and that the glory which was to be His, followed after His sufferings (1 Peter i. 11). God taught His people that this glorious Man was to be His Anointed, the "CHRIST."

Centuries went by and even the people, whom God had called and blessed and to whom He had revealed His mind, forgot Him and got away from Him so that He had to deal with them in judgment and send them into captivity to their enemies, taking their kingdom from them and giving it to the Gentile power which eventually became the Roman Empire.

Except for one or two here and there, the people had lapsed into indifference and empty formalism, and it was when the people were like that that the Lord Jesus came into this world. A little Babe, born of a virgin, cradled in a stable outside an inn in Bethlehem. Before He came, He had sent His angel Gabriel to announce that He would be born of Mary and the Angel said to Joseph who was to be the husband of Mary, "thou shalt call His Name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins."

If He was to bless men, and have dominion from sea to sea, ruling in blessing throughout the vast universe of God, He must first destroy the power of Satan and, in doing so complete the mighty work of redemption for God, to His praise and glory. This meant for Him all the sorrows of His earthly life, and also all the bitter agony of the Cross of Calvary; especially those three hours of darkness when God laid *upon Him* all our iniquity. When, "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

What a joy it is to know Jesus as our Saviour; to be able to say, "He has saved me; I am His through His precious blood; and He lives for me now in Heaven at God's right hand."

Does it not make you long to see Him? Are you not glad to know that He is to have the glory? He already has it at the Father's right hand; by faith "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Yet, in spite of changes on the surface of things the world of men and woman in which we live continues to go on very much the same as when He died, crucified by men.

Sin is so abominable in God's sight that the Lord Jesus could not take any position amongst men except as revealing the heart of God to them; moving in and out amongst men in blessing, healing the sick, cleansing the leper, giving sight to the blind and making the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear; raising the dead. He was a stranger in this world, with no place where He could lay His head; despised and rejected of men—a Man of sorrows, making acquaintance with grief. (Isaiah liii). He could not take a place amongst the great in this world of sinners, and where Satan ruled. He came first as the Saviour of sinners—the Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world, and that is how we must first come to Him: as our Saviour and our Lord.

If we are His, those who have come to Him as sinners needing a Saviour, then we know that we are amongst those who are precious to Him. He loves us as His

Own and He has saved us in order that He might have us with Him eternally for the delight and joy of His own heart and to share His glory as the glorious Man Christ Jesus. All those who have believed on Him, since His death, resurrection and ascension, together form His Body, the Church, as we read, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." (Eph. v. 25).

Now it is the purpose of God, that just as Eve shared with Adam all the glory that was his, as given to him by God, before the fall, so the Church is to share throughout all eternity, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Heir of all things. But we can never enter into this while we are here on earth, because the inheritance of our Lord Jesus Christ is the whole universe of God and not only this earth. We also have a place with Him in the Father's house, as He tells us in John xiv. 1-4. He went to prepare a place for us in the Father's house, and we are waiting His coming to conduct us there. He Himself is coming for us, and the mode of His coming and our going are referred to in 1 Thessalonians iv. 14-18, and also Philipians iii. 20-21.

This second coming of our Lord for His own has been the hope of Christians ever since the Lord Jesus went into Heaven, and it is to-day the daily expectation of all those who truly believe that He is coming, and are waiting and watching for Him in spirit.

He has given us no indication as to *when* He is coming, but in referring to it in Revelation xxii. He says, "Behold I come quickly." That is, His coming will be a very quick movement of His from Heaven and into the air to call us away. Evidently so far as the world is concerned, it will be a secret transaction; all they will know is that the Christians have disappeared, just like Enoch, who walked with God and God took Him, unknown to anybody. Also Elijah was taken up into Heaven and his going was only seen by Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Those of us who have by faith seen Jesus go up into Heaven, now have a double portion of His Spirit (we are indwelt by the Spirit of God), and we are the only people on earth who are in the secret of where the Lord Jesus is to-day.

So He is coming, and it may be to-day. What a wonderful effect it would have upon us if we really knew that to-day was to be our last day on earth; that at any moment we may see Jesus and be with Him where He is. We would not want to be found by Him doing or allowing anything that we would be ashamed of at His coming.

Well, He is coming; coming *FOR US* because we are *HIS*, the purchase of His blood, and redeemed to God. We are loved with the same love as He is loved with, by the Father, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *HE IS COMING*.

But after He has come for His Church, this world of men and women will continue to go on; only it will go from bad to worse *spiritually*, although there may be great developments in the realm of science and men's knowledge. But people will become more and more estranged from God and more under the dominion of Satan.

Some of God's earthly people (Israel) will have a desire after God and they will be looking for their Messiah, Christ. They will understand, as they do not now, the meaning of the prophecies concerning Him; especially the prophecies of Daniel, Zechariah, and Isaiah, and they will be looking for Him who is to come. This coming of the Lord Jesus is usually referred to as "His Appearing," and it is connected with His coming in majesty and power to take the Kingdom away from Satan, and man under Satan.

Evidently after the church has gone to be with Christ Satan is going to raise up two men of great power, along with the development in Europe again of the Romish System. One of these two great men will have his headquarters in Rome, and the other in Jerusalem, which will then have its temple rebuilt, and where the Jews will be driven and will have found a home again in Palestine.

These two wonderful men are going to bring about a condition of things in the

world, which will be so perfectly according to the desires of fallen men that the Jews will think the Millennium has come, and they will accept the great man in Jerusalem as their Messiah; but he is really Antichrist. After a short period they will be undeceived. First of all the great man in Rome takes all power out of the hand of the false system, the Romish Church, and says he and he alone is to be worshipped as God. The other great man in Jerusalem is of the same mind and in league with the political head in Rome, and he sets up in Jerusalem an image, to which he gives life and commands that everyone shall bow down and worship this image, under penalty of death.

This will be the period of the Jews' "great tribulation" in which certain faithful ones, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Daniel's time, will not bow down and worship, and they go right through this awful time, which is only ended by the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His triumphant saints, to take His Kingdom and bring in the glorious millennial reign on this earth.

After His millennial reign, during which Satan is chained and evil is restricted, Satan is loosed again for a short period to show that the hearts of men are unchanged, for they flock to his standard and he dares to lead them against the Lord and His hosts, only to be finally defeated, never to

rise up again but to be condemned to the Lake of Fire eternally. Then the Lord Jesus brings in the glorious eternal day of blessing for all the children of men, and all creation. Then He will make the whole creation smile and hush its groan.

J. F. ENGLISH.

THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

A CHRISTIAN was arguing on a railway platform concerning the Deity of the Lord Jesus with a Unitarian, a man of considerable intellectual ability. The Christian was evidently getting the worst of the discussion, when a rough Dutch farmer broke in.

He asked the Unitarian, "Do you believe the Bible?"

"Yes," was his reply.

"Then do you believe every word of the Bible?"

"Certainly."

"Then do you believe the verse which says, 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich'" (2 Corinthians viii. 9.)?

"Certainly."

“ Then when was the Lord Jesus rich ? ”

The farmer went on to point out that the Lord was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, brought up by Joseph, who was a carpenter, that concerning the Lord Himself the question was asked, “ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary ” (Mark vi. 3)? That when He wanted to pay the tribute money He had to find it in a fish’s mouth, that whilst the foxes had holes and the birds of the air nests, He had not where to lay his head, and that in the end He lay in a borrowed tomb.

In the light of all this, the Dutch farmer asked his question in broken English, “ Ven was Jesus rich ? ”

The Unitarian was nonplussed, silenced, did not know what to say. Conveniently for him in his embarrassment the train was about to start. He entered the train, and as it drew out of the station the Dutch farmer followed the train as long as he was able asking his question, “ Ven was Jesus rich ? ”

When was Jesus rich ? Not in this world certainly. When, then, was Jesus rich ? The answer is obvious. It must have been *before* He came into this world of sin and sorrow. The Unitarian denies Deity to the Lord Jesus, therefore in his creed there is no “ before ” He came into this world. The simple old Dutch farmer impaled the Unitarian on the horns of a dilemma. If Jesus was rich, and certainly not rich in this

world—"When was He rich?" Surely the Unitarian came under the condemnation of the Scriptures he professed to believe. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is NOT OF GOD." (1 John iv. 3.)

It is reported that under peculiar circumstances an orthodox minister arranged to preach in a Unitarian pulpit. The two ministers were in the vestry before the service began. The Unitarian minister said to the orthodox minister, "Remember there must be no controversy."

"Certainly," replied the visiting minister. He got into the pulpit, and read out the text. "*Without controversy* great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." (1 Timothy iii. 16.)

