"Our Calling"

VOLUME II

"Ye are called in one hope of your calling."
(Eph. iv. 4.)

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Our Calling

The Love of Christ.

IT is a love *personal* to each, *common* to all, and *special* to the church.

Each of us can say, "He loved me;" all of us can say, "He loved us;" the whole company can add, "Christ loved the church." It is minute, constant, tender, faithful, holy. It may comfort, or it may rebuke; it may test, or it may win; but it is an "everlasting love," and one which "passeth knowledge."

'Tis the treasure I've found in His love,
That has made me a pilgrim below,

is the language of one who truly knows it. He finds in that wonderful love such a power, such an attraction, that his heart is weaned from that which once held it. It has a transforming effect on his thoughts, words, and ways. It constrains him—is the mighty inner motive—to live no longer to himself, but to Him who died for him and rose again. It detaches from old habits, severs old links; it is a power altogether new, but unspeakably blessed. It remains, because it is unchanging. Other arms may fail, other supports give way; this abides. Other hearts may become estranged, other loves grow cold, but the love of Christ is ever the same. Whom He loves He loves to the end—unremittingly.

The object of that love may possibly prove himself unworthy of it. He may fail, he may stumble; he may disappoint, he may grieve; but notwithstanding Christ's love is unchanged. It may take the form of rebuke and chastening, but is faithful to the end. When the cloud is passed the sun is seen shining in its undimmed brilliancy. Thank God for a "Friend who loveth at all times," and this we have in our precious, ever-blessed Jesus.

Heavenly glory is His to-day. He fills the highest station; He who, as the Word, became flesh and dwelt amongst us—seen, handled, contemplated, revealing the Father, doing good, speaking as none other—God manifest in flesh, seen of angels, full of pity, healing the sick, receiving sinners, absolutely holy, binding the strong man and spoiling his

goods, soul-troubled in Gethsemane, bearing the curse on the tree, made sin, laid in the sepulchre, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, seated as Man at the right hand of God, coming again to receive all His own to be for ever with Himself, so that their joy shall be full and eternal.

Son of Man, Son of God, glorious Firstborn from the dead, our Redeemer, Saviour, righteousness, life, our all! How we adore and bless Thee! How we long to see Thee! How we await the earliest beams of the morning star, patiently but longingly, to find ourselves, the whole loved and blood-bought and cherished family of God, caught up from scenes of sorrow and strife and growing confusion to the Father's house, our everlasting home!

Well could the Apostle speak of the surpassingness "of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. III.). Beside this all other knowledge is beggared, all gain is but loss.

Beloved, while resting on His work in its eternal stability, may we set our hearts daily to acquire a deepening acquaintance with the love of Christ: it is a

Love that no tongue can teach.
Love that no thought can reach.

It is a love that passeth knowledge, yet we are to know it in all its wondrous fullness. J. WILSON SMITH.

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THE first element of the heavenly *calling* is attachment to a divine Person, the Lover of our souls. Heaven became a new place to the disciples when they saw Jesus go up; He stole their hearts and carried them off there. It is the secret of love to lead the heart captive; the affections lay hold of an object, and just go where that object goes.

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Is He known to you as the One who is occupied with all your concerns? Paul knew he was borne on the heart of Christ, he had tasted His love. He could say, "Did He not promise He would go with me to Rome? Did not He give me a word, when all were in despair, to make the people in the ship know that my God was everything to me?" Paul found the love of Christ a personal thing: "The Son of God loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*."

Loved to the End.

JOHN XII. is the brightest moment in our Lord's earthly pathway. Hosannas filled the air, garments were strewn, palm branches waved, joy and gladness filled every heart, Zion rejoiced, the daughter of Jerusalem shouted, the multitude of the disciples praised God with a loud voice, ascribing glory to the King, "*just* and having salvation; *lowly*, and riding upon an ass" (Zech. IX. 9). Even the Pharisees say among themselves, "Behold, the world is gone after Him!"

In chapter XI. He had been declared *Son of God* with power by resurrection; in chapter XII. He is owned *King of Israel;* and to complete the picture the Gentiles desire to see Jesus. His predicted glories were fulfilled; He had nothing to do but take the sceptre, sit on the throne, and govern in righteousness; He was the Son of God, the rightful Heir, the true King, the Head of the Gentiles. Why then did He not take to Himself His great power and reign?

A little word of five letters explains. Had He taken His royal rights, claimed His kingdom glories then, He would have been "*alone*." Unless the corn of wheat fell into the ground and died, no bride could share His affections, no joint heirs His throne, no brethren acknowledge Him as Firstborn, no saved company own Him as Captain, no priestly family draw near in the holiest, no praises ascend in the midst of the church now, or the great congregation at a later day.

He could have gone out free, but He was the true Hebrew servant; the language of His heart was, "I love My Master, My wife, and My children; I will not go out free." Behold Him then turning from the rays of brightness and glory which shone round His steps at that moment, in order to gaze into the deep, dark depths of the cold, silent grave.

Linger, my soul, over the wonder of wonders, the Creator of the ends of the earth *troubled in soul*, as He anticipates Calvary with its gloom, its darkness, its anguish, its forsaking. When, stricken, smitten, afflicted, He bore our judgment, endured the hiding of God's face, and was cut off out

of the land of the living, no marvel that, perfect Man as he was, He cried, " Father, save Me from this hour ! "

Now mark what follows : " But for this cause came I unto this hour ; *Father, glorify Thy name.*"

What love, what obedience, what devotedness to God His Father, for how else could the many sons be brought to glory, the counsels and purposes fulfilled as to the adopted family ? What love to us, to suffer, bleed, and die, turn away from a crown, a throne, a kingdom, and be made a curse, endure the shame and suffering of the cross, then lie in a borrowed grave ; this is love indeed, love divine, all praise excelling.

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He is no longer in death ; the sealed tomb, the great stone, the Roman guard, the combined hosts of hell could not keep Him there ; He rose a mighty, triumphant victor over sin, Satan, death. Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, has ascended Jehovah's throne, is crowned with glory and honour, and has a name outshining every other. At the name of Jesus, earthly, heavenly, infernal beings shall bow.

What of His love ? Is it still the same ? For answer read John XIII. 1 : " Having loved *His own* which were in the world, He loved them *unto the end.*"

" *His own !* " Dwell upon those words. Think of the price paid, the ransom given, the wealth expended to make thee " His own." Rich, for your sakes He became poor, gave up His glorious seat in the heavens, vacated the throne of the Eternal, left the glories above, sold all He had to purchase, redeem, win, and make thee " His own."

Is the love which brought Him down from those heights of glory lessened ? Nay, He loves to " the end "—an end without an end ; with girded loins He patiently, graciously, carries on His service, He is a bondman for ever. As our Priest He succours, sustains, sympathizes : not a sorrow He does not enter into, not a woe He does not feel, not a perplexity in our path He is not deeply, intensely, interested in.

He removes the pressure on our side, ministers mercy and grace in order to free us to enter the sanctuary in spirit, where as a great Priest over God's house He delights to associate us with Himself and lead our praises.

As our Advocate He watches every step of our pathway—if we should sin He immediately takes it up—ever lives to make intercession, meets the Accuser, rebuts every charge; for has He not anticipated all, and at the cross made a full answer to God's glory, so that in faithfulness and justice to Him (on our confession) we are forgiven, cleansed, restored to the joys of communion with the Father?

No other love is so patient, so forbearing, so gracious; our waywardness would have estranged all others, but *He loves to the end.* Here patience has her perfect work. Here is love that suffereth long and is kind, bears with, cares for its object; it is a love which has set us in the Father's presence, loved as He is loved, blessed as He is blessed, bringing us into all He possesses. Chapter XIV. tells us He will never be fully satisfied until outside the world, and inside the Father's house, we shall drink in that love in all its fullness; for where He is, there He waits to brings us. Meantime it flows from Him as a fountain, bubbling over in a stream which is inexhaustible; it passeth knowing, is boundless and eternal, going on—on—on to an end without any end, delighting in having those for whom He died with Him, and like Him, for ever and ever, to gaze upon His face, hear His voice, and know in fuller, richer measure, unhindered by flesh and sense, that love which turned from the glories of an earthly kingdom and endured the sorrows of Calvary for us.

H. NUNNERLEY.

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IT is a blessed fact that there is a Man in heaven in the highest possible glory on the throne of God; and that Man has a heart to enter into everything that concerns His people down here, this risen Son of Man is occupied with a suffering people down here in all the circumstances they have to pass through. When the heart is chilled, yearning for a little warmth, how sweet to turn to the Lord Jesus and feel the warmth of His love! We are in the wilderness now, and we count by days and weeks, and the time seems long; but One up there looks upon you and says, "Surely I come quickly." Having loved His own, He loves to the end.

Ruth.

THIS lovely Old Testament story illustrates the decision of heart which first *separates* from the world, then *appreciates*, *appropriates*, and *participates* in the affections and wealth of the Redeemer Bridegroom.

Naomi, widowed and desolate, with sorrow and death round her, heard that God had visited His people in giving them bread. The goodness of God touched her heart, and she resolved to separate from Moab and its idolatry. Her decision becomes a test to Ruth and Orpah, her daughters-in-law; the result was, Ruth decided to accompany her mother-in-law, whilst Orpah turned back to her gods.

After she had gone Ruth was again tested, with a more severe test. I suppose all who separate from the world and seek to follow Christ have had a testing at one time or another; testing must come, and often from a quarter least expected. Who would have thought that Naomi would have proposed to Ruth that as her sister had already gone back to her country and her gods, she also should return? Her answer to the test is, "*Thy* people shall be *my* people, and *thy God my God*" (Ruth I. 16). Henceforth they journey together to Bethlehem, the "house of bread," arriving at the beginning of the barley harvest. You will recollect that at the commencement of the harvest the first sheaf had to be presented to the Lord, waved as a burnt offering of sweet savour. So Ruth arrived at the moment when Christ, in figure, was presented to God as the risen One. Thus blessing can flow out, even to a Gentile, on the ground of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter II. tells us her hap was to light upon part of the field that belonged to Boaz. Do you know what was behind that "hap?" The purpose of God was behind it. This woman, unlikely as it seemed to be, was to be brought into the line from which the blessed Lord Himself sprang. Her name is in the genealogy in Matthew; step by step she is brought closer and closer into contact with Boaz, a "mighty man of wealth."

Who was such a mighty man of wealth as our blessed Lord Jesus Christ? Though He was rich, yet for *your* sakes He became poor. How often we quote that verse in this way: "For *our* sakes became poor, that *we* through His poverty might be *made* rich."

What is the difference? The Apostle was writing to the heathen, telling them of the grace that had come to them in their distance and alienation from God; it is the grace of the mighty man of wealth, reaching all over the barriers to those who had no claim upon Him, stretching even to us Gentiles who were "far off." "For *your* sakes He became poor, that *ye* through His poverty might *be rich.*"

Ruth got more and more into the company of Boaz, receiving at last the parched corn from his hand. It says, she did eat, and was sufficed, and she "left." I used to think that meant she did eat, and was sufficed, and then got up and went away. Ah no! "She did eat, and was sufficed, and reserved some" (N.T.). Can we ever exhaust the glory of the grace of Christ, as the parched corn, under the fire of God's judgment, now the food of His people? Ruth's need was sufficed, she took what was over and gave to a weary heart at home; she carried that which had satisfied her own need to meet the need of another—go thou and do likewise.

Ruth valued the blessings she got from Boaz, just as we may delight in the mercies and the blessings we receive from our Boaz; He has blessed us with untold blessings. Is that all He wants? No. *Appreciation* must be followed by *appropriation.* If He has given us untold blessings, if He has ministered from His own fullness, is it not to lead us to appropriate Himself? Here was Boaz. He had been giving to Ruth, this stranger, one thing after another; but when Naomi said, Is not Boaz of our kindred? she discovered that she belonged to the family of this wonderful person and had a claim on him. I, Ruth in effect says—I must appropriate the person through whom blessing has come to me; I am not content with what he can give me, but I must have *himself.*

May the Lord awaken in our hearts a desire to have the Blesser as well as the blessing! We have many blessings

in Romans v. *through* our Lord Jesus Christ. "Peace with God," "joy in God," blessing after blessing is unfolded to the gaze of our souls; but in chapter VII. we read that we are married to Another, even to Him who was raised from the dead. God has in view our union with the risen Christ in glory. But how do we reach it in our experience? I know there are difficulties in the way. There were difficulties in the way with Ruth; up to this time she had been burdened with care and the sorrows of widowhood, but the moment had come when she was to regard herself as a widow no longer. Her widow's attire is laid aside as she responds to Naomi's bidding, "*Wash thee*," "*anoint thee*," and put "*raiment on thee.*"

The first time these words "Wash thee" came home to my soul they pulled me up. I had been brought to God through the death of Christ, but there came a moment when I woke up to the fact that there is cleansing of a practical nature needful. The death of Christ has met all my judgment as a guilty, fallen child of Adam. His blood has cleared me entirely in God's sight; but there are things in connection with the daily pathway that need to come under the cleansing—the moral cleansing—of the death of Christ. "Wash thee"—apply His death to thy ways!

Romans VI. used to puzzle me immensely. How could I reckon myself dead unto sin? I used to try to reckon myself dead unto sin, and the more I tried to reckon myself dead to sin, the more alive to sin I felt. A servant of God—now gone to his rest—suggested to me a better way. He said, "Why don't you take it up on the line of reckoning yourself *alive unto God?* Let God fill the vision of your soul. Hold yourself as living unto God, and in the measure in which you reckon yourself living unto God in the light of a risen Christ, you will reckon yourself dead to sin."

"Anoint Thee."

You cannot do it in your own power. We need the power of the Holy Spirit, but if there is one thing the blessed Spirit of God delights to do, it is to direct the hearts of God's people to Christ. The servant had only one way to take when conducting Rebekah across the wilderness—his way

was straight to Isaac; and if we allow ourselves to be in the hand of the blessed Spirit of God, He will conduct us to that blessed Person our heart is longing to know.

Put "Thy Raiment on Thee."

What raiment is this? Ruth had put off the raiment of widowhood. She is no longer in heart going back over the old days and saying, "How good they were." She says, There is something far better on beyond, and there is *some one* far better to whom I am going. Her heart captivated, clothed in festal robes suited to the occasion, she goes just as Rebekah went to Isaac arrayed in the best robe sent from him as a love gift.

Ah, does not this speak to your heart and mine? How can I come? the soul might say. I feel my utter unworthiness, and yet I long to claim Christ, to have Him as the absorbing object of my heart's affections. Hush! do not say that any more. What are you? You are of His kindred, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, accepted in the Beloved, under God's eye in all the favour and love that rests upon His beloved Son; united to Him, one with Him; sharing His desires, knowing the joy of His heart in you; clothed in divine righteousness, having on the best robe.

Do you know what the fourth chapter is? It is union consummated, the crowning point of all "PARTICIPATION" in the wealth and affection of the Bridegroom in the sight of all, just as it will be at the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. XIX.) when the church is displayed with Christ in glory.

That which follows the union of Christ and the church will be the full restoration of Israel to blessing and joy in connection with this earth. Christ's bride shall have the heavenly portion, share with Him heavenly joys, sit on His throne; but the poor, weary nation of Israel shall also be brought into blessing, so that those around will be able to say, "A child is born unto Israel." There will be restoration for God's earthly people, as well as blessing in that heavenly scene of glory, where Bridegroom and bride shall share together the Father's house and the delight of the Father's heart.

JOHN MOODY.

The Christian Calling.

"LAY hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also *called*" (1 Tim. VI. 12).

Here, as elsewhere in Paul's epistles, eternal life is looked at as future, as something which lies at the ultimate goal of Christianity, that into which we shall be brought. There is no conflict between this and the view of it presented to us in the writings of the Apostle John; in these, eternal life is brought to us in this world. The Son of Man is "lifted up" that we may possess it. The Spirit of God is given that the power of life may be in us (John IV.). The voice of the Son of God awakens us that we may live (John V.), and He Himself, incarnate, dead and risen, is the food which sustains that life (John VI.). John repeatedly states that *he that believes has it.* He unfolds the marvellous fact that eternal life in the person of the Son has stooped from its own blissful sphere to become available for perishing men, and the known and enjoyed portion of *all who believe.*

Paul, on the contrary, regards eternal life as the goal to which we shall be brought (Rom. II. 7). It is not with him the down-stooping of divine grace bringing eternal life to us, but the uprising of the same grace carrying us into eternal life in its own home. Yet he recognizes that eternal life is ours now, hence he says to Timothy, "Lay hold on eternal life," *i.e.* make it your own as a matter of enjoyment by laying hold of those things in which, in a practical way, it consists. To these things Timothy and every other Christian are called.

. . . . . .

Our businesses, our family and domestic circumstances, and such-like matters are no part of God's *calling;* they are most distinctly part of His gracious appointment for us in connection with His governmental ways, but His *calling* carries us outside the realm of natural life into that of spiritual life, and fixes the choicest energies of our souls on those unseen, eternal realities which centre in Christ—the

knowledge of God's love, His will, His counsels, His purposes, His power,—and above all, of Christ Himself personally.

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Turn now to 1 Peter II. 20, 21. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye *called*: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."

The call of God for us is to a life of well-doing in subjection to His will, and not a life of self-pleasing. It involves suffering in various forms, including suffering at the hands of man, because of doing well.

Who is there that knows his own heart but will admit that suffering for well-doing is very hard to bear? But it is what we must expect, although we may get but little of it nowadays. Possibly that is one reason why God in His holy government allows so much suffering of other kinds, not directly inflicted by man, to come upon His people.

Be that as it may, suffering is clearly going to characterize our path upon earth.

There is a disposition with every one of us to assume that Christianity means everything going smoothly with us here upon earth; with the result that we get terribly upset and disheartened when trouble comes. Suffering, whether coming from the world without, as in the days of primitive Christianity, or from the church within, as is more common in these days, should not surprise us.

May we have grace to take it patiently and turn our hearts while under it to the bright realms of glory to which we are called. F. B. HOLE.

. . . . . .

NOT a sparrow falls to the ground, not a flower blossoms without the Father. As sorrows turn up, as thorns and briars come in our path, how good to know the Father is in it all. We are to pass on quietly, without care, knowing that every detail of life is watched by a Father's eye.

Our warrant for casting all our care upon Him is the word that assures us He cares for us.

Yield Yourselves.

WE are to learn not only that the death of Jesus is the grave of our sins, but also of our sinful selves. God has judged and set us aside in every shape and form, and we are to take His side against ourselves, and be abstainers from every evil thing. Buried by baptism into death, God sets us up in the One who is risen, puts the Holy Ghost within us, and starts us to walk through this world in newness of life. We start on the heavenly road, with the Spirit of God within us, and nothing before us but God, on the resurrection side of death. The blessed Lord when risen left sin, death, the devil's power, the judgment of God, behind; He had nothing but God before Him. Now reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. That is how Romans presents Christian walk in its earliest stages, not as some great attainment, but bound up with the great foundations of the Christian faith. Then we are told to yield ourselves unto God (Rom. VI. 13). This word has the force of a completed act. A moment comes in your history when, as a Christian, you *yield yourself to God* and start on the heavenly road. We also read: "Neither *yield* ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin." This word has not the force of a completed act, but a continuous one; it means you are to *live on as you started.*

How often have you broken down? Whilst we do not excuse ourselves, there is a resource for those who fail. We have an Advocate at God's right hand, Jesus Christ the righteous; but the Christian's life is not to be one of constant failure, but of victory over sin and self. This will be brought about as you are taken up with Christ, and yield yourself continuously to God just as you did when you started on the heavenly road. T. OLIVER.

. . . . . .

Do you know Christ in heaven with all the feelings and thoughts of a *man*, with all the glory and beauty of *God?* In that face of glory and beauty is there nothing that addresses itself to your heart?

Paul's Letter to Philippi.

THIS epistle has a joyous ring in striking contrast to the circumstances of the writer. Paul at that time was a prisoner in Rome, but he had made the Valley of Baca a well. Joy, instead of despair, filled his heart; knowing Christ as the satisfying portion of his soul, he was able to minister to others. He drank deeply into the Spirit of Christ, hence he had little regard for his own circumstances, but was greatly concerned for the welfare of the saints.

Paul's great desire for these Philippians was their *unity*, that they might "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1. 27).

Many schemes are now afloat to bring about the unity of Christendom; there is a desire to remove barriers which divide Christians; but it is not mere outward unity that Paul has in view, it is a unity dependent on and produced by the *moral condition of the units*.

In Pentecostal days saints were truly united, but when spirituality declined and selfishness crept into the church, murmuring took the place of joy, leaders were made heads of parties, and divisions resulted.

Unity is produced by saints *individually* getting back to Christ, drinking into His Spirit, having the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

We need more of the grace which brought Christ down from the throne to the cross, and the lowly spirit which marked Him as a Man here. What we *say* and what we *do* is important, but this flows from what we *are*, so that the spirit of our minds is the chief thing. Are we set on following Christ? He was the meek and lowly One, His path shows us the more excellent way of love; and it is love that binds our hearts together.

If we contemplate the *unselfishness* of Christ, set forth in His lonely pathway, His sufferings and death, we shall find ourselves in the presence of a MORAL GLORY which bows our hearts at His feet. As we feed upon His excellencies and perfections, the Spirit of Christ will produce the

same moral features in ourselves when He becomes the undivided object of our hearts.

Saul, the self-righteous Pharisee, who imagined that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, had his whole life changed by the sight of that Blessed One who spoke to him from heaven. The rays of that glory, which felled him to the earth, revealed to Paul a risen Saviour who loved and gave Himself for him.

We have not actually seen the face of the Lord, like Paul, but we behold Him by faith, and as we gaze we are changed into the same image. Gazing thus, we take character from Christ and become assimilated in mind and purpose.

Spiritual attainments differ; there are babes, young men, and fathers in the household of faith, but if Christ is the object of each heart, there will be no discord in the Christian circle. All will be of the same mind in the Lord, and the God of peace will be with us.

This is the *ideal* state, the true standard as the Lord would have it. How far the actual condition of the church is removed from the ideal is manifest to all who have eyes to see! If we have hearts to feel we shall deplore the divided state of the assembly and perhaps we shall seek to alter it. Many have tried their hand, only to reap disappointment and failure. Why? Through not seeing that the only way to get others right is to *get right ourselves.* Only then we shall be able to influence others in the right direction. Paul could exhort the Philippians to follow him because he himself was following Christ.

The Lord give us grace to listen to his exhortations, and to walk after his example. There are yet, we trust, a few Timothys, like-minded with Paul, who "naturally care" for the interests of Christ, and who seek no reputation for themselves. Such men are happy, although they have their share of human sorrow. Timothy suffered in his health. Epaphroditus was nigh unto death; Paul grieved over his sickness; added to this, service for a rejected Christ involved suffering, not only from the world, but from false brethren; nevertheless, Paul's joy was in the Lord, outside all the circumstances, and from the heart of a Roman prison he bids us again and again to rejoice in the Lord.

To complete his joy in the assembly, he urges them to be of one accord, of one mind. To produce this end was one object of his Epistle to the Philippians. Hence he sets before them Christ as their life, pattern, object, and power. Only as we come under His benign influence are we delivered from selfishness and all that makes for division. May the Holy Spirit thus bring Christ before us, so that He may be formed morally in each one. Then shall we realize the power which supports above all earthly pressure, gives joy in adversity, and binds the hearts of Christians together in the " bond of perfectness."

W. TAYLOR.

Himself.

MAY He Himself be more personally with and before us; a *nearer* and *more real* object than ever!

Truth that gives *thoughts* is not fully the right thing; but truth that gives *Himself*—that is the thing.

Jesus once here—now in the heavens—again to be here and with us for ever—the *same* Jesus throughout—known for eternity as He was known in His track through the cities and villages of Israel—this is the mystery that gives us *Himself*. And it is the business of *faith* to reach *Himself*. The centurion pierced the cloud, the *thick* cloud of His humiliation, and got at the *divine* glories, which lay the other side of it, or under it. The poor sinner of the city pierced the cloud, the *dark* cloud, of her own sin and misery, and got at the *divine love* that could heal it all. Faith may thus find various excellencies in Him, but it is *Himself* it reaches.

Faith sits and sings—

> All human beauties, all divine,
> In my Beloved meet and shine.

Let not this evangelic age give you the *work* of Christ alone. It tends that way. Without His work, I know, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work turn you from personal acquaintance with Himself.

J. G. BELLETT.

The Way of God in a Day of Ruin.

IN former papers we have seen that man, in responsibility, has invariably failed; the present dispensation, in which we live, demonstrating this as completely as every other.

2 Timothy indicates the causes of this failure. In Asia were situated those favoured assemblies, including Ephesus, that enjoyed the richest unfolding of the truth of the church. But now these very churches had turned from Paul, and in so doing, had really turned from the great truth of the mystery revealed to him.

The gospel also was neglected. From the eighth verse we learn that the gospel is in affliction, because Paul, the great herald, is a prisoner forsaken of all (2 Tim. IV. 16). In thus forsaking Paul, the believers very clearly indicated that they but lightly esteemed the gospel, and were not prepared to suffer for the gospel that he preached. Time was when those who received the gospel "endured a great fight of afflictions"—had compassion of Paul in his bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods (Heb. X. 32–34). But the freshness of those early days had passed away and the gospel was neglected by the professing church.

Alas, though the gospel is still preached by faithful individuals, yet it has ever since been in affliction, and is increasingly neglected by the mass of professing Christians. The loss of the truth of the church and the neglect of the gospel are accompanied by *false doctrine* working like a gangrene among the professing people of God (II. 16–18).

Paul foresees that this would increase unto more ungodliness, and bad doctrine be followed by *bad practice.* As surely as effect follows cause, so surely have bad doctrine and bad practice followed the neglect of the gospel and the loss of the truth of the church; and we find ourselves in the last days spoken of by Paul, in which men retain the form of godliness but deny the power thereof; when seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; when the mass of professing Christians will not endure sound doctrine, but, turning away from the truth, are turned unto fables.

What then is the path marked out in the midst of the ruin and evil? Must we quietly acquiesce in that which we cannot remedy? Far from it. The failure of the church *corporately* does not remove *individual* responsibility. Therefore, while the individual cannot, and is not responsible, to restore the church to its pristine condition, he is still responsible to be right himself. God, in His goodness, has given most definite directions for a godly individual to get right, and *keep right*, in the midst of the perilous times of the last days.

These directions can be briefly summed up in three exhortations :—

1st. " Depart from iniquity " (II. 19).

2nd. " Flee also youthful lusts " (II. 22).

3rd. " Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart " (II. 22).

Note that separation from evil is incumbent upon all that name the name of the Lord (II. 19). We must not connect the profession of that holy name with evil doctrine or practice.

On the one hand there may be those who are outwardly blameless in conduct, but who hold doctrines destructive of Christianity. We are responsible to separate from such, in order to be fit for the Master's use. The golden vessels in a great house defiled by contact with dirty vessels are not fit for the Master's use.

On the other hand there are those who have a form of godliness—are correct as to doctrine, yet in practice deny Christianity. " From such " the godly are to " turn away " (III. 1–5).

We do well to give heed to this clear and definite instruction as to separation from those holding bad doctrine and those indulging in bad practices. Alas! there are those who would condone false doctrine on the plea of the apparently blameless life of the one holding evil doctrine, and on the other hand there are those who condone bad practice on the plea that the persons are sound and orthodox in doctrine. As to the last we may quote the words of another: " Christians will often find themselves in strange situations who *disregarded actual evil on the*

assumption that the system which produces it is theoretically correct: for in this manner there may be no limit to the measure of practical wickedness which will be tolerated, while conscience satisfies itself on the plea of an abstract excellence which may turn out to be a mere shadow or worse" (*J.N.D.*).

But separation from evil is not enough. It must be accompanied with the most rigid self-judgment, hence the importance of the exhortation "Flee also youthful lusts." This involves self-judgment with the consequent fleeing from all the varied lusts which youth, in the strength of its passions, would naturally pursue. It is natural to fallen nature to lust after everything which gratifies the flesh and exalts self. So that without self-judgment the fact of separation would only become an occasion to exalt self and lead to the Pharisaical position of those who say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." Such, says Jehovah, "are a smoke in My nose, a fire that burneth all the day" (Isaiah LXV. 5).

HAMILTON SMITH.

(*To be continued.*)

Growth in Grace.

ALL the graces of the Spirit were fully, perfectly manifested in Christ when here. The Christian has the *same* spirit, and the Apostle Peter (2 Peter I. 2–14) exhorts us all to diligence, in order to the unfolding and display of these graces; we are to be like the rosebud, growing and expanding into the full-blown rose. Have—says he—in your faith virtue; in virtue knowledge; in knowledge temperance; in temperance endurance; in endurance godliness; in godliness brotherly love; in brotherly love love.

The rosebud at first discloses two petals; then as it grows and unfolds other petals are displayed, enlarging as inner petals are added; these when fully developed give us a full-blown rose; a lovely picture of a Christian manifesting the virtues of temperance, patience, godliness; love the centre, faith encircling the whole, as the effect of growing in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

JOHN GASKIN.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER III.

Q. Why does Paul speak of himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles?

A. It was on account of proclaiming the truth of the introduction of Gentile believers into the same wonderful place as believers from among the Jews that he suffered so much and was a prisoner. The truth involved that the special place of the Jew according to the flesh was lost, alike in the common death in sins in which we all were found, and in the common height of the blessing as quickened together with Christ, raised together, and seated in Him in the heavenlies in which they all are set. This levelling up and down was too much for Jewish pride and unbelief and brought upon him all their rancorous enmity. See Acts XXII. 21 *et seq.*

Thus it is the essence of the great truth that characterized his apostleship that he should be the prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles; and he uses the fact here as an incentive to increased interest in all he had to communicate, on their part and ours.

Q. Is "the mystery" (ver. 3) the same as that referred to as "the mystery of God" in Colossians II. 2?

A. He refers especially to (chap. I. 9) "the mystery of His will" as connected with God's eternal purpose, here spoken of as "the mystery of Christ," who was the object of all God's purposes (Col. II. 2). The true reading is "the mystery of God" as traced to its source. With these passages may be connected Romans XVI. 25, 26; I Corinthians II. 7. The mystery is the same, though only presented in the full scope of it in Ephesians I. There it is the heading up of all things in the heavens and upon the earth in Christ. But that chapter does not close without showing that this has begun in His being Head over all things to the assembly which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. This is the present aspect of the mystery; *i.e.* the saints united to Christ as their Head in glory by the Holy Ghost

dwelling in each of them and thus constituted as His body on the earth. In chapter I. 22, 23 the body is seen as embracing all who are Christ's from Pentecost till He come: in every other passage it is a present existing fact on earth. Verse 6 of our chapter emphasizes this bringing in of the Gentiles upon the same footing as the thousands of Jews of whom the assembly had consisted since the day of Pentecost.

Q. Does verse 5 *mean that the Old Testament saints were wholly ignorant of what he speaks?*

A. Unquestionably, for it "was not made known unto them;" and in verse 9 "from all ages" or "eternity," which is the force of the expression, the mystery has been hidden in God. So in Romans XVI. 25, "kept secret since the world began;" Colossians I. 26, "hid from ages and from generations."