Yes, "*without controversy*" JESUS IS GOD. There is abundant testimony in Scripture to show this. Search and see.

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians* xiv. 1—40).

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

CHAPTER xiii. being a parenthesis, showing the surpassing excellence of divine love, the first verse of chapter xiv. is connected with the last verse of chap-

ter xii. Love is to be pursued as the thing of all importance, for where it is, spiritual gifts may safely be desired. Where love reigns, they will be desired not for personal advancement or distinction, but for the profit and blessing of all. Hence the gift of prophecy is given the first place. It is amongst the best gifts which may be coveted earnestly.

The Apostle at once proceeds to contrast the gift of prophecy with the gift of tongues, which evidently had great attractions in the estimation of the Corinthian believers, being so obviously supernatural in its origin. He does not cast any doubt upon this particular spiritual manifestation. The "tongues" to which he alluded, were the genuine manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, and *under the control of the speaker*. The apostle spoke with tongues himself in larger measure than any of the Corinthians, but he did so in a controlled and restrained way. Verses 6, 15, 18, and 19 show this. The point is, that even when the gift of tongues is at its best, it is of less profit than the gift of prophecy.

When the Corinthian saints came together in assembly before the Lord, He was to be their Director in all things, and all their activities were to be in the energy of the Spirit of God. This chapter furnishes us with many directions from the Lord—direc-

tions of a general character, which are binding at all times. Whether on a given occasion this or that brother should take *any* audible part, and if they should, *what* part, is a matter which must be settled in reference to the Lord's will when the occasion comes. But when they *do* take part, they must do so in subjection to the general instructions given by the Lord in this chapter, acting as men of a sound mind, enlightened by the word of the Lord. It may be remembered how Paul speaks to Timothy of God having given us the spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." This is exemplified in the chapter before us. Chapter xii. shows us the Spirit of power in the assembly; chapter xiii. the spirit of love; chapter xiv. the spirit of a sound mind.

Spiritual activities in the assembly may be Godward or manward. Activities Godward are mentioned in verses 14 to 17,—praying, singing, giving of thanks. But in the main the chapter is concerned with what is manward,—prophecy, tongues, doctrine, interpretation. These gifts are to be exercised for the benefit of others, and the test the Apostle applies is that of general edification. If the exercise of the gift edifies it is of profit. If it does not edify it is to no profit.

According to verse 3 the end to be attained is threefold. The simple meaning

of edification is building up. The foundation is laid when the Gospel is received; but upon the foundation an immense deal has to be built up, so that edification may rightly continue throughout a long Christian life. Exhortation, or encouragement, follows. We pass through a hostile world, subject to all kinds of adverse influences. Hence we continually need what will stir us up to spiritual vigour. Then thirdly, comfort, or consolation is a continuous need in the assembly; for there are always those present who are face to face with sorrow and trouble and disappointment, and who need that which will lift them above their sorrows. We might summarize this threefold end as, *building up, stirring up, and lifting up*. Prophecy leads to the attainment of these three things.

Prophecy is not only the foretelling of future events. It includes the forth-telling of God's mind and message. In the apostolic days, before the written New Testament Scriptures were in circulation, there was prophecy of an inspired sort, such as is claimed by the Apostle Paul for himself and others in chapter ii. of our epistle, verse 13. We have not that to-day, nor do we need it, having the inspired Scriptures in our hands. Prophecy of an uninspired sort we may still have, for we may still find men gifted of God to open up to us, from the inspired Scriptures, the mind of God and His message for any given moment; and when we find it we do well to be very

thankful for it. Such ministry of the Word of God does indeed build up, and stir up, and lift up.

As to the gift of tongues; its exercise is not forbidden, but it is definitely and strictly regulated in this chapter. The regulations laid down are of much importance. They make it certain that this gift if present, and exercised, shall be used for profit. Futher, we have no hesitation in saying that when and where the gift is claimed, and yet those exercising it systematically ignore these divinely given regulations, a doubt is at once raised in any sound mind as to the genuineness of the alleged gift.

Even apart from this, however, these regulations are full of profit for us, for what is laid down must obviously apply in other directions also. For an instance of what we mean take verses 6 to 9. The immediate point of these verses is that mere vocal sounds are of no value. What is uttered by the voice must have some meaning to those who listen. It must be *intelligible*. Is that only of importance in connection with the gift of tongues? By no means. It applies universally. In our meetings it will not be enough that the speaker talks in English, for he may be enticed into a display of his learning by using hosts of long words of uncommon use, which leave the minds of

his learners a complete blank as to his meaning. Or he may speak with such rapidity, or with such mystic obscurity, as to be unintelligible. In all such cases people merely "speak into the air," and there is no profit.

We might wonder at Paul writing as he does in verses 14 and 15, did we not know what sometimes takes place even in our day. It is not God's way that even the speaker himself should be ignorant of the meaning of the words he has just uttered. He is to utter words, whether in speaking to others, or in prayer, or in song, which he himself understands and which are understandable to others.

If anyone address himself to God in the assembly, whether in prayer or thanksgiving he must remember that he does so as giving expression to the desires or the praises of the assembly. He is not speaking merely on his own behalf. Consequently he must carry the assembly with him; and they, understanding and following his utterances, ratify them before God and make them their own by saying "Amen" (signifying "So be it") at the end. They cannot intelligibly and honestly say "Amen" at the end if they are quite unaware of what it is all about. Far better is it to speak but five words profitable for instruction, than ten thousand words that mean nothing to the hearers.

Take note that verse 16 supposes that each in the assembly, even the unlearned and insignificant, *do* say "Amen." They *say* it, and not merely *think* it. If our experience be any guide, a very small percentage in the assembly say "Amen" to-day. Test what we say in an average prayer meeting. If a brother in prayer really voices our desires let us ratify what he has uttered with a good distinct "Amen." If he has not, honesty compels us to refrain from saying it. If the earnest, fervent outpouring of our desires were ratified by all of us in the utterance of a hearty "Amen" at the close, and the wearisome parade of information, and discussion of doctrines with God, which sometimes is inflicted on us at great length as a substitute for prayer, were ended in a rather chilling silence, the offender might possibly be awakened to what he is doing. When however every prayer finishes in silence save for a few feeble "Amens," no such discrimination can be felt, and one begins to fear that all may be formalism and with little or no meaning or depth. Let us think on these things and cultivate reality.

Also we are to cultivate understanding in the things of God, while retaining a child-like spirit in other regards, as verse 20 tells us. When tongues are misused, as indicated in verse 23, it only shows a complete lack of mature sense. Children might act in that foolish way, just as they love to show

off their new clothes. But the believer is to act as having the understanding of a man, not a child. The prophetic ministry of the Word of God brings the soul into the very presence of God. And the power of such ministry may be felt even by an unbeliever who happens to be present.

It is not enough that there should be prophecy. The gift must be exercised according to God's order, which is laid down in verses 29 to 33. The Corinthians were highly gifted, and the tendency in their assemblies was evidently to have a great excess of talking. Verse 26 shows this. Each was eager to exercise his gift and get it in evidence. Confusion, disorder, tumult, was the result. God was not the Author of this.

So definite instructions were laid down. Speaking in tongues was not forbidden, but it is strictly regulated in verses 27 and 28; and if no interpreter is present it is forbidden. Prophecy too is regulated. Two or three speakers in any given meeting are enough. How wise is this regulation! The Lord knows the receptive capacity of the average believer. If two speak at considerable length it is enough. If more brevity marks the speakers, three may find an opportunity. Then it is enough. Someone may ignore this ruling and insist on

giving us his word, but we are wearied and end by retaining less than if we had heard only three.

Note that the others who listen are to "judge." That is, even in days when inspired utterances by direct revelation (see verse 30) were given in the assembly, those who listened were to do so with discernment. They were not to receive without testing what they heard. They were never to adopt the attitude of:—"Oh, everything that dear brother A— says *must* be right!" Such an attitude is a direct incitement to the devil to pervert the ideas of brother A— and so encompass the fall of many. It is a disaster for brother A— as well as his admirers. There is liberty for all the prophets to prophecy, though not of course on any one occasion. If on any given occasion a prophet may have something to say and yet no opportunity occurs, he must restrain himself and wait on God till the opportunity comes. He himself is to be master of his own spirit and not mastered by it.

Verses 34 and 35 deal with the silence of women in the assembly. The instruction is very plain and the word used for "speak" is the ordinary word and does not mean "chatter" as some have made out. This regulation cuts across the spirit of the age, without a doubt. But if that be a reason

for ignoring Scripture, there will not be much Scripture left that is not ignored.