Q. Verse 8. *How would you define the unsearchable riches of Christ?*

A. If "unsearchable" they cannot be defined, but it may be noted that the Apostle refers in verses 8 and 9 to his double ministry: in verse 8 to the grace given him to evangelize to the Gentiles these unsearchable riches, in verse 9 to enlighten all as to the administration, or practical ordering and carrying out, of the mystery. I say "administration" because this, the true reading, is a larger word than fellowship, though fellowship be a very precious part of it. For the two parts see also Colossians I. 23; his ministry of the gospel proclaimed world-wide (vers. 24–29) that of the assembly.

Q. Who are the principalities and powers in the heavenlies (*ver.* 10)?

A. It is not a subject of revelation who they are; but in the way they are brought in in this verse, we may conceive of them as of the highest created order of intelligence, to whom by means of the assembly has been made known the manifold wisdom of God.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

(*To be continued.*)

Our Prospect.

WHAT a bright scene of glory awaits us! To the weary body—REST; the toilworn servant—REPOSE. Instead of conflict — PEACE; sin — HOLINESS; darkness — LIGHT; hatred—LOVE.

How sweet the exchange will be from a sin and sorrow-stricken world; but that is not the chief thing which attracts the heart that really loves Christ. It longs to see Him, to gaze upon that blessed One who loved and gave Himself, to behold the glorified face of the MAN who wept at the grave of Lazarus, who sat weary on Sychar's well, whose breast was a pillow for John's head.

Very precious it will be to see Him. WE SHALL SEE HIM, but how? Not as a judge, but in a body of glory, the First-born among many brethren, a Son at home with the Father, who will introduce us there with a "Behold I and the children which Thou hast given Me."

When He comes He will change this body of humiliation and fashion it like unto His glorious body, and we then SHALL BE LIKE HIM. This likeness will not be merely outward, not only bodies fashioned like to His own, but every thought, every emotion, every inward feeling will beat in fullest accord with the Father's delight in the Son, and the Son's in the Father. Then we shall know in the perfect meaning of the word what holy fellowship means—no distracting thoughts, no jars, no earthly discords, all will be perfectly harmonious. Thus fitted to dwell with Him and conformed to His image, what a sorrow it would be to leave His blessed presence. How precious then to know that WE SHALL LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM, and that *for ever*. No more cloudy days and painful nights, no more separations, but together with Him and together with all the redeemed we shall spend a blissful and joyous eternal day upon which the sable night never casts a dark shadow.

Thus our joy will be complete. We shall see Him, be like Him, and be for ever with Him; our every longing satisfied, we shall find ourselves where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

H. NUNNERLEY.

God's Thoughts.

PSALM CXXXIX. 17, 18.

IT is a very blessed day in the history of our souls when one's thoughts are displaced by God's thoughts, when we can say, "How precious are *Thy thoughts* unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." It is the beginning of a new day for us in relation to God.

Naturally we have our own thoughts about God, about men, about the world, about Christ, and also about all that would be best for ourselves; but we have to learn that all our thoughts are wrong, and that there are better thoughts concerning us in the heart of God than ever were found in our own hearts about ourselves.

This is brought before us by Him who "knew what was in man," in the parable of the wilful son of Luke xv.; he thought he could do better for himself than his father was doing, so he took his journey into the far country, but he had to learn, in the deepest depths of degradation, how much better it would have been for him to have submitted himself to the thoughts of his father and to have left himself in his hands. He made the same mistake on his return when he formulated the terms upon which he was to be received, those of a hired servant!

But it was not merely to meet the need of a homeless wanderer the father ran from his door the day that sin-sick soul departed from the swine's trough and began to retrace his erring footsteps. If it was the son's need which drew him in the direction of the father, the father also had a need which expressed itself in falling upon the neck of the wretched penitent and covering him with kisses; but the need of the father was very much greater than the need of the son, and of an altogether different nature. It was all selfishness with the prodigal—and it could not be anything else, for his need was so great that he was unable to have regard for any one but himself—but with the father it was the necessity of unselfish love gratifying itself in blessing an unworthy object.

And this is the picture we have drawn by the *One* who

dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and who knew all the thoughts and desires of that bosom; a picture of the way in which a poor sinner is received by God, and of the joy that God has in receiving such; a picture we contemplate with unwearied gaze, and in which we ever find some new beauty; a picture in which we read how much better the thoughts of God are about us than our thoughts are about ourselves, and how much worse off we should have been had He dealt with us according to our desires.

God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. Less than this would have expressed our thoughts, fulfilled the desires of our minds, even of our renewed minds; but how much worse off we should have been! But God will fulfil His own thoughts, His own eternal thoughts of "peace," of "good," of glory.

His thoughts about us are set before us in Christ glorified as man; so the better we know Him, the better we shall know the thoughts of God about us. From these thoughts of His He is not to be diverted, He will have His own way in spite of everything.

And these thoughts of God are *eternal;* thoughts He had regarding us before the world was, when He purposed to have us in the relationship in which His Son is to Himself and in all the love of which He is the worthy object. Blessed be His name! How well we may say, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!" May these thoughts of His be our daily meditation. JAMES BOYD.

. . . . . .

THERE is no providence by which God deals with us that He will not interpret by and by, nor is there any promise by which He sustains and comforts that He will not abundantly make good.

. . . . . .

IF an angel from heaven were to come to my bedside, and tell me that Christ was occupied with me, as a member of His body, should I be more certain of His love than I am? It is no delusion, it is a fact that Christ loves me, and will love me right on to the end.

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Love in Sincerity.

THE magnificent Ephesian epistle, which unfolds to us the full outpouring of the grace of God, placing, even now, the saints in "heavenly places in Christ," and investing them with every spiritual blessing, has a very simple ending: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Such is the closing desire of the inspired writer.

This salutation does not contemplate them as highly advanced or deeply taught Christians; it does not allude to their exalted position, nor to their having been made the subjects of God's most wonderful purpose in Christ, but simply addresses them as those who "love our Lord Jesus Christ," and that "in sincerity." Grace, he says, be to all such.

God looks for affection of this kind in His children, and promises favour to those who love the blessed Lord truly. It is not enough that we should know and value the heights of blessing gained for us by that which Christ has done, but that we should also love Him who did it, and love Him "in sincerity."

A clear, divinely given apprehension of our position, privilege, and standing, is precious indeed, if along with it there is personal love for the Lord Jesus; hence the appropriateness of this closing word. How salutary! Observe how that love is qualified. It is to be "in sincerity": pure, genuine, incorrupt affection for our Lord Jesus Himself. It is not the kiss of a traitorous heart, nor the fulsome expression of one who utters glib sentiments, but the warm beatings of a soul that cherishes its object, and values it more than position or service or honour of any kind. Grace be to all those who appreciate the *One* who is dearer to God than every one else—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

Would that this closing word of Paul had been heeded, then the sad rebuke of unrequited affection—"Thou hast left thy first love"—would never have been necessitated.

How much hangs on sincere love for our Lord Jesus Christ!

J. WILSON SMITH.

Sorrows.

"I HAVE *seen*, I have *heard*, I *know*." These touching words enfold varied degrees of sorrow and suffering. There are sorrows which are known to and can be *seen* by others; they are outward and visible, such as sickness or losses. These can be taken cognizance of; they draw out sympathy, and the sharp sting is taken out of the sorrow by the loving care and sympathy of the Lord's people becoming channels through which comfort from the God of all comfort flows. Of such distresses God says, "I have *seen* the affliction of My people."

But there is a deeper sorrow than this; there are trials we cannot speak of publicly. We may pour them into the ear of a trusted friend upon whose sympathy we can count; we may, above all, make them known to God, express to Him in words a cry wrung out of the depths of the heart, make our requests known, for, poignant as they are, they can yet be made known; to all such petitions the Lord saith, "I have *heard* their cry."

But there is a deeper sorrow still—a sorrow in which the kindest friend can have no share, a sorrow that eats away the heart, which cannot be expressed in words, and which, if it were possible to be expressed, had better be left untold; a sorrow lying deep down which cannot even be told to God in words—a groan unutterable. Such matters can only be laid before Him in the silence of His presence, who not only sees what could be *seen*, hears what others perhaps may *hear*, but who *knows* sorrows as none else, discerns their true nature, is acquainted with our griefs—those inner griefs—hidden from all others. What sustainment to our hearts to know that, like Israel of old, God our Father can not only say of us, I have *heard* their cry, I have *seen* the affliction of My people, but I *know* their sorrows! And the Spirit who dwells in us can interpret those sorrows, even though expressed only in groans, and present them to God according to His knowledge of our true need. Meantime we are to hold firmly to the fact that in some way or other—inexplicable to us now perhaps—all things, *even these sorrowful things, work together for good.* F. G. PATERSON.

Egypt and Canaan.

CANAAN was a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills (Deut. VIII. 7). Egypt had a mighty river that was everything to it, but the source of that river was unknown. Canaan, on the contrary, had no mighty river. A "brook," as it were, was its largest stream—even Jordan, compared with the Nile, was but a streamlet, but it had "fountains" springing up in its hills and valleys. Its currents and channels may have been small, but it was full of the sources and springs of those currents. This was just the opposite of Egypt.

There the current was mighty, but the source unknown; here the channels were small and unimportant, but the sources were all known and enjoyed, together with their waters and streams.

These two lands were mysteries: the land of Egypt representing the world out of which the redeemed are called, and Canaan the scene of communion with God into which the redeemed are brought.

The world can go on supplying itself from the great current of daily providential mercies and leave the Source or Parent of it altogether a secret; while the believer has to do with the great Source or Parent in all things and in every place.

We may ask ourselves: In which land are we more at home? Do we like to walk in a place that is full of the presence of God, like Canaan; or would we choose a place like Egypt, where we may get all providential supplies, while keeping the great Source of them at an unknown distance?

J. G. BELLETT.

. . . . . .

LIFE down here is to most people a life of vexation, of trial; the heart wears out under it, or else there is a sort of stoicism. When troubles come people say, "We have got to endure it, and we must." How different when we see that *all things* work together for good. We get the heaven side of things when we see *God in everything*.

Obedience. Faith. Confirmation.

"I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod. III. 6).

Abraham is the earliest example of a divine call. God purposed to bless him and make him a blessing; and in order to carry out that purpose He called Abraham, and the call took him clean out of all his surroundings.

Isaac was the child of promise; he displaced the child that was born after the flesh; the coming in of Isaac meant the going out of Ishmael. In a certain way—I say it reverently—the same thing took place when our blessed Lord came into this world by a new way, by the conception and power of the Holy Ghost. In His miraculous birth God indicated that the natural order of man was to be set aside.

In His pathway the mind of heaven was concentrated on Him, as the sole object of God's delight. He not only displaced man, but became a new centre; so that although the temple and the ordinances were going on, God no longer drew to them, but to Christ (John I.), God's Centre, to whom everything is to be gathered.

Isaac was received back from the dead in figure, Jesus was so actually, and all was carried forward in Him through death on to the platform of resurrection. Nothing has been lost, everything is secured in resurrection; all the promises of God are in Him Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Instead of remaining here a Man according to the flesh, perfect as He was, death having no claim on Him, He passed through death in love to us and in obedience to God, on to the resurrection platform; and God calls attention now to Christ in resurrection.

God is the *God of Jacob* as well as the God of Isaac and Abraham. Jacob primarily represents the ups and downs of Israel; but he also represents all those ups and downs that individual saints have on their way to the fulfilment of the purpose of God. God is as much the God of Jacob as He is the God of Isaac; that is to say, in all the ups and downs of our life and in all our difficulties, we may count upon God being for us.

There are three lessons in connection with the story of Abraham :—

OBEDIENCE (in Genesis XII.).
FAITH (in Genesis XV.).
CONFIRMATION (in Genesis XXII.).

Chapter XII. 1–5. There is no doubt Abraham had many interests in the country in which he lived. He must have been a person well known, and a man of some influence among his countrymen. The call was a startling one. It involved getting clear of everything that surrounded him, moving clean out of his environment; but "he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went." Somehow or other, there was confidence instilled into his mind that this holy, supreme Being who had spoken to him would secure blessing for him, favours infinitely greater than anything connected with the environment where he was.

This is what Christianity does for us. It takes us clean out of our environment ; it gives us new links, new joys, new life, new power, entirely foreign to everything around.

The sovereign call of God came to this man ; and although he had surroundings, society, and religion (for he worshipped idols on the other side of the flood), the call of God took him clean out of it all. Having nothing but the naked word of God to rest upon, he turned his back on country and kindred, and obeyed the call of God, going out not knowing whither he went. Probably others questioned the wisdom of the step, and asked, Is it not imagination ? Is it not a dream ? Is it not some mistake ? Cannot you tell us where you are going ? Are you acquainted with the place ? Do you even know its name ? Here you are perfectly at home and getting on well, and you occupy a good position ; why turn your back on it all ? The only answer he could give was, The God of glory has appeared to me and called me ; and I go in simple, unquestioning obedience, leaving all the future to Him.

We are better off than Abraham ; we *do know* that to which we are called. There will be a day when Christ will take us to His Father's house, and He will bring us with Him when His glory will shine over the earth.

Very often, however, when a man is the subject of the mercy and grace of God, he yet allows some natural affection to hinder him. Abraham at first stopped half-way, instead of fully responding to the call of God. He made a good start, but he allowed his father to hinder him. Natural relationships have their place, but God's call is superior to all and must be obeyed. God calls you clean out of everything, and there should not be a second consideration ; His call should be the one thing that commands your life. He takes us clean apart from everything here, to be in the world for a little time for Him, our whole bodies entirely yielded to Christ.

Up to chapter xv. the Lord had simply spoken in general terms that He would bless Abraham and make him a blessing. But in chapter xv. the question is raised by Abraham as to the ways and means by which this purpose of God could be carried into effect, because he was childless. God's answer indicated first that the child of promise was to be the man of His purpose ; and then He took him abroad and said, Look toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them ; and He said unto him, " So shall thy seed be." Here he got a divine revelation, something for faith to take hold of, and " *he believed God.*" On this ground—of faith in God and the revelation that God gave to him—he was reckoned righteous.

It is the same God who speaks to us ; but He fixes our attention on Christ, not on Isaac ; and in bidding us look toward heaven, it is not " stars " we are to gaze at, but the One who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, now seated in acceptance and favour in the presence of God. If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, we are accounted righteous in His sight, even as Abraham was accounted righteous. And while in Abraham's case God challenged his ability to count the number of the heavenly bodies, saying, " So shall thy seed be," it is in our case as though He invited us to look upon the heavenly Christ, His beloved Son, and assured us, So shalt *thou* be, for He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Chapter xxii. 1, 2, 15–18. God graciously came in to

confirm His word to Abraham, and He confirmed it by an oath. The meaning of it was this: By Myself have I sworn, that having taken you up for blessing, I am going to see it through.

He gave this confirmation to Abraham in the day when he surrendered his son Isaac. Obedience pleases the Lord better than sacrifice. When he laid his all on the altar, God came in and said: I gave you a revelation of what I am going to do, and now I make known to the heirs of promise the immutability of My counsel. I give you a confirmatory oath, I pledge My very existence, My character, upon this, that I am going to carry out every thought of My heart in regard to you.

God thus made assurance doubly sure, confirmed His promise in the day when Abraham surrendered everything.

But we learn from Hebrews VI. 13–20 that it was not for Abraham's sake alone God gave this unalterable pledge of His intentions, but for the sake of every soul who flees for refuge to Christ. When Isaac had been offered up, and had typically passed through death into resurrection (Heb. XI. 19), then God could unreservedly announce that everything was infallibly secure and would be infallibly carried out.

Our hearts then rest in the true knowledge of God. Satisfied with Christ and all that Christ is and had done by His death and resurrection, God pledges His very existence and character to the entire fulfilment of the purpose He had in view when He picked us up.

Sometimes God, in the wisdom of His ways, demands some peculiar sacrifice from His people; but this is ever with a view to minister richer, fuller blessing, and give them double assurance. When in obedience to the word of God Abraham laid everything down and surrendered *all* to God, God vouchsafed this extraordinary oath. What a God the God of Abraham is!

THIS GOD IS OUR GOD.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

The Way of God in a Day of Ruin.

SEPARATION and self-judgment are not all that we need. They define our right attitude toward evil, but they give no direction as to good. Therefore God has given another great guiding principle for the direction of His people in an evil day. We are to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." In a day of abounding iniquity we are to follow righteousness; when faith is being overthrown we are to follow faith; if the love of many is growing cold we must follow love; and if on every hand strifes abound we must follow peace.

In carrying this out we are not to take up a position of solitary independence. Righteousness, faith, love, and peace are to be followed *in company* "with them that call on the Lord out of a *pure heart.*" It is not only those who "call on the Lord," but they who do so "out of a pure heart," that is, a single and devoted heart which has no other object than the Lord. We are to seek to act in every circumstance under the direct guidance of the Lord and for His glory, be the consequences what they may, refusing to allow either friends, relatives, teachers, or party to come in between the soul and the Lord, ever remembering that it is the *pure* heart which sees God. And its great mark, according to 1 Peter 1. 22, is unfeigned and fervent love toward our brethren.

We are not called to follow persons, though it is our privilege to follow "*with them.*" The tendency of our hearts is always to follow men and thus escape the exercise of individual faith. This tendency manifested itself in the beginning of the church's history and is a prominent trait of the "last days"; but in both cases it is condemned by God (see 1 Cor. 1. 12, III. 1–5; 2 Tim. IV. 3, 4). In a day when man makes much of the "form of godliness," while in practice denying its power, God makes everything of the pursuit of those moral qualities which link the soul with Himself and lead to spiritual growth.

"*Departing*" from evil, personally and in our associa-

tions, and "*following*" good are the two great principles given by God to guide His people through the ruin of Christendom. We need to take heed to both. It is fatal to take up one without the other. It has been truly said: "If the first part only is taken up (the departing from iniquity and purging from vessels to dishonour), the conscience may be upright; but a spirit of judgment and of self-righteousness will be engendered. If the latter only (to seek to walk with the pure heart without the former), conscience will be loose, and faithfulness to Christ and obedience more or less lost" (*J.N.D.*).

How true this is: mere separation from evil, without following righteousness, faith, love, and peace "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," will lead to legality, causing the separation to degenerate into mere pharisaical sectarianism, whereby self is exalted and others condemned.

On the other hand, to seek to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace," without maintaining separation from evil in doctrine and practice, will only result in latitudinarianism, which "has an amiable form in general, is in a measure respectable in the world, tries nobody's conscience, and allows of everybody's will" (*J.N.D.*).

But it may be asked, what is to guide and direct us when treading this path? Separation from evil and the faithful pursuit of these moral excellencies will not, *in themselves*, give definite instruction as to the varied relations of life and our conduct in the church and the world. 2 Timothy III. 16, 17 shows us the *Scriptures* are to direct; and in chapter IV. the coming of the Lord, the kingdom glories, and the crown of righteousness are to encourage.

Every difficulty is fully provided for in Scripture; it is "given by inspiration of God," and therefore speaks with absolute authority and is final in all its directions. It teaches, reproves, corrects, and instructs; so that, in this day of ruin, "the man of God" possesses that whereby he may be complete, "throughly furnished unto all good works." It instructs us in every relation of life; it unfolds the heavenly privileges of the church as well as the order and discipline of the house of God on earth; it reveals to us

God's ways with men in the past and unfolds to us the course of events in the future.

Finally, the Scripture sets before us the hope of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, to put down all evil, establish the kingdom in power and glory, and reward with the crown of righteousness all those who love His appearing.

Therefore, in spite of the ruin and general departure from the truth, we are exhorted, in view of the coming of the Lord, the kingdom, and the crown, to PREACH, WATCH, and ENDURE (2 Tim. IV. 1–5). HAMILTON SMITH.

Closing Days.

THE Apostle Jude looks round, and sees everything failing, breaking, giving way, the very faith of our Lord Jesus Christ being given up, and his epistle comes to us as a trumpet-call. He presses upon our souls earnest contention for the faith once delivered to the saints. Let it get right down into our souls that this faith once delivered to the saints God has committed to you and to me.

If we look around our hearts sink; we see the floods of iniquity arising. What is God looking for? He is looking that your heart and mine hold the faith of the Son of God. It is the victory that overcomes the world. This faith is the most magnificent thing that God ever revealed. It not only meets the need of our souls, but rises up to the very height of the throne of God where Christ sits, showing us everything established in that blessed One.

Is Christianity a failure? Yes, as *entrusted to man*, but not as *entrusted to the Son of God*. Look up at the throne of God. Does any failure touch Christ? Has all the break-up of the church altered one iota of the purpose of God concerning His blessed Son? Has it changed for a single moment the fact that Christ is the Head of the church? Let us hold fast these living realities in our souls which the faith enfolds.

We have often reminded each other that we cannot help anybody further on than we are ourselves. Do the glories of Christ entrance our souls? Does the greatness of Christ affect us? Everything centres in Him, the Son of God.

What is being attacked to-day? Doctrines? Yes. The written Word? Yes. But behind it all Satan is working against the Son of God. If he seeks to shake faith in the written Word, it is because he desires to shake the very foundation of everything in the person of the Son of God. If we want to help the people of God we must get the truth of the Son of God in our souls, Christ must be a living reality to us.

Are the glories of Christ so shining before our souls that our minds, our affections, are above? We have our earthly occupations, but these are external things. God wants internal things. He wants the affections of our hearts and the thoughts of our minds set upon His beloved Son.

I think Jude points out to us in the closing verses of this epistle that which would enable us really to stand, contend earnestly, and hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints. He reminds us that we are loved of God, with a love which never grows cold. However much we may have forgotten Him, He has never forgotten us. So he says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Is that our occupation? Are we seeking to know more of the love of God, allowing nothing in our walk and ways to dim the vision of it?

Then we are to build up ourselves on our most holy faith. Let us mark the word by which the Apostle characterizes the faith here. It is the faith that is marked by holiness; it is intolerant of evil, and will produce true separation. Outward separation was possible to a Pharisee, but it was not a separation that had any value before God. Unless outward separation flows from inward separation it is absolutely valueless. If you will take the trouble to turn to the description of that wonderful temple that was shown to the prophet Ezekiel, you will find the enclosure is spoken of first (Ezek. XL. 5), but the measurement of it not given until the prophet has been taken into the most holy place (Ezek. XLII. 15–20). This is a little lesson for us. The measure of our separation will only be as we enter into the holiest; and as the holiest marks us in our walk and ways, the world will be an outside thing, we shall not be conformed to it. Why? Because our hearts are with the One that is outside it.

May our hearts be touched as we read this verse: "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." There must be that moral state in our souls which will answer to the faith, the doctrine which is according to godliness. Next we have PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST.

I think that the Apostle would lead our hearts on the line that the Holy Ghost is on, the line of the purpose of God concerning Christ. The Spirit of God is here to lead our hearts into the fullness and the blessedness of that which is established in Christ, and He would have the desire of our hearts on that same blessed line. The things which will occupy us when praying in the Holy Ghost are those on which the Spirit of God is set.

"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." He is not only coming for those who are looking, waiting, and longing for Him, but He is coming for His church, for every member of His body, every redeemed one, in wonderful mercy.

Then the Apostle turns to the ability of Christ to establish everything. Now he says, "To Him that is able." Ability is in Christ to keep us from falling. Who can keep us from being carried away by the mad rush of the times? He is able. If we are to be kept, He must do the keeping.

Now unto Him that is able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Think of that. Think what it will be to Him to present those for whom He died faultless. Then think of His delight throughout eternity, in having every member of His body spotless and faultless, suited entirely to Himself. He concludes with a doxology, an outburst of praise: "To the only wise God our Saviour, glory and majesty, dominion and power." As the purpose of God gets into our souls, and the thought of the presentation day is present to us, there will be worship. There is no effort in worship. It loses all its value if there is effort. It is an overflow from a heart so full that it cannot contain itself. As the immensity of the glory of Christ touches our souls, worship and praise will spontaneously rise to God.

JAMES GREEN.

Prayer.

"I WILL therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Tim. II. 8).

A holy walk, a forgiving spirit, a believing mind are three great moral requisites when we have to do with divine Persons and divine things. We must be in a suited spiritual state in our approaches to God, our hands must be clean. Holy hands are the result of our inviting God's inspection of our thoughts and words and ways. Isaiah LII. 11 shows the necessity for this: "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." The man in Psalm I. illustrates the first moral requisite: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Walking, standing, sitting, he is in complete and absolute separation from evil in every form, he is a holy and separate man; he has clean hands, whatsoever he does prospers. This man answers to the primary condition needful for prayer to be answered.

Next, when we approach God it must be in the spirit of forgiveness towards others; we are to pray without "wrath." How can we draw near to God aright if we are not at one with our brother? We must get right, be reconciled to our brother first. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and *then come and offer thy gift*" (Matt. v. 23, 24). How otherwise can we truly utter that petition: "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive* those that trespass against us"?

Then we are to come "without reasoning"; we must not only believe that God *IS*, but that He has both *ability*, *power*, and *willingness* to reward those who seek Him out. "With God all things are possible." Let us get hold of that, and not measure God by our own feebleness.

Look what John says: "This is the confidence that we have in Him, if we ask anything according to His will, *He heareth us.*"

We are not only indwelt by the Spirit, but are exhorted

to walk in the Spirit, and our prayers are also to be in the Spirit; therefore, if walking in *separation* from evil, in *peace* with our brother and *confidence* in God, our petitions *based on His Word* and offered in the Spirit, we may surely count upon God *hearing us;* consequently we know that we have the petitions we desire of Him.

THOMAS OLIVER.

. . . . . .

Is there *anything* too hard for the Lord? There is nothing too *small* for His care, nothing too *great* for His power; there is nothing too *hard* for the Lord.

. . . . . .

Six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, in a sterile desert, where there was not a blade of grass, not a drop of water—no visible source of subsistence. How were they to be fed? *God was there!* How were they to be kept in order? *God was there!* How were they to track their way through a waste, howling wilderness? *God was there!*

When they retired to rest at night there was not a single atom of provision for the morrow, there was no storehouse, no larder, but—*God was there!* At the end of forty years it was written: "The Lord thy *God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.*"

This God is our God. He has promised to supply all our need from that matchless storehouse, Christ Jesus in glory.

. . . . . .

Look at that dead sparrow in the street! Without your Father that sparrow did not fall to the ground; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

. . . . . .

God tells us that He counts the hairs of our head. Suppose I go to a sick-bed and find the mind of a saint anxious and troubled. What, I say, is your Father in heaven the God of the sparrow, and is that the Father you trust?

. . . . . .

Before the sun rises or the day dawns Christ will come and take us to Himself. He is the bright and morning Star. Our comfort is the night is far spent.

Strangers and Pilgrims.

A STRANGER is one who comes *from* another country, whilst a *pilgrim* is one who is journeying *to* another country. Abraham left his country, severed his national and social links through distant and future attractions. He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Embracing the promises not only made him a stranger, but a pilgrim also; for he not only *saw* them by faith, but his affections were engaged, his heart captivated; he *embraced* them, and *confessed* his strangership, maintained his pilgrim character in walk and ways, never settled down, like Lot, in Sodom.

We Christians come from another country; our home is above, our citizenship is in heaven; our origin—the spring of our life—is in a risen and glorified Saviour. We are now like colliers working in a pit where there is no air to sustain life except that supplied from above—we breathe a heavenly atmosphere whilst in this dark world. The only light in the pit is that which the collier takes with him; the only divine light in this world is that produced by the Holy Spirit making the bodies of the saints luminous; hence our light is to shine before men, that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven. A collier never thinks of settling in the pit; his affections are with wife and children, his interests are at the top, his home is there. So our home, our interests, our citizenship is above—all our abiding links are heavenly, our portion is in the light. The collier's work is at the bottom of the pit, but he ascends to the top to receive his wages. The Christian's day of labour is here, but his reward awaits him in that day when he will be praised of God and receive the well done of faithful service. The collier listens for the signal to go up, when, without effort of his own, he is carried to the top. So the Christian awaits the assembling shout, the archangel's voice, the trump of God, when, carried by almighty power, he will rise to meet his Lord, will soar away out of the dark night of this world into the bright light of glory.

As the light and joy and blessedness of that day fill the vision of our souls, we shall—like the patriarchs of old—not

only enter into the fact that we are *strangers* because we come *from* another country, but declare we are *pilgrims* going *to* another country ; but this will only be in proportion to the way our minds are set upon those things that are above, where Christ sits at God's right hand.

JOHN GASKIN.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER III.

Q. In what way is the manifold wisdom of God known to the powers in heavenly places ?

A. The wisdom of God had been displayed in many ways, but the all-various resources of it were brought together and manifested in the assembly as His masterpiece, according to eternal purpose.

These exalted intelligences would distinguish between the purpose and work of God, by which a redeemed people were formed into one out of the most opposed nationalities and diverse interests on earth, and our failure in maintaining that unity practically.

But before the Apostle could address himself to this, the responsible side of the truth, he bows his knee, in prayer again, " to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ " this time, for all that is needed to empower us for it.

You rightly read verse 15 " of whom *every family* in heaven and earth is named." Although no lists of the families are given, yet as to heaven we have an angelic family, and a saintly family, besides the new family known as the assembly ; while on earth we have the family of the true Israel of God, and the many families of the nations that will be blessed subordinately to them.

When we come to what the Apostle prays for as needed from the Father, how blessed to have the riches of His glory presented as the only measure of the strengthening we may look for. And this by the Father's Spirit, because it is in order that the Son who dwells in the Father's heart may dwell in our hearts by faith. It is the only place the Spirit is thus spoken of.

Q. In what way is the inner man strengthened ?

A. In the affections of the heart (as distinguished from

ordinary strengthening in weakness), in order that we may be able to look out upon the illimitable scope of these counsels of the Father, of which Christ has been the centre and object from all eternity.

Q. How does He dwell in the heart?

A. By faith and in the power of the Spirit; no mere passing impression of His grace and glory, but abiding—"enshrined," as you say, "in its deepest affections"; that we, being rooted and grounded in the love revealed in those purposes, may be able to apprehend (a lowlier thought than comprehend, which would mean to take in *all*, though the distinction in the words is not always observed) what is the length and breadth and height and depth. It is sometimes asked, of what? But it is indefinable, for there is no limit to that vast sphere of glory that God has counselled for Christ.

Q. Why is it said, "with all saints"?

A. Because not one can be left out in the comprehension of God's thoughts, and so He would have it in ours.

Q. What is the force of "passeth knowledge" when Christ's love is the theme?

A. It is the second great object of the mighty strengthening of the inner man; for if the heart thinks in passing from the unlimited sphere of Christ's glory that it has got to what it can more readily take in in the love of Christ, how blessed to know that His love is just as unlimited, as far beyond our power to grasp, all the fullness of God being expressed in that love. Still, the object of the prayer is, that there may be the increasing apprehension of what is beyond all human thought, and that thus we may be filled increasingly into that fullness.

Q. What is the power that works in us, verse 20?

A. It is the power of God, the exceeding greatness of which was manifested in raising Christ from the dead in chapter I. 19, which was "to us-ward" there, and now made good *in* us by the indwelling of the Spirit.

Answers by
J. A. TRENCH.

(*To be continued.*)

Correction.—Page 19, 2nd par., 1st line, for "it is the essence" read "it is of the essence."

Our Centre.

"BLIND from his birth." Could anything picture a more hopeless state? for "since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was *born* blind"; but Jehovah Jesus was passing by, and the sight of misery not only drew out the compassion of His heart, but the glory of God was thereby manifested, for God's glory is shown in goodness and blessing to man; hence this interview between a blind beggar and the Son of the living God.

Jesus bids him "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." With living power those seven words reached him; without questioning, halting, or hesitation, he journeyed to Siloam's pool and washed, and "CAME SEEING"; his once-sightless eyeballs now beheld the light of heaven as the result of simple faith in *one* sentence from the lips of the "sent One."

Henceforth his grand topic was, "A man called Jesus"; his neighbours, his parents, his friends, all heard the wonderful story, how he was indebted to Jesus for sight. The Pharisees to whom he was brought ask, "What sayest thou of Him?" "He is a *Prophet*," is his ready reply. When asked to describe once more the way by which he had received sight, he replied, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be His disciples?"

They revile him, but true to every ray of light that reached his soul, their revilings only bring out a fuller testimony to the person of the Lord Jesus; he answers, "*If this man were not of God, He could do nothing.*" This was too much for them; "they cast him out"—outside their social and religious circle—but nothing better could they have done, for in casting him *out* they cast him *into* the arms of Jesus, whom they had previously rejected (John VIII. 59). The Lord's eye had been on His faithful witness; all that had happened He knew. "HE FOUND HIM," and asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

Once a voice had said, "Go, wash"; but his sightless eyeballs could not then gaze upon the Speaker; now he is about to learn that He who had spoken to him in his blindness was none other than the Son of the living God!

"Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." Ah! that voice, with its "Go, wash," had been believed without seeing; now gazing upon his divine Benefactor he joyfully responds, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshipped Him.

Having found the person of the Christ, his heart is satisfied, filled to overflowing; worship flows forth spontaneously. He is no longer an outcast, he is now basking in the warm rays of the Sun from whence light had streamed into his dark life; he found in the Son of God the centre of a new and blissful universe. What are father, mother, synagogue now? He has found Him who in time and eternity will be the satisfaction of his heart. He has found One from whom every good thing radiates—*the Lord Himself.*

He did not pass from one synagogue to another, he did not change his religion merely, no; he *lost* all he had, and *found* all he wanted, and ever will want, in the Son of God!

Jesus *Himself* henceforth and for ever is for him the One attractive centre; Christ commands his affections. Is there need of a *great* company when we are in the holy presence of the Son of God? No! *He* is all-sufficient.

Suppose this man had found ten thousand already gathered to the Son of God, he would be *with* them, but *gathered to Christ Himself—not* to the company. Suppose ten thousand more were gathered afterward, it would make him happy for their sakes and for the glory of Him whom he loves, but tens of thousands cannot add to the delight of his soul in Christ's company. Suppose trouble arise; suppose your brethren cast you out, as they did the blind man! What of it if you are truly gathered to Christ? What of it if He, and He alone, is the adored object of your soul? Depend upon it, you cannot stand in the day of difficulty if you do not know what it is to find your *all in the person of the Son of God.*

The blind man, rejected by the religious world, found in

the solitude of the presence of Jesus an object which filled his heart and bowed his soul to worship; *One* who was all-sufficient, apart from ritual, temple, and priests; *One* who in Himself and by Himself drew out the deepest feelings of his innermost soul as he prostrated himself in adoration at His feet. Outside of a *system* once owned of God he found a *Person*, a new and living Centre; and so may we; for "where two or three are gathered together in My name, *there am I in the midst of them.*" Our part is to gather unto His name—the name of the Son of God—Jesus, the Christ; our Lord—the glorious person of our Redeemer; the Head of His body—the Church—owning no less a circle in our thoughts and affections than the living stones which compose the temple where the Holy Spirit now dwells; the entire body of Christ, the whole company of the redeemed.

Gathered thus, we can count with absolute certainty on His presence; for does He not say, "there *am* I"? Not "I will come and identify Myself with you if you are more intelligent and have more light than others"; no, if gathered by the Holy Spirit to the Holy and the True, walk and ways in accord therewith, the presence of the Son of God may be known in all its blessedness to-day as truly as in the palmy days of the early church.

PRESBUTES.

The Joys of Jesus.

LUKE X. 21–24; JOHN XV. 10, 11.

"A MAN of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Such was Jesus here below. He had a heart to feel, an understanding, a knowledge of things, a capacity to enter into all they meant, as none other had. If Jerusalem can say, "All ye that pass by, behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lam. I. 12), how much greater His sorrow, who entered into it all, and into the reason of it, before God in spirit, and bore the

penalty of it all in fact. We do right to dwell upon it and Him who bore it all in meekness and in grace, and to seek earnestly before God upon our knees that we might be better able to enter into the sorrows of the Lord, to weep with Him in His weeping, and to sorrow with Him in His sorrowing. We do not do it nearly enough, and we are in consequence losers beyond all count.

But there is another thing that we do not do *nearly, nearly, nearly* enough, that is, to enter into *His joys.* There were joys in the heart of Jesus that were never in the heart of man before. Into those joys He would introduce us; and with those joys He would engage our souls as we are passing through this world—a world of sin, of sorrow, and of death. It is here, and amid such circumstances, that He would make us to " rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory " (1 Peter 1. 8).

Read Luke x. 17–24: " In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." Now mark, this was the hour of His being an outcast. His own people had refused Him, the world had not received Him. His mission thus far was fruitless, and the words of the prophet were to be fulfilled in Him: " Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain " (Isa. xlix. 4). But at that very hour Jesus had within Himself joys which were altogether unaffected by circumstances.

Our joys are too often the fruit of circumstances, and therefore they ebb and flow with them. His joy was entirely outside of them. It was not, so to speak, a circumstantial joy; it was a joy between Himself and the Father. " I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth "—not, that Thou hast brought the great, the grand, the noble to My feet, so that, pointing to them, I could show that all power on earth is at My disposal. No. He says, " Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." His joy was in the will of God; in what was pleasing in His sight.

" Even so, Father ! " Beautiful acceptance of the will of God at all cost to Himself, no matter what might be entailed to Him thereby. What filled him with joy was the pleasure

of the Father in the revelation of the Father's name to these babes, these poor fishermen.

He who has before his mind the gathering of a company from the great and the grand, the noble and the wise does not know the mind of God. It pleased the Father to reveal these things to the poor and to the lowly, to those who had, even in appearance, nothing to give Him in return. That is the one great joy that Jesus had, revealing to these babes, to those whose minds are docile and submissive to Him, all that there is in the Father's name.

Joy surely there is in the contemplation of power that will hurl Satan as lightning down from heaven and triumph over all the power of the enemy ; a power that will be enforced in the coming glory during the millennium ; a power held in the hand of Jesus then. But the subjugation of evil is not the highest joy. The joy of heavenly grace and of the Father's heart, the unfolding of those things that are proper to the Father's name, this is the joy that fills the mind of Jesus, and this is the joy with which He would fill our minds as well.

In John xv. 11 we find another joy : " These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you." As in Luke x. His joy was in the revelation of the Father's love, so here His joy is in doing the Father's will, in walking in obedience to the commands of God. He was the one Man on earth capable of comprehending God in His divine being, of apprehending the relationship of the creature to the Creator. He apprehended that relationship, for He created it ; and He apprehended the terrible apostasy of man from it. We often speak of man as a fallen, an apostate being ; but how far do we understand what that fallen state implies ? He understood it fully, and the dishonour done to God by man's apostate will ; and He came to do the will of God, and in willing obedience to the utmost limit, as the great burnt offering, to glorify God, and to vindicate His name. What joy that was to Him—pure infinite delight !—as He says, " I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. . . . And now I come to Thee : and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

And to His disciples He says, " If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love ; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." This is a joy we would do well to contemplate and earnestly seek to know more about.

What a wonderful thing—wonderful to us, and yet how natural to Him—to say, " I know all about the disobedience of man, the power that Satan has got over the creature through disobedience, and I have come down here for this one purpose, to undo it all (1 John III. 8). I have come down here to do Thy will." He came not to speak His own words ; He came not to do His own works. The Father was alike to Him the Source of His words and works (John VIII. 28 ; XIV. 10) ; and so perfectly and fully was it all accomplished, that He could say, " I have glorified Thee on the earth." Think of that. Were you set in a particular place, and you glorified God in that place, you would be there to the glory of God, but only so far. But Jesus could say, " I have glorified Thee on the earth ; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." Oh, the joy it was to Him, pure, infinite, and perfect, thus to contemplate that great mission closed in time, and then to look onward to the great future for evermore, flowing in expanding circles of glory still to be from the womb of that work already done. " And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." This was joy upon joy, " ineffable and glorified." " For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

If a little ray comes to you, revealed from heaven in the person of the Christ, it will fill your heart, and mine, with the joy of being here for the will of God ; one little ray let into the eye of your soul, and your whole body will be full of light, luminous.

May the Lord lift us up to Himself, that we may live and walk in the joy of that of which He here speaks.

E. CROSS.

Our Journey.

ALL our way is known to the Lord, every turn in the path is noticed by Him : *yesterday's* trial He knew, *to-day's* difficulty is under His eye, *to-morrow's* care is seen by Him.

On looking back at the *yesterday* of our journey, how truly each one of us can testify to the faithful goodness of God, raise our glad Ebenezer, and adoringly say, " Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," whilst *to-day* we can count upon Him as " a very *present* help in time of trouble."

How graciously He invites us to cast all our care upon Him (the word translated " care," 1 Peter v. 7, includes distractions, worries, perplexities). Is it because He is able to remove these cares ? No. Is it because He is *willing* to relieve us of them ? No. Something far more tender, more consoling—it is because He *careth* for us. Think of that ! We are to bring all our cares, distractions, worries, perplexities, and cast them upon Him because we are an *object of care to Him ;* because He takes the deepest personal interest in us.

Why then are we sometimes burdened ? Is it not because we do not *tell* our sorrows, do not *make our requests known*, do not *pour out* our hearts in prayer and supplication ? Have we not always found, after telling our troubles—pouring out in simple, child-like language the story of our sorrows, making them known, and thus casting our burden on the Lord—that God our Father has sustained us, His peace has garrisoned our hearts ?

He does not promise to remove the cause of our cares or take the pressure away, but what He does pledge is, a peace that passeth all understanding, a sustainment in the midst of the sorrows, a gracious sense of His tender interest in us.

Our snare is that we do not *tell Him everything*. Little cares, little perplexities, we keep to ourselves, or perhaps say, " Ah, the Lord knows all about them " ; and instead of casting them upon Him we try to bear them ourselves, until they get such a heavy load that we are apt to murmur at our lot, and think no one has as many worries as ourselves.

Do let us be simple. If the Lord says, " Make your

requests known, cast all your care, roll the burden on Me," depend upon it, He intends us to do it. Let us begin by pouring into His ear the particular weight that is pressing upon us now. Every day brings with it some fresh need, but the fresh need will bring fresh mercy and grace to meet it; but to get relief from the pressure *we must make our requests known*, come with liberty of speech—for this is what the word "boldly" means—to the throne of grace.

What of *to-morrow?* We should look for no to-morrow here, our to-morrow is the glory where Christ is; but if *to-morrow* should dawn upon us in this world it then becomes *to-day*, and the grace which met us yesterday and meets us to-day will be available then; but if we anticipate sorrows *before they come* we have no support promised, no consolation pledged; our Lord said, "Sufficient unto *the day* is the evil thereof," thus intimating we have nothing to do with to-morrow.

An anticipated trouble is always worse than the reality, because we have no divine support pledged to meet it. Looking back, in how many cases the thing we dreaded, worried about, never came at all; or, if it did, comfort, help, grace from the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort lifted us above it.

Why dread what may never come? Think what God has pledged as to the future; dwell upon His sure promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Read the history of Jacob—the first to whom this promise was made—then the history of Joshua, the next, and you will have living proofs that God has been true to His promise. You could not get two men more dissimilar in their day and generation than Jacob and Joshua; the only point in which they were alike was that each was entering on a new experience in a foreign land when the promise was given, yet both, at the end of their course, testified to the faithfulness of God to His promise. It is repeated for us in the strongest possible terms in Hebrews XIII.: I will never, no never, on no account whatever, leave thee nor forsake thee.

Here then is to-morrow's care provided for. In the confidence of this we may travel onwards, upheld by the everlasting arms, sheltered by the shadowing wings, secure

in a Father's hand; all we have to do is to pillow our wearied heads where John rested his, and drink in the love, care, goodness of our God, and as troubles come roll them upon Him in prayer, going again and again until the peace of God quiets our distracted minds and the care wherewith God cares for us becomes the solace of our hearts.

The love which we have so fully experienced, so truly proved in the past, is to be the ground of our confidence for the future. " 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?" We may rely upon it that what God *has been* God *will be* until wilderness sorrows are over and travelling days are done; meantime we know that *all things work together for good* to them that love God. Let us hold this fast, and whatever comes, carry all in prayer to God.

"Each load in prayer gets lighter, strength comes day by day
From God, who is our refuge, our helper, and our stay."

" The raven, busy through the day in its quest for needed supplies, returns to sleep on the roost at night with no thought for the morrow."

H. NUNNERLEY.

. . . . . .

As connected with the household of God what dignity is ours! Even a servant in the royal household is elevated by his environment, how much more a son! What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, how careful to maintain our holy dignity, since we belong to God's household.

. . . . . .

Israel was betrothed to Jehovah, but through unfaithfulness she has been set aside, and a bride whose full and final portion depends upon the faithfulness of her eternal Lover has been brought into view. Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, suited in nature and being, loved and *died* for, loved and *lived* for, loved and *waited* for, soon the nuptial day will dawn, and the marriage of the Lamb will consummate the happiness of bride and Bridegroom.

Divine Names.

A pathetic interest is attached to the following paper. The beloved writer passed away to be with the Lord soon after writing it, and before it could appear.

DIVINE names are indicative of some perfection in the Godhead. God—Elohim—speaks of supreme and creatorial power, whilst Most High God is prophetic of blessing to the millennial earth under the true Melchisedec. Almighty God tells of the resources the pilgrim can fall back upon when treading the pathway of faith like Abraham ; whilst the name of Jehovah declares the unchangeableness of His being, the One who was, and is, and is to come, consequently every promise and pledge to Israel will be verified ; whilst Jesus-Emmanuel tells of a Saviour God who in pity and compassion has visited this world to bless man, and reveal the almighty and unchangeable God, the Creator who wields supreme power, under the gracious name of FATHER.

There are several ways in which God as Father has been made known, such as the *Father of mercies* (2 Cor. I. 3), *Father of glory* (Eph. I. 17), *Father of spirits* (Heb. XII. 9), and *Father of lights* (James I. 17). He is the Author, Origin, and Source of all these things.

FATHER OF MERCIES ! It is from His liberal heart and hand we have and enjoy the manifold mercies wherewith our daily path is strewn ; mercies temporal and spiritual both come from the same divine fountain, the former being concerned with our need whilst on earth, whilst the latter connects us more with heaven.

Mercies, such as those we find in the Epistle to the Romans, and by which we are exhorted to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom. XII. 1) are of a spiritual nature. These "mercies" are intended by Him who is the *Father of them* to produce like feelings in us. Oh, what a lack there is of the exercise and manifestation of these heavenly features ! Alas ! what scattering and confusion has been wrought amongst the saints of God by those who ought to have shown " bowels and mercies " toward each other.

FATHER OF GLORY ! The contemplation of the God of our

Lord Jesus Christ under this title should lift our thoughts from earthly needs and circumstances (whether pleasing or painful) to what is heavenly and eternal; the wide sphere of glory to be displayed in all its fullness in accordance with counsels and purposes before all worlds. He has established the truth of this title, pledged its future display, by giving glory to Christ now as Man. We also are called to a glory that is eternal, *by* which He would attract our hearts in passing through the world to where Christ is, for we are called *by* glory *to* glory. The day draws near when the entire universe will universally demonstrate our God to be the *Father of Glory*.

FATHER OF SPIRITS! This title is connected with the Father's government of His children, and calls for subjection to Him, as such, in order that we may live. What a comfort to remember that when chastened it is a mark of His love and solicitude, every movement of His hand being actuated by the love of His heart, the end in view being our real good and blessing. Knowing this, we must not *despise* chastening, nor *faint* when reproved, but through godly *exercise* reap the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

FATHER OF LIGHTS! "God is light," He is the Source of all light, whether in the old creation or the new. The God who spoke out of darkness in the old creation, has shone in our hearts the glorious light of the knowledge of God now shining in the face of Jesus, the Head of the new creation. Believers are the children of light, their inheritance is in the light, they are light in the Lord.

But the highest aspect, towering pre-eminently above all others, is that of the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* It was to declare the Father's name, and bring us into the same relationship that Jesus now enjoys, as Man, before the Father, which was the real reason for the Father sending the Son. In His person the disciples saw the glory as of an only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth, who dwelt, whilst here, in the bosom of the Father; whose mission was not only to reveal and unfold that name so expressive of grace and relationship, but to accomplish a work in virtue of which we can now be brought into the highly favoured place of sons.

John's Gospel teems with gracious communications concerning the Father. There we learn it was worshippers of the Father Jesus came to seek, and all who came to Jesus came under the drawings of the Father, consequently none would be cast out, but should be raised up at the last day. We also learn it was the Father's doctrine He taught, the Father's words He spake, the Father's honour He sought, and that the Father's commandment is life everlasting, the many-mansioned house of the Father, our eternal abode where Jesus now waits to welcome His own. Meantime the Comforter, sent of the Father, gives us the consciousness we are not orphans, and that we are *in* the Son as the Son was *in* the Father, and in keeping Christ's word we shall know the presence of, and enjoy communion with, the Father. The Father being the Husbandman who purges with a view to *more* fruit and *much* fruit. It is to the "holy Father's" keeping we are now committed. Jesus, having accomplished atonement, ascended to *His* Father and *our* Father, and from the glory into which He was received He sent down the Holy Spirit from the Father, giving to us the sense of our relationship as sons, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

What a wonderful circle of blessing, what divine affections the sovereign grace of God has introduced us into as connected with the Father's name. We can now look forward to that bright day when we shall dwell with the Father and the Son through eternal ages, in all the effulgent brightness of holy love and light, as sons before the Father's face; the Father's love the source of glory then, as it is now of all our mercies and providential experiences in our pilgrim journey. Continuous and unalloyed communion will crown the story of His grace when with the Father and the Son in glory.

Whilst every name in which God has revealed Himself in relation to men, with the blessing attaching thereto, has not become obsolete, but still exists for our comfort and blessing, yet *the highest and best is that of Father.*

R. BLAKEBOROUGH.

Reading on 1 John ii.

THERE is neither type nor illustration of advocacy in the Old Testament, because the Father was not known; advocacy is with the Father and is connected with relationship.

Priesthood is with God, but Christ's present priesthood is not connected with sin, for the simple reason that it is all put away once and for ever. It was as Priest He confessed our sins on the cross—but that was not a priestly office—and now He is in the holiest, all question of sin being eternally settled.

Jesus Christ the righteous is always before God, so that the sin question and the righteousness question is solved. He is a propitiation not for the Jews only, but for the whole world. Making propitiation is not bearing away sins—it is the blood on the mercy seat in virtue of which any one can go to God—drawn by grace, of course—but it is nowhere said that the *sins* of the whole world are borne away.

Christ wrought a work on the cross which has so perfectly glorified God that in virtue of it any sinner can come—the way is open. God has set forth Christ, a mercy seat through faith in His blood. All believers are made the righteousness of God in Him.

God's righteousness is manifested in placing Christ *as Man* at His own right hand, He having perfectly glorified God. The *work* in which He glorified God was on *our* account, so it would not be *just to Christ* if *we* were not in the glory with Him.

Christ is our life, and we are made the righteousness of God in Him. We *were* once identified with the first Adam; now we *are* identified with the last Adam, in Him we have life and righteousness. We do not find these things in the gospels. There we learn what Christ *did*, but the *effects* of His work are brought out in the epistles, after He was glorified and the Holy Ghost sent down to bear witness.

Advocacy has to do with our walk. I am to keep myself unspotted from the world; I cannot touch pitch without

being defiled. Numbers XIX. is very strong as to this, it shows that God must have us suitable to His presence. If a man died in a tent, those with him could not help it, yet they were defiled. This shows God's intrinsic hatred of sin, and the fruits of it in every form. We ought to be closed vessels, not open to contract defilement.

If I am spotted by the world and go into the presence of God, the effect is the spot is manifested. From Christ's pierced side flowed blood and water—both—not one only. By the blood guilt was expiated, by the water defilement is removed. At conversion we are bathed all over—clean every whit—but if my feet get defiled by contact with the world they must be daily washed. This is Christ's present ministry, as the Advocate, with a view to restoration to communion with the Father.

Sin is not any longer charged or imputed to me, because Christ has borne it completely away; but if my conscience is defiled, the spot must be removed by the washing of water by the Word. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

If I have sinned, communion is interrupted, and I need the advocacy of Christ for restoration. God has given me a nature that delights in what He is; as a consequence, I can have communion and fellowship with the Father.

Fellowship with the Father is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in me—giving me, in measure, the same thoughts and feelings the Father has.

All depends upon the *CROSS*—all blessing flows from it; there God manifested perfect love and goodness toward man; there Christ, as Man, manifested perfect obedience to God, as a consequence He is now glorified. By and by He will be glorified here—manifestly, outwardly—but for this He waits; we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. God would not wait for the manifested glory, He *straightway* glorified Him, and consequently the Holy Ghost is here, as a divine answer and witness to the glory Christ has received as Man.

We no longer know Christ after the flesh; Paul had looked for a Messiah after the flesh, but he would no longer

know Him in that way, for he knew Him now as something nearer and dearer—a glorified Man at God's right hand.

Christ's death is my death. I learn that my links are broken with the world. I feed upon Christ, eat His flesh and drink His blood; having eaten, life eternal is mine, then I feed continuously and I dwell in Him and He in me. I cannot properly feed upon Christ incarnate until I feed upon Him in death, not till then can I follow Him in His path down here. Christ in glory—a divine Person and a glorified Man—is the Old Corn of the land. We cannot feed upon Him thus as connected with earth, He was separate from earth in life and in death, He was heavenly whilst here.

We ought to be diligent in feeding on Christ, diligent as to communion. If we are in communion we learn divine secrets; John lying in His bosom learned the secrets of the Lord. He did not occupy that place because he wanted to know the secrets, but just for the simple pleasure of being there, and consequently was not afraid to ask, whilst the others were. He rested on a bosom of perfect love, and perfect love casts out fears. I cannot truly walk with Christ unless I have entire confidence in Him.

There are not two kinds of holiness, there is only one; the standard—Christ. I am to walk as He walked. It is never said we ought to *be* what Christ was, but to walk as He walked. We are told that as He is we now are. As He is now in the glory, so are we down here in this world. We are to walk then as He walked. Obedience and love sum up His pathway, they are characteristic of Him and of eternal life, for He Himself is that life (1 John v. 20).

His words and commandments are to govern us. The commandments are compulsory, but His words, being the revelation of the divine mind, are to me, as a Christian, as binding as positive commands.

We never get Christ doing anything to please Himself. That is the standard we are to measure ourselves by.

J. N. DARBY.

Summary from notes taken by Inglis Fleming.

The Father's Commandment.

2 JOHN.

JOHN'S first epistle embraces in its scope the entire family of God, whilst the second and third are personal missives, but the heart that embraced the whole equally cared for each individual saint with a love that owned nothing less than the love of Christ as its model, as it was its living, active source.

John had leaned on the bosom of Jesus, felt the warm pulsations of that love which had its source in the bosom of the Father, and, we may safely assume, never lost the blessed consciousness of that divine well-spring, *over*-flowing and *ever*-flowing, in all its blessed fullness. If that love flowed as a river in the first epistle, for the blessing of the whole household of faith, the rivulet ran with characteristic energy in the second and third epistles, refreshing and invigorating, the heart of the " elect lady " and " the wellbeloved Gaius " ; but he let us know this love is inseparable from truth, they are twin sisters.

In this day, when falsehood leavens love, this essential character of love, according to God, cannot be too strongly emphasized. In so far as love is one with the truth, so far and no further it partakes of the character of divine love.

The Apostle's joy was great on finding members of the elect lady's household walking in the truth, *i.e.* according to its practical controlling power, so giving character and stability to love. Natural love tolerates blindness to everything that obstructs its expression, either in the one who loves or in its object. Not so the love of God, which, issuing out of its own pure, transparent depths, acts according to the moral condition of its objects and thus furnishes the model and principle upon which that love in the creature redeemed by grace should be framed, viz. according to the truth.

But this " walking according to the truth " is presented in a remarkable light, viz. as a " commandment from the Father." This term, expressing paternal relationship, lifts it out of the region of legal obligation and is suggestive of

authority in its highest and purest form, that is, as the Father's will for the children. The love of the Father lays down the path of blessing: the love of the child responds in implicit obedience, after the model of Him whose life and nature the believer possesses; but love and truth find their expression in incarnation, *i.e.* "from the beginning" (vers. 5, 6).

What presses upon the Apostle's mind in this epistle to the elect lady seems to be the danger of undervaluing the importance of the fact that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, emphasized here as of vital moment, as it were the beacon-light of Christian testimony, from which, in the darkening age of apostasy, every other truth essential to faith radiates. Against this doctrine the forces and strategy of evil are uniformly ranged; "For *many deceivers* are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." "The stone which the builders disallowed [ignored or omitted], the same is made the head of the corner" (1 Peter II. 7), for it is the omission of this fundamental truth that the Apostle lays stress upon. Without it the whole superstructure, as to stability, vanishes.

This *omission* of the doctrine of the incarnation constitutes the initial step in the programme of anti-Christianity, as paving the way for *the denial* of the Son when in person the Antichrist appears on the scene. For the Antichrist brooks no rival to his universal autocratic sway, either in the person of the Messiah, as relating to Israel, or the Father and the Son, as characterizing the Christian revelation (1 John II. 22). Hence the solemn and emphatic denunciation of the teacher who *omits* this essential doctrine: "This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

Again, as the Apostle presents the matter here, the ignoring of incarnation, that wondrous expression and manifestation of Deity, of which Christ in incarnation is the witness, is obliterated. "Whosoever goes forward and abideth not in the doctrine of the Christ *hath not God*." Deity as manifested in humanity is not theirs in spiritual possession, and with it passes all the marvellous outflow of grace and truth, of light and love, of sorrow and sympathy, presented in holy perfection on earth as the life of God in

man, to which Paul apparently refers in Ephesians IV. 21, "as the truth is in Jesus," to which no mere mortal could lay claim. On the other hand, "he that abides in the doctrine has the Father and the Son" (N.T.), *i.e.* possesses the full revelation of Christianity.

It was this fact of incarnation that underlay the inextinguishable hostility of chief priests and elders, of scribes and Pharisees, against the person of Christ, whose claims to Deity were oftentimes presented, directly or indirectly (John X. 33; V. 18; XIX. 7). It was this that aroused at the crucifixion taunt and mockery, railing and insult from those who had already denied His claim to be the Son of God (Matt. XXVII. 43).

M. C. GAHAN.

A Word to Christian Women.

THE discipline of daily work is good for you physically—essential for you morally; practical conduct in the household, zeal and care for all its duties is part of your witness for Christ, the more so when there is that in it which is not congenial. We *talk* of sufferings, but do we bear them as the meek and lowly *One* of whom Matthew XI. speaks? Let us keep a good conscience in our daily work and walk; and let our demeanour and actions so speak that they will tell their own tale of their source. Others may misjudge us, but we can commit that to God.

The mere enjoyment of truth when listening to lectures, the ability to converse on Scripture, is not enough; its practical power must be seen in living action, and its sweetness displayed in the routine of daily life. Without the daily training you will go through the time God may leave you on earth shorn of much of the strength which submitted will, obedience, and its blessed fruits bring; adorning the life of the Christian woman with that ornament the Lord Himself loves to see in her—the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Surely you would like to shine in spiritual beauty and adornment in the perfect view of Him who esteems this lowly spirit as of great price. Meek and lowly of heart, He loves to see these beautiful traits repro-

duced in His followers. This—and much more—is within your reach if you wholly submit yourself to the Holy Spirit who dwells within you. Although you may not be known outside the home circle, yet if *as wife* you are true in heart, in purpose, in person, in subjection to your husband as the church to Christ ; if *as mother* you are patient, firm, nurturing and admonishing your children in the Lord; if *as servant* you are faithful, upright, not rendering eye-service, but in singleness of heart serving the Lord—this is equally well pleasing as the more prominent service given to men, for it has pleased God, in His ways, to give women a more retired, but not less honoured place than man ; the quiet walk and work of the wife shall in a coming day receive full recognition, and the faithful servant shall receive the inheritance as a reward.

DR. MACKERN.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER III. 21.

Q. What does the expression "glory in the church by Christ Jesus" involve?

A. The prayer of the Apostle is that, as the object and end of all God's counsels that centre in Christ, there should be glory to God in the assembly *in* Christ Jesus (as it really is), the closing words being the elaborate expression of continuance for ever; while the connection with the preceeding verse indicates that the aim of the power that works in us even now is ever that glory.

CHAPTER IV.

Q. What "vocation" does Paul refer to in verse 1?

A. The calling wherewith we have been called, now to be pressed as the standard of Christian walk, doubtless refers to what had been presented as the actual subsisting position of the assembly on earth in chapter II. 11–22 : namely, one new man (ver. 15) as to life and nature, one body (ver. 16), individual nearness to the Father (ver. 16), and the habitation of God by the Spirit. There is thus entering into and forming "our calling," corporate relation-

ship with Christ, individual relationship with the Father, and that of the house by the Holy Ghost taking up His dwelling in it.

Q. Do you consider that those gracious moral traits spoken of in verse 2 would call for special exercise in a "walk worthy of the vocation"?

A. Assuredly. What is put first as necessary to the path flowing from such a calling is this spirit of lowliness before God, meekness in relation to men, and that with longsuffering and forbearing one another in love, even where all was so bright as in the early days of Ephesus.

Q. How would you define the "unity of the Spirit"?

A. It is the realization in our walk by the power of the Spirit of the unity which we have with all that are Christ's, expressed in verses 4–6 in different aspects of it. The body could not but be one and gives its main character to this unity, though it is not it. Note that no shade of failing in maintaining that unity is implied, as in the modern use of "endeavour": it is simply "giving diligence." And then there is the precious "uniting bond of peace."

Q. The word "one" occurs seven times in verses 4, 5, *and* 6. *Will you explain what the true force is of each expression?*

A. There are three circles of relationship in which we have our part as Christians that are thus brought to bear upon our hearts for the practical realization of unity. They have the same centre, but widen out from each other. The first is that of one body, that of Christ into which we have been formed by one Spirit, in one hope of the full accomplishment of it in glory. Next comes that of profession—one Lord, the object of the one faith of all who submit to His claims, confessed in one baptism; it is that of the house. And lastly, one God and Father of all, who as to His personal place is above all, while yet through all as God everywhere, and then in intimacy of relationship "in *us* all," connecting thus by the last clause with the oneness of the family of God as seen in John XVII.

Answers by
J. A. TRENCH.

The Man Christ Jesus.

THE humanity of the Lord Jesus was perfectly natural and simple in its development. He grew up amid the relationships and circumstances of human life in a manner entirely like our own. Still, there was a character to it that morally separated Him from those in the midst of whom He lived and moved. His life unfolded itself like a flower beneath the genial rays of the sun, its beauty and its sweetness alike attained without effort and without aim. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke II. 40). As years went on He "increased in wisdom, and in favour with God and man."