The Spirit of God foreknew how these regulations would be ignored or challenged. Some at Corinth evidently were inclined in that direction. Hence verses 36 and 37. The Word of God came *out* through the Lord Himself and His apostles and not through the Corinthians. It came *to* them. They might fancy themselves as spiritual people. If they really were spiritual they would prove it by discerning that these rules laid down by Paul were not just his notions, but the commandments of the Lord through him. The test of our spirituality to-day is just the same.

Take note that the Word of God does not come out through the church. It comes to the church. The crowning pretension of the great Romish system is that "the church"—and by that they mean the Romish authorities—is the teaching body. We need not here concern ourselves with their claim to be "the church," for it is evident from this passage that the Apostles are the fountains, whence have flowed the pure waters of the Word, and we have them to-day in their inspired writings—the New Testament Scriptures. The church is not "the *teaching* body" it is "the *taught* body." The Word of God comes to it, and its duty is *to bow to the Word of God.*

F. B. HOLE.

THE TWO CLEANSINGS.

A CHRISTIAN gentleman—a friend of mine—with whom I was speaking the other day, told me that so far as his own observation went there were but few Christians who seemed to know anything about the place "*the water*" had in the teaching of Holy Scripture. He was not referring to the water of baptism. He had in view that significant passage in John xix. in which we are told that from the pierced side of the crucified Saviour "there came out blood and water"—and that in Ephesians v. 26, which tells us that "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"—and that in John xiii. 10, where our Lord says, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." These are the passages which were in his mind when he said what he did.

And he further remarked that he did not believe the true value of "*the blood*" was clearly seen, inasmuch as it is an article in the creed of Evangelical Christendom that the believer, as often as he fails, should

go back to the precious blood of Christ to be re-washed, re-cleansed. Hence, failing Christians—and who does not fail?—are continually exhorted to seek a fresh application of “*the blood*” which cleanses from all sin. My friend believed this to be a profound mistake which a proper understanding of Hebrews x. would correct once for all.

I propose in this short paper to examine briefly certain passages of Scripture and see whether these things be so. The Bereans did this when Paul preached unto them, and they were warmly commended for so doing (Acts xvii. 11). We shall not go wrong in following their example.

Let us begin with Romans v. 8. Here we are told that “Christ died for us,” and in the following verse it is said that we are now “justified by His blood.” It is God who justifies, of course, but the shed blood—the sure sign of life laid down—is the ground of our justification before God. It is the meritorious cause of it. The blood of atonement satisfies all the demands of divine righteousness and enables God—the Supreme Judge—to absolve the believing soul from every charge of sin. *And He does so absolve him.* This is a fact of the first magnitude, and glorious enough to set the bells of the universe a-ringing! Henceforth no one can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect—no one can bring an

accusation against them. "It is God who justifies," says the apostle, and then in triumphant tones he asks, "Who is he that condemns?" To that loud challenge there is no answer—every voice is silent (Rom. viii. 33-34).

"Though the restless foe accuses,
Sins recounting like a flood ;
Every charge our God refuses :
Christ has answered with His blood."

Blessed be God for that!

Here it may be helpful to ask a question. Is this justification of the believer a thing that lasts, or has it to be renewed every time he does something which he ought not to do? Will he have to be justified over again? The answer must be in the negative. Though he has failed, he has not ceased to be "*in Christ*." He is still a child of God, though a failing one. What failure involves is the loss of communion with God. Other consequences may follow. But God does not cease to love him any more than an earthly parent ceases to love his child when that child trespasses. The link of communion is easily broken, not so the tie of relationship. And what the erring one now needs is not to be cleansed afresh by the blood, for that can never be repeated. What he needs is the cleansing of the water—the feet-washing of John xiii. But more as to this presently.

In Hebrews x. the atoning work of Christ is very blessedly set forth. Being first addressed to Hebrew Christians it is presented in terms admirably suited to their habits of thought. But the apostle's reasoning we can easily follow. He tells them that the sacrifices offered on their ancient altar could never take away sins either from before God or from the conscience of the worshippers. Those sacrifices were divinely ordained, they served their purpose, they were a shadow of good things to come, but they could not atone for sins and purify the burdened conscience. But in the sacrifice for sins which Jesus offered there was a complete atonement, the worth of which endures to everlasting days. Therefore it is said in verse 12 that after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, He for ever *sat down* on the right hand of God. On that line of service there remains nothing more to do.

“Done is the work that saves,
Once, and for ever, done.”

Looking back to the cross I see the solemn settlement of the great sin question. It cost the Saviour untold suffering to settle it. All my sins were there, all of them, I say, from cradle to coffin. None of them forgotten, all of them remembered. And in that supreme transaction, the like of which Eternity had never seen nor shall see, I had no part save that which my sins gave me. There were but two engaged

in it—God, whose love and righteousness shine out from that cross in all their unclouded majesty, and the One who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." On Him my sins were laid. He bore the penalty. He paid the ransom price, and met every claim that divine justice made or could make. And the One who did all this is now *for ever* sat down at the right hand of God. The work that saves is indeed for ever done. There remains nothing for us to do. By that one offering the believer has been *for ever* perfected. So says verse fourteen of Hebrews x.

But there is another thing. The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us that this is so. Not only have we the reasoning of the apostle—divinely inspired of course—but we have also the witness of the Holy Ghost. The apostle cites it from Jeremiah xxxi. It is to the effect that God will remember our sins and iniquities no more (verse 19). They have been remembered in Calvary's dark and dreadful hour—they shall be remembered *no more*. They have been blotted out as a thick cloud, never, never to come up again. Such is the witness of the Holy Ghost, and a surer witness it is impossible to have.

And if I receive this witness of the Holy Ghost—this testimony that He bears in the Holy Scriptures, to the value of Christ's one

offering, what follows? My conscience is perfectly and for ever at rest. God is satisfied, and I might well be!

But we must say a few words about the water. In this very chapter it is spoken of (Hebrews x. 22). Two things are indispensable if we are to enter 'into the Holiest with boldness and to be at home there. The evil, that is the guilty, conscience must be taken away—this, as we have seen, is the result of the atoning work of Christ—and the body must be washed with pure water. This should have recalled to the recollection of these Hebrew believers what took place when the Jewish priests were consecrated—they were washed with water. That was the first thing, and, as an act of consecration, it was never repeated (Leviticus viii. 6). What answers to that washing in our case is found in John iii.: "Born of water and of the Spirit." This is the basis of all moral cleansing—the cleansing of life and ways—*moral* cleansing, I say, as distinguished from *judicial* cleansing which is by the Blood. It is the water of the word by which, when clothed with the power of the Spirit, we are born again. The Apostle Peter's way of putting it is this: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23). And thus a new life is communicated with a holy nature, and in following the instincts of

this new life we find pleasure in obedience and in the things of God. This is the starting point of all *practical* sanctification. It is the first washing of John xiii. 10, which, as our Lord tells us, is never repeated, for we are "clean every whit." There is no such thing as being born again the second time.

Feet-washing is another matter—*that* we often need. This, too, is by the water of the Word. And connected with it is the ceaseless intercession of our Advocate on high. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," said the Lord to Peter on the eve of his terrible fall. And He who prayed for Peter prays for us. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). In result, the believer who has sinned is made to feel his sin, and to confess it to his God and Father. He does not do so as being in the same position as when he first confessed his sin as a rebel brought to repentance. He confesses his sins now as a child of God—not as fearing the judicial penalty, for he knows that has been borne by his Saviour. His confession is deeper, for he has sinned against grace and light. 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). This is *moral* cleansing, the cleansing of our practical ways. It is the feet-washing of John xiii.

Is this clear to the reader? If not let him write to the Editor, whose address is on the cover, and the subject shall be further dealt with in the correspondence columns. We believe it to be of prime importance that we should distinguish between "*the blood*" and "*the water*" and see the place which Scripture assigns to each.

W. B.

ARE WE ASLEEP?

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans xiii. 11).

IT is impossible to read the Epistles without observing the fervent desire of the writer that the Lord's people should be awake. Our young Christian readers, and also older ones, will note with interest the occasions, as well as the urgency, with which the call comes. After presenting to the Ephesian believers a chain of entrancing, soul-thrilling, emancipating, elevating truth there comes the trumpet call:—"Wake up thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee" (Ephesians v. 14, N. Tr.).

So in the Epistle from which we have culled our text, we have the most exquisite unfolding of the Gospel as that which shows

us how poor wretches like ourselves can be picked out of the very gutter of sin, and set down in the presence of God in the image of His Son ; and then there comes this startling word: " It is high time to awake out of sleep."

As we read such words we are simply compelled to stop and ask ourselves,

ARE WE ASLEEP ?

We will, for the moment, leave the Roman and Ephesian Christians out of account, as well as others to whom similar words were addressed, and ask ourselves this pointed question.

Shall we bring it a little nearer home and ask,

AM I ASLEEP ?

Let us consider. We once heard the Gospel in its simplicity, we believed it and we were saved. Then we sought to know that Gospel better, and, as we endeavoured to plumb its depths, we delighted in it. We were attracted to Him who is the theme of the Gospel, and, as we became increasingly attracted to Him, we found ourselves more and more detached from the world and from our former habits and manner of life. And then—? And then—?

Something happened. We began to cool off. Our Bible reading became more per-

functory; our prayers more formal; our desire for the things of God decreased; our hankering after those things that we had dropped increased, until we became spiritually asleep. Just as a kind mother arouses her boy and says, "My boy, it is high time to awake out of sleep, or you will lose your situation:" so our ever gracious Lord, His heart wounded, His love grieved, arouses us, and says in effect: "It is high time to awake out of sleep, or you will lose all spiritual vitality."

Why this stirring call? Because the time of opportunity will soon be past. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." In view of that we need to be awake, alert, active, as those who realize that the time is short, and that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Where this clarion call is found it is in connection with our walk. It is not a call to work, to preach, to do things which might make us conspicuous, but to walk. First, we are called upon to "cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light" (v. 12).

We would fain paraphrase the first sentence "Let us therefore cast off—?" But we will each complete the sentence for ourselves. You know, dear fellow believer, just what it is that is sapping the spiritual life; that is hindering divine

growth. That thing, that habit, that must-be-in-the-fashion idea that you once dropped but you have taken it up again. That unholy alliance which you contemplate, and which has already affected your relations with the Lord and with those who belong to Him. Shall we hear the long, loud, insistent call? Shall we awake out of sleep? Shall we cast off the works of darkness, and put on that armour of light that will at once detect and refuse all that is not pleasing to the Lord?

We are approaching the end of the journey; we are getting nearer to the moment when we shall see His face; and when He will review with us all our life history. How many years of sleep will have to be recorded? How many things that we had "cast off" and taken up again will be recalled? We cannot remedy these things now for they belong to the past, but we *can* "awake out of sleep;" we *can* "cast off the works of darkness;" we *can* "put on the armour of light;" we *can*, to sum up, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (v. 14). Shall we here and now seek to do so?

As we lay aside this paper, let us drop on our knees; own our lethargy; confess our sin; judge ourselves in the presence of God; ask Him for grace and power to "cast off," to "put on," and to "walk,"

(v. 13). so that we may be no longer slumberers and cumberers but may be found here pleasurable and serviceable to our blessed Lord.

“Praise, praise the Lord, and vigil keep,
As those aroused from death's dead sleep ;
He Comes ! He Comes ! spread round the cry,
Awake ! Awake ! the Lord is nigh.”

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

“BEGIN TO POSSESS.”

IN the Gospel God has made Himself known to us as a *Giver*. He gave His Son. Faith, too, is His gift, as well as all those mighty spiritual blessings to which faith introduces us. Then He gave us His Holy Spirit, “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. ii. 12). The “things” are given, and given *freely*; but we are to “know” them by the Spirit; not merely know about them, but know them in their spiritual reality.

First of all faith lays firmly hold upon the fact that they are really ours. The divine “deed of gift” has been duly executed, as attested in Holy Scripture. Having laid hold upon this fact, we must now proceed to lay hold upon the things themselves by the Holy Ghost who is given to us. We must begin to possess our possessions.

All this is presented to us pictorially in the Old Testament record concerning Israel. They had the land of promise by deed of gift from God, but they had to put in their claim for it in the presence of hostile powers; and only bit by bit did they actually take possession. In Deuteronomy ii., we read how Moses brought home to Israel their responsibility as to this.

Put together two verses in that chapter and the point will become very clear :

“ Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon : **behold I have given** into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land : **begin to possess it**, and contend with him in battle” (ver. 24).

“ And the Lord said unto me, **Behold I have begun to give** Sihon and his land before thee : **begin to possess**, that thou mayest inherit his land” (ver. 31).

So two things are quite definite. First, God *had given*. Second, He had also *begun to give*. The superficial reader might feel inclined to demur at this, and at least demand that, if both statements are to be accepted, they must stand in reversed order: viz., first, He began to give; second, He had fully given. The Scriptural order is however the right one. First He gives so that the title deeds are ours. Then

He begins to give practically and in detail, as we begin to possess.

Now the exhortation, "Begin to possess," was twice repeated. There are two reasons why we should bestir ourselves and begin to possess our possessions; and they are illustrated here.

The first is that the title deeds *are ours*. They really *are*. If they were not, our beginning to possess would be utterly unwarranted; a mere lawless grabbing at what did not belong to us. And like all such lawless proceedings it would ultimately land us in disaster. Being ours by Divine gift, our beginning to possess is not a defiant trespass, but the calm assurance of faith. It is the right and proper response to the Divine gift.

You have, let us suppose, a friend whom you love and highly esteem. Longing to express your feelings, you scrape your hard earned pence together for a long time and finally present her with an expensive and beautiful dress. You are *so* pleased to give it! A fortnight later however, calling unexpectedly to see her you discern the beautiful dress fluttering on a scarecrow, erected to keep the birds off her kitchen garden! Now, how do you feel? Pained and mortified almost beyond expression! You expected the gift to be used and enjoyed by the recipient. You thought she would really

possess herself of it, and not relegate it to the scrap heap.

Has God given these wonderful things to us in order that we may misuse them, or even keep them unused, like a dress carefully secreted in a draw, until such time as the age to come dawns? To ask such a question is to answer it. God *has given* the things to us; but we are to *begin to possess them*.

The second reason why we should bestir ourselves and begin to possess is, that God Himself begins to give as we begin to possess. The fact is that if He did not begin to work with us, in order to give us a practical entrance to our possessions, we should never gain any foothold in them at all.

In Numbers xiv, we read how God said that because of their unbelief, He would not begin to give the land to Israel for another forty years. Nevertheless the people insisted that they would begin to possess. "Lo, we be here, and will go up," they said. The rejoinder of Moses was, "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you." Yet they would not listen but presumed to go up and as a consequence were utterly smitten. At that time, though the title deeds were already theirs, God has not "begun to give" the inheritance to them and hence their attempt to "begin to possess" was absolutely futile.

When Moses spoke, as recorded in Deuteronomy ii., the hour for action had struck. God has begun to give in a practical way, and they were to begin to possess.

Now these things are written for our instruction. What about these things that are freely given to us of God? They are ours, and now is the time for us really to possess ourselves of them. This is shown by the fact that God has given to us His Spirit that we may know them in realized and happy possession. Are we laying hold upon them? Are we giving ourselves to the study of the Word of God which reveals them to us, and praying in the Holy Ghost so that we may be built up and established in them?

What hinders us in this? Just our natural lethargy coupled with love of the world. Verse 31, already quoted, is followed by verses 32 and 33, which say:

"Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people to fight at Jahaz, and the Lord our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people."

Immediately we begin to possess opposition springs up. The old powers do not yield without a struggle. It is a stern business. It means saying, "No," to many things which are *not* the things freely given to us of God. It means exercise and con-

flict and trouble. But it is well worth it. The joy of victory follows: the joy of really possessing a little bit more of that which is ours by an incontestable title, as given of God.

Do not be content with knowing that there are things which are freely given to you of God. Do not even be content to know about them. Aim at really knowing them by the Spirit given to you. Go in for the joy and satisfaction of realized possession.

F.B.H.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians xv.* 1 — 44).

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

THE opening words of chapter xv. appear at first sight rather extraordinary. Why, we may ask, should the Apostle declare the Gospel to people who had already received it?

There was, we believe a little wholesome irony in his words, as also there had been in verses 37 and 38 of the previous chapter. As we have noticed several times previously the Corinthians had inflated ideas of themselves, their gifts and accomplishments, so the Spirit of God confronted them with realities. The intellectualism they affected

was leading them to deny, or at least question, the resurrection from the dead—a fundamental truth of the Gospel. Paul had to begin declaring the Gospel to them all over again.