The secret of the life of Jesus lay within, deep hidden from the eyes of man. Beneath the fostering love of God His Father He grew; one motive gave character to all He did and said; His delight was to do the will of God and be about His Father's business. His relationship to God as His Father, and absolute subjection to His will, did not take Him out of His human relationships and the duties that attached to them; it was in those relationships and connected with those duties He glorified His Father, perfectly met His mind and will, whilst at the same time was subject to His parents.

In the life of Jesus the spring of everything was absolutely divine, though the expression of it was perfectly human. It was in the humble home at Nazareth, beneath the parental roof and control of Joseph reputed His father and the gentle nurture of Mary His mother, working at His lowly task as a carpenter, that Jesus, the Son of God's love, lived for thirty years, ever mindful during that time of His "Father's business." Here He tasted, in all its sweetness, the overruling care of divine love; as indeed He did during His subsequent public ministry and prophetic service. His Father's will governed everything in Him, His Father's care was unchanged; the storms of public life, the opposition of men and Satan, only gave occasion for His faith and obedience to display them-

selves. Every step of the journey He lived *by* and *for* His Father.

His enjoyment of divine love and care was perfect and uninterrupted, because His *walk* was perfect. "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John xv. 10). *Obedience* was the principle upon which His enjoyment of the Father's love to Him, as a Man here, was dependent. How fully that was put to the test the wilderness and Gethsemane witness; He learned obedience in suffering. His *walk*, as well as His *person*, ever afforded delight to the Father; He ever did those things that pleased Him.

The obedience of Jesus is a sweet and holy thing for our souls to dwell upon; it is the fine flour of the meat offering, the true bread from heaven by which our souls are nourished; every step fragrant with delight, for in Him we see the *one* and only *Man* who never had a thought or desire apart from God, and in whose holy nature no contrary thing was found; the absorbing object of His life being the work the Father gave Him to do, the intense delight in doing it being that which imparted to it the sweet savour of frankincense—type of the affection and devotion which imparted to all the words and ways of Christ their sweet odour.

He who thus walked was "God manifest in flesh"; the divine glory of His person is manifest all along His life of dependence; but it never overlaps or clouds the reality of His humanity. His divine glory was always itself, and there for man's blessing, but it never interfered with the reality of His manhood. These two things are beautifully set before our eyes in the scene on the lake of Gennesaret. In sweet and simple faith in the care of God, His Father, He rested in the hinder part of the ship asleep. Awakened by His terror-stricken disciples, His divine glory burst forth in all its brightness; in words which fully demonstrated His Deity. He commanded the angry winds and waves to cease; obedient to His command, peace reigned where all had been unrest and violence.

"*What manner of man is this?*" the awe-stricken disciples exclaim. We answer, it was "Emmanuel" who spake

that word which produced a "great calm"; it was "the Man Christ Jesus," "God manifest in flesh"; such a man never was on this earth before, the deep mystery of His person only known to God the Father.

In His divine glory we can have no part save to hide ourselves in it and find there all our blessedness; but we are called to live the life of faith and dependence in which He ever lived, if we would be in the abiding enjoyment of divine love as He ever was.

DR. WOLSTON.

The Holy Incense.

EXODUS XXX. 34–38.

WHAT Jesus is to God nobody can tell: this is set forth in figure in the perfume, which is symbolical of Christ, typifying those excellencies enshrined in the Son incarnate, the perfections of the sacred person of the Man Christ Jesus—God manifest in flesh—which transcend the creature's grasp, for the incarnation by its inscrutability presumes at once the mystery of Deity.

"The Father *only* Thy blest Name
Of *Son* can comprehend."

The four ingredients which composed the incense were all of like weight; there was no inequality, no preponderance, all were proportionate, all *tempered together* after the art of the apothecary, *i.e.* the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of the Spirit of God (Exod. XXXI. 3–11). Pure frankincense, salted, with "stacte, onycha, and galbanum," were compounded into a perfume, a *con*fection, pure and holy. Not one of the "sweet spices" of which the perfume was composed is indigenous to Palestine; much concerning them remains unknown altogether.

(1) Stacte.—Opinions vary as to what this substance is; all that is positively known is that "it signifies an odorous distillation from some plant."

(2) Onycha.—The word occurs here only in the O.T. It is generally believed to be the operculum, or covering shell of some species of mollusc, found in India

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and the Red Sea. The Greek word is applied to onyx stone and to a shell which is still used for making perfume, and it is "probably" the substance referred to here. "Bochart believes some kind of bdellium is meant."

(3) Galbanum is "perhaps" grown in Persia, or imported from India or Africa; "but the plant from which it comes is not yet certainly known."

(4) Frankincense is produced only in Arabia and the east coast of Africa. "The resin itself is well known; but it is still uncertain by what tree it is produced." "It was imported from Sheba (Arabia) into Syria (Jer. VI. 20), as at present."

This "PERFUME" typically expresses the sweet "savour" of Christ in His excellencies as going up to God, the Father, for the sole appreciation of Him who can alone appreciate Him. Of all the glories that belong to Him, with which He will be worthily crowned, in which we too shall have our part in owning Him as worthy, there is none to which our hearts more gladly bow than the great fact that, beyond and above all we now so feebly know, and all which we shall yet so fully know, of His great worth, His excellencies, these "sweet spices," speak of something unknown to us and that will ever remain unknown to us.

Our Lord and Master, our Saviour, Son of God, is well known to us in the love that makes Him known in the intimacy that loves to make us intimate, yet in the adoration and the reverence that will be our soul's eternal delight there will still remain a distance, infinite and eternal, between all the creature can apprehend of the worth of Jesus, the Virgin's Son, the Nazarene, the Son of God, as so revealed to us, and the glory that is properly and essentially His, as known to God alone. How foolish, therefore —when it is not positively wicked—for man to allow his mind to work, and in ignorance of the "apothecary's art" —this divine science—to attempt to put those things together which are typified by this perfume, or to analyse them when so *com*pounded, seeing that to God only belongs the sweet savour of *all* that there is in Christ.

The anointing oil and the perfume were alike guarded

from profanation, but the latter was still further guarded from the curiosity of analysis or definition. It might be—and was—"beaten small," but never *separated*, and every blow only brought out its innate excellencies. In a cloud of this incense the high priest entered the holiest on the great day of atonement, but there, as elsewhere, all the perfume, the sweet odour, was for God, and is expressive of the special and peculiar delight He had in the offering of Christ, embodied in the words: "Therefore doth My Father *love Me*, because I lay down My life that I might take it again."

There is that in both the life and death of Christ which God alone can comprehend. Our part is to stand with unshod feet and adoring hearts, as we gaze upon that "Great Mystery" God manifest in flesh, not attempting to define what is undefinable, or gauge what is incomprehensible to creature minds.

EDWARD CROSS.

Prayer Meetings.

"HEAR, Lord, the voice of Judah . . . be Thou an help to him" (Deut. XXXIII. 7). Judah's *voice* was to be poured into God's *ear* to obtain *help*. How suggestive of the true nature of a prayer meeting! At such times we are gathered to speak to God audibly, unitedly seek His help, and count upon His gracious answers. There is no such thing as a "gift of prayer"; the youngest saint is equally privileged with the oldest to express to God the needs of His people. We have in the New Testament examples of assembly prayer meetings convened on three occasions. Acts IV.: Pressure and persecution drew saints and servants together, with one accord they supplicated God for boldness to speak the Word. Not only was there an *outward* answer—for the building shook where they were assembled—but an *inward* one also, for each and all were *filled* with the Holy Ghost: one heart and one soul animated the entire company. They craved power to testify to a hostile world of a gracious Saviour once crucified, now exalted, made Lord of all.

The next time—Acts XII.—one of their number is in prison. Peter is chained to two soldiers inside; two others keep guard outside; whilst bolts and bars and an iron gate make escape, humanly speaking, impossible. In the house of Mary—John Mark's mother—many are gathered together; they remember Peter's bonds as bound with him, enter into the adversity which has befallen him, and intercession to God is made without ceasing by the church for him. Impossibilities are unknown to God; what are prison doors and Roman guards to Him? Peter's chains fell from his hands, an angelic messenger conducted him through the first and second wards, bolts and bars flew back, the iron gate opened of its own accord, Peter stood outside—a free man. Making his way to John Mark's home, the incredulity of the company witnesses that the *prayer of desire* is not the same as the *prayer of faith*, for when the answer came, and Rhoda announced his arrival, they proclaimed her mad.

When they found it was really Peter we can well conceive that the meeting convened for intercession was concluded with thanksgiving, for had not God graciously demonstrated that the word "impossible" could not apply to Him, that there is nothing too hard for the Lord?

In chapter XIII. saints are again together. The Holy Ghost had marked out Barnabas and Saul to go to the regions beyond, to carry the glad tidings of the grace of God to other lands. With fasting and prayer—commended to God by the church—they go forth assured of the happy fellowship and hearty identification of the saints with the work to which the Lord had called His servants.

These prayer meetings were, in each case, assembly meetings. The first was marked by fervent *supplication* for power in *testimony;* the second by long-continued *intercession* for a saint and servant in *adversity;* the third by whole-hearted *identification* with the *evangelization* of the regions beyond. It was not their personal needs or private cares which drew them together; it was love for the Lord and unselfish devotion to His interests that caused them to bow their knees in united prayer, and called for special seasons of waiting upon God.

If we were more awake to the distracted and divided

state of the whole church, should we not often be found together in humiliation and supplication for *all saints?*

How often we come to a prayer meeting burdened with private sorrows and individual wants (which should have been cast upon God before coming together) ! Consequently our hearts and minds are not free to enter into the circle of divine interests. What a field the epistles open to us for united prayer ! We are to pray for kings and all in authority that God's people may be in peace ; *for all saints,* that they may enter into the matchless counsels of God, that they may walk worthy of the Lord, stand perfect and complete in all the will of God ; and for *all men,* that the gospel might have free course, run, and be glorified.

Is it not the lack of cultivation of the spirit of prayer for *all* saints and *all* men which makes our prayer meetings cold, dead, and formal ? How often platitudes are uttered, prayers long drawn out without point or power, many words spoken, but few simple, distinct, definite requests made.

How can this be remedied ? Let the heart and mind become permeated with those things connected with the circle of divine affections ; let us make ourselves acquainted with the needs and sorrows of saints ; let us identify ourselves with Christ's servants in their labours ; let us seek to embrace every member of Christ's body in our affections, " watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for *all saints.*" Then let our thoughts widen out, and let us offer " supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men ; for kings, and all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

J. PALMER.

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" LET not your heart be troubled." Sorrows of the wilderness, pilgrim fare there may be, but if the heart is kept happy *inside,* outside circumstances matter little. Faith can always count on Christ to meet everything as it comes up ; He is always thinking of us and is equal to every emergency.

"Called" Children.

" BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called the children of God*" (1 John III. 1).

Here is an absolute, unqualified statement, full of deep meaning. Matchless depths are in these precious words; we are *now* the children of God!—" born " into that relationship, and it is one which abides. A clear apprehension of this gracious truth, this divinely assured fact, is deeply important: it is the birthright of every true Christian, and the assured knowledge of it is for our present enjoyment. The more truly we enter into our relationship, take our place as children of God, the more effective will be our testimony in the world; whilst that which gives us the inner consciousness of it, the ring of certainty and assurance, is the indwelling Spirit of God.

Our destiny is sonship, conformity to Christ in glory. It is this of which Paul speaks; but John—if I may coin a word—speaks of child-ship; we have the family nature imparted to us. A king's child is by birth higher in dignity than the richest and greatest in the realm in whose veins the royal blood does not run. Everything flows from relationship. Let it be established clearly that we are really and truly born of God, then things otherwise inexplicable become intelligible and easily understood.

Our calling is that of *children*. Other scriptures delineate other aspects of our calling, but the charming food of our souls here is to behold the special and peculiar *manner* in which *the Father's* love is shown to us: " Behold, what *manner of love* the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called "—saints? Nay! Christians? Nay, something sweeter and more precious than those terms convey—we are called *children of God!* Here is love indeed!

Let us behold the wondrous manner of this love as pictured in that hapless prodigal lying, *yesterday*, forlorn, destitute, beggared, miserable, squalid, without a friend; *to-day*, kissed, welcomed, robed, and feasted in the unending joys of the Father's house; his portion the unspeakable

enjoyment of the Father's love—not only to-day, but for ever. They *began* to be merry. Oh! that the manner of that love may thrill our hearts as we behold it; what a picture! But it is the picture of a great reality, the actual transmigration from the awful distance of sin right home to the Father's embrace, and welcome, and love; but understood only by those who have experienced it.

The creation of this world and its thousand constellations by omnipotent power, never filled those heavenly courts with melody such as was heard when the fountain of everlasting love was opened to receive a repentant prodigal and bring him into the family circle, partaking of its life and nature.

All heaven is in ecstasy at the introduction of a once sin-polluted, fallen child of Adam into the divine family, cleansed and pardoned; the bringing of a "child of wrath" into the relationship of a "child of God." This is far and away the most wondrous part of God's ways; the new creation leaves the old far behind, for it is the fruit of measureless love through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; it demands the endless thanksgiving of every babe, young man, and father in the family of God.

"Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me." "I and the children"! Think of the disparity, the moral distance which once existed between Himself, the Son, and the children with whom He deigns thus to associate Himself! How has this distance been met? First by redemption, and then by a love that begat them anew, placed the redeemed ones in the nearest and dearest of all relationships, so that "He is not ashamed to call them brethren"!

Marvellous indeed! This is far beyond forgiveness, far beyond justification, unspeakably blessed as that surely is; it is the gratification of the heart of the Son in associating with Himself those begotten of the Father, all of those who are truly and rightly called "the children of God"; fruit of the love of the Father who had given them to Him. It is the highest form of Christian favour and privilege. As we adoringly contemplate it, and enter into the blessed meaning of those words, "Beloved, *now are we* the children of God," we may well exclaim, "What manner of love!"

J. WILSON SMITH.

Hebrews.

APPROACH to God, walk with God, witness for God, characterize this epistle. The believer is viewed in chapters III. and IV. traversing the wilderness pathway ; in chapter X. 22, drawing near in the sanctuary ; in chapter XIII. 13, going forth outside the camp.

The whole epistle is a word of exhortation (XIII. 22) that these three positions should be embraced in faith. Written, as it is, to saints not yet fully separated from Judaism, its teachings become of immense importance in these days when the principles of Judaism have been introduced into the church under the plea of divine order, and saints are beguiled into a compromise with the truth to their own loss and God's dishonour.

In chapter II. 12, 13, we see the Apostle and High Priest of our confession in a threefold identification with His people corresponding to the three positions to which attention has been called. First in praise to God, then in the path of faith—" I will put my trust in Him," next with the believing generation : the children in the place of testimony among the professing people of God. " Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for *signs* and for wonders in Israel."

The first three men of faith named in chapter XI. exhibit these three traits : Abel *approaches* God in the value of what was presented on the altar, and testimony is rendered to His gifts ; Enoch *walks* with God, and it is recorded that he " pleased Him " ; Noah *witnesses* by the building of the ark and thus bears testimony.

The *walk* of faith may be known by the rich as well as the poor. It is the Spirit of Christ in us who says, " I will put my trust in Him " (chap. II. 13), quite irrespective of outward circumstances. The supply of all need is according to the divine riches in glory by Christ Jesus, and whilst including temporal needs has a far-reaching meaning.

Another aspect of the life of faith is Godward. We are invited to draw near in full assurance of faith, the basis of *approach* being the blood of Jesus and the new and living

way. The divine thought is that we should enter where "praises never fail." The leader of those praises is the One who has known the sorrow of the first twenty-one verses of Psalm XXII.; it is He who raises the song of verse 22.

The Spirit interprets to us the meaning of His measureless sorrow, and produces in response the harmonies of that song which He raised in the midst of His brethren.

The first ten chapters conduct us onward to the holiest, the last three show us the walk and witness of the man of faith. The first essential for a true witness is separation to Christ. "Let us go forth to Him without the camp" (chap. XIII. 13). The camp is evidently the place where, under ritualistic forms, man in the flesh professes to worship God, the way into the holy places not being known; for the true idea of testimony lies in the representation on earth of what is revealed from heaven. If there is not a *moral* correspondence between the heavenly revelation and the earthly representation, there is no true testimony; the one must be a counterpart of the other.

The death of Stephen illustrates this: a world-rejected but heaven-glorified Saviour is revealed; the counterpart is *seen* when Stephen suffers on earth and in those sufferings exhibits the grace of the life of Jesus.

What we need is to learn the true nature of Christianity, the oneness of saints with Christ in heaven—their glorified Head—and the *Holy Ghost on earth* forming the body—one body in Christ; each member of that body being privileged to draw near in priestly worship, walk in holy separation, and witness to their association with Christ outside the camp.

May the Spirit of God work the reality of these things in us, in their proper proportion and sequence in our souls, so that we may walk, worship, and witness, in the grace, power, and unction of the Holy Spirit.

DR. WARREN.

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How came testimony to be broken up? From seeking our own and not the things of Christ. What maintained unity at first was simply going after Christ as sheep after a shepherd, *not seeking anything else.*

The Well and the Wall.

JACOB having purchased land in Shechem, pitched his tent, erected an altar, and dug a well, henceforth known as "Jacob's." Later on he was commanded of God to leave Shechem, and thus lost possession of the land and the well. Returning later, he had to regain it with his sword and bow, and subsequently gave it to Joseph. When dying he blessed Joseph, saying, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a *well!* whose branches run over the *wall*" (Gen. XLIX. 22).

At Sychar's "well," centuries later, the branches of the true Joseph ran over the "wall" to one of Samaria's daughters. A wearied traveller sat on that well-side, His body worn with a fatiguing journey under a broiling Eastern sun, when presently a sin-wearied daughter of Samaria approaches desiring to draw from Jacob's well, and the stranger asks for a drink of water. Surprised at such a request from one with whom her nation had no dealings, she inquires how it is that He asks this favour at her hands.

Ah! little did she know that it was the Lord of glory who had come all the way from heaven to earth who sat there, and who sought a far more satisfying portion than the refreshment found in the cool draught from Jacob's well—a feast not even to be found among unfallen angels in glory. Oh, the amazing grace of God! This poor woman was brought to the well-side to minister delight to the heart of Jesus.

In order that she might not be terrified by the glorious majesty of God, He appeared in a servant's form in the humble garb of a wearied traveller. What condescension! What unspeakable love! He opened a living spring, refreshed her with the waters of a fountain of which those who drink never thirst, and at the same time refreshed and gladdened His own heart. Weariness and bodily need were forgotten; He had meat to eat the disciples knew not of, an all-satisfying feast in doing the will and finishing the work of the Father who had sent Him; both had a feast that day which will last throughout all eternity.

"Sweeter, O Lord, than rest to Thee,
While seated by the well,
Was the blest work that led Thee there,
Of Grace and Peace to tell."

What a fruitful bough He proved, what a well-spring to Samaria's daughter! Lovely picture of the grace of God to us Gentiles, of the love which went forth to bless, not only this poor woman, but all in like manner whose souls are, like hers, athirst for the water of life.

"There Jacob's erring daughter found
Those streams unknown before,
The water-brooks of life that make
The weary thirst no more."

JOHN GASKIN.

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WE are CHILDREN OF GOD, sealed with the Holy Ghost; not only the glory of the Father's house, but the affections of the Father's heart ours. There is no separation in the love of His heart from one whom He has been pleased to bring into family relationship. Oh that we were more filled with the thought of it, turning more constantly to the freshness of the love in God's heart, that God, who has called us with such a calling, expressed His love to us in making us sons! Even now when passing through the wilderness we are *loved* children. We shall never be *more* beloved than we are *now*; all the affections of God's heart are flowing out to us. What a marvellous position is that of a child of God!

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IF you are soon to be in the glory of God—joint heirs with Christ—will God, think you, let you be in want of a scrap of bread by the way? The waves may come rolling against you, but when they break you will see they came to show some particular thing the Father had to do in you, something He wanted you to bring into the light. Do not leave it to Him to press home things in you that are unlike Christ; go to Him and condemn them in yourself; and go on doing so if they come up again and again.

Response.

IN Luke XIV. a supper is spread—a *great* one. Its greatness worthy of its giver. Desolation had been written over the portals of the temple in chapter XIII., but satisfaction and delight are inscribed on these door-posts, for wisdom had prepared her house, mingled her wine, loaded her table, and sent her messengers forth to fill the house with guests.

The parable of the prodigal in chapter XV. illustrates the reception and welcome which await all who come. Robed, ringed, and feasted, he enters into the Father's joy, his fellowship is with the Father as he feasts on the fatted calf. This reception is common to all who come; all are received alike; it is grace pure and unalloyed. It tells us that the love which spread the feast welcomes every returning prodigal to the banquet of love; but whilst the bounteous hand of the giver of the feast provided richly for all who came—without money and without price—the narratives of those who received blessing—after this supper was spread—tell us that the grace which brings salvation carries its own lessons to those whom it seats at the festal board.

Luke gives an account of only four persons having been healed and blessed after the announcement of the supper. The first was a LEPER, the second a BEGGAR, the third a PUBLICAN, the fourth a THIEF.

Chapter XVII. records the first of the four who were blessed by the ministry of Jesus, Emmanuel.

Ten lepers own their moral distance as they stand " afar off." All cast themselves upon the mercy of Jesus; each discovers that His compassion fails not, and they go away cleansed. One, finding he is clean, turned back to Christ, and falling at His feet, with a loud voice glorified God. The once defiled leper became a WORSHIPPER.

The other nine went on their journey to the desolate house, whilst this one makes much of Him by whom he had been blessed. Christ becomes everything to him; he delights to lavish the gratitude of his heart in grateful praise on the One who had manifested such grace to him;

no longer " afar off," he is now " made nigh," and falling in adoration at the feet of Jesus, he ascribes glory to God.

In chapter XVIII. a POOR BEGGAR hears that " Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." With the keen eye of faith he discovers—what the crowd failed to discern—that it is " David's Son," the rightful heir to the royal throne, and not merely a despised Nazarene who is passing by; he at once casts himself upon the " mercy " of David's Son and David's Lord. God's mercy is an inexhaustible resource for those who cast themselves upon it. " Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee," is the immediate answer; and the once sightless beggar, having obtained the desired blessing, " followed Jesus "; attracted by the gracious answer to his need, he WALKED with the One who had blessed him. Jesus was on His pathway through a world that had rejected Him, and was now on His journey to the cross; to follow Him therefore involved being found with Him in His rejection.

As we commence chapter XIX., we see the Lord claiming " the chief among the publicans." He bids Zacchæus " make haste and come down," saying, " To-day I must abide at thy house." The Lord having dispensed salvation to him as a son of Abraham, immediately takes possession of his house. Do you think the beggar was left outside when Jesus was seated at the rich man's table? The poor man who is to rejoice in that he is exalted, and the rich in that he is brought low, of whom James speaks (chap. I. 9, 10), is here illustrated: Zacchæus *came down*, the beggar *rose up* at the call of Jesus; both rejoiced in a common benefactor and feasted at a common table.

Is not this incident an intimation that our Lord not only claims the " *worship* " of His people, but their WEALTH also? Henceforth their houses, with all they contain, are to be held at the absolute disposal of the One who has brought salvation to them; they are no longer to be used for self-gratification. This incident is connected with the parable of the nobleman gone into a far country, and to return, leaving his servants to study his interests and occupy till He come. Christ will soon receive His kingdom; then will come the reckoning time with His servants. How

many of us will then be able to say, " Lord, since You brought me salvation I have used my *time*, my *house*, my *wealth* for Thee and *only for Thee.* I simply hold all I have as a steward " ?

In Luke XXIII. the Lord has the whole power and enmity of the world against Him ; all had forsaken Him ; the only bit of comfort He found was in the thief dying by His side. This man feared God, condemned himself, justified Jesus, turned to Him in faith, and said, " Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

How the Lord's grace shines out in the answer : " To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Had He kept him waiting for the kingdom he must have waited until now, for the King has not yet claimed His kingdom. Instead of waiting for that, during all these centuries he has been with Christ in paradise.

Here we see a man who had no feet free to walk and follow Jesus, no home, no wealth to place at His disposal, only one member of his body was at his command. How did he use that one during the closing moments of his life ? In WITNESSING to his fellow-thief.

Is it not a salutary question for each and all to ask: "Are we answering to the grace which has reached us by rendering the *worship* of our hearts, the *walk* of our feet, the *wealth* we possess, and the *witness* of our tongues to the Christ the Son of God ? "

Shall the Samaritan leper, the blind beggar, the rich publican, and the dying thief receive the Lord's " Well done " in that day, whilst we, who are seated at the heavenly feast in wisdom's seven-pillared house, shun a walk with an unpopular and rejected Christ ; hoard up riches for ourselves instead of lavishing them upon Him ; keep our mouths closed when we have an opportunity of witnessing ; and fail to render the holy, happy worship of hearts redeemed at the infinite cost of the life-blood of the adorable Son of God ?

Grace saves wholly apart from works, but the grace which saves—if rightly appreciated and responded to—will surely be found expressing itself in the varied ways illustrated by these four men. H. NUNNERLEY.

Holding the Head.

If I hold the truth of the *one body* and do not *hold the Head*, I am in danger of making the maintenance of *ecclesiastical order* of more importance than *Christ*. If truly holding the Head, I shall not be negligent of church order ; but I must not forget that the Head would be incomplete without the body.

Scripture tells me I am related to *all* the members of Christ on earth, and that each one, with myself, is the object of His unalterable love and care. He gave Himself, nourishes and cherishes, not despising the lowest or smallest member, but sanctifying and cleansing, with a view to the day of presentation.

If we deny, in any way, the privileges of the whole body by appropriating them exclusively to any section less than the whole, it is the spirit of sectarianism, even if I claim that " I am of Christ " in doing so.

We are to maintain at all cost the holiness that suits God's presence in His house, but we are to do it in love, otherwise no maintenance of the truth of the *one body* will save from party spirit. Our relations with each other must ever be in the spirit of lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and forbearance. Practical grace in our ways, a heart kept in the sense of divine love, will alone enable us to forbear and forgive.

We must remember the unity of the body is not in our keeping ; we neither formed it, nor can it be broken by man.

The unity of the Spirit is maintained by walking in the recognition of the unity so formed, and by so conducting ourselves that in us lies no hindrance to its practical exhibition ; our affections embracing the whole church of God, and the truth maintained in a spirit of grace and patience toward those who differ from us.

In the unity the Spirit has formed we are to act as integral parts of a great whole, each seeking to fill the particular place in the body which has been assigned to us. For this we need much grace and exercise of heart, that we put no stumbling-block in the way of others, nor help to

turn over into the enemy's hands those who are the objects of Christ's love.

Where we have failed, self-judgment and confession to any whom we have wronged is the way of recovery left open to us, ever remembering this becomes us as those participating in a nearness to God, in a relationship as fixed and unalterable as the counsels of God—and as abiding as the perfect work of Christ—which gives effect to these counsels.

D. T. GRIMSTONE.

God's Oracles.

FROM the beginning of God's ways we see His value for the written Word. He has made a hedge about it, that no rude hand can guiltlessly touch it, either to add thereto or take therefrom. It was to mingle itself with all the personal and social life of His people, and shed its light on every path, however ordinary, of their daily journey. He has bound it round the heart, and before the eyes, and on the hands of His people. The gates of the field, the doors of the house, the morning and evening family, the walk abroad and the rest within, all were to witness to it.

Is it not blessed to see the Lord thus esteeming His own revelation and commending it to our esteem? It is the food of the life of faith and hope, it bears the soul to God and brings God to the soul; may we hold it fast, but use it skilfully, with a reverent and worshipping mind.

The two Testaments—the Old and New—are so linked together by the Holy Spirit, that scarcely a book in the Ancient Oracles is not expressly cited, distinctly referred to, or silently glanced at in the New Testament. The stars in those hemispheres may differ in magnitude, but they are equally the workmanship of one hand. "Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them for ever" (Ps. CXIX. 152).

J. G. BELLETT.

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IF you are on a sick-bed, and laid there to find out the right bearing of things, depend upon it, you will not find any comfort save in the word of the living God. It may be but a scrap of the old book, but with one word of the living God you will be more than a match for Satan.

The Rapture and the Kingdom.

THERE is a great difference between the Rapture and the Kingdom. The coming of the Lord Jesus for the church is the expression of His peculiar *love;* the Kingdom is the expression of His *power*. He will come and fetch His bride first. Looking at the Lord's love to us thus, it is quite distinctive from all other grace He will ever show.

Israel is to have an earthly kingdom, but external power would not satisfy us. We are part of the bride, the Lord has given Himself *to* her as well as *for* her; it is He—Himself—for whom she waits. The sway of the Lord Jesus in that day will extend to and take in everything; the people now associated with Him in suffering will reign with Him. The thought of being a king and a priest is beautiful for glory and dominion, but, ah! it does not touch that blessed thought of affection connected with the Bridegroom and the bride, or that of children in the Father's house in company with the Lord Jesus, the First-born among many brethren.

G. V. WIGRAM.

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YOU know you are in the Father; has He not revealed a love flowing out of His bosom to you? Not saved only, but the greatness of the Father's love bringing you so to Himself that you can say, "My fellowship is with the Father and the Son."

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YOU thought to be a strong disciple, but I am making you feel your weakness, giving you a broken heart that you may be strong. I am going to make a channel of you for My love to flow through, I am breaking you down that you may be able to feed My lambs.

Replies to Questions.

What constitutes meetness for heaven?

Every believer is perfectly fit for heaven solely through that which Christ *has done*, and no good act or acts can possibly make him any more meet than he is. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ has put all his sins away, and the

Word of God declares that the Father hath made him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Meetness is attributed in Scripture to the work of Christ and the Father's grace. If a true believer needs anything to give him additional fitness, then Christ has not wrought a complete salvation. But Christ HAS atoned fully for our sins, wrought a complete deliverance, so that it is the Father's joy to bring forth the best robe, and array the prodigal after such a fashion that the Father's house is the only suited place for him.

The believer is " made meet " to start with. There is no fitness awaiting him in the future; he has it the instant he gets Christ. Christ is his meetness. Christ is the best robe. The prodigal goes into the Father's presence in the acceptance of Christ personally, and in all the value of His finished work.

We cannot be too emphatic as to this. The work that fits us for the presence of God was done at the cross, and the moment we rest in the One who has done that work all the value of it belongs to us.

Is there a repetition of the baptism of the Holy Ghost ?

Christ, having accomplished redemption, entered into a new state for man in resurrection and a new place in ascension. The disciples were connected with this new state and new place by the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, when the one body was formed. This action of the Spirit changed their status from that of individual believers to that of membership of a body united to a living Head in heaven.

This initial act has never been repeated ; there is no fresh baptism of the Spirit ; but individuals quickened and sealed are incorporated in the body, thus filling up the ranks—constituting them members of the one and only body Scripture knows—as saints since Pentecost have gone to be with the Lord. This body is a living organism, permanently formed, abiding intact in the midst of outward ruin, and which Satan can never destroy ; its living members being continually added to by the Holy Ghost ; just as recruits are added to an existing regiment.

Eternal Life.

I DWELT for nineteen years in the things of the world, dead in sin, then I found Christ as my living Saviour in heaven and I was born again of incorruptible seed. I found too that I had a *Father* up there and that God the Holy Ghost dwells in me. What love ! God dwelling in me and heaven opened for me to dwell eternally with Him, eternal life my everlasting portion. If we get to the sphere where eternal life is to be displayed, we find a range of glory beyond what the heart can take in. It includes the whole range of the Father's delight in the Son, and ministers joy as nothing else does. Eternal life is ours as a thing to be rejoiced in. When trouble comes, oh, let your hearts be in communion with that One in whom your life is, and you will find that you have a portion, a fullness of joy, that no circumstances here can interfere with. You have a life above in Christ, soon to be made manifest in the day of His appearing.