The Gospel saves us *if* we “keep in memory” or “hold fast” its message. If we do not hold fast the Word it does not save. Some people do not like the “If,” but it is there nevertheless. It is easy to say, “I believe,” and as result be numbered amongst the believers. Yet time tests us. The real believer always holds fast; the unreal does not. With that proviso we can say to all who take the place of Christians, “The Gospel has saved you, and in it you *stand*.” Consequently he who tampers with, and disturbs, the truth of the Gospel is cutting away the ground from beneath his own feet.

Now the Gospel brings us tidings of facts. First, the fact of Christ’s death for our sins, as the Scriptures had foretold—Isaiah liii. 5 and 8, for instance. Second the two facts of His burial and resurrection, which are grouped together, as according to the Scriptures—Isaiah liii. 9 and 10, for instance.

There was no question as to the first and second of these facts: they were publicly known. The third was not publicly known, but it was the prominent theme of apostolic preaching as recorded in the Acts. It was the third that was being called

in question here, and hence Paul reminds them of the overwhelming witness of its truth that existed. He cites six different occasions on which He was seen in resurrection, ending with his own case when He was not only risen, but also in glory. Paul's list is by no means exhaustive, for he does not cite any of the occasions on which He appeared to the believing women.

However, he himself came at the end of a long line of witnesses, and this reminded him of the fact that when the other apostles were having a sight of their risen Lord, he was an opponent and a persecutor, at least in heart. The thought of this humbled him, and made him feel unworthy to be numbered amongst the apostles. At the same time it filled his heart with a sense of the grace of God—grace which not only had called him, but also led him into a life of labour for his Lord more abundant than all the rest.

Still as regards their testimony there was no difference. Whether the twelve or himself, they had all equally preached the Gospel of the risen Christ. The Corinthians had heard no other Gospel from their lips than this. Upon the risen Christ they had believed.

Now the whole truth as to resurrection hinges upon the resurrection of Christ, as verse 12 indicates. How can resurrection be denied, if Christ be risen ?

However the Apostle proceeds to argue the whole matter out in orderly fashion. First he contemplates the assumption that after all there is no resurrection, and shows what the logical results would be. This occupies verses 13 to 19. Quite obviously if there be no resurrection then Christ is not risen. And if Christ be not risen, what then?

Then a whole sequence of results must necessarily ensue. Paul's preaching then was vain, for he must be convicted of preaching not a fact but a myth. Their faith was equally vain, for they had believed a myth. This explains the remark at the end of verse 2. The "believing in vain," there spoken of, does not refer to faith of an inferior or defective kind but to faith, be it ever so vigorous, which rests in an unworthy or false object.

Then further, it would mean that the apostles were not true men but false witnesses, and that the Corinthians themselves, in spite of their faith in that witness, were yet in their sins. It would mean that those believers—some of them Corinthians—who had already died, had not entered into bliss but perished. Indeed it would narrow down any benefit or hope to be derived from Christ to things within the confines of this life. What a tragedy! Every bright hope of an eternity of glory extinguished in the night of death from which there is

no awaking. All that Christ can give us is whittled down to a kindly example, which, if followed, would somewhat improve our short lives in this world.

There is no exaggeration in the statement that if that is all, "we are of all men most miserable." Of course we are! Every Christian, worth the name, has deliberately turned his back on the sinful pleasures of the world. So he is in the position of denying himself what he might have, the pleasure that comes from gratifying his lusts, in view of a future, which after all does not exist. In that case we are indeed like the dog in the fable who dropped the piece of meat in clutching at its shadow. The out-and-out worldling at least has the pleasures of sin, whereas we should draw a blank in both worlds.

In verse 20 the Apostle turns from this negative line of reasoning to a positive argument. He starts now from the glorious fact that after all Christ is risen from the dead, and risen as the Firstfruits of the sleeping saints. The saints are the afterfruits of the same order as Himself. This important truth is expounded fully in the later part of the chapter; it is implied here in the use of the word, "firstfruits." No one would present you with a potato as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, or even a plum as the firstfruits of the apple crop. They would be incongruent. But there is

nothing incongruent here. Though Christ is God yet He became Man, and as the risen Man He is the firstfruits of them that have died in faith. His resurrection must involve the resurrection of all that are His.

This point is of such importance that the flow of the argument it interrupted for a moment, and it is enlarged upon in verses 21 to 23. Death was introduced by man, and so now resurrection also is by Man. Adam brought death in, and all who are in him, that is, of his race, are under the death sentence. Christ has brought in resurrection, and all who are in Him, of His race, are to be "made alive," or "quickened." This quickening is special to those who are Christ's. Though the unjust will be raised their resurrection will not involve quickening. The saints are going to enter into what is properly "life." How complete and glorious has been God's answer to man's sin !

But in resurrection an order is to be observed: "each in his own rank." (N. Tr.) as verse 23 puts it. Christ rose from amongst the dead first, and is preeminent. Afterward, at His coming, all who are His are also to rise from amongst the dead, leaving the unsaved dead in their graves. And, "then cometh the end," when the unsaved dead will be raised, though this is not explicitly stated here, but implied in verse 26. If Revelation xx. 11—xxi. 4, be

read, it will be seen that death is destroyed when the wicked dead have been raised.

What is plainly stated in our passage is that the end which is to be reached in virtue of resurrection is the complete subjugation of every adverse power, so that all may be in subjection to God, who is to be all in all. This brings us to the eternal state, which is also alluded to in 2 Peter iii. 13, and is described at greater length in Revelation xxi. 1 - 5. The millennial kingdom will serve the purpose for which it is designed. There will be found in it the perfection of government, and it will not end until the last enemy has been brought to nothing.

When that point is reached the whole work of redemption and new creation will have reached finality, and the Son will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. In becoming Man the Son took the subject place, and that place He retains to all eternity : a clear proof that He has taken up Manhood for ever. Subjection, be it remembered, does not necessarily imply inferiority. The Son was no whit inferior to the Father when here on earth, nor will He be in eternity. In the eternal state God is to be everything, and in everything ; but of course the Spirit is God, and the Son is God, equally with the Father. The Son however retains His place in Manhood, the Head and the Sustainer of the

new creation universe, which exists as the fruit of His work; this guarantees that it shall never be encroached upon by evil, but remain in its original splendour for ever.

Before passing on, just notice this contrast: that whereas the denial of resurrection worked out to its logical result leaves us in our sins and in hopeless misery, the fact of resurrection, accomplished in Christ, lands us into the eternal state of glory.

Verses 20-28, are somewhat parenthetical in nature, and hence verse 29 picks up the thread from verse 19 and reads on quite naturally, though its meaning is perhaps rather obscure. We believe that "for" in this verse indicates "in the place of." A large percentage of the dead amongst the early Christians had fallen as martyrs, and so Paul views the newer converts as stepping by baptism into the place of the fallen, to become themselves targets for the adversary. Very courageous; but of course foolish and futile if there is no resurrection of the dead.

This interpretation of verse 29 is confirmed by verse 30. Why should the Apostle and his associates expose themselves to the adversary, if there were no resurrection? And in asking this he was not indulging in a mere figure of speech. It

was a hard fact, and a daily fact with him. Not long before he had gone through the terrific riot in the Ephesian theatre, as recorded in Acts xix., when men fought against him like wild beasts, and every day his life was in danger. What an absurd man he was to live a life like this! Apart from the fact of resurrection one had better adopt the motto of the godless world, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." In this way once more do we reach the logical result of discarding the truth of resurrection. Not only are we left the most miserable of all men, but we are left with nothing better than the gratification of our animal appetites.

Having reached this point the Apostle appeals very pointedly to the Corinthians. They were being deceived, and all evil teachings have a reaction in the sphere of morals. If we think wrong we cannot act right. This throws light on the immorality amongst them, denounced in chapters v. and vi. Questioning the resurrection of the body, they had the more easily fallen into sins involving the abuse of the body. They needed to awake to what was right and gain the knowledge of God.

But the Corinthians, though having so little knowledge of God and righteousness, were an intellectual, reasoning people; so two questions that were sure to spring to their lips, are anticipated in verse 35. The

first raises the question, *How?* the second, the question, *What?* The answers to these questions occupy practically the rest of the chapter. The second question—being more definite perhaps—is answered first.

Intellectualism proves itself again and again to be a great snare for believers. Having begun with faith some are inclined to continue on the basis of mere intellect, unaware that the things of God (as chapter ii. has told us) are so deep as to entirely submerge the greatest human intellect. Nothing baffles human thought more than resurrection, as may be discovered if one listens for a little to the pronouncements of "Modernists." We cannot fail to know what the Modernists think of God, for they are sufficiently vociferous. Here we see what God thinks of the Modernists. He dismisses them with one word—"Fool!" That one word is as much inspired of God as is John iii. 16.

Still Paul was writing to saints, even though they had got tainted with that peculiar folly which is so fully developed in the Modernists of to-day. So having plainly indicated to them their foolishness, he proceeds to answer the question.

Nature itself furnishes us with a striking analogy on the point, an analogy used previously by our Lord Himself. When He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but

if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," He indicated His own death and resurrection.

Here the same analogy is used but with a different application. A seed is sown in the earth, yet, though its identity is preserved, it comes up with a vastly different body. The acorn is buried, but the oak springs up. Every seed has what we may call its own special resurrection body in which it comes forth. The bearing of this on the point before us is plain. The dead body of that saint is laid in the grave: in the resurrection it will come up vastly different, yet with its identity preserved.

Again nature teaches us that this presents no difficulty to God, for He is of infinite resource. Look at the variety seen in creation. These are different orders of flesh—men, beasts, fishes, birds: and within those orders there are again vast differences of body. Again, there are bodies of a heavenly order—as to which at present we know so little—and bodies of an earthly order, which we know well. It is very probably true that no two stars are in all respects the same.

This conducts us to the marvellous declaration of verses 42-44. The body that is sown in the grave is characterized by corruption, dishonour, weakness, souliness, —if we may be allowed to coin that word, for the word, "natural," is more literally, "souliness," something fitted for the animal

soul rather than the spirit. It is raised in incorruption, glory, power, and a spiritual body rather than a soulish one. The identity is preserved, as witnessed by the words, four times repeated, "It is sown . . . it is raised." Nevertheless the condition in which it is found is of a different order entirely. This answers the question, "With what body do they come?"

How this is to be accomplished, we have yet to learn, but we will close for the moment by noticing how definitely verse 39 negatives the fundamental assumption of evolution, which assures us that all flesh is the same flesh, having sprung from a common ancestor. The truth is that "all flesh is not the same flesh," just as it is also true, according to Genesis i., that everything in creation which reproduces itself does so "after its kind." Put those two brief sentences together, and you have the truth about creation in a nutshell. Follow the speculations and vagaries of evolutionary philosophers, and you have the lie.

F. B. HOLE.

Christ dos not bring us into a position where it is **impossible** to sin—but where it is **possible not to sin**. Sin in the case of a true believer should be only analogous to a railway accident, and never according to time-table.

A CLOSING WORD.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Romans xiii. 12).

WE purposely passed over this sentence in our paper last month, because in a certain sense it stands alone and it seems a fitting word for the closing month of the year. So far as the interpretation is concerned it must be read and considered in connection with the portion with which we dealt last month. The writer seems to use it as a lever in urging upon the saints those things that immediately precede and that follow. Having remarked this, we venture now to detach these words from their context, and to ask our readers attention thereto.

It may be that when we entered upon this year some of us anticipated that before it closed the Lord would come and call His own to be for ever with Himself. Even as we write it is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility that it may happen.

Whether it does or not, of one thing we are assured and that is that "the night is far spent." Night, because we are still in the night of our Lord's betrayal. Night, because He is absent. The more deeply we are attached to Him the darker the night will be to us, and the longer it will seem.

Another year has rolled by. For some, a year of sad memory because of the loss of loved ones; because of trying circumstances; because of some upheaval in their life of which they never dreamed. For others, a year that has brought brightness and joy into their life and has introduced them into experiences previously unknown. Be that as it may, we love our blessed Lord; with Him none can compare. To see His face will more than compensate for all the ups and downs of the pathway. The joy of being with Him will far eclipse the greatest joy that we could have in our life here. Yet it is not to be free from sorrow; and not merely to have something better than we enjoy now; our hearts are thrilled by the message "The night is far spent," and that because we know what joy that gives to Him. So dearly does He love us that He longs to have us with Him. He has so attracted us to Himself, and has so completely captured our hearts' affection, that nothing short of being with Him will satisfy us. Hence our delight to know that "the night is far spent."

If we are permitted to see the end of 1934, another hour in the night will have struck, perhaps the last before the rising of the Morning Star, heralding the dawn of the day. "The day is at hand." What a day! A day without a night; without a cloud; without a single disturbing element; "the day of the gladness of His heart"; the day of indescribable joy for our heart.

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

"The day is at hand." The day of glory, the day of display, the day when our blessed Lord shall come into His rights. It may be that this is the real significance of "the day" in our text, though it must be ushered in by His coming for His own. In any case our hearts, beating in unison with His, are made to rejoice in glad anticipation of it. So that if we see January 1st we shall bid farewell to the old year saying, "The night is far spent"; and we will welcome the New Year exclaiming, "the day is at hand." This will keep us awake; and will prove the great incentive to "cast off," to "put on"; and to "walk" in the light of, and in the momentary expectation of, the day.

We appeal to all our readers, to our dear young fellow-believers in particular, let nothing come in that would threaten to

dim the light; to cloud the prospect; to quench the desire for that day. Look up! Look on! Rejoice with exceeding joy! "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Then:—

"He and we in that bright glory
 One deep joy shall share,
 Ours to be for ever with Him;
 His, that we are there."

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

MY SHEPHERD

(From Notes of Addresses.)

ONE of the sweetest titles the Lord ever gave Himself when here on earth was that of Shepherd. It is a name which carries with it the thought of His tenderest care and solicitude for those who belong to Him. It is John's gospel, more than any other, that brings Him before us in that character. In chapter x. He gives the very special features of the true Shepherd in contrast to "the hireling, whose own the sheep are not."

Being described by prophetic utterance as "The Shepherd of Israel," of whom David was the great type as the Shepherd

King, we have in Christ the true Shepherd ; a contrast to all those who had assumed to be in that position for Israel, but who had failed to shepherd the sheep of His pasture. He assures us that He has other sheep that are not of this—the Jewish—fold, and thus He announces that we too are the sheep of His flock, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.

He has told us that He is the Good Shepherd, and fully bears out His own description of such, in that He has given His life for the sheep. As great David's greater Son He has in the depth of His own love delivered us from the mouth of the great Devourer as did David the little lamb in His day. Shall we ever forget the Lord in that character? How precious He has made Himself to be to us, and we give expression to our feelings of love and praise oftentimes thus:—

“ We'll sing of the Shepherd that died
That died for the sake of the flock,
His love to the utmost was tried,
But firmly endured as a rock.”

“ When blood from a victim must flow,
This Shepherd by pity was led
To stand between us and the foe,
And willingly died in our stead.”

It has often been said that Psalm xxiii. is the great Shepherd Psalm simply because it begins “ The Lord is my shepherd,” but I think Psalms xxii., xxiii., and xxiv. are all

Shepherd Psalms. In Psalm xxii. we have the *outward* journey of the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep. In Psalm xxiii. we have the *homeward* journey of the Great Shepherd that bears over rock and waste and wild the sheep He had found. Psalm xxiv. gives us the Chief Shepherd of the sheep landing the sheep home amid a host of others. He goes out alone ; He comes home again as the Lord of Hosts. Thus it is that these three Psalms give us the Shepherd in the yesterday, the to-day and the to-morrow of His love ; all corresponding to the titles that are given Him of the Good, Great and Chief Shepherd of the sheep. It is in death He proves Himself the Good shepherd and in Resurrection He is the Great Shepherd, and when He comes in glory He will come as the Chief Shepherd.

Let us look particularly at His gracious activities as the Great Shepherd of the sheep on the day when He was brought again from the dead, and see how beautifully he fills the description of Himself as it is given in Psalm xxiii.

What a busy day He had on that first day of the week after He had risen from the dead as the Great Shepherd. It had been announced, in Zechariah xiii. 7, that the Shepherd should be smitten and the sheep scattered. Now His first business, and apparently His whole business, that day

was caring for and recovering the sadly scattered sheep, who had lost sight of Him, and who had consequently lost heart. The wolf—the open adversary—had scattered the sheep, but here is the Great Shepherd of the sheep busy from early morn till late at night gathering the scattered remnants of the flock. How well we can see in all this that He is the great Gatherer while the Devil is the great scatterer.

MARY MAGDALENE. This dear woman was evidently the Great Shepherd's first care that morning. *Want* was what truly described her. Without Him the whole word seemed to be in want. What a heart hunger, what a want was hers such as she had never before known. No one would fill the void His death had made for her. It is not for deliverance she is now craving, she had had that, and could never lose it. But it was the Mighty Deliverer she had lost, and the result was a broken-hearted woman !