What a subject to be occupied with is eternal life ! It has come down to my own soul from Christ, and ought to flow in streams of blessing. The secret of joy is walking in the power of eternal life, *in the consciousness of all the delight of God in Christ,* saying, " There He is at the right hand of God as the expression of His delight, and He is mine, and I am His." If living in the power of that life which is hid with Christ in God you will have nothing but joy all the way. What then can disappoint you, what difficulties can daunt you? If you have got *Him and eternal life*—God having given you the pledge of eternal life now—your soul can be happy under any circumstances. Paul lived in a dark day, but the promise of eternal life was given, and having this pledge he could go through all difficulties and trials. Christ is the smitten rock, from which eternal waters flow to the soul witnessing of heavenly things.

There is an immense difference between battling with circumstances down here, and realizing in my heart that I have got eternal life unfolding itself in communion with God, and tasting the sweetness of being a partaker of the divine life, finding itself in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Men—all men—have eternal duration of existence, but believers have a life now which not only will be unfolded in heaven, but has present fellowship with God. The eternal life I have in Christ is a thing apart from what God breathed into man in Eden; that life was good, but the first action of eternal life is the bringing of him who has it into fellowship with the Father and the Son. When you look at eternal life, go back millions and millions of ages, that life was there, and never was there a beginning of that life; but think of that life displayed in perfect beauty here, a beauty calculated to draw out worship and awaken every feeling of adoration and love. But where is Christ now? Gone up to heaven, seated *out* of the world, *outside* the entire system set up by Satan all round us; and we are *out* of it with Him, we have a life *outside* things down here, we are in the world, but not of it, even as He was not; but soon the Lord shall come out of heaven to fill up with the power of eternal life all His own, and He will bring them home filled vessels; and when we come to the Father's house we shall find that fountain ever flowing in all its fullness, in all its boundless torrents of blessing.

G. V. WIGRAM.

Feet-washing.

CHRIST has gone to prepare a place for us. He need not have left the glory at all if it had not been for our sakes. He took flesh and blood, but it was for us; because the children were partakers of flesh and blood He took part in the same; He laid down His life, but it was for us. He rose, but it was for us. He has gone into the presence of God, but it is for us. All that He has done, He has done for us.

No, you say, "He has done it for the glory of God." Of course He has; all He has done He has done for the Father's glory most surely, but it is just as true, on the other hand, that all that He has done He has done for us, and the place He now occupies is the place that belongs to us; He has taken hold of it for us, it is our proper place even whilst here in the world. When we go to be with Him we shall enjoy it perfectly; there will be no hindrance when we are there,

but while we are on earth His desire for us is that we might have part with Him in the place where He has gone.

How can we have that ? Well, He sets before us in figure what is necessary whilst walking through this defiling world in order that our feet might be kept clean. He takes water in a basin, girds Himself with a towel, and begins to wash the disciples' feet. Peter demurs to his Lord stooping to an act usually performed by a slave and refuses to have his feet washed. Jesus says, " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Peter did not know the meaning of what the Lord was doing, so the Lord replies, " What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Evidently then it was not merely feet-washing, not merely a down-stooping to perform a lowly act. Peter knew He was washing the disciples' feet with water and only thought of menial service, but " thou shalt know hereafter " points to a spiritual meaning typified by the act of feet-washing, which went far beyond Peter's thoughts.

We should love each other, and be ready to do the most menial service to one another ; that is perfectly true, you do get that in the passage, " If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet " ; but it is just as true, on the other hand, that Peter and the other disciples did *not* know what He was doing. What He was doing is a figure of what would be done for them spiritually during His absence. Peter says, " If I cannot have part with Thee without having my *feet* washed, well then, wash also my *hands* and my *head*, because at all costs I must have part with Thee."

Now we get another truth, and that is that it was not necessary to do that. He says, " He that is *washed all over*—that is what the word means—needeth not save to wash his feet," he is clean every whit. Now that is true of *all believers ;* they are clean every whit.

If you are born of God, you are born of water and the Spirit ; you are as clean as the work of Christ can make you ; there is not only a new nature produced in you, but the death of Christ has been brought home to your soul with such power that you are cleansed from every defilement ; you are washed, you are bathed all over, you are perfectly

clean, you are fit to have part with Christ, fit for the glory now. The moment a person is converted, he is as fit for the glory as if he lived to the age of Methuselah and walked with God every day. His walk would not make him one bit more fit for the glory of God at the end of that time than he was at the beginning.

The thief never had his feet washed because he was not left to walk through this defiling scene, but those who remain here continually need their feet washed. The disciples could not help picking up defilement; you and I cannot help picking it up, because it is a defiling world. The Lord Himself never needed His feet washed, He was undefilable, there was nothing in Him that answered to the defilement of this world, it would not cleave to Him at all; but it cleaves to you and me, because there is in us that which responds to the defilement that is in the world, and we need that removed, and the only thing that will remove it will be the Word of God, which speaks of the death of Christ and the unfathomable grace of God in that death brought home to our souls in the power of the Spirit of God. That is what feet-washing is; it is the death of Christ, and all the love expressed in that death brought home to our hearts in the power of the Spirit of God.

The world appeals to us at every step, we cannot avoid getting defiled; it may or may not be an open act of sin, it may not come to that; but whether it does, or does not, our feet must be washed in order to have part with Christ where He is. Think of being associated with Him before the face of God. What a wonderful place! In John xx., after He had risen and the work of redemption was accomplished, He says what He had never said before: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." We have His place; we are in His relationships, the same relationship to the Father in which He as Man is now.

In the world we have natural relationships and affections that belong to them, and they are exceedingly sweet. To have relationships without affections would be a horrible thing. Think of parents and children not having affections; think of husbands and wives having no affection for each

other. The relationship would be intolerable. So it would be intolerable to have to do with God—if you could think of such a thing—if there were not the affections that belong to the relationship; but there are the affections as well as the relationships; the relationship is set forth in Christ, and the affections also; we are brought into the relationship of children and the affections are produced in our hearts by the Spirit of God, so that we may have part with Him in the place where Christ has gone. The affections are seen in the love that is between the Father and the Son; that is the peculiar nature of the intimacy into which we are brought; if we enjoy that intimacy we shall be conscious of the slightest shade that would come in between us, and be very anxious as to our walk and ways through this world, so that we may not contract defilement. Should we do so, the filth will cleave to us unless we have our feet washed. The disciples needed feet-washing, and if they needed it, you may be perfectly sure you and I need it as long as we are here in the world. Blessed be God, Christ not only intercedes for us before the face of God, but He washes our feet by the Word. He washes our feet whenever it is needed, in order that we may be able to receive, and take our place along with Him in that holy place into which He has gone, and be able to enjoy the blessedness of those relationships formed in that heavenly sphere.

JAMES BOYD.

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THE Saviour who lets me into heaven has been cast out of earth; to *profess* companionship with Him and go on with the world indicates something morally wrong.

Christ's death has cleared us before God; we are therefore to keep clear of evil before men. Distance was removed in the cross on God's side; we must keep that which was removed at a distance on our side.

Christ's place is ours; we are united to Him where He is, and left here to be for Him where He is not.

Hatred cast Christ out, Love took us in. How can we love that which hated Him? We cannot have part with Christ unless we part company with the world.

The Holy Anointing Oil.

EXODUS XXX. 22–38.

IN the above scripture we have directions for the "holy anointing oil." It was to be composed of certain ingredients, in different proportions, "compounded after the art of the apothecary."

This is the figure of the Holy Spirit, with which the tabernacle and all connected therewith were to be anointed; and with it, mingled with "the blood that is upon the altar," Aaron and his sons and their garments were to be anointed also (Exod. XXIX. 21), figuring the anointing of the Spirit that comes to us as the seal and power of redemption through the death of Christ. Upon man's flesh it was not to be poured, *i.e.* man in his natural state could not receive it; it belonged to the priestly family, and was for sanctuary uses, *i.e.* for the service of God. Neither could it be imitated: "holy" indeed it is—the Holy Spirit—and holy it was to be to them—holy, and not common or profane (ver. 32).

Regarding the spices of which the holy anointing oil was composed, it is noteworthy that none of them was indigenous to the land of Palestine. They were all exotics. One element only of the "oil of holy ointment," the oil itself, was produced in the land. All the rest, while entering in their several functions into its composition, yet neither belonged naturally to, nor formed part originally of the inherent substance of the soil.

The "authorities" tell us that of the four spices styled "principal," or chief, that go to make the holy anointing oil—

1. Myrrh grows in Arabia Felix and in East Africa.
2. Cinnamon, allied to the laurel, grows in Ceylon. It is imported from India and the Far East.
3. Calamus is imported by the Phœnicians as "the sweet cane from a far country" (Jer. VI. 20), probably India.
4. Cassia grows only on the east of India.

None of these spices are indigenous to the Holy Land; they were all imported: thus we find set forth in type that the Spirit—the Unction from the Holy One (1 John II. 20–27)

—in all the elements that characterize His presence, is extraneous to man; and further, "upon man's flesh it shall not be poured." It appertained to the priestly family only, and to the tabernacle, with all the vessels of the sanctuary. These the Lord had set apart for His service: "that they may be most holy; whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy."

Oil was, in a general way, frequently employed both for religious and secular purposes; but the "oil of holy ointment" was for special use and not to be employed elsewhere. It is said of David, "With My holy oil have I anointed him" (Ps. LXXXIX. 20); but it is questionable if this was the "oil of holy ointment." Compare 1 Samuel XVI. 1–13 with IX. 15, 16; X. 1; 2 Kings ix. 1–6. But possibly from 1 Kings I. 39 we might infer otherwise; at least in Solomon's case.

In the case of the leper, plain olive oil was used (Lev. XIV. 10–15).

EDWARD CROSS.

Our Resource.

THE Apostle in Galatians v. 13–26 speaks of the only resource of which faith can avail itself to-day. The Galatians had been troubled by false teachers who sought to set up again the legal system from which they had been delivered, in order that they might have a righteousness of their own and make a fair show in the flesh. He was troubled about them, was in anguish of spirit; all his labour apparently was ending in disaster; but he realizes the immense fact that a Power is here to meet anything, and his desire is to bring the Galatians back to their great resource, the Spirit of God. In His power they, and we, are to walk, and thus fulfil the law without its bondage; resist evil; overcome the lusts of the flesh; and bring forth "the fruit of the Spirit" (ver. 22). This power is here to-day; we are in the same danger as to legality on one hand and licence on the other; the Holy Spirit alone by our absolute submission to His control can deliver us on the one side, or empower us for a righteous walk on the other. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (ver. 16).

T. R. WESTON.

Entertaining Strangers.

We have a fine example of entertaining strangers in Genesis xviii. 1–8. Abraham sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day—a stranger and a pilgrim—received and feasted three strangers; little did he think when he fetched water for their feet, and ran and brought the fatted calf and bread to comfort their hearts, that one of them was a divine Visitor; but so it was; unawares he entertained a wonderful Guest, for it was no less a person than the Lord Jesus who appeared in the guise of a traveller that day.

We find another example of hospitality in 2 Kings iv. 8–11: "It fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and *she constrained him to eat bread.* . . . And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive *that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us con*tinually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there." This great woman provided sustenance, food, and rest for the prophet. She had discernment, she recognized him as a holy man of God, and prepared him a suited lodging, a *little room, a bed, a table, a stool, a candlestick.*

God was not unrighteous to forget her labour of love for His servant, for when a famine came which lasted seven years, she and her household were cared for and preserved alive, and all the fruits of the land, by the king's command, were restored to her at the end. God still has servants who seek to do His will and minister His Word, and though there are not many "great" as this woman was who can care for their temporal needs, yet it is encouraging to those who receive them to know that in receiving them they receive the Master who sends them. It does not follow they will receive here their reward, in the way the great woman received hers; but it will be duly recompensed in "that day" when not one thing done to His name will be forgotten.

Lydia is a New Testament example of *entertaining strangers* (Acts XVI.). Paul and those with him were strangers to the women who came to the river-side where prayer was wont to be made, but the Lord *opened Lydia's heart* and she *opened her house*, saying, " If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into *my house and abide*" ; and she constrained them. This generous care for the Lord's servants appears to have marked the company at Philippi ; even after the Lord's servant had left them Paul says they were distinguished from other assemblies by their continuous contributions to his temporal needs, their practical fellowship in his labours, which he terms " an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God " (Phil. IV. 18). " The third epistle of John encourages believers to the exercise of hospitality, whether towards the known brethren or strangers, and to all benevolent care in furthering their journey when departing, *provided that they came with the truth and for the truth's sake without salary or provision.* Gaius received them, it appears, and was helpful to them within his own house and on their journey. Diotrephes *on the contrary*, did not love these strangers, who went about—it is said—without a formal mission and without any visible means of subsistence. They had gone forth for the Lord's sake and had received nothing of the Gentiles. If they came in reality *out of love to that NAME*, one did well to receive them. In receiving those who went forth to preach the truth they helped the truth itself ; they were co-workers with it " (J. N. D.).

Peter also reminds us whatever any one has is for the good of all saints. We are to be " good stewards of the manifold grace of God " ; " each according to the *ability which God giveth* " is to minister to the other things spiritual, or things temporal, according as they have been committed to us (1 Peter IV. 7–11). A cup of cold water given to any one because they belong to Christ shall not lose its reward. We are to do *good* and to *communicate*, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased ; but we are not to grudge what we give, all is to be done so that *God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*

It is interesting to notice that resurrection is connected

with several persons who were noted for their hospitality. Abraham received back Isaac in figure; the great woman's son was restored to life; the home of Bethany—the standing witness of hospitality—received Lazarus again from the dead. In each of these cases they had a recompense in resurrection. Our Lord in directing hospitality to be shown to the poor and needy adds, "Thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be *recompensed at the* resurrection of the just" (Luke XIV. 14).

R. K. WILSON.

Varied Service.

SERVICE is of a very varied character, as we may see in Romans XII.; all the members of Christ's body have not the same office; gifts differ according to the grace given to each, but all centre round the person of Christ, who, rejected by the world, has been received of God and made Lord of all.

If you turn to 2 Samuel XV., XVII., and XIX., you will find three classes of servants who render to David, in the day of his rejection, intelligent and acceptable service.

I. Ittai the Gittite, a stranger and an exile (XV. 20), voluntarily identified himself with the fortunes of David when he was cast out and rejected. David tests him by letting him know that an outcast and a wanderer has nothing to offer his followers; in spirit he says, "They have persecuted me and they will persecute you; the only prospect before me is one of sorrow and suffering; are you prepared for that?" How beautifully this test brings out the depth of Ittai's devotion! He replies, "As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in life or in death, even there also will thy servant be." Practically he put his life in his hands. This self-abnegation is an important requisite for a true servant. It is of this the Apostle speaks when he says, "We who live are always delivered unto death . . . and are made the off-scouring of the world." Ittai was willing to leave Jerusalem, with all its attractions, to be servant to a homeless outcast.

To-day, God in His sovereignty has called some to give up all for Christ ; home, friends, wealth, position, all that man, as man, values most, relinquished in answer to a distinct call from God. We have a striking example of this in Saul of Tarsus, also in Peter, who left nets, boats, and fishes at the call of Christ. Obedience to such a call will never be accompanied by ease and comfort after a worldly sort ; for the "minister" must WAIT on "his ministry," "the teacher" on his teaching, "the exhorter" on exhortation ; that is to say, the Lord's service is to be the distinct business of his life, all other things are to be subservient to this one end. He may make tents, but tent-making is not his object in life ; he may labour with his hands to minister to his necessities (or that of others, as the chief of the apostles did), but this is only a means to an end ; he is ready to set such occupation down or take it up again, at the bidding of his Lord. He will remain two years in one place, only two days in another ; be at the centre of a mighty work of God like Philip at one moment, or taken out of it to speak of Christ to one anxious inquirer like the Ethiopian eunuch ; and he will always find abundant occupation if Christ's will governs him, God's Spirit energizes him, and God's Word directs him. He has only to obey ; counting on divine support for all that the call involves. In carrying out his service he is to "let love be without dissimulation ; abhor that which is evil ; cleave to that which is good." In other words, he is to cultivate pure spiritual affections, walk in a separated path, let good control him, and give evil no place.

II. God has not only called out some who are to leave everything that would in the least interfere with His service ; but we read of others who in the exercise of "brotherly love" are to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" ; "distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality" (Rom. XII. 13). Zeal, fervency, *generosity, hospitality* are to be exhibited towards all saints, all who belong to God, all in the circle of Christ's affections, every member of His body, the church, which He loved and for which He died and now lives, and those who seek to serve them ; this will call forth service of a very varied character. The action of Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai (2 Sam. XVII. 27–29)

furnishes a beautiful illustration of such service, a service as grateful in its way and season as that of Ittai, though differing in its nature and character. They do not *go out, leaving everything* to follow a rejected king; but they place their *wealth*, their *beds*, their *homes*, and their *food* at the disposal of *David and those who shared his rejection.* "The *people*," say they, "are hungry and weary and thirsty," and we will minister to their need. This carries our thoughts to the faithful Gaius of New Testament days, to the devoted women who ministered to the Lord of their substance, to the Philippians whose care for Paul's temporal needs ascended as a sweet odour to God.

A cup of cold water given in the name of Christ is treasured up by Him in sweet remembrance until that day, when "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" will recall many a long-forgotten act of "brotherly love."

This has a very practical application to many Christians. It may be you cannot evangelize, teach, or preach; but this you can do—HOLD ALL THAT YOU HAVE IN THIS WORLD ABSOLUTELY AT THE COMMAND, CONTROL, AND DISPOSAL OF YOUR MASTER—reckoning neither wealth, home, nor comfort as your own, but as a "good steward of the manifold grace of God," using all for Christ in the practical activities of that love which looks not upon its own things, but the things of others.

III. But some may say, "I have no special gifts wherewith to serve the Lord, nor house nor means to place at the disposal of those that are His." For the comfort of such we find the Lord (in Luke XII.) distinguishes between a "waiting" servant (ver. 37) and a "working" servant (ver. 43). He SERVES the former and REWARDS the latter; but both are termed *servants*.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, says of the crown of righteousness that it is for those who LOVE THE APPEARING of their Lord. The heart that is freed from itself can "weep with those that weep," and if done in communion with the Master's mind, it is service of a very grateful and acceptable kind to His heart; and if the longings of our hearts, the affections of our souls, are going out after our absent Lord,

our bodies will be the lamps through which the light of companionship with a rejected Lord is seen. Such service is beautifully exemplified in the demeanour and conduct of Mephibosheth during the absence of his beloved though rejected king (2 Sam. XIX. 24, etc.) ; during the whole term of David's exile this devoted servant, unable to follow him in his wanderings when in rejection and reproach, or to minister to him of his substance, was a standing witness that, though actually present in Jerusalem, his heart was with his beloved master, and he expressed his sorrow by *keeping separate from* those who had rejected the one who had shown the kindness of God to him ; his body witnessed the fervour of his affection.

We need not be ascetics, but if our affections are drawn to the earth-rejected and heaven-received Jesus, our practical ways should demonstrate the fact that we are dead and risen with Christ, and that our only desire is to be with Him where He is.

Mephibosheth might have cultivated the favour of the usurper on the throne, but he cared for neither POSITION, APPEARANCE, RIDICULE, nor WEALTH ; his affections had travelled after David, and his entire demeanour declared him to be a man who longed for his Lord's return ; his " spirit through the lonely night, from earthly joy apart, sighed for one that's far away, the Bridegroom of his heart."

Can *we* truly say, " Lord, awaken in our hearts the desire to be *Thine, only* Thine, *wholly* Thine ; to use all that we *have* and *are* in Thy service, and if we have neither wealth nor talents to place at Thy disposal, we will give Thee the affections of our souls, be men who truly wait for Thee and show it by keeping separate from the world that rejected thee " ?

H. NUNNERLEY.

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THE whole deportment of a Christian should declare him a pilgrim and a stranger here ; " Onward " and " Upward " should be his motto. Oh, for more of the *onward* bent, the *upward* tendency, more holy fixedness of soul and profound retirement from this vain world.

We have only one life to live. Are we living that life to Him who died for us and rose again ?

Prayer and Fasting.

LET me recall that striking scene in Matthew XVII., when the broken-hearted father brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples and they could not cast the devil out. How did their powerlessness come about?

"O *faithless* generation" supplies the answer. We learn that "reasoning" prevented their prevailing with God; it was because of their "unbelief." If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible; but this kind goeth not forth but by *prayer and fasting*.

Notice that couplet—prayer and fasting. What is the force of "fasting" in Scripture? It is not confined to eating and drinking—doubtless we eat and drink too much—but it has a more extended meaning: it applies to every form of self-gratification; it involves abstinence from everything that wars against the soul. Here we find the disciples were deficient in the great element of power; why? Evidently they had failed to abstain from self-pleasing and self-gratification. What was the troubled father's resource? He brought him to the *Man of power*. The only Man that was of the slightest use on that occasion was the Son of God. Why was He the Man of power? Because He was the Man of prayer and the Man of self-abnegation. He did not come here to please Himself or to do His own will—if He had done His own will it would still have been the will of God—but, perfect Man as He was, His whole life was expressed in those words, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

The Man of obedience and the Man of dependence is the Man of power; so when the poor father brought his boy to Jesus—the Man of prayer and the Man of power—his difficulty was met, the demon was cast out.

Christ is our great example; He always did the things that pleased the Father, therefore at the grave of Lazarus He could say, "I know that Thou hearest Me always"; only let us fulfil the conditions and we also shall be heard.

God's standard is Christ; if we say we abide in Him, we ought also to walk even as He walked.

THOMAS OLIVER.

Abide with Me.

"ABIDE with me," David said to Abiathar in a great crisis. Abiathar—the one priest Doeg had not killed—had fled for his life and found refuge in the cave of Adullam. David welcomed him, saying, "Abide with me, fear not; he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life"; our lives, so to speak, are one; "with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

Now what David said to Abiathar is, I think, what the blessed Lord is saying to us to-day. He says to each one of us, "Abide with Me, fear not." It is our privilege to abide in constant, happy intercourse with Christ. The two who went to Emmaus said, "Abide with us." They had got a taste of the sweetness and the blessedness of His company; He had made their hearts burn by unfolding to them the Scriptures, and then He gave them one passing sight of Himself. That sight positively electrified them, changed the currents of their thoughts and lives; they returned at once to Jerusalem, retracing their steps spite of the lateness of the hour, spite of eight miles of hilly road, all that was nothing, for had they not seen the face of their risen Lord? They had proved the blessedness of His company and were entranced; no wonder they desired Him to "abide." "Abide with *us*," that was their desire, as "abide with me" was David's desire for Abiathar, and it is the Lord's desire for us. It is the only happy place and the only safe place. We are "safeguarded" by Christ in an infinitely better way than Abiathar was by David, in perfect safeguard day and night. We are safe amidst the tossing billows of this stormy world when abiding with Jesus. You remember the storm on the lake in the end of the fourth of Mark, when the blessed Lord was asleep, quietly sleeping, undisturbed, undistracted. The alarmed disciples awake the Master, saying, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Oh, how could they perish if they were *with Him* in the boat? If they simply *abode with Him* they were *in safeguard*, however terrible the storm. He slept in perfect tranquillity, and the same tranquillity would have possessed their hearts if they had been careful for nothing, if they had left everything in His hands. Well beloved, let us establish our souls in this

all-important truth, that if we are really, consciously abiding with Christ, if we are walking with Him in humility and brokenness and exercise of soul, be the storm what it may, we are in safeguard, we need have no fear, we are in the same vessel as the Lord Himself, and as He will never perish, we shall never perish. Can Christ be defeated? Never. He has passed through the greatest conflict, He has abolished death, come victorious out of the grave; He is not only risen, but in glory; an omnipotent victor, all power rests in His hands. His word to us is, "Abide with Me, and fear not; He that abideth with Me shall be in safeguard."

Let me press upon my own soul, and upon yours, that it is our privilege and security, the true secret of rest and peace, deep down in the secrets of our souls, to abide with Christ. Now, if you can find a better road, if you can discover a better solution to the everyday difficulties than this, I should be exceedingly glad to get it. Can you tell me any other way to rise superior to them than simply and solely abiding with Christ, walking continually, habitually, during the day, closing our eyes at night, awaking when the day breaks upon us, still abiding in Him? Depend upon it, abiding with Him is the secret of power, joy, and victory.

"In Thy presence we are happy;
In Thy presence we're secure,
In Thy presence all afflictions
We can easily endure:
In Thy presence we can conquer,
We can suffer, we can die;
Wandering from Thee we are feeble—
Let Thy love then keep us nigh."

J. WILSON SMITH.

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NOT a sparrow falls to the ground, not a flower blossoms without the Father. As sorrows turn up, as thorns and briars come in our path, how good to know the Father is in it all. We are to pass on quietly, without care, knowing that every detail of life is watched by a Father's eye. Our warrant for casting all our care upon Him is the word that assures us He cares for us.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER IV.

Q. What is the difference between "grace" and "gift" in verse 7?

A. Verse 7 first states the universality of the grace bestowed by Christ—"to each one of us has been given grace"—before, in verse 11, we have the more special gifts connected with the ministry of the Word. Upon both these characters of gifts depends the increase of the body into the edifying of itself in love (ver. 16). Each member of the body has received grace to be used in the mutual blessing of the whole, though not in the same measure. This is according to the measure of the gift of Christ; namely, as He sees fit to bestow.

Q. What does leading "captivity captive" mean? And why are verses 9 and 10 given as a parenthesis?

A. Verses 8–10 carry us up to the source of gift in the ascended Christ. Psalm LXVIII. 18 is referred to where He received gifts "in the man" (margin, as literally); namely, as man. In the application here He is seen giving gifts to men. Acts II. 33 may be compared for the historic fact. He receives the promise of the Father for us, the Holy Spirit, and shed forth this as they had seen and heard in the gift of tongues; though this character of gift, meant to act upon the unbeliever, is not brought in here, but only that which was needed to form the growth of the saints in the likeness of Christ. Hence the assurance of the continuance of the gifts here: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. IV. 13). The force of "when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive" will be clear when it is seen that in this consists the great present proof of the subjugation of Satan. Those who were once his miserable captives have not merely been delivered by Christ to be His own possession, but are now employed in the service of setting their once fellow-captives free. The parenthesis emphasizes the character of the triumph of the Captor, who entered into the last stronghold of the enemy's power through death to bring

it to naught, and has now ascended up above all heavens to fill all things not only with the display of His power and glory as God, but with redeeming love revealed in the unfathomable depths to which He descended, and now in the fullness of His grace from the heights of His exaltation. Nothing less would form the subject-matter of the ministry of the gifts with which from that height of glory He has endowed His body the assembly.

Q. Verse 11, *"He gave some." Does this refer to the persons or to the gifts conferred on them?*

A. Clearly to the persons so given, "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." (The commas between "some" and the following words ought not to be there.) All are alike His gifts—apostles and prophets laid as the foundation, and still ours through their inspired writings; evangelists in their active ministry of the gospel in the world-wide sphere of it; pastors and teachers too in theirs as caring for and leading on by the truth those reached by the evangelist, the copulative between these last two showing how intimately these two gifts must be connected to be effective in exercise.

Q. Does verse 12 *define their service?*

A. It directs us to the object of Christ in conferring them; namely, "the perfecting of the saints," the individual always first in these blessed ways of His grace, as in chapter 1. 1–14 before what is corporate is introduced. The intermediate means by which the perfecting is carried out follows "the work of the ministry" and "the edifying of the body of Christ."

Q. What is meant by "the unity of the faith," verse 13?

A. "Till we all"—that is, each one—"come in the unity of the faith." "The faith" is the doctrine, the revealed truth of God taken up in the faith of our souls. It is delivered to the saints (Jude 3). By faith we make progress in what is common to all, and arrive more and more at unity through and in the apprehension of it, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, instead of being carried adrift by every current of the doctrines of men, only to be involved in a maze of error and deceit.

Q. What is "a perfect man"?

A. It is the end to be attained by the ministry of the gifts—one of mature age, no more to be infantile, as in the next verse. It is the only standard of God, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," which the ministry will ever have before it as its objective for the saints, with its powerfully formative effect upon both minister and those ministered to, though that measure be only reached when we see Him as He is (see Col. 1. 28, 29).

Q. Verse 15. *In what way do we "grow up unto Him in all things"?*

A. As "holding" (it is more than "speaking") "the truth in love," according to such a ministry of it, we grow in assimilation to Christ, who is the Head, from whom the whole body derives all that is needed, according to the practical working in its own place of every member for its increase, to the edifying or building up of itself in love.

Answers by
J. A. TRENCH.

Answers to Questions.

I. *Are all decisions of a meeting binding?*

An act of discipline must ever be in view of the whole assembly—the entire church of God—so that exclusion signifies that the person or persons excluded are unfit for Christian fellowship anywhere and everywhere.

When a local gathering acts, *with the Lord in the midst,* all others claiming to be divinely gathered are bound to accept what they do, provided always that they have acted in accordance with Holy Scripture, and have the support and warrant of a "thus saith the Lord" for what they have done. Otherwise their acts are, in principle, Rome—pure pretension (if not worse)—no matter how many honoured names lend weight to their decision. If their action does not bear the hall-mark of God's Word, it binds no one on earth and certainly is not ratified in heaven.

Where excisions have been made without adequate scriptural warrant, the only course open is for the gathering to confess its mistake and not make any pretension to infallibility.

II. *Is a divergence of judgment on points not affecting fundamental truth any justification for division?*

2 Timothy II. 23–25 contemplates questions arising productive of contentions which are to be met in a spirit of forbearance. The Lord's servants are directed in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves, looking to God to lead such persons into the truth. They are often ensnared by allowing the natural mind to work in divine things. Their teaching may not call for excision nor for dividing the saints into parties, but for patient presentation of what is *true* with a view to correcting that which is false. This direction to the Lord's servant not to strive has persistently been overlooked, hence contentions have arisen over minor points, parties have gathered round favourite teachers who have coloured their disciples by their own thoughts. Instead of those who know and hold the truth meeting such in a spirit of gentleness, they have fiercely contended, ranged saints under opposed leaders, until strife has ended in division, often afterwards refusing to speak to each other, thus making it impossible to carry out apostolic direction in such cases.

If *fundamental error* is in question we must " turn away " (2 Tim. III. 5) or " withdraw from " (II. 19) those who teach it; but let us first make sure it is fundamental; for, alas, how many divisions, how much strife among God's people, have been over things that Scripture directs us to meet in meekness, gentleness, patience, and which do not affect the foundations of our most holy faith, but are simply the outcome of party feeling or jealousy on the part of leaders or teachers pressing their favourite views unduly.

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THE flesh is not presented in the New Testament as a thing to be perfected, but a thing which has been crucified; not a thing to be cultivated, but a thing to be mortified; not a thing to be improved, but a thing which has been weighed and found wanting. This applies equally to religious flesh as to vicious flesh.

David's Last Words.

NOW these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2. The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

3. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God.

4. And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

5. Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.

6 ¶ But *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

7. But the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear: and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place.