She is verily a seeking soul, and they that seek find, for had He not said Himself, "Seek and ye shall find." The language of her heart was "One thing have I desired...that will I seek after." He Himself is going to satisfy that longing soul. He is going to appease that heart hunger of hers, and immediately He is found near her. With His own skilful touch of compassion He touched the sore spot at

once and said more than angels had thought of saying. He adds to their question another "Whom seekest thou?" Here is the Great Shepherd fulfilling His mission. "He calleth His own sheep by name." "Jesus saith unto her, Mary!" Suddenly the want in her heart was at an end. Satisfaction, peace and rest are hers. She is at once in green pastures, beside the water of quietness and lying down in rest and peace. Now she can say "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want." Not "there is no want," for there is plenty of it; but in the midst of all the want "I shall not want." *Oh for such a vision of the risen Christ!*

SIMON PETER. The next evidently to have the Shepherd's care was poor, dear, backsliding Peter. "*The Lord is risen and hath appeared unto Simon,*" is the joyful news that runs round the little circle of disciples. Simon? Yes, Simon! Poor unhappy heart-broken Simon must be got ready for the meeting in the evening. He is here as the great Gatherer of the scattered sheep. He is just as ready to confirm his love to a backslider as He is to respond to the love of a devotee.

The last that had been seen of Simon was when he went out of the High Priest's house in a flood of tears. He had been sitting in the seat of the scornful, and standing in the way of sinners and had become a moral coward in the process.

What a meaning to Peter would those words have in Psalm xxiii. "He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness *for His name's sake.*" How well He is justifying His own name as the Great Shepherd of His sheep! And He leads us into such paths as will glorify His name too.

Nothing is said of that interview, but that He had appeared unto Simon. It is not so much what was said as what he saw. We sadly need a revelation of Himself. Note it is the revelation of Himself that restores all these wanderers, and is the means of drawing them together. Lose sight of Him and we soon scatter and turn back. This is what took place with Israel. "*As for this Moses . . . we wot not what is become of him.*" This was the reason for their saying to Aaron, "up, make us gods, which shall go before us." People do not readily go back to the world unless they have made themselves gods. "Little children keep yourselves from idols."

THE TWO GOING TO EMMAUS. A deep shadow is on the spirit of these two. They had buried their hopes in connection with Christ in the garden sepulchre of Joseph the devoted Councillor. They too had lost sight of Jesus. They were verily walking in the valley of the death shade. Death had shadowed their lives, and blasted their hopes as it has done for many since

then, but as yet they knew not the Great Shepherd. He was only that in resurrection and they knew nothing of the triumph that had been witnessed in the early hours of that morning. They had heard it but the whole thing was so unaccountable that they could not believe it. The story of certain women was to them impossible. They are walking in the valley of the shadow of death, reasoning and saddened as they go.

Then was fulfilled the part of the mission of the Great Shepherd "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for *Thou art with me*," for it is written "As they reasoned Jesus Himself drew near" and *went with them*. His rod and His staff comforted them. His rod for *correction* and *direction*, and His staff for *protection*. "Fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" is His correction. He then spread a table before them in the wilderness, anointing their heads with oil, giving them such a sample of the work of the Holy Ghost in His wonderful exposition that their cups ran over, as their hearts burned within them. But you must observe, wonderful as the ministry was, it never altered their course a little bit. They still moved on the way from Jerusalem, where they had been bidden to stay. But it had no doubt prepared them for the next step in the recovery, and that is a fresh revelation of Himself. Ministry may lead to heart burn-

ing but a view of Christ is necessary to move their feet in the right direction, that is back to the place of departure. Their eyes were opened and they recognised Him. He who was supposed to be the Guest became Host, and the giving of thanks for the bread was an eye-opener to them. He went and they returned.

THE GATHERING OF HIS PEOPLE.

No sooner had they been all gathered in one flock than the Great Shepherd is with them, *in the midst of them*. A little foretaste it was, doubtless, of the dwelling in the house of the Lord for ever; while each one would have his own story to tell of the goodness and the mercy that had followed them to that glad moment.

ART CUTTING.

REWARDED OPENLY.

TWICE over in the Sermon on the Mount are recorded the pregnant words, "*Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*" There is a world of meaning enshrined in these ten words.

First God sees in secret. We all believe this, but do we all act as if we did? We often let ourselves go, when no earthly restraining eye is upon us, and forget our Father, who seeth in secret.

If there is one Christian virtue that is wholesome and safe it is *sincerity*—to be

real, true, without veneer, in all places and at all times. This will be so, if we are consciously in the presence of God.

To this end the reverent study of God's Word is most helpful. Have you ever noticed in Hebrews iv, verse 12, where we are told that the Word of God is living and powerful, searching us through and through, that it is followed by verse 13, which passes from the book to the Author, from the Scriptures to God Himself, as if the book and the Author were one and the same, and speaks of all things being "naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." We may deceive and hoodwink our Christian parents, or our Christian brethren, but we cannot hoodwink God. If we are deceitful as between man and man, so much the worse for us as in God's presence, for everything we do is "naked and opened" under His eye.

There are two classes in Matthew vi. 1-8, who get their reward. There is the hypocrite, who gives his alms ostentatiously and publicly, who advertises his piety in prayer by the blare of the trumpet. Our Lord says succinctly and ominously, "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward," a saying twice repeated (vv. 2 and 5).

Then there is the other class. Happy is the man that will do his good deeds

in secret, not letting his left hand know what his right hand doeth, who will enter his closet and pray to his Father in secret. Of such we are told they shall be rewarded openly.

This is a principle that has its application in many ways. There are instances of its working in the Scriptures.

Take Joseph. Think of all the years he glorified God in the weariness, pain and unhealthiness of an Egyptian dungeon. See him rewarded openly, when he became the mighty food controller of Egypt, riding in the second chariot of the land, next to Pharaoh himself in power and rank, and he a young man of only thirty years.

Take Moses, who was content, after having been reared in the palace of Pharaoh, to be in the backside of the desert, tending sheep for forty years. See him rewarded openly as he stands before Pharaoh, and calls for plague after plague on the land that was persecuting God's people.

David is another example. See him in secret slaying the lion and the bear, and God honouring him in public, as in the very sight of the king and the armies of Israel, terrified by the challenge of the mighty giant, he stepped into the breach and with the smooth stone from the brook slew

Goliath, and in time became king over Israel.

Take Saul of Tarsus living in seclusion for three years in Arabia, stepping forth to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, and to make his mark upon the world to this day, though well nigh a score of centuries have rolled by.

We earnestly appeal to young Christians to live a life *in secret* with God. If that is done, the public life will be sweet and straight and honest.

It is reported that a clergyman once asked a theatre manager, if there was a door into the theatre, through which he could pass unobserved. He received a well-merited rebuke, "Sir, there is no door in my theatre through which you can pass unseen by God."

These are days of slackness, increasing worldliness on the part of Christians. Scripture warns us of these days. They tell us of professing Christians "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy iii. 5).

It is almost inconceivable that these professing Christians should be characterized as self-lovers, pleasure lovers more than lovers of God, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, without natural affection, despisers of the good, etc., etc., truly an alarming list, yet so it is.

What are wanted to-day are serious, earnest, true Christians, living a life in secret with God, and the open reward will surely come. Will you, my reader, by the grace of God be one such?

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(1 *Corinthians xv.* 45—*xvi.* 24.)

To be of any profit this article must be read in connection with a Bible, opened at the above passage.

THE first question of verse 32, "How are the dead raised up?" gets a very full answer in verses 45 to 54. In this question the force of "How" seems to be "In what condition?" rather than, "In what way?" or "By what means?" Otherwise there would be no conclusive answer to the question in the chapter. Moreover, if God did condescend to explain in what way or by what process He will raise the dead, we should be no wiser, for the explanation would be utterly beyond us. As it is, we have an answer. In a nutshell it is this—we shall be raised in the image of the heavenly Christ.

In order to understand it we must consider the contrast between the two Adams, the first and the last. The first was made a living soul, as Genesis ii. tells us. The last is of another order entirely. Though as truly Adam (i.e. Man) as the first, He

is a life-giving Spirit. The one, then, is "natural" or "soulish:" the Other, spiritual. We might have expected that the Spiritual would take precedence of the soulish as to time. But it is not so, as verse 46 points out. The first Adam was constituted a living soul by the Divine in-breathing. Consequently he was "soulish," and he possessed a "natural" or "soulish" body (verse 44) which was "earthy." He has reproduced himself in abundance; but all who spring from him are earthy also, as being of his order (verse 48).

The last Adam stands in sharp contrast to the first. Though truly Man, being a life-giving Spirit He is God. He is the "Lord from heaven." He is not only Man, however—the "Second Man" as stated in verse 47—He is Adam, i.e. He is the Progenitor and Head of a race. And He is the last Adam, for He is never to be succeeded by another head. In Him God has reached perfection and finality. God be praised for this! We are amongst the heavenly ones who are of His order.

Let it be emphasized in our minds that He is not only "last Adam," but also "the second Man." This latter expression shows that between Adam and Christ no man is counted. Cain was not the second man. He was only Adam reproduced in the first.

generation. So were all men—only Adam reproduced in their various generations. But when Christ was born, He was *not* Adam reproduced. By the “virgin birth,” under the action of the Holy Ghost, the entail was broken, a new and original Man appeared worthy of being called “the second Man.” He, in His turn becoming the Head of a new race, He stands forth as “the last Adam.”

Now we all started as children of the earthy Adam, bearing his image. Brought to Christ, we have become subjects of the Divine workmanship, and find ourselves transferred from the earthy to the heavenly. That transference however has not so far touched our bodies, for we still bear the image of the earthy, and consequently our bodies decay and are subject to death and the grave. In resurrection we are to bear “the image of the heavenly.” We are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, not only as to our characters, but as to our very bodies. Most glorious fact! How are the dead raised up? In a condition of perfection and glory such as that!

Do not let us overlook the fact that, though we must wait for the realization of this perfection, we have not to wait in order to be under the headship of the last Adam, to be linked up with the second Man. The end of verse 48 does not say, “such are they also that *shall be* heavenly”—but “that

are heavenly.” We *ARE* heavenly. Is not that wonderful! Does it seem too wonderful? Are we inclined to shrink from it? Do we feel that its implications are very sweeping and make demands upon us which we cannot face? Well, let us beware of paring down the truth to suit our low walk. Behaviour which is low, and carnal, and earthly, and worldly, does not befit those who *are* heavenly.

With verse 50 the Apostle passes on to speak of the great moment when the change from things earthy to things heavenly shall reach our bodies. We are going to inherit the kingdom on its heavenly side and find ourselves in a scene of absolute incorruptibility. We cannot enter there in our present “flesh and blood” condition, to which corruption is attached.

“Behold I show you a mystery,” he says. These words indicate that he is going to announce something hitherto unrevealed. That there would be a resurrection of the dead, that the Lord was coming, they knew. They had not hitherto known that when the Lord came He would raise the dead saints in a condition of glorious incorruptibility and change the living saints into a like condition. It seems that saints of Old Testament days conceived of resurrection as being a raising up of the dead to a glorified life on earth. It is certain that

they had no knowledge as yet of the resurrection *out from among* the dead, which believers are to enjoy at the coming of the Lord. Until the truth of the heavenly calling of saints, of the calling out of the church, came to light, the moment had not come for the full truth as to resurrection to be made known. This orderly progress of doctrine can be noted all through the New Testament.

Now it is plainly revealed. We shall not all "sleep" (i.e. die) but we shall all be changed, whether alive or dead at the moment when the Lord comes *for* His saints. The change will involve the swallowing up of all that is mortal or corruptible about us, in life and in victory. We shall "all be changed," you notice, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—not in many, or at least several, different moments, as would be the case if by a partial rapture, or series of partial raptures, the church is destined to enter into its glory.

The mighty change will be wrought instantaneously by the power of God, at the "last trump." In verse 29 believers were considered as soldiers stepping into the ranks by baptism to take the places of their fallen comrades. In verse 52 we see them all—whether in the ranks still, or fallen out of them by death—put, in one

moment at the last trump, beyond death and corruption. Their warfare will be over. They will never need another trumpet blast for ever!

As regards ourselves, the saying of Isaiah xxv. 8 will be fulfilled when we are changed bodily into a condition of immortality and incorruptibility. This illustrates what we have just said. The Old Testament has in view the victorious resurrection power of God exercised on earth. Our Scripture brings to light a greater fulness of meaning, lying dormant in the verse until the Gospel day was reached. When the saints reach the image of the heavenly, death will be swallowed up in a victory that none can deny. Our Scripture, you notice, does not speak of the "rapture," the catching up of the saints. For that we must turn to 1 Thessalonians iv.

The sense of how great the victory of that day will be, moves the Apostle to an outburst of exultation. He flings a triumphant challenge to death and "the grave"—or more strictly "*hades*." The fact is, the victory is already ours. It has been won in the resurrection of Christ which has been so fully established in this chapter. The resurrection of saints is merely the outworking of *that* victory, and we can treat it as being as good as done. The victory is ours to-day—thanks be to God!

With what tremendous force does the closing exhortation of the chapter come! "*Therefore*—." Behind that word lies all the weight of the glorious truth established in the earlier 57 verses of the chapter. Having entertained doubts as to the truth of resurrection they must have become unsteady, easily moved, slack, and inclined to subscribe to the motto, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die."

Resurrection however is a glorious certainty. Christ is risen, and we, being of His heavenly order, are to join Him in His heavenly likeness. These things being so, THEREFORE an unmoveable stability becomes us. Instead of fooling away our time eating and drinking, we are to abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that nothing really done for Him shall be lost. All shall be found again as fruit in the resurrection world.

Are we living in the light of that resurrection world? We may recite the creed correctly, and have resurrection as a prominent item in it; but if our souls really have it full in view, we shall be diligent and untiring workers in the service of the Lord, as He may be pleased to direct us.

The last direction of the Apostle in this epistle concerns the special collection being made at that time for poor saints in Judæa. To-day in many religious circles money is

so often the *first* topic. Here it is the *last*. Still it comes in, and instructions of abiding value are given. In verse 2 *systematic* giving is advocated as opposed to haphazard. *Proportionate* giving is also what God expects—in proportion to the prosperity which God Himself may have given. In Jewish days God fixed the proportion at one tenth. He has not fixed any proportion for us who are under grace; but depend upon it we shall hear something pretty serious at the judgment seat if we fall below the standard set by the law. If all believers practised giving which is both proportionate and systematic, there would be no money problem in connection with the work of the Lord. The chapter division perhaps leads us to miss the connection between xv. 58, and xvi. 2.

The closing messages of a personal sort begin after this, and verses 5—12 are illuminating if compared with the history of Acts xviii. 24—xx. 6. Paul wrote from Ephesus while in the midst of a great work with many adversaries, whose opposition culminated in the great riot in the theatre. Apollos had preceded Paul at Ephesus, and then after being further instructed in the way of the Lord through Aquila and Priscilla, he visited Achaia, where Corinth was situated. Paul had come to Ephesus while Apollos was at Corinth, but by this time Apollos had passed on from Corinth. Meanwhile Paul contemplated passing

through Macedonia and visiting Corinth on the way. This visit to Macedonia was accomplished, as Acts xx. records, though his second epistle shows that his visit to Corinth was delayed. He had begged Apollos to pay them another visit, but without avail.

Observe from this that if God raises up a servant he is responsible only to the Lord who commissions him, and not even to an apostle. Paul assumed no jurisdiction over Apollos. The fact that he begged him *to go* shows that he entertained no feelings of jealousy towards this fresh man of gift who had suddenly appeared. The fact that Apollos felt he should *not* go to Corinth at this juncture probably indicates that he on his part had no wish to push himself forward lest he should fan the flames of that partisanship and rivalry which would say, "I am of Apollos."

The Corinthians had been unwatchful. They had been vacillating as to the faith of the Gospel. They had behaved more like weak children than strong men. Hence the graphic exhortations of verse 13. We must keep those exhortations connected with verse 14, or we may go astray. All our things are to be done "with charity," or "in love." Otherwise our manliness and our strength will degenerate into something fleshly and almost brutal. Christian manliness and strength exercised *in love* is according to God and very powerful.

Verse 15 gives an interesting side-light on service. The household of Stephanas had "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," or, "devoted themselves to the saints for service." They laid themselves out to serve the saints realizing that thus they would be serving Christ in His members on earth. There might be a lot that was commonplace and humdrum in such work, but it was rendered to Christ. Such service is not very common, we fear. It receives mention and commendation in verse 16. It exemplifies, we judge, what is meant by "helps," mentioned amongst the gifts in chapter xii. 28.

The three closing verses are a blending of solemnity and grace. The Corinthians were prominent as to gift but deficient as to love. Hence verse 22. Many of us are like the Corinthians. Let us take it to heart that it is love that counts. Not to love the Lord Jesus means a curse at His coming, when all profession will be tested. Maran-atha is not Greek but Aramaic, signifying "The Lord is coming."

For those who do love the Lord there is a full supply of grace from Him, and the outflow of love from those who are His, as seen in the affectionate closing salutation of the Apostle Paul.