2 SAMUEL XXIII.

ISRAEL'S sweet Psalmist departs whilst inditing a good matter. His holy breathings are things concerning the King; they are not of private interpretation. Our prophet carries us beyond the scene and circumstance until we lose sight of dying David and are conducted—in spirit—to David's greater *Son*. It is Jesus who fills the vision of his soul, and thus these "last words" become a gate of heaven to our souls. Every word that falls from his lips points to the anointed of the God of Israel, either in the lowly grace of His person, in His present exaltation, or His future glories.

David reminds us he was the "son of Jesse," a family of no account in the eyes of men, a poor and despised house, and as he elsewhere tells us, he was the "least in that house." How this carries our thoughts to the manger at Bethlehem, the house at Nazareth, to the reputed son of Joseph the carpenter—a family unknown amongst those robed in purple. When Saul inquired of Abner, "Whose son is he?" as David went forth to that unequal contest in Elah's valley, he replied, "O king, I cannot tell." So when the wise men of the East sought another "Son of Jesse" at a later day, the courtiers in Herod's palace had to admit they "could not tell."

Jesus came into this world in lowly guise, became a com-

panion of the poor of the flock; like David when hunted as a partridge on the mountains, the "Son of Man had not where to lay His head." Marvellous, precious, ineffable grace! Jehovah's Fellow stooping to the lowest place, condescending to the meanest estate. How this draws out our renewed affections as our souls contemplate the travel-stained feet, the weary frame, the furrowed cheek of God's Well-Beloved, lowly in heart, seeking no place among the great ones of this world, mingling with a poor and afflicted people.

David's next utterance carries us, in spirit, from the evangelist Matthew to the historian Luke (Acts 1. 9). Carried up into heaven, we behold in the lowly Son of Jesse THE MAN RAISED ON HIGH.

Jesus in lowliness had humbled Himself, taken a servant's form, gone down to a slave's death, was buried in a borrowed grave, in obedience to the Father's will; but when the lowest point was reached, "He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." In His descent none went so low; so His ascent is glorious and exalted above all others. He has been set *far above* all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; the sceptre is placed in His hand, He is enthroned and crowned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, no longer the despised "Nazarene," but the glorified Man who will fill the entire universe with blessing!

"Worthy the Lamb that's gone on high
To be exalted thus."

This once despised, but now exalted Son of Jesse is also "THE ANOINTED OF THE GOD OF JACOB," the centre and sum of all God's purposes for Israel and the Gentiles—as, indeed, of heavenly counsels also. David had been anointed with Samuel's "horn of oil"; but the anointed of the God of Jacob passed in vision before his soul, and he too, like Abraham, looked on to the day of glory, and saw One who was at once David's "Son" and David's "Lord" —"the Prince of the kings of the earth"—who should ask and "have the heathen for a possession," and sit as King on the holy hill of Zion.

The next note of the dying patriarch speaks of "THE SWEET PSALMIST OF ISRAEL." David indited many sweet and holy songs, but never set to such music as that which sounded through the lips of Jesus, as He "piped" in the midst of Israel those melodies of grace, compassion, goodness, love. Alas! alas! Israel's heart was fat, and their ears dull; cold, listless, careless, they listened to the voice of Him who "spake as man never spake," but hearing, they heard not; so instead of the "garment of praise," the sweet singer wraps himself in the "robe of heaviness," and thus robed weeps that touching lament over the rebellious city: "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not."

O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! having refused shelter under the shadow of those everlasting wings, thou didst stifle the voice of the sweet Singer in a shameful death on Calvary's tree; but thou couldst not hush it for ever, for the bonds of the tomb were burst, the resurrection morning dawned, a new and everlasting melody sounded—a note altogether heavenly in the midst of the church, soon to widen out to the great congregation (Ps. XXII. 25)—for Israel shall praise during millennial days, the ends of the world shall take up the strain, the Gentiles laud His holy name, and the wide creation be resonant with song.

"He that ruleth over men must be just; ruling in the fear of God." Alas! David bowed his head, saying, "My house is not so with God"; I have failed. I cannot look back upon a pathway of unswerving righteousness, of absolute obedience; but I can look onward to a blessed Man who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him—a kingly Priest having the dew of youth, who shall send the rod of strength out of Zion. "This is all my salvation and all *my desire!*" he exclaims, as his thoughts turn to the verdant beauty of the kingdom under the righteous reign of God's anointed King. "He shall be as the light of the morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." What an exquisite picture! These words tell us this dry and arid wilderness will blossom as a rose, that

all earthly blessings man now vainly searches for will then be found in the true David who "shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.... His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. LXXII. 6–8, 17). In the presence of a prospect so resplendent with glory the Psalmist burst out with "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, Amen." The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, were ended, the only fitting thing was praise and adoration as he anticipated the blessedness of that reign; so here, as a like vision filled his soul, he devoutly and fervently says, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire."

We may well ask ourselves, have we the same spirit of earnest desire that animated his soul? If the vision tarry, have we patience to wait for it, "though He make it not to grow"? Are we found in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ, in company with the beloved John in Patmos's isle, content to let opposition, violence, and oppression take their course until He come forth whom Jehovah "has made strong for Himself"? Then shall Belial's sons feel the weight of His righteous judgment, for by "the breath of His mouth, and the brightness of His coming," shall He "clear out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity." "The thorns cast away" tell of righteous indignation on those who "know not God, and (those that) obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," when the mighty Conqueror shall descend, with His glittering sword and glorious apparel, "the day of vengeance in His heart," and with Him "the armies which are in heaven"—the tens of thousands of His saints who will then be associated with Him, in judgment as in blessing, "for this honour have all His saints" (Ps. CXLIX. 9).

Very significant too is the fact that the names, the

valour, the victories of David's associates in the day of rejection find a connecting link with the holy breathings of our prophet. Does it not remind us that the kingdom will be marked by the recognition and approval of the ways and works of those who serve and walk now in avowed association with and testimony for Him whom earth rejected? Does it not point us to the time when "the Lord, the righteous Judge," shall award the crowns of "life" (Rev. II. 10; James I. 12), "glory" (1 Peter V. 4), and "righteousness" (2 Tim. IV. 8), when He shall pronounce the "Well done!" and "every man shall have praise of God"?

In view of that day it behoves us to be "diligent, that we may be found in peace; looking for that blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Then the "Son of Jesse" and "the Man raised up on high," "the sweet Psalmist," "the anointed of the God of Jacob," will

"Give these bodies vile
A fashion like His own:
He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan.

When cloudless morning shines,
We shall His glory share;
In pleasant places are the lines,
The home, how fair!"

H. NUNNERLEY.

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GOD looks on us with the same delight as on Christ; He cannot stop the flow of His affection and delight in Christ, and so it all flows on us. We are before God in all the completeness of Christ's work, in the removal of everything He had against us. All God's delight is in Christ and in the work of the Son of His love. All the perfection of what *He is* and of what *He has* He gives to us; we are blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in Christ.

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WHEN unerring Wisdom, omnipotent Power, and infinite Love invite us to roll all our cares, bring all our sorrows, and leave them to that Wisdom, Love, and Power to deal with, the confiding heart may enjoy unruffled repose and rest in peace without an anxious thought.

Part with Me.

I DO not know whether we are very clear as to whom we shall see when we go to heaven. Perhaps you say, "Shall we not see the Father?" Yes, but in seeing Christ we see the Father. He was not when here the Father personally, but all that the Father is came out in Him—"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"—the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him; the Father dwelt in Him in testimony, and the Holy Spirit in power. The words that He spoke were the Father's words; the works that He did were the Father's works, it was the Father He set before men; so perfectly did He do this that He could say, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

In John XIII. the hour was come when He should depart out of the world unto the Father. He had won the heart of His disciples; they had been drawn to Him of the Father; He had their affections. He had given to them the Father's word, and the world had hated them. They had lost the friendship of the world; they had lost all that was dear to them as men by their connection with Christ, and now He was leaving them.

What about these disciples of His? Had His love waned? No. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." That does not mean merely that He loved them as long as they would be here—which is perfectly true—as it is also perfectly true that His love is eternal, that He will love them for ever; but it also means He loved them in spite of every obstacle He would have to surmount, there was nothing that lay in the pathway of that love that He would not go through to possess those disciples. The judgment of God lay upon them on account of their sin; they were sinners like every one else; there was no difference between these disciples and you and me as to our natural condition. They deserved nothing at the hand of God but eternal banishment from His presence; but they had been drawn to Christ, He had loved them, and they had loved Him.

And now, what was He going to do with them? No longer

could He have *part with them.* He came forth from the Father, now He was leaving the world and going back to the Father and leaving them in the world. His love led Him to bear all that lay upon them in order to have them as His, but His desire for His own left in the world was that they might have *part with Him* in the place where He was going.

He could not have part with them any longer, could not associate with them as He had done. They had gone out and come in with Him, kept company with Him here in this world. What a wonderful and blessed thing for these disciples to go out and in with God manifest in the flesh, be in His company, and not only see His works of power, but share in them, for He gave them power to perform wonderful works. But He is leaving them and sorrow fills their hearts ; and so the Lord seeks to lift their eyes from earth to heaven.

He was going to the Father, and He wanted to occupy them with that place. They were occupied with earth, and never really lifted their minds from earth, not even when He was raised from the dead. They never travelled in the affections of their heart into heaven until they got the Holy Spirit ; they could not rise above the earth until they got the Spirit of God. Even when Christ was in resurrection they inquire about the kingdom. They were far more occupied with the place that Christ was *leaving* than with the place to which He was *going ;* but He wanted to fix their gaze on the place to which He was going, and detach them from the world He was leaving. His desire was that they might have *part with Him* now He could no longer have part with them. He was going to the Father, to a far better place than the best place on earth. " If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I." It would have been a great joy to them if they had understood all that this involves. They truly loved Him, but they were not able to take in what it meant for Him to return to the Father. They thought He had come here and was going to abide for ever, and they never really took in the truth that He had to die and rise again and go to the Father.

Let us beware of grovelling on the earth; we also are called to have *part with Him* whilst still here. When we go to be with Him we shall actually have part with Him; there will be no difficulties then, nothing to hinder our enjoyment of those joys into which He has entered. The difficulty is to have part with Him now, to enter in mind, thought, and affection into the blessedness of that place into which He has gone: for where He has gone is really our place; we have no earthly place.

In chapter XIV. He tells them plainly that He was going to the Father. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." It was according to the eternal thought of the Father that man should be in that place, but then Christ had to go in first as our Forerunner, His entrance prepared the place. What prepared the place was the entrance of Christ as Man into the presence of the Father in the Father's house, and He would have us know that that place is ours.

The only sense in which we have a place here is that of witnesses in testimony during His absence, despised and rejected of men as Christ was, lights shining in the midst of the darkness, heavenly people walking here upon earth. Our feet in the wilderness, our affections in the *home* where He has gone, occupying for our absent Lord till He come.

JAMES BOYD.

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I HAVE to do with a living Person—Christ Himself. The revelation of Himself to the soul changes everything; there may be the same difficulties and trials, the same routine of daily duties, but everything has a different value, is entirely changed, because I can connect them all with Christ. He becomes the Centre of my life, the Pivot on which everything turns. When the glories of Christ shine in on my soul I have no thought of settling down in the wilderness. I am jealous of everything that robs me of a present view of Him whom my soul esteems the fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely *ONE!*

Love has enshrined me in the affections of the Bridegroom; my affections should be responsive to His.

Unity.

In Ephesians iv. unity is presented in a threefold way. In verse 3 we have the " unity of the Spirit " ; in verse 13, " the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God " ; whilst in verse 4 we learn there is " one body." In this verse the word " unity " does not occur ; yet since the " one body " exists in the power of the one Spirit, and is indeed a unity of all the members of which it is composed, we may venture to term it the " unity of the body."

It may be helpful to observe the differences between these three aspects of unity.

The unity of the body exists as the result of the purpose and work of God. Nothing that can happen during the time of the church's pilgrimage on earth can possibly annul it. The Spirit of God is the source and power of it, and it therefore abides for ever. Man did not make it. The most devoted of saints could not maintain it, nor could the most perverse mar it. It stands connected not with the responsibility of saints, but with the sovereign purpose and power of God.

" There *is* one body," come what may ! In these days of ecclesiastical confusion, owing to the will of man asserting itself in God's things, a great point will be gained if we thoroughly recognize this. It is a mark of faith so to do. Elijah recognized the unity of the twelve tribes of Israel when he built his altar of twelve stones, though the nation was divided and largely apostate (1 Kings xviii. 31). The same thing is found in James's epistle, in regard of Israel, in the New Testament. He wrote to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, though at that time the larger part of them had disappeared. All outward manifestation of the unity of the body may to-day have disappeared as completely as the lost ten tribes have, still the unity of the body itself abides for God and for faith. Let us have faith to recognize it.

The unity of the Spirit based upon the foregoing is that practical oneness which will be found amongst all the members of the one body, or any number of them, for

just so long as they are really controlled by the one Spirit.

It is not *merely* an ecclesiastical unity; it goes much deeper than that, for it is possible to maintain outward ecclesiastical ties whilst disunion is rampant within. On the other hand, it certainly includes it. Should pride and self-sufficiency—the opposites of the excellent features mentioned in verse 4—so gain the upper hand amongst saints that even ecclesiastical bonds are riven asunder, then the unity of the Spirit is indeed broken as effectually as ever it can be.

The unity of the faith differs from both the above. It is neither something formed by God which exists to-day because maintained by Him, nor something produced by the Spirit and entrusted to our keeping. It is something not complete as yet, but at which we all should seek ultimately to arrive. It is the unity, not "of faith," but of "*the* faith," *i.e.* the faith of Christianity, and as the whole faith of Christianity centres in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, it adds, "and of the knowledge of the Son of God."

This verse may well be connected with Philippians III. The knowledge of Christ is there seen to be the great object of the Apostle Paul's desire (vers. 8, 10, 12). After this he pursued, not counting that he had already attained, but still pressing on and urging all others to do likewise. Those who were thus minded with himself he terms "perfect," or of full growth (ver. 15).

The more truly the faith of Christianity possesses us, the deeper our knowledge of the Son of God, the more will *this* unity be reached by us, though doubtless never in perfection until the resurrection day, as Philippians III. indicates.

We might summarize the matter by saying:

1. *The unity of the body* is a unity of *life* which cannot be broken. The body is in the life of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

2. *The unity of the Spirit* is a unity of *love*. It is a plant of most tender and sensitive growth, easily injured, and must be therefore jealously guarded by us.

3. *The unity of the faith* is a unity of *light*. It is there-

fore a matter of apprehension and attainment. It is not that *with* which we *start*, but *to* which we are to *come*.

Now what are our responsibilities in regard to these things? As to the first, our responsibility is to recognize its truth and reality, and shape all our practical life and conduct in the light of it. "There *is* one body"; we need to remind ourselves of this fact again and again, just because Christians generally have so largely forgotten it, and walk individually and collectively in the truth of it. Since it *is* so, our every dealing with any saint we meet must be consistent with it. Equally so must all our collective actions and gatherings together be in the light of this fact. We are no more at liberty to act inconsistently with it in an assembly way than in a private and individual way. The natural mind always runs to one or other of two opposite extremes—easy-going looseness or sectarian narrowness. Careful recognition of the unity of the body will help us to steer clear of both.

As to the second, our responsibility is to *keep* it. "Endeavouring to *keep* the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That this is an exceedingly difficult matter the whole history of the church bears witness. How are we to keep it? What will help us? The cultivation of "lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love," and that alone. Outward *uniformity* may be produced by ecclesiastical edicts, such as Rome and other bodies of professed Christians sometimes enforce; but *uniformity* is not *unity*. The latter can neither be formed nor maintained by such means.

In Mark IX. 33–37 we find the first recorded breach in the unity that marked the twelve apostles, and its root is discovered for our instruction. "They had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest." Its remedy is shown to be the cultivation of the spirit of the little child. Thus and thus alone can unity be kept.

As to the third, we must give diligence to *pursue* it. In order that we may reach it gifts have been given. The most exalted gifts are no longer with us in flesh and blood—apostles and prophets I mean—but we have them in their

writings. The Scriptures therefore practically take their place as far as we are concerned.

Whether, therefore, it be the Scriptures, or gifts from the ascended Christ still available for us, let us value and use them each in their place; always remembering that neither will be of much benefit apart from that diligent earnestness of soul which marked the Apostle in Philippians III.

Notice carefully that gifts find their place in connection with the *unity of the faith*, not *the unity of the Spirit*. No "gift" is necessary for the latter. If dissension appears amongst saints the sovereign remedy is *not* to send for some gifted servant of God, but rather to seek afresh that lowliness of mind which the Spirit of God produces. On the other hand, if believers are ill-taught in the faith and have but little knowledge of Christ, to send for a gifted servant of God would be a very appropriate thing.

Let us then beware of confusing these three "unities" in our minds. Has there not been a tendency to do so, especially in the case of the second and third above mentioned? They are *not* one and the same thing, and the unity of the Spirit is *not* a unity of *light*. Many a saint who has been but poorly instructed in the faith has excelled in keeping the unity of the Spirit over other saints whose degree of light has been greater than his. Many a time has the unity of the Spirit been broken by the enlightened brother who has refused and treated disdainfully the brother much less enlightened, but no less true to Christ than himself.

Let us each and all seek help from God that we may more fully recognize the unity of the body, more carefully keep the unity of the Spirit and more diligently pursue the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, until all three unities coalesce in the one great unity of the church as of "one pearl of great price" in the glory of God.

F. B. HOLE.

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WE must first be inside the veil before we can be truly outside the camp.

Warnings and Promises.

2 Cor. VI. 11–18.

THESE verses contain WARNINGS and PROMISES. Why does God warn us? Because we need to be on our guard. Why does He make promises? Because we need encouragement. We need both, and we get them in Holy Scripture. There is a possibility of our being straitened, narrowed in our affections, so it says, "Be ye also enlarged"; let your love flow out, but let it be a holy love. Beware of an unequal yoke. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" In every circle of our life of responsibility down here the dividing line must be definite. The questions which the Apostle asks the Corinthians have but one answer; it is this: we are not to have any fellowship whatever with what is evil. Why? Because our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; we are not our own, we are bought with a price, we are God's dwelling-place. It is a stupendous fact that God the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven and taken up His abode in the saints. Oh, that God would burn this into our souls! The greatest fact in the world's history is that the Son of God has been on this earth, but the greatest in the saint's history is that the Holy Ghost has taken up His abode in his body. What effect ought this great truth to produce upon our souls? Just consider for a moment that one of the divine Persons in the Godhead has taken up His abode in your body! If we seriously bowed to the tremendous import of this it would be the controlling factor in our life. How can we connect our bodies—temples of the Holy Ghost—with social, commercial, or ecclesiastical evil? With a trumpet-call we are told to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Cleansing ourselves from evil personally, or separating from it collectively, will surely cost us something; but look at the recompense, look at the promise, "I will receive you, and will be a Father *unto* you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." That is our resource. Let us do what is right, trust God, and leave consequences to Him, *He will not fail us.*

T. OLIVER.

Concerning Giving.

"UPON the first day of the week let *every one of you* lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. XVI. 2). This was written to the Corinthians concerning a collection for the poor, but it contains a *principle* for our guidance, and we gather from it that we are to lay by in store week by week, as *the Lord prospers*, in the same way that part of our income is laid aside to meet rent, etc. Those who have tried this plan can testify how helpful it is and how greatly their powers of giving have been increased thereby.

Should any ask, "What proportion is to be laid aside?" it is according as every man hath *purposed in his heart*. No rule can be laid down, as it was under the law, but it will be found that the pleasure and luxury of giving increases with the giving; for as we wait upon the Lord and ask Him what we are to give, we long to give more and more. This must ever be in proportion to that a man *hath;* but poor, as well as rich, can act on this principle, for the Macedonian saints were in *deep poverty*, but they abounded in *rich liberality*.

The secret of it all was that they first "gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. VIII. 2–5), then all they possessed naturally and easily followed. Would this not be so with us if we truly realized that we wholly belonged to the Lord? that we are bought with a price, redeemed with the precious blood of Christ? All we have and are belongs to Him. Let us no longer deny His claims, but own them in *deed* as well as in *word*, and give practical expression to our obedience to His will by devoting a right proportion of our earnings to further His interests, whether in caring for the poor, ministering to the Lord's servants, or evangelizing at home and abroad.

Let us do this prayerfully before the Lord, and if He should be pleased to ask us for more than we have set aside, let us thankfully give. We acquire no rights over what is *left* by laying aside a part. We are to give good measure, pressed down, running over, and give in faith, laying up in store a good foundation for the time to come. Such givers can ever count upon what Paul said to the Philippians

should their circumstances change: "My God *shall* supply all *your* need." He is not unrighteous to forget what is done to His name.

Let us affectionately exhort the reader to give *liberally* and give *cheerfully*. If you have never put in practice the scriptural way here advocated we ask you to *try it*. Many who have done so find it increases their power to help others to a far greater extent than they could have imagined, besides increasing their joy in being the channels of God's goodness to others.

COLONEL JACOB.

Women's Work.

THE part that women take in all Christ's history is very instructive, especially to them. The activity of public service, that which may be called "work," belongs naturally to men (all that appertains to what is generally termed ministry), although women share a very precious activity in private. But there is another side of Christian life which is particularly theirs, and that is personal and loving devotedness to Christ. It was a woman who anointed the Lord while the disciples murmured; women who were at the cross when all except John had forsaken Him; women who came to the sepulchre, and who were sent to announce the truth to the apostles who had gone after all to their own home; as women before ministered to the Lord's need. And indeed this goes farther. Devotedness in service is perhaps the part of man; but the instinct of affection, that which enters more intimately in connection with His sentiments, in closer communion with the sufferings of His heart—this is the part of woman: assuredly a happy part. The activity of service for Christ puts a man a little out of this position, at least if the Christian is not watchful. Everything has, however, its place; for there are women who have served much and men who have felt much. Note also that this clinging of heart to Jesus is the position where the communications of true knowledge are received. The first full gospel is announced to the poor woman that was a sinner who washed His feet, the embalming for His death to Mary, our highest position to Mary Magdalene.

J. N. DARBY.

Life and Love.

I JOHN IV. 7–21.

THIS charming scripture speaks of love, life, peace, power, and boldness. The introduction is very beautiful: "Beloved, let us love one another." Love is always occupied with the blessing and the good of others. If you want an explanation of love, read Cor. XIII. That chapter is an antidote for selfishness. Do *you* love God's children? Then you are born of God. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." You show that you love God because you love His people and are occupied with their blessing. What a wonderful thing in a world of darkness and selfishness to know the love of the living and true God! By acquaintance with Him your heart is made happy; it is the knowledge of God that gives peace and rest, as well as life, to the soul. The outcome is that you love all Christians because they belong to the family of which you are a member, and they have a common place before the Father. He that loveth not knoweth not God. Why? Because God is love.

I might not be able to understand His love in things He passes me through, but if I wait on Him, I shall learn that He makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. In all His doings love comes out, the blessed unfolding of His nature. Having tasted His love, I am to show it in deeds. Talking of love is not love in action; God loved, and His love took action and form. Beloved, if God so loved us, we *ought* also to love one another. There is no "must" in Christianity, but there are a good many "oughts." We ought to love one another. Why? Because God has loved us. If we love one another, God *dwells in us* and His love is perfected in us. God dwelt in Jesus when here, but He is not here now. Who are here? The children of God, begotten by the word of truth and by the Holy Ghost. What men saw in Jesus when He was here ought to be seen in you and me to-day, the love of God coming out of us. That is Christianity. Distributing truth to others is not the same as living the truth ourselves. The great necessity to-day is downright, real, practical

following Christ in life, and ways, and conversation, and behaviour. If you and I are living the life of Christ, then the love of God will be flowing out from us.

God dwells in us by His Spirit, and we dwell in Him. How? Because He has given us of His Spirit. What is the power of a Christian? The Holy Ghost. If you are living with the Lord and walking with the Lord, what will come out? The grace of Christ in the power of the Spirit will be manifested. You are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It is a great thing to bear in mind you have got the Holy Ghost in you. This should make you careful where you go, because, wherever you go, you cannot *leave Him outside the door;* He never leaves the Christian; even when grieved He never forsakes. He is God's seal until the day of redemption.

Power lies in this, that you cleave to the Lord and you yield yourselves to the blessed Spirit of God that dwells in you. He is then free to bring you into the enjoyment of what God your Father is; you have the Spirit of God's Son sent into your heart because you are a son. Now walk in dependence, walk in the holy dignity of a son of God; the man who is holy and the man who is dependent will be the preserved man, will be the happy man, and God will use him in blessing for others. We can look fearlessly into the future, because as Jesus is, so are we in this world; we are in all the acceptance and delight of God in Him. Who is? Every believer. Where? *In this world.* As He is, so are we, *in this world.* He represents us *there,* and we are to represent Him *here.* We not only have life, peace, and power, but boldness—wonderful boldness—in view of the Day of Judgment. Who is going to be the Judge? The Lord Jesus. *What* will He judge? Our sins? No, He was judged for them. Then *what* will He judge? What you and I have *done for Him* down here on earth in our pilgrim pathway. He is going to appraise, and reward every single bit of devotedness to Him; if it is only a cup of cold water given in His name it will not be forgotten. But as to our persons we shall never come into judgment; we have already been judged in our Substitute when Christ took the guilty sinner's place on the cross.

DR. WOLSTON.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER IV.

What is the meaning of "as the truth is in Jesus"?

From verse 17 the Apostle proceeds to develop the individual aspects of a walk worthy of our calling; first recalling the awful condition of the Gentile world to which they once belonged. But the saints had not so learned the Christ, risen and glorified. "If ye have heard Him, and been instructed in Him." The subject-matter of the instruction is, "the truth in *Jesus*": that is, the life and nature of God revealed in the lowly path of Jesus (made strongly objective by the article before His name in the original, where it found its perfect expression. But in order that this should have any application to us, the truth involved our "having put off concerning the former behaviour the old man"; that is, all we were in our former alienation from the life of God (ver. 18), "corrupted according to the lusts of deceit." It took place when we bowed to the early sentence of the end of all flesh, which was carried out for God and for faith in the death of the cross, Christ having there taken His place for us under the judgment of God. But the truth also involved (leaving out the parenthetical clause for the moment) "our having put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth." These qualities of the new man (ver. 24) being in direct contrast to those of the old (ver. 22).

What is meant by the old man and the new man?

The former is what we were as characterized by the corrupt and deceitful will of the flesh within us in unconverted days. The latter is what the Christian is as characterized by the life and nature he has received from God, and the Spirit as the power of it, in new creation. It has been before us in chapter II. 15. (The word for to "*make*" in Himself has been already rendered "create" in verse 10 of that chapter, also III. 9, and is the same as in IV. 24.) Only there the new man is collective, embracing all who

are Christ's, who are formed into one new man and so characterized—so making peace. There would be no sharp angles of Jew and Gentile left to jar against each other in such a character in Christ, in which each had part by grace and new creation.

This had to be made good individually, and the passage before us occupies us with how the truth of all that God is in nature, that had been perfectly revealed in Jesus when here, is now to form and be the model of the practical walk of saints in Christ.

As to the parenthesis of which you ask the force (ver. 22). The having put off the old man having taken place for faith in death with Christ, we have to encounter the opposition of every principle of man and his world to the life of faith; but there is a "being renewed in the spirit of our mind" to meet this. For it is present, if the putting off was one past act; we are thus reminded of the need of the constant renewal of His grace, if it is there for us, that we may be ever fresh and bright in His things.

In what way does the creation of the new man differ from that of Adam?

It has no relation to the creation of Adam, who was created in innocence, and knew neither good nor evil till he fell. When this knowledge of the good, without power to do it, and of evil, to be the poor slave of it, had been acquired, as we know, from God (Gen. II. 22), he was driven out from the garden—no longer a suitable habitation for sinful man—and debarred the way of the tree of life, which would but have perpetuated his ruin. All now depended upon the seed of the woman, the Man of God's eternal counsels. Neither righteousness nor holiness of truth had any part in the creation of the first man.

But we cannot dismiss the creation of Adam without recalling the divine council of the Persons of the Godhead that preceded it (Gen. I. 26): "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness." This remains true of man in his responsibility, in both image, as we know from Paul in 1 Corinthians XI. 7, and likeness, from James III. 9. But oh, how morally fallen from what should answer

to such a place! Yet no thought of God fails of its full accomplishment, though it needed a man after another order and a new creation to bring it about. For this we need to refer to the way the new man is presented in Colossians III. 9, 10 as well as Ephesians.

Note that the verbs are here rightly translated in the past tense, as might have been more clearly represented in Ephesians. We are never exhorted to put off the old man or put on the new: the whole Christian character and walk depends upon this having taken place once for all for faith in death and life with Christ. The difference will be noted in the way in which the new man is here presented. Which is renewed or being renewed (it is present) "unto full knowledge according to the image of Him" (namely, God) "that created him" (that is, the new man). We know the image is Christ from Colossians I. 15, "who is the image of the invisible God." This helps too as to the force of "image"; it is representation. Only for Christ being the image, God in His own essential being would have been invisible for ever (1 Tim. VI. 16). The new man is here then renewed to the full intelligence of Christ, God's image, that formed by all the glory of His person as his object the Christian may represent Him here: Christ become all things as object to those in whom He is their life (ver. 11), that the lovely traits of His life being reproduced in them (vers. 12–17), they may truly represent Him in every word and deed. The *image* is the aspect of the new man in Colossians. But in order that there should be true representation there must be moral likeness. And *likeness*—moral likeness to the nature of God—stamps its character upon the new man in Ephesians. True to faith now in Christ and by new creation, both likeness and image will be ours for ever in bodies of glory. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the *image* of His Son" (Rom. VIII. 29). "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet manifested what we shall be: but we know that, when it shall be manifested, we shall be *like* Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John III. 2).

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

Forbearance.

In how many different ways our fellow-disciples try us and grieve us; and, no doubt, we do them. We see—or fancy we see—some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it or to go on in further company with them; but just in those same ways the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh, and yet He went on with them, "*not overcome of evil*," but "*overcoming*" the evil that was in *them*, with the *good* that was in *Himself*.

Some of these wrong things in them that must have sorely grieved Him we well understand and continually experience now. *Vanity* in another tries us—an air of self-satisfaction, a putting of ourself forth to admiration; the Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. The mother betrayed it, and His kinsfolk (John II., VII.). Peter was thus self-confident when he said, though all should be offended, yet he would not be. All of them were guilty of this when they contended who should be the greatest, and also when they *forbade* those who followed not *with themselves*.

Ill-temper is a very fretful thing; it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it when she complained to Him of her sister; and so did the apostles when they urged Him to send away the multitude, just because their privacy and repast had been intruded upon (Mark VI.).

A covetous, grudging spirit is very hateful. Jesus must have had to bear with it on such occasions as Matthew XIV. 17; XV. 33.

Unkindness, whether towards ourselves or to others, is very irritating. Peter's inquiry in Matthew XVIII. 21 covered, I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper; as also Matthew XV. 23.

Indifference to others and carefulness about oneself is very vexing to us also—it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried by enough of it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping; He spake of His death, but they were thinking of their

place and honours in the kingdom; He spake of leaving them, but none of them asked, "Whither goest Thou?" and in the ship it was of their own safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

Ignorance is apt to try us and make us impatient. Who ever found more of it in those He was continually teaching than the Lord? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned; and when He spake *spiritually* or *mystically* to them, they listened to Him as *in the letter*—they were asking explanations of the simplest parables.

Unspirituality of mind in fellow-disciples is a trial to us. From how much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering! We often, alas! through vanity or self-esteem, mistake *mere nonconformity with ourselves for lack of spirituality*.

These are some of the ways in which the disciples must have tried the mind of their divine Master; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren. It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect the mind of Jesus was, and then we shall know that though the instance was faint and the occasion a small one, yet His finer sensibility gave it more than the importance of the greatest occasion.

And comforting, let me say, it is to see the Lord going before us in such trials as these. But if He have gone before us in the *trials themselves*, He has also left us an example of *a series of victories* over them, and in these victories He has told us to "follow His steps"; for not only in His ways with His *adversaries*, but in His ways with His *disciples*, is He our pattern. If, in not answering reviling with reviling, nor wrongs with threatenings, He is an example to *us*, so also in His *going on still with His disciples*, in spite of naughty outbreaks and many shortcomings among them. For we have returned to Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," in *all* things as the One who is a pattern to us—how we should carry ourselves to all, adversaries or brethren (1 Peter II. 21–25).

And He, as I said, was never overcome of evil that was in another, but ever overcame it by the good that was in Himself (Rom. XII. 21).

Thus did He suffer from His disciples, and thus did He conquer. How ready are our selfish hearts to plead *our right to part company if another do not please US*. But this was not Jesus. The pride, the indifference, the ill-tempers, and the low, unspiritual mind which the disciples were continually betraying did not tempt HIM to separate from them. For at the END of their walk together He is *nearer to them than ever* (John XIV., XVI.). He did not *part company* with them, although they gave Him much exercise of heart and were continually drawing upon Him, but He warned and instructed them, rebuked and condemned them; but NEVER GAVE THEM UP. Blessed, perfect Master! Lover of our souls at all cost! (1 John II. 6).

J. G. BELLETT.

Rejoice.

PHILIPPIANS III.

IT is a most important thing for us to cultivate in our souls the joy of the Lord. Why should we not be glad? None have such reason to be glad as those who know the Lord. It is our proper portion, and if we have not cultivated it, then let us set to work to cultivate it. It is a thing to be cultivated. There is such a thing as cultivating a good spirit, a happy spirit. We have every reason to be happy and to rejoice in the Lord always. It is the portion that God has given to us; and when we think of it, we will project our thoughts outside of what is visible and temporal, what is merely passing, into eternity, into the Father's house, into what He has set forth for us as in His heart to give us, in such wise that He so loved us, and gave His Son, that we should have through Him eternal life. Is there not enough in that to fill our souls with joy inexpressible, unspeakable, and glorified? Peter speaks of it as already glorified, full of glory. He was carried outside himself, and all that belonged to him, as a poor, feeble creature, into those vast things that belong to God.

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Set yourself before God, and on your bended knees get, with His Word, before Him, in such wise that He will enable you to understand something about this great joy. It is your portion. Do not you miss it. Do not let the world, the things of the world, the trials of the world, the power of evil, the natural failings that belong to each one of us be allowed to rob us of that which really is our proper portion, the joy of the Lord.

" My head with oil Thou dost anoint " is expressive of joy, freshness, happiness, blessing. These things are set forth in the figure of oil. Now how do you get oil ? Only by tremendous pressure ; many tons to the square inch is needed to bring the oil out. It is only got under pressure. So under the pressure of circumstances, sicknesses, trials, etc., what is inside comes out. And what comes out is Christ ; He is at the very bottom of you, He is the life in you. When the saints are under the direst pressure we get proof of this. Look at the Apostle ! He was here in prison ; not exactly the kind of prison found in this country, under this government of ours, where all is so arranged that the cruelties of prison life are historic. It was not so in Paul's day. Lacerated and bleeding he was thrust into the inner dungeon, his feet made fast in the stocks, left in absolute darkness. It is not imprisonment of a gentle kind to which he refers here in the Epistle to the Philippians. He was in continued confinement for a long period ; and though there might be some relaxations in his very trying circumstances, still, prison life in Rome, under any circumstances, was not exactly what you would call palace life. It was under such circumstances he wrote this Epistle to the Philippians, this beautiful, flowing, unctuous epistle. It flows out in the power of the Spirit of God in all its four chapters. In the midst of untoward surroundings he writes to tell others who have their liberty, fresh air, and everything in life to make them happy and joyful : he writes to those people because he knew those things could not make them fully happy—could not give them full, satisfying, and abiding joy in their soul : he says in effect, " I have a joy in my soul, and I want you to share that. Rejoice in the Lord *alway :* and again I say, Rejoice."

Turn to Nehemiah VIII. Here are the remnant in circumstances of very great trial, a poor, feeble people who had come up in the days of Ezra, under very trying circumstances indeed. In Nehemiah VIII. 8: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading"; possibly that meant they turned the law from the Hebrew language into the Aramaic, which they then spoke. Then we read in verse 9: "This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law"; and in verse 10: "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet"—wherever they found it—"and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared." They were to forget their sorrows, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared. Why? "For the joy of the Lord is your strength." They were a poor, feeble people, having nothing to rejoice in amongst themselves. Nothing, if they looked outwardly at what was before their eyes; but the joy of the Lord was their strength. If that joy fills your soul you may be perfectly certain of this: it is a joy this world cannot give you and it is a joy that this world cannot take from you. Neurasthenia is one of the worst diseases you can have. It is nothing more nor less than this: the sufferers are not happy. If they were happy they would not be neurasthenic; and we may suffer spiritually in the same way. But all that would be at once removed if we brought the joy of the Lord to bear on our circumstances; we must eat the fat, and drink the sweet. Christ is meat indeed and He is drink indeed, and if we feed upon Him and rejoice in the Lord we shall be lifted above our trials.

I would say to myself, and to you, Let us cultivate this joy in the Lord. None have such reason to be glad as those who know the Lord. If we walk uprightly, walk graciously, walk righteously, walk humbly, walk before the Lord, cultivate the joy of the Lord in our souls, we shall be independent of all the world has to offer.

Turn to Luke X. 17–20: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld

Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions . . . but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." That is to say, instead of power over evil filling their hearts with joy, they were to rejoice that their names were registered in heaven. Putting evil down is a very good thing, we think a great deal of it ; if we had power to do it we would rejoice. It would be no trouble rejoicing in that. But supposing you could rejoice in a power greater than that, not only a power that would put down evil, but open a spring of richer, fuller joy much greater than that !

" In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." Mark, this was the time when He was refused, rejected, despised ; when they would not have Him ; when they cast Him out ; when it was getting more patent every day that His mission as regards Israel was to be a complete failure ; nearing the time when He said, " I have laboured in vain, and spent My strength for nought and in vain." Think of the journey He took from the heights of glory and came by the way of incarnation down here to travel a lowly pathway. His mission so far as Israel was concerned, so far as outward appearances went, and so far as the gathering back of the nation went, absolutely in vain ; yet at that very time He had a joy in His soul untouched by outward circumstances. He rejoiced in spirit, and said, " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to Me of My Father : and no one knows the Son but the Father ; and no one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." That was the great joy He had, to make known the Father's name on earth and reveal that name to those whom the Father had given Him. That was greater than the putting down of all evil. He will certainly put down all evil—all that is hostile to God—and bring everything into perfect order, and give back the kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all. But the greatest thing He does will be not simply the putting down of evil, but the manifestation of good. He will reveal God in the supreme goodness that

belongs to God, in the essential being of which He consists, and that is His great joy.

There are constructive and destructive politicians. The destructive politicians may put down evil with military power, with an iron will; but stopping there would be to fail in a constructive policy. Christ will destroy every hostile power; but He has got, so to speak, a constructive policy in the revelation of the Father's name. That is the great constructive policy. In our own tiny, microscopic way it is a good thing to keep that before us. Destruction of evil is right in so far as it goes, but the Lord says, "Do not rejoice in that, I will give you something better to rejoice in; you have got a heavenly portion, you shall share with me all the joys of the Father's house."

EDWARD CROSS.

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THE great secret of getting to the sunny side of sorrow is to get to its divine side, to see God in everything; all ordered by Him who has counted every hair on our heads, and without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground.

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IF we did but value what we have in Christ, if we but took account of our condition in relation to the Lord and not in relation to circumstances, we should always be happy beyond expression—our joy would be full; but it is in that point we fail. We love circumstances; we live in the power of them too much, in the light of the Lord's favour too little, and we are dull and low and half-hearted. Were it not so with us, the journeys in company with the cloud, chequered as they are, would find us and leave us still a happy people. For it is one Jesus throughout, whether it be the day of the blood (Exod. XII.), of the song (Exod. XV.), or of the cloud (Exod. XIII.); one and the same Jesus who was with us in the circumstances of human life, in the dying love on the cross, in the life of intercession in heaven, and who will give us His unchanged self in glory for ever.

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HEAVEN is filled with the fragrance of the Person and work of the One in whom I am accepted.

The Blessings of a Man in Christ.

EPHESIANS I. 1–6.

WHO can teach like God? If we sat at the feet of the greatest master in the world, he would be as much dependent upon our ability to take in the thing that he had to communicate as we should be dependent on his wisdom to show us; if we had not capacity to take the lesson in he could not do anything with us. God is not like that; He can enable us to take in what He says; not only unfold things to us, but can make them good in us; this applies to the most profound truths. In Ephesians we are told of the blessings of a man in Christ. These are infinitely higher than the blessings of the saints in Old Testament days. They cannot be set forth in Abraham, Ephraim, or Manasseh; Christ alone can set them forth. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." These are not the blessings simply of a justified man, though no doubt the man is justified; but it is not the way he is looked at here, but as chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It has nothing to do with what we are as sinners; we were chosen in Christ before the world was, so are viewed on an entirely different plane, on the line of divine counsels; blessed with every spiritual blessing, not on earth, but in heavenly places in Christ according to God's eternal choice before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Before all worlds He predestinated us unto sonship by Jesus Christ unto Himself; He wanted sons. It was not in any way to fulfil the desire of your heart and mine. Which of us desired to be a son before the face of God? Some lone place within His door would have been good enough for us; we did not want to be too near God. The prodigal said, "I will be a hired servant." Well, wait and see what your Father says. You are not to dictate where you are to be or where you are not to be, you are to be blessed according to your Father's thoughts. When he was a great way off his father saw him, and ran and fell on his

neck, and covered him with kisses. That is not the way hired servants are usually treated, but that is the way God has received us ; we are holy and without blame before Him in love, in the place of sons.

In Ephesians it is the Father coming out to fulfil the desires of His own heart ; in Romans it is God coming out to bless us according to our need. It is the Father who has predestinated us by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, whereby He has made us accepted, or taken into favour—" in Christ " ? No, that would not do. " In the *Beloved* " ! Of course it is in Christ, but Christ as the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

All our blessing is set forth in Christ, God's " *beloved.*" There is one little sentence in the Epistle of John which makes our blessings plain—" *As He is, so are we in this world.*" Do you inquire, " What is the nature of these blessings ? " Well, the better I know Christ, the better I can explain it, and the better I shall be able to tell you. If you are to know the nature of these blessings, the extent of them, you must know something of Christ, you must know Him ; and the better you know Him and the place He has as Man before God, the better you will know what the blessings are, because they are all set forth in Him.

A person may say, " What is the good of learning all the blessings of a man in Christ ? It is all very nice and very instructive, but what is the benefit of it ? " I will tell you the benefit of it. What benefit is it to a prince to know that he is a prince ? Oh, well, you say, knowing his rank, he does not consort with common people. Quite so, there is a dignity about him flowing from his exalted rank which nothing else could impart, a tone about him that no common person has. It is the consciousness of his princely birth which imparts this tone to him which no commoner could have. He may not always *act* worthily of the position, the exalted place that he has in the kingdom, but it belongs to him by right as it does not to those outside the royal family. If we could get hold of the greatness of the place that we have

before God, the dignity of our position, we should be different people. You remember what Paul said when he was before Festus and Agrippa. Picture a man who had been for two years in an Eastern prison; he must have been in a terrible condition, he certainly would not present the appearance of a courtly man as he stood chained before the king and nobility. Listen to him as he addresses Agrippa: "I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were not only almost, but *altogether such as I am*, without these bonds." "Such as I am"! not such as I shall be when I am glorified. Think of Paul, with torn raiment, chained as a criminal, guarded by soldiers, having been conveyed out of the hands of the rabble that would have torn him to pieces, saying, "Would to God that you were just like me." Could you go into the presence of a great potentate, a king, or an emperor, and say to him before all the nobility, "I wish you were like me?" Would you not be ashamed to say it? Would you not think, They will scoff at me? Ah, but if we only had a sense of the dignity that is ours it would be a very different thing. We should feel what an enormous benefit it would be to those men if they were only just what we are. "Would to God"—it came from the very bottom of his heart—"that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were not only *almost*, but *altogether* such as I am, without these bonds." You may be perfectly sure that Paul walked through this world, whether he made tents or stood before his judges, in the sense of the dignity that was his as a child of God.

Just think, we have such a place before God that nothing can set it forth but Christ; that we have no less a place than the place He has as Man in the presence of God, we are in Him, blessed with every spiritual blessing! He went down to the very bottom when He gave Himself for our sins; but He has brought us to the very top, set us in all the value of His work, in all the acceptability of His person, before the face of God, and in the relationship in which He stands to God—in all the grace and favour which rests upon Him. That is our place *now* as much as it will be in eternity; then glorified we shall enjoy it more, but it is our place now. A person conscious of this unique favour

could surely well wish that every other man on earth was like himself.

Where is the pomp, the grandeur, the glitter with which Agrippa and Bernice entered Cæsarea? Where are the chief captains, the principal men? Where is the court now? All gone in dust and ashes long ago; death and time, decay and corruption, have swallowed all up. Not so that which belonged to Paul, not the dignity that was his, not the blessings which were his—all these are imperishable, and will shine forth in the day of Christ's glory in all their magnificence. The world will then say, "Why, God has loved Paul and every other Christian as He has loved His Son!"

If we knew and entered into the blessings of the man in Christ more and made them consciously ours, it would impart a tone to us in this world that nothing else in the universe can. Mere intelligence will not do it, religious education will not do it; the Spirit of God alone can give us the sense of the dignity that is ours as men in Christ Jesus. Let faith appropriate the matchless roll of blessings in this chapter in the power of the Spirit, and the effect produced in Paul will be found in us.

JAMES BOYD.

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FELLOWSHIP with the Father and the Son is the key to fellowship with others. The gushing fountain-springs of mighty rivers come not originally from the basin where they are first visible. They have a secret connection, unseen but constant, with a hidden, unfailing, exhaustless reservoir, in unknown distance and depth. By continual supplies thence received the fountain overflows; and the streams flow on, and come into fellowship with other streams having a similar reservoir; and at last they all unite in the mighty ocean. So let us all draw from the hidden, unsearchable fullness of Christ, the exhaustless reservoir—hid from the eye of flesh, but known to the eye of faith—and we shall come in due time, after refreshing many a thirsty land in our way thither, into the full ocean of joy prepared for the whole family of God.

Our Resources.

JOHN XIV.

In this chapter the Lord unfolds the blessed portion of our hearts whilst He is away. Knowing all we should be exposed to during His absence, He opens the divine storehouse of the things of God, in order that we may know the wealth at our disposal. The man of the world who has resources is not afraid of disaster. Difficulties may overtake him, but if he has abundant resources at his back he says, "Things are going against me, it is true, but I have plenty to fall back upon." So it is a great thing for our souls to know what our spiritual resources are. There are many in this chapter, but before unfolding them the Lord starts by showing what the end of our pathway will be. What we shall meet in the pathway we know not, but He would have us fully aware of the end to which that pathway leads. And so He presents His coming in order to draw out the affections of our hearts after Himself. It is well to have Scripture in our minds—let us get as much of it as possible; but if we are really to know the things of God, our affections must be held in touch with the Lord's love, so that our hearts go out after Him. He appreciates every bit of affection that is awakened in our hearts for Himself, and the way He here presents His coming is with the object of quickening that affection. Perhaps most of us are clear as to the order of events connected with His return. We understand the difference between the rapture when He will come for His saints and the appearing with them in His kingdom; but what the Lord desires, what He treasures, is that His coming should link us to Himself in a bond of deep affection, not merely held in clearness and intellectual coldness, but something that, producing holiness of walk, will deliver us from the attractions of the world because our affections are elsewhere.

He also shows that we are an object of affection to Him. He presents His own love to us in a very special way when He says, "In My Father's house are many abiding places"; in that wonderful sphere over which My Father rules,

amongst those many families which have their places and relationships assigned by Him, I am going to prepare a place for you; and "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to MYSELF; that where I am, there ye may be also." Yes, He died to possess us for Himself, that whether we wake or sleep we shall live together with Him. He loves us so well He cannot do without us; we are the desire of His heart. He will take everything into His own hand, "bid the whole creation smile, and hush its groan," share all His glories with us; but more blessed still, He will have us in His own place in the Father's house, loved as He is loved, in all the wonderful acceptance in which He, the Beloved, is.

In verses 6 to 12 the Lord shows that He is the Revealer of the Father. How greatly do we need to pray for a deeper appreciation of these divine things; for our spiritual senses to be developed, our spiritual tastes cultivated, to value these things more highly. One person might be shown a picture by some great artist, and say, "I really do not see much beauty in it," and yet another will see such value in it that he is ready to spend thousands of pounds to possess that picture. In order to understand the real worth of that picture a cultivated artistic taste is needed. So it is with divine things; they are not appreciated by the natural mind, divine teaching is required. For that purpose the Spirit of God is given; that great Teacher who, understanding to the full all these revelations, desires to bring the appreciation of them to each one of our hearts, that we may consciously know the things that are our eternal riches.

Never until the Lord came had there been a manifestation of the Father. In Old Testament times it had been said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him"; but there had been no revelation of the Father, no declaration of Him as He truly is, no unfolding of the Father's heart; but as our Lord moved amongst His disciples, they saw the Father in the One who expressed in every detail of His life the supreme blessedness of the relationship involved in the terms Father and Son.

It is a wonderful thing to contemplate that life and see

revealed in Him all that the Father is, to behold His acts, His ways, and gather from them a conception in our hearts of what God the Father is. The disciples were slow to take it in. Philip says, If we could only see the Father, that would suffice us. Mark the Lord's answer: Philip, have you not read beneath the surface? Have you not reached down to the deep springs of My life? Have you not learned that I and My Father are One; so that he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father?

Then He adds, "I am the Way." It is by Me you may reach the Father. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me." It is in Me you have the way to the Father, the truth concerning Him, and the life to enjoy Him. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" or else believe Me for the very works' sake.

Mark all My love, My tenderness, My deep compassion, and know that it is the Father that dwells in Me, that is expressed in My words and works. And as I am your way to Him, so I am His way to you. God the Father has been revealed in Christ; that is riches indeed, that is something which we can fall back upon as a stay to our souls.

In consequence of this we have in verses 13 and 14 very wonderful words: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Suppose some great personage of unlimited wealth were to make such a statement, saying that he might be drawn upon to any extent, what a change would be made in the outlook of most men by such a communication; but our Lord has said words more really true and abiding than any earthly riches, and He intends them for our comfort: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do."

MY NAME—that is the whole point. I have revealed the Father, that He may be the joy of your heart, and now I am leaving the world and going to Him; but I will leave behind the whole value of My name, you are to be here for Me, to do all in My name, and your power for being and doing will be in proportion as you ask in My name. We are left here in connection with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that His interests may be carried on and that He may be glorified. Our askings and our actions are

to have as their object " that the Father may be glorified in the Son," in order that glory may be brought to the Father and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be magnified in connection with it. Ask then what you will, and it shall be done. A very different thing indeed from asking something for ourselves, in relation to our own circumstances. If we are hungry, naked, sick, or in need, we may certainly ask, making our requests known to God, and receiving His peace as the blessed answer ; but this verse regards us as bought with a price, Christ's slaves, sent on His business, to trade for Him, to carry His name through this world as He carried the Father's.

We need to have our eyes opened to the greatness of the resources connected with Christ's interests, the making known the abiding truth on account of which He died—the knowledge of the Father revealed in the Son (ver. 31) ; for this object we can ask what we will, and it shall be done.

Let us wake up to it that the one great purpose for which we are left here is to bear the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent Him in the place of His rejection during His absence, and in as far as we are doing this, all the wealth and power belonging to that name are at our command. He says, I put you here in My name. I put all the wealth of My name, the key to infinite resources, at your disposal. If our earthly occupations are carried on as serving the Lord Christ, if the rest of our time is used in His service, we may in the Lord's name draw in faith on those resources, and we shall not find Him fail us. It was in the power of that, that the Apostle Paul could say, " I can do all things." Was that boasting ? Yes, it was ; but look in whom he boasted. " I can do all things THROUGH CHRIST, which strengtheneth me." Paul was nothing, the vessel was weakness in itself, but he was strong for all things in Him who gave him power.

We also have in the presence of the Holy Ghost a still further support. The Lord says, I will give you another Comforter ; I am going to carry on your affairs on high, you will be well represented in the court of heaven, for I shall be there ; but you will now have an additional Com-

forter—the Holy Spirit will be here, the Paraclete will be here, One who, understanding all your case, will make intercession for you according to God's mind. Then in knowing the longing that would be begotten in the heart for Himself, the Lord added in verse 18: I am coming to you; I will not leave you orphans, I am not going to leave you deserted in the world. Ye shall see Me. "Because I live, ye shall live also." But how are we to profit by the presence of the Holy Ghost? and how are we to know the manifestation of the Lord's presence? For this one condition is absolutely necessary: our walk must be in obedience to Him. We have to put ourselves simply and unreservedly into His hands, that He may choose our pathway from first to last. He does not say one word about obedience until He has revealed the fullness of the Father's heart. Then when the revelation of that marvellous heart of love has been made known, He puts us under the control of it. "Keep My commandments"; hold yourselves completely at the disposal of such love, a slave in its bonds; let God do what He likes with you, and then will follow the most marvellous recompense. What is loss in this world, what is its passing frown, if the heart is in the knowledge of the Father and the Son by the power of the Spirit of God? It is then a very small thing to endure rejection and be counted one of those foolish people who are not up to the things of this very enlightened age. "If a man keep My words, My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him." There is compensation indeed; far outweighing the fleeting things of a passing age, and abiding in its ever-deepening joy for ever and ever.

This being so, the Lord says, "Peace I leave with you." Do not take that verse out of its connection, read it in the light of the whole chapter; let it have its weight with you. "My peace I give unto you." I am leaving you in a world where you will have tribulation, where you will have difficulties and trials, but I have passed through it in the peace of the knowledge of the Father's love, and My peace I leave with you, "My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Then having said this He went straight from that upper chamber into the night,

took the way to Gethsemane's garden, and from thence to Calvary's cross, to lay there in His own death the solid foundation upon which these things could be true for us. It is through His death we have part with Him in these precious things of eternal love. Let us follow on then in the power of the Spirit to know more and more of the resources of divine grace unfolded in this wonderful chapter.

JAMES GREEN.

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GOD has stooped to the very lowest point of our misery in order to raise us to the very highest point of blessedness.

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THE secret of suffering for Christ lies in the affections being centred in Him. The more I love the Lord and the closer I walk with Him, the more I shall be prepared to make sacrifices for Him; and the more I am filled with His worth and beauty, the less I shall be occupied with the suffering. If the eye is fixed on Christ, the suffering will be as nothing in comparison with the present joy and future glory.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER IV.

"Speak every man truth with his neighbour" (ver. 25). *Why "neighbour," and how are we viewed as "members one of another"?*

Coming now to details of conduct, it is of the deepest interest to see that the Apostle looks for, not merely the refusal of what was of the old man, but the positive production of the traits of God's own nature according to which the new man has been created. Hence "having put away" (the aorist of one definite act) falsehood—everything that has that character, not merely lying—"let each speak truth with his neighbour," apparently recalling Zechariah VIII. 16, only changing "to" to "with," as more suited to what follows in the intercommunion of those who are members one of another because of the body of Christ.

Similarly, the quondam thief is not only to steal no more, but, through honest labour, to be generous to others. Lips once given to worthless speech are now to be used for good, to be helpful in building up and in ministering grace to the hearers. " And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, in whom ye have been sealed to the day of redemption."

What is the connection between the Seal and the day of redemption ?

The Spirit has already been presented as the earnest of our inheritance with reference to redemption having yet to be applied in power to it (chap. 1. 14). But He is also the Seal of God upon us in view of the redemption of our bodies. We may grieve Him by the allowance of aught that is of the flesh, but this passage proves that He will never be taken from us till we possess Him in bodies of glory for ever. Thus the subjective measure of our path has been set before us in the truth in Jesus—the having put off the old man and put on the new—and in not grieving the divine Person who dwells within us. The objective measure of it now follows from verse 31 : it is nothing short of Christ manifesting God in this world in love and light.

Verse 32 says : " forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," whilst chapter v. 1 *exhorts to follow " God, as dear children." Does this refer to the way we should extend forgiveness to one another, or is it descriptive of the conduct suited to those who are addressed as dear children ?*

First it must be noted that " for Christ's sake " is simply " in Christ," as again and again in the epistle. It is not enough now that bitterness, wrath, etc., the various forms of the violence of the flesh, should be removed from us, but the measure of what we should become in kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness is what God is as manifested in Christ. We are to be (more than " followers " it is really) " imitators of God," the reflection of what He is in His own nature, " as children beloved "—that is, beloved of God.

The full force of this, and much that follows, will only be seen as we connect it with the truth of " His calling," as we have it before us in chapter 1. 3–7. Blessed with all

spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, before God in Christ all that He is according to eternal counsels, in relationship to the Father as sons, accepted in the Beloved in whom we have received forgiveness—all the light of such a position is brought to bear upon the walk that flows from it in this part of the epistle, and is thus the strongest confirmation to our souls of having been set in the position. We are to be in practical ways as those who have come out of heaven to display the character of God upon earth, to walk as Christ walked, in whom that character was seen in all its perfection as Man. Hence verse 2: "And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

Is this the burnt-offering aspect of Christ's death?

I do not know that it can be defined thus. The word for the holocaust (or whole burnt-offering) is not used: in it the priests had no part, it was wholly consumed as a sweet savour to God. But the meat-offering (or meal-offering) had this sweet-savour character too. The words are such as are applied generally, and seem to take in the devotedness of Christ in both life and death. But do not let us miss the character of the love set before us that we are to walk in. Christ's love was such as led Him to give Himself for us, great in the utter unworthiness of the objects of it; but the love that comes down from God working in man rises up always towards and to God as its just and necessary object: it can have nothing lower as its spring, towards whomsoever it is exercised, as another has shown. Thus we have both "*for us*" and "*to God*" in the verse. "The higher the object, if we look up, the nobler the affection; if we look down, the more unworthy the object, the greater the love."

Verse 5. Why is the inheritance here spoken of as "the kingdom of Christ and of God"?

To follow the connection—all the forms of the corruption of the flesh are to be refused. None so characterized, however high-sounding their profession, have any inheritance in the kingdom which is not only that of Christ in administration, but of God, bearing thus the stamp of His nature. But all this flows from the full height at which

our walk is set. God, of whom we are to be imitators, is light as well as love. We who were once darkness are now light in the Lord, and should walk as children of light.

Verse 9. *Should it not be fruit "of the light" instead of "of the Spirit" here?*

Yes; there is no question of the original text, and the moral connection of the passage proves it. Light and darkness are contrasted throughout these verses, light making the true character of everything manifest according to its property (ver. 13).

Verse 14. *Does this view a believer as sunk down to the world's level, asleep as to spiritual things, among the dead as to associations?*

It does indeed; and nothing can be more solemn than that, with all the truth communicated and the absence of anything overt in the condition of the saints addressed to hinder its being communicated as in other assemblies, such an exhortation should be needed. The soul may so easily miss the light and the power of the truth through a dull lethargic state, or fall into it through lack of exercise. To sleep amongst the wholly dead in sins is a truly terrible condition for one quickened with Christ. Yet such is His grace, that when the appeal takes effect He—"the Christ," according to the full revelation of the place He has in God's counsels—"shall" not merely "give thee light" as we have it, but "shine upon thee," recalling for the Christian Isaiah LX. 1, 2; only in more intimate and personal blessing than for Zion in the day of glory yet to be revealed.

Clearly a careful walk was needed (ver. 15), "not as unwise, but wise, redeeming the time," as to which you ask, "because the days are evil." It has the force of redeeming from loss, buying up or seizing the opportunities to fill them up with Christ. For this we need not to be foolish, but intelligent in the will of the Lord (ver. 17); not intoxicated with the joys of this world, as "drunk with wine" would symbolize, but to "be filled with the Spirit," the effect of which, for the world that does not know Him, might at times be mistaken for, or at least put down mockingly to the former, as in Acts II.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

Lift up Your Heads.

MEN'S hearts are failing them, things grow blacker religiously, socially, politically; but these things tell us our redemption draweth nigh. We are to lift up our heads, look above, beyond—it is at the darkest hour the day star appears.

Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But day-spring is at hand.

Christ is coming, coming for His redeemed, coming to deliver them from this restless, disturbed, distracted world, and introduce them to that peaceful, holy, happy scene—the paradise of God—the Father's house, with its rest, its joys, its blessings.

When He came before, expectant hearts waited to welcome Him; a Simeon and an Anna hung upon His sure promise and ardently longed for its fulfilment. Five hundred years before Malachi had written, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE." What was Anna's response? "I will be there to meet Him." She departed not from the temple; though not of the priestly tribe, its precincts became her dwelling-place. Year after year rolled away, still she waited; she retired to rest anticipating the rising of the "Sun of righteousness"; when she rose in the morning, "Perhaps to-day" was the language of her affections. Time dimmed not the fervency of desire nor delay the momentary expectation of His coming; patience of hope marked her ever and always.

This fervent longing for her absent Lord produced practical effects in her life; Anna was no ascetic isolating herself from others. She knew those with burdened hearts looking for redemption; to them she spoke of Christ—He was her theme. Weary hearts are all around us; have we skill or desire to speak a word in season to tell them of Jesus, of the wonders of redeeming love? What better can engage us than to speak of the One who travelled from the heights of glory to accomplish REDEMPTION BY BLOOD, and who soon will leave the throne of the Majesty on high to accomplish REDEMPTION BY POWER?

Anna was no mystic. She laboured as well as hoped; service untiring marked her day and night. She fasted, denied herself, and as she waited FOR her Lord she waited UPON her God in prayer and supplication.

Many Christian women ask, How can I serve the Lord acceptably? Shall not Anna's example furnish an answer? Even the youngest saint can *continue* in "supplication and prayer." If you have hitherto neglected this service commence *now*. Do not begin with general requests—START with any of God's people you know, but do not STOP there; widen out to all saints. Be simple and definite in your petitions. Paul prayed for saints and servants by name—a good example for us to follow.

Anna not only PRAYED, but she PRAISED; joy filled her heart, praise filled her lips. Jesus gladdened her; the Lord Himself touched the chords. Out of the fullness of her heart her mouth spake. She was "inditing a good matter"; her tongue became the pen of a "ready writer." His virtues and excellences were the theme of her lips; like Philip, she could say, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," and she called upon all that was within her to praise and bless His holy name; she anticipated the day when everything that hath breath will praise the Lord.

Our Redeemer has appointed us *a meeting-place;* so fervent is His love that He will leave heaven, travel back to the atmosphere surrounding this earth to meet and welcome His own. All the redeemed will be there, but among them His bride will have a special place of nearness; she will not only share the glories of His kingdom, but the affections of His bosom. She will responsively ESTEEM HIMSELF BETTER THAN ALL HIS GIFTS—she will find her satisfaction in the Bridegroom, her joys in the Father's house.

We get a little intimation of this satisfaction in Simeon, a man just and devout, upright, and devoted. He waited, like Anna, for the Consolation of Israel; heaven approved his fervent desires, and assured him by a special revelation he should not "depart" until he had seen the fulfilment of his hopes. Drawn by the Spirit, he enters the temple, takes up the holy Babe in his arms, sees in Him a light to

reveal the Gentiles, and rejoices that Israel's Glory had come. The sight so satisfied his heart that he exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace; mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!" Strange language for a Jew! What a contrast to Hezekiah, who wept sorely at the prospect of death (Isa. XXXVIII. 3). Does not this utterance tell us that there is something better than the glory and the kingdom; something more excellent than emancipation and deliverance; something more precious than ruling and reigning? The person of Jesus so fully engaged his affections that all else paled in comparison; he could drop his Jewish hopes, having found in that "holy" Babe salvation and satisfaction. The language of his heart was:—

O Lord, the bright and blessed hope
That cheer'd us through the past,
Of full eternal rest in Thee,
Is all fulfilled at last.

Yes, it is our Lord Himself who is coming; ere the day of the kingdom dawns we shall have the holy, blessed joy of seeing His face, be WITH HIM and LIKE HIM; be ushered BY Him into the intimacies of the Father's house. The air is our meeting-place, IT IS NOT OUR DESTINATION. We are to go with Jesus to the home of the Father, to behold His glory THERE; to see Him *as He is*. Then, having spent a long, happy time in the Father's house, we shall come forth to share in the glories and blessing of His millennial kingdom. When that is over we shall still find ourselves in His blessed company, for our portion is to be *for ever with the Lord*.

As the darkness deepens we may lift up our heads, sure that our redemption draweth nigh. The last message from Jesus in glory is, "Surely I come quickly!"

He comes—for oh, His yearning heart
No more can bear delay,
To scenes of full unmingled joy
To call His bride away.

H. NUNNERLEY.

. . . . . .

THE Holy Ghost delights to reveal the Son—to take of His things and reveal them to us. These things we have in all their fullness and beauty in the Word.

*

Wait on the Lord.

ISAIAH XL.

IT is not God's thought that His people should be perplexed and distressed. God is the God of all comfort; He would cheer our hearts and bring before us that which is for our comfort, but He has to make room in our hearts for this comfort. It is useless looking within or around: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and that maketh flesh his arm." It is not a bit of use expecting anything from one another; all comes from Him, though frequently He is pleased in grace to use His people to minister to each other—and a very blessed service it is to be the channel of God's comforts to disconsolate hearts—but we must have no expectations from each other. The Lord is our Shepherd; "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." He *carries, feeds, gathers, leads.* The first thing He does is to put us on His shoulders rejoicing, and He will never set us down until we are in the place where we shall be perfectly safe; He will carry us right home to the Father's house. On the way He feeds us and gathers us. It is His mind that all His sheep should be gathered. To whom? To this person or to that person, to this society or that? No, He gathers to Himself!

Ours is no ordinary shepherd; He is brought before us in a very wonderful way in this chapter. The ONE who deigned to take the place of a shepherd is He who measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, who meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. Have you ever stood on some rock-bound coast and seen the waves foaming in as though they would sweep everything before them, but having reached a certain point, they are stayed? How comes it about? Jeremiah tells us the Lord has placed the sand for the bound of the sea, and though the waves thereof roar, *yet can they not pass over;* though they toss themselves,

they cannot prevail. When this world was sent rolling on its course He not only created it, but He has maintained it ever since.

Isaiah goes on to ask, With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and He taketh up the isles as an atom. If the world is as an atom, what are we? Let us get down from our lofty pedestal and humble ourselves in the dust before Him, for we are less than nothing and vanity; but though we are so tiny He does take account of us. He is indeed great and glorious; but one mark of His greatness is this: He can take account of every creature He has made, and has numbered the very hairs of our head.

Having directed our attention to things terrestrial, He says, Lift up your eyes to things celestial. Lift up your eyes on high. Who hath created these things? He calleth them all by names, for that He is strong in might not one faileth. It is computed there are not fewer than one thousand million worlds, and He numbers them, gives them all names. If you were given a million worlds, could you find names in your vocabulary for them all?

This wonderful Person is so gracious that He meets the need of the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. Look at the millions of His creatures who are constantly crying to Him. Do you suppose one cry is not heard? "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" He both hears and answers. Sometimes we wonder why our cry is not answered, and why He does not come and deliver us out of our perplexity; but we must not say our way is hid from the Lord; there is not a single thing that concerns us but what He is deeply interested in it, not a sigh, not a groan, not a tear but what the blessed Christ of God has taken it all into account. That is His greatness; His greatness comes out in this wonderful way, that He can take account of every one of us, tiny as we may be, and is deeply interested in all that concerns

us. Well may the Psalmist exclaim, " Great is our Lord ! " Yes, He is indeed great ; His understanding is infinite, and His love is as great as His power. " Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord the Creator of the heavens and the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Let us come before Him with all our little concerns ; they are not small in His eyes, there is nothing too trifling to pray about ; He wants us to bring all our cares and sorrows to Him. We never weary Him. His ear is ever open, His heart ever attentive. He understands all our needs ; He knows everything that concerns us, and is deeply interested in every one of us. We are the Father's love-gift to Himself, and He must, because of His love for us, interest Himself in all our concerns ; He fainteth not, neither is weary.

It is no use depending upon our strength, but they that wait upon the Lord shall change their strength ; that is, they exchange the natural for the spiritual, the human for the divine, when they cast themselves absolutely and entirely upon this great and glorious Person. But we have to wait upon Him for this. It is they that wait upon the Lord who renew their strength ; they mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and are not wearied, they walk and do not faint. What we need is to get before Him, wait upon Him ; " He that waiteth on his Master shall be honoured." He wants us to wait upon Him, when our youth will be renewed like the eagle's. There are two periods in the life of an eagle. It may be seen standing upon a rock apparently dying, it has scarcely strength to hold up its head ; but wait a bit. Presently it seems as though it has got a new lease of life. Its youth has been renewed. Underneath that old beak there has been growing a new one ; those feathers that have fallen out are being replaced by new ones ; its strength returns, it is able now to tear its food. The sun gleams out, and away that eagle soars right through the clouds, its feathers all tipped with yellow gold, its strength renewed.

If our strength is to be renewed like the eagle's, it is

only as we wait on the Lord. He is never weary. He fainteth not, and He imparts His own qualities to those who wait upon Him. Strength divine thus becomes theirs; they will run the rest of the pathway that lies before them unto God's eternal day. The reason why we are so often marked by defeat is because we are not sufficiently waiting upon the Lord. When we are inclined to give up because of the way, like the people of Israel, it only shows that we have not been pouring out our hearts before Him, and receiving this strength which He is ever seeking to minister to us.

How blessed to turn our eyes from ourselves to One who would engage our hearts with Himself, whose power is infinite, whose grace is manifold, whose love is unchanging, whose mercy is everlasting.

E. E. CURTIS.

The Upward Look.

WHEN the whirlwind carried Elijah heavenward, Elisha saw him, and in the power of that upward look he began a new and distinct pathway. Practically he said, "The pathway I have to tread is that marked out by the footprints of the one that has gone before." He begins with Jordan, which stands in Scripture not merely for the death of the body, but death in a spiritual way, death with Christ. There are two ways every Christian may speak of Christ's death. He may say first, "Christ died *for* me." Then he may say something equally true, "I died *with* Him." Now Jordan brings death with Christ before us in figure. In practice it works out very simply: it is a question of affection, it is the refusal to be identified with the world which would not have Christ; we say, It would not have our Lord, so it shall not have us, we will share His rejection. Elisha then goes to Jericho, the only place where he tarried. His stay there may be viewed as a picture of ourselves left in the world. Instead of taking us to heaven as soon as we are converted, God leaves us here awhile to be for Him. Why should Elisha tarry in Jericho? It was a lovely place, but intolerable to live in, for the ground was barren and the water was undrinkable. That is just

what the world is—a very lovely place, but nothing in it to sustain or refresh the Christian. Elisha tarried there in order that he might minister, in the grace and power that were his through that upward look, to the need in that place. He did a great work in Jericho: he healed the water and removed the curse from the ground. You and I have been left in the world, not for any selfish reason, not merely that we might learn wonderful lessons, but that we might in our little measure act on God's behalf in view of the desperate need that is here. Some of us seem to be like soldiers who do full justice to the commissariat department, but who do not care to go on the drill ground. We can do with an immense quantity of spiritual food, we seem to have voracious appetites. But when it comes to the outgoings a different tale has to be told. You have heard of the Dead Sea: no fishes can exist in it, no animal life is found in its vicinity; it is a scene of death. Do you know what makes it so? It has plenty of fresh inlets: the River Jordan flows into it, carrying a volume of fresh, sparkling water. The River Arnon, and the Brook Kedron run into it; it has all these *inlets*, but no *outlets;* it is for this reason it is *dead.*

Our inlets are such things as prayer-meetings, reading of the Scriptures, oral and printed ministry, such as the monthly magazines and other helpful books, intercourse with Christian friends—these are what we mean by inlets.

Now what are our outlets? Do you ever take a bundle of gospel books and go round from door to door? Well, no, I hardly have time for that. Do you ever say anything to your friends about the Lord? Do you ever put a little gospel book into an envelope and post it? Well, no, that has not occurred to me. Do you ever visit the widow and fatherless, or any poor saints who are in sorrow and suffering, even if they are not in your particular "fellowship"? Do you share your spiritual blessings and temporal mercies with others? If not, be sure of this, if your outlets are not proportionate to the inlets, if rivers of living water are not flowing from you to refresh others, you are not answering to the object for which you are left here.

One more place Elisha visited, Bethel. Here he met with treatment that he never got in Jericho. I suppose

those at Jericho were delighted to have him there, he did so much good; but as soon as he set his face towards, and began to tread, that road he got mockery. Bethel means "House of God"; it got its name when poor Jacob, having pillowed his head on the stones, had a wonderful vision and woke up saying, "This is none other but the house of God" (Gen. XXVIII. 17). It was the house of God—a terrible place to him—but a very blessed place for us. Later, Solomon built a "house of God" of great and costly stones at Jerusalem. Although that temple no longer stands, God still has a house on earth; it is composed of all Christians, they are living stones and are built together for a habitation of God. He dwells in them, and consequent on this we find there are certain principles and truths connected with the house of God upon which we are to act. We tarry in Jericho, preach the gospel, circulate the glad tidings with the zeal of an apostle, and have God's blessing, and yet escape mockery. But if we set our face towards Bethel and begin to take that road, if we show that we are determined to act on the principles connected with the house of God, then we shall be mocked. Some will call us "loose," others "narrow-minded" and "bigoted"; we shall be accused of setting up to be better than others; our motives will be misinterpreted, our words twisted, all sorts of evil things said about us. Why? The simple truth is that we have found out a little about the house of God, and we want to follow that road and be true to the principles of God's assembly.

We are not to curse the mockers like Elisha, we are to bless those who persecute us. Our resource is the name of the Lord. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." If we make the name of the Lord our centre of gathering we shall find it a tower of defence and a refuge indeed. May God graciously give us in the power of an upward look, and as a result of having the heart engaged in secret with Christ, to take the Bethel road, and be true to the principles of His assembly, His church, His house, until He come. It is as true at the end as it was at the beginning of the church's history that there is "one body" and only one, "one Spirit" and only one, even as there is "one hope of our calling." H. P. BARKER.

Notes on Galatians.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE Pauline epistles illustrate in one form or another the Apostle's "care of all the churches." The condition, actual or threatened, of the Galatian churches is graphically set forth in four characteristic words, viz. REMOVED—"I marvel that ye are so soon *removed* from him that called you into the grace of Christ" (chap. I. 6); BEWITCHED—"O foolish Galatians, who hath *bewitched* you, that ye should not obey the truth?" (chap. III. 1); ENTANGLED—"Be not *entangled* again with the yoke of bondage" (chap. V. 1); HINDERED—"Ye did run well; who did *hinder* you that ye should not obey the truth?" (chap. V. 7).

The key to the epistle appears to be furnished in chapter II. 4, viz. "false brethren unawares brought in," attacking "our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus," in order to "bring us again into bondage." The seemingly insignificant link of circumcision between Christianity and Judaism had the effect of placing them in the relation of "debtors to do the whole law" (chap. V. 1–4).

This gave occasion for the necessity of distinguishing Christianity and the Christian revelation, *in its source*, from Judaism.

CHAPTER I.

The subject was of such urgent importance that the Apostle broke in upon his salutation—abruptly and parenthetically—to establish the direct source of his own apostleship. "Whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Matt. XXI. 25). "Paul, an apostle, *not of men, neither by man*, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." This statement unmistakably set aside any authority derived from Judaism through its hierarchy, or even from the apostolic circle at Jerusalem; his apostleship was direct from heaven, untouched by any human medium as source or authority; "not *of* men, neither *by* man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."

The whole of the introductory portion of this epistle (chap. I. to II. 9) may be viewed as an elaboration of this point which was essential and fundamental to the Apostle's object, viz. the disentangling of the Galatians and the Gentile Christians for all time from Judaism in any and every form. Even the grace of salvation, upon which Paul throws the Galatians back, is utilized to bear upon his subject. Judaism is shown later to be " bondage under the elements of *the world* " (chap. IV. 3), when Christianity in its full revelation comes in upon the scene.

Verse 6 : That their position was serious is clear from the Apostle's words, " removed from him that calleth you into the grace of Christ unto a different gospel " (N.T.). Paul's gospel *allied with* Judaism at any point was not the gospel of " *the grace of Christ,*" but a different gospel. Verse 7 : What was taking place in their midst is exposed in the plainest language : there were certain *troublers* engaged in the perversion of the gospel of Christ. Verse 8 : The Apostle's denunciation of this is of the most fervid and impassioned character, involving solemn anathemas *upon himself or even an angel from heaven,* should such a thing be possible as the announcement by either of these of a gospel differing in any way from that which Paul had already preached. Verse 9 : What they had received was final and irrevocable. " If *any man* preach *any other gospel* unto you *than that ye have received,* let him be accursed " ; unsparingly Paul deals with the troublers, whoever they might be.

His own call and ministry as the vessel of " the grace of Christ " or " the gospel of Christ " now occupies some considerable portion of the epistle to chapter II. 9. Verse 10 : Unfettered by any disposition to obtain the favour of men or to please men, his whole object was to be approved as a servant of Christ.

Verses 11, 12 : The gospel that he preached was in itself a matter of direct revelation—" by the revelation of Jesus Christ "—and not received (vers. 13, 14) through any human channel. Once foremost enthusiast and zealot in Judaism, surpassing his contemporaries in its culture and enforcement (ver. 15), a moment came in the good pleasure

of God—who had set Paul apart from his birth (ver. 16)—when a revolution took place in his life, effected by the revelation of God's Son (Acts IX.) in him for proclamation amongst the Gentiles. In the natural course of things this would have led to a conference with the apostles at Jerusalem; but so distinct and direct was Paul's divine call, that he avoided conference with flesh and blood (ver. 17), abstained from going up to Jerusalem, went immediately into Arabia (ver. 18) and thence returned to Damascus. Not for three years did the Apostle (ver. 19) go up to Jerusalem, when he saw Peter alone, returning after fifteen days into the regions of Cilicia and Syria (vers. 21, 22). Unknown by face to the churches in Judea, the record of his miraculous conversion *only* was known to them, to the glorifying of God (ver. 24).

These details, far from being insignificant, substantiated Paul's direct divine call and commission as *apart from Judaism,* and were important for the establishment of the divine authority under which Paul ministered.

M. C. GAHAN.

(*To be continued.*)

Joseph's Bones.

THE *inheritance* given to Abraham and confirmed in Isaac controlled the thoughts and governed the lives of the patriarchs. They testified their faith in God's promises in the directions they gave concerning their burial-places, proving how fully they believed in the God of resurrection. It mattered not where their bones lay, whether Hebron or Sychem—one in the north, the other in the south—so that it was somewhere within the borders of the promised land.

Joseph, confiding in God's promise, said to his brethren, "I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Gen. L. 24, 25).

They embalmed his body, laying it in a coffin in Egypt. A hundred and fifty years rolled away; God visited His

people—as Joseph predicted He *surely* would—and the children of Israel took the bones of Joseph, and from Egypt issued the largest and longest funeral procession on record —six hundred thousand men. For forty years they carried a dead body; it accompanied them in all their wilderness wanderings. How this should remind us that we commence, and continue, our journey in company with the true Joseph who has died. We have to bear about in our body the dying of Jesus; enter into the blessed yet solemn fact that we have died with Him.

The word dying, or deadness, sets forth moral inaptitude to be taken up with things of the world; but it is only as our affections are engaged with those promises of God—which have their Yea and Amen in Christ risen—and as we become absorbed with those unseen and eternal realities connected with our inheritance, that we shall regard this world as a graveyard and pass through it as those who have died with Christ. This bearing about in our bodies the dying of Jesus is also our power for warfare. We have no record of the burial of Joseph until the land had rest from war; for seven years perpetual warfare was carried on, and it was not until Canaan was conquered that his dead bones were entombed. Surely this has a voice, it tells us that, whether passing through wilderness experiences or contending with wicked spirits in the heavenlies, the sentence of death should ever be on self.

Christ, not Joshua, is our Captain; in His might we fight. We look not for strength in ourselves, we remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, a powerful Conqueror. We write death on self; are crucified to the world, and the world to us. Thus we go on to possess more and more of our heavenly inheritance, and set our feet practically upon that glorious inheritance which is ours in God's *purpose*, as it is already ours as God's *gift*. JOHN GASKIN.

. . . . . .

You are bound up for eternity in the same " bundle of life " with Christ; it was ever God's thought to connect you in life with Christ; God connects you eternally with Him, so never think of yourself as apart from Him; and walk in the power of it.

Lord and Head.

ACTS IX. 1–6; COL. III. 12–17.

To Paul was given that wonderful truth, the truth of the mystery, to complete the Word of God. The way in which the Lord Jesus was first made known to him characterized the whole of his ministry. Two things are prominent in that interview. One, the lordship of Christ—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" the other the headship of Christ, underlying the Lord's first words to Paul—"Why persecutest thou Me?" In the title Lord we have specially brought before us His rights, what is due to Him; and in the headship of Christ the One in whom are all the boundless resources of God for us.

Turn to Colossians III. 12–14: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." I can understand somebody saying, "Is it possible for these wonderful things to be manifested on earth? If a spot can be found where these things are manifested, that spot would surely be heaven upon earth." Indeed, it would be like heaven upon earth if saints manifested these heavenly graces. How can this be brought about in us, who by nature are the very opposite of these things? I believe if we keep subject to the Lord, and if we are truly holding the Head, if we know His lordship aright and His headship aright, these things will be seen in us as a natural consequence; and where it is otherwise, you may be sure that we are weak in these two ways. Alas! how much do we see that is contrary to these things. We find a brother with a grudge against another, and he maintains that grudge. Hard and bitter feelings come in between Christian and Christian, and no attempt is made to settle the difference or remove the feeling. Instead of there being a forgiving spirit there is oftentimes a spirit of retaliation, revenge, bitter feeling, backbiting, and the like, all so different from the beautiful qualities mentioned in these

verses. We little understand how terrible these evils must be in the sight of the Lord. Many who shrink with horror from the gross sins of the flesh think lightly of speaking evil of their brethren and harbouring bitter thoughts against them, and yet, are they not equally wrong in God's sight? Ah, when we get to God's side of things how different our view of evil. We then see that to harbour bitter feelings against our brethren, and to speak evil of them, brings in a breach into that holy, sacred circle where the Lord is Head. It breaks up fellowship, and instead of God and our Lord Jesus Christ seeing that which is delightful to them in the saints, there is seen the very opposite.

Thank God, it is possible for these lovely graces to be manifested in and through us. They are exactly the things that characterized the Lord Jesus Christ. We are never exhorted to be anything that He was not, hence, these lovely things that are to be manifested in the Christian circle, are the things that came out in all their perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, to the delight of God's heart. If they are to come out in us we must be brought under His control, and that can only be as we come under His lordship. There must be subjection to Him in our individual lives. That is what we are called to.

> Take Thou our hearts and let them be
> For ever closed to all but Thee;
> Thy willing servants, let us wear
> The seal of love for ever there.

He calls us to acknowledge His lordship. He calls us to be in every way under His authority, and do not think that will be a life of hardship. Listen to His gracious words: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

But what kind of a Lord and Master is He? He is a Lord and Master who is most tender in His dealings with those who are subject to Him, and moreover He desires that they should serve in a very blessed capacity. You will remember the passage in the fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel, where our Lord Jesus Christ sets forth the character of the service wherewith He would have us serve Him. There He says:

" I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." " Ye are My friends." Oh, think of that. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ saying, " Ye are My friends." Many a time I have said to myself, " Am I ? " What is a friend ? A friend is one whom you can trust, one to whom you can commit your secrets, one who is true to you—who you know will maintain your interests and not betray you. That is a friend, and the Lord Jesus says, " Ye are My friends." Are you ? Can He trust us ? Can He commit to us His secrets, and know that we will maintain those secrets here in this world for the honour of His name, and act in accordance with them ?

He is our Friend; yes, never a difficulty in which we cannot go to Him; never a burden that we cannot put at His feet; never a trouble that we cannot tell Him. He is a Friend that loveth at all times, *the* Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Every one of us has proved that, but can He turn round and say, " Ye are My friends " ? " If ye do whatsoever I command you " is the test by which we may test ourselves as to whether we are His friends. He has called us into communion with His thoughts and purposes, He lets us know and understand what He is about, the blessed motives that are behind all His gracious work, the purpose and the reason for everything He does; He would bring us intelligently into these things, so that we might serve as friends and not as servants.

This being the case, it becomes us to be in true subjection to the Lord, and the maintenance of His rights in our individual lives, as well as His rights in connection with the people of God. Hence we must not be found in any association in which the Lord's rights are set aside. We may be called to serve the Lord in the world where His rights are altogether rejected, but we ought not to be found in association with any circle where there is not the desire to maintain His rights, and where there is not the maintenance of them as far as light is given. This will keep our feet in the narrow pathway, but it will also keep us with the sense in our souls of the approval of our Lord. As we tread that

path He will be able to say to us, " Thou hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My name."

But what is to maintain us in such a pathway ? The Lord Jesus Christ as our Head. Let us read a wonderful verse : " For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power " (Col. II. 9, 10). See what is said : " Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." But who is it that is the Head of all principality and power and in whom we are complete ? The One in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. There is a Man upon the throne of God in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells. All the mighty resources of God are in Him for us ; we are complete in Him. That means there is no necessity to go outside Him for anything we need. We do not need philosophy, the wisdom of man, religious organizations, or anything men can produce. We are complete in Christ. We have everything we need in Him, for in Him are all the resources of God.

Then He is the Head of all principality and power. There are mighty powers in this world, powers of evil, powers seeking to withstand the work of God, powers seeking to turn aside Christians from the right way, principalities and powers under the lordship of Satan, but the Lord Jesus Christ towers above them all ; He is the Head of all principality and power. All the resources of God are in Him for us, and there is no power in the universe can prevent those resources from coming to us if we are subject to the Lord. So no matter how weak we are in the eyes of the world, if we are in touch with those mighty resources, what results there will be !

Our great business is to hold the Head. Just as the members of our body are all in touch with the head, and the nourishment of the members comes from the head, so we find in the Colossians that all the nourishment the members receive comes from Christ. The life of the Head is the life in the members. The same life that is in Him is the life that is in us. *He is our life.* But what does it mean to be holding the Head, and how can we hold the Head ? There is a verse in Colossians II. that will help us, I think : "As ye have

therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught" (vers. 6, 7). How did you begin your Christian pathway? Oh, you say, "The Lord Jesus Christ received me, a poor sinner, and I received Him, a great Saviour. He saved me, He did it all." The language of my heart was:

Thou hast Thyself redeemed me,
Yes, Thou hast done it all.

Yes, we found *everything we needed* in our Lord Jesus Christ. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Let us continue in that way. If He was sufficient for us at the start, He is sufficient for everything along the road; we need not look outside Him for anything. If we are not looking outside of Him for anything we are holding the Head, and from Him will come the nourishment that we need, so that the spiritual life will be vigorous within. How would that life manifest itself? In exactly the same way that it manifested itself in Him. Oh, how tender we should be one with the other; how graciously we should act towards each other; in short, we should act towards each other as the Lord acted towards His own when He was here. Do you see Him in the midst of His disciples, girding Himself with the towel, and taking the basin and stooping down and washing those feet, and then saying, "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Yes, if His life is in us in vigour and power—as it will be if we are holding the Head—we shall be acting towards each other as He acted, in accordance with His own words, "I am among you as He that serveth," and again, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Is that to be my pathway? Yes, that is the pathway, and that is the life that will be seen if you hold the Head. Impossible for us naturally, for no power in nature can maintain us in a path like that. For instance, Peter listening to the Lord's gracious teaching realizes that it is very

different from the things he had heard under the law. He had listened to the scribes and teachers in Israel, rehearsing the law "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and with the sense in his soul that this is very different from the Lord's teaching, he says, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" And the Lord replies, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." You can understand Peter saying, "Lord, is it possible?" and we say, "Lord, is it possible, seventy times seven to forgive one another?" Why, if we did that the most cantankerous Christian would be overwhelmed by grace. I have said to myself, "Is it possible?" and like a flash the answer came from the Lord, "That is the way I have treated you, that is the way I am treating you; and I only desire that you should treat others as I have treated you." That makes all the difference. I am not righteous in the place He has put me in if I do not treat others in the way He has treated me. When we come under the power of His grace, instead of it being a difficulty, it becomes a pleasure, it becomes the natural welling-up of that love that is within us to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

This scripture in Colossians III. presents a lovely picture of what every Christian company should be, but these things will not be seen in us if first of all we do not become subject to the Lord—if His lordship is not a fact in our lives. But if owning Him as Lord, and being subject to Him, we hold Him as the Head from whom all nourishment flows—weak and feeble and insignificant in the eyes of the world as each one of us may appear, the life, the blessed life of Jesus, will be seen in us to the delight and glory of God.

J. T. MAWSON.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER V.

Q. Can a person be indwelt by the Spirit and not filled with Him?

A. Most assuredly, as humbling experience can only answer. All who have received the glad tidings of their salvation through faith in Christ have the Spirit to dwell in

them. How few of us know anything of being filled with Him. Yet it is enjoined on us as the privilege and duty of all. Such a state would be marked by absolute occupation with Christ, for the blessed Spirit is given not to occupy us with Himself, but to glorify Christ. It would be the absolute opposite of self-elation or supposed superiority to others. It is not attainment in any way, but only to be known by watching against anything that would turn the Spirit from His normal testimony to our souls of Christ and His things, to negative in us what we have been allowing of the flesh or of the world. The next two verses would be the spiritual safety-valve of such a condition of being Spirit-filled.

Q. What is the difference between "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"?

A. Closely allied, the psalm and hymn would be distinguished by the former rising more directly to the Person addressed who is before the soul in worship, as might be fittingly accompanied by the attitude of the body, bowed in His presence. The hymn would be more as we sing about Him, what our hearts have made touching His varied excellencies and glories, which may well turn into personal address and so partake of the character of a psalm. The spiritual song would be more for meditation and the expression of it, as in the well-known "Man of Sorrows," by the late Mr. Darby.

Q. Should "making melody in the heart to the Lord" be the continuous state of the soul?

A. I should rather find this in the following verse: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (as it is unquestionably). Singing and making melody in the heart would be in contrast to the mere use of the voice—lip-worship that is of no account with Him. "Yourselves" in verse 19 is the same word as translated "one another" in chapter IV. 32, and seems to involve community in the expression of praise.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

Our Calling.

It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn, to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above the provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ " after the flesh," and to desire to find Him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life, and there only.

But this is not *our calling*—this is not the risen heavenly life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know ; but *our calling calls us beyond it.* We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our human relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them ; but to know Him, and to have Him in such a way as tells us that He is a stranger on earth and that we are to be strangers with Him, " this is a hard saying " to our poor hearts.

In John's Gospel, among other things, the Lord sets Himself to teach us this lesson. The disciples were sorry at the thought of losing Him in their daily walk and conversation, but He lets them know that it was expedient for them that they should lose Him in that character, in order that they might know Him through *the Holy Ghost,* and ere long be with Him in heavenly places (chap. xvi.). In chapter xx. Mary Magdalene would have known the Lord again, as she had already known Him ; but this must not be ; this must be denied her. " Touch me not," the Lord says to her. This was painful ; but it was expedient—good for her then (just as it had been already good for the disciples in chapter xvi.) to know that she was to lose Christ in the flesh. For Mary is now taught that she was to have fellowship with Him in the more blessed place of *His ascension.*

The company at Jerusalem, in the same chapter, " were glad when they saw the Lord." But this gladness was *human.* It was the joy of having recovered, as they judged, the One whom they had lost—*Christ in the flesh.* But their Lord at once calls them away from that communion and knowledge of Him, to the peace which His death had now made for them and the life which His resurrection had now gained for them.

All this it is healthful for our souls to ponder ; for we are prone to be satisfied with another order of things. The " sorrow that filled the hearts of the disciples " at the thought of their Lord going away shows the disposedness of the heart to remain with Christ in the midst of *human* relationships and circumstances, and not to go with a risen Christ to *heavenly places*.

How slow some of us are to learn this ! And yet our readiness of heart to learn it and to practise it is very much the measure of our desire to depart and be with Christ. I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller acquaintance with *Himself* that our hearts need ; and then we should long, and desire and pant after Him in such ways as nothing but His presence could satisfy. I know souls in this state ; and yet it is not *knowledge* that gives it to them, but *personal acquaintance* with the blessed Saviour through the Holy Ghost.

His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim ;
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.

J. G. BELLETT.

Man in Eden.

GENESIS III. 1–24.

THE book of Genesis is the seed-plot of the Bible, it is the first book of Scripture, and gives more information about the origin of things than any other book in the world, whilst all other books of the Bible unfold the germs of what we find in Genesis.

The critics tell us the book of Genesis is very unreliable ; of course they were there when all it records took place and know all about it !

God was there, and has recorded in this book how things came into being, and His blessed Son stamped Genesis again and again with His approval. He quoted a bit of the second chapter when He said, " Man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife." Men don't know the

dreadful and treacherous ground they stand on when they begin to criticize the Word of God. I am an old man now, and have been studying this blessed book for fifty years and have been searching for the flaws these critics see, and I *cannot find any*. " Well," they say, " you are blind ! " Thank God, my eyes are open to its perfections if I cannot find any defects. I believe this book to be the Word of God from cover to cover. Each writer presents things in different ways, but they all point to the blessed, glorious Christ. The Old Testament is the picture-book of Christ, and if we spent more time going over the early part of the Bible we should see how Christ comes in everywhere. God had it in His mind to bring out what His blessed Son was, and what His own heart was ; how He could meet the misery of man, who had ruined himself by listening to the enemy of God and man.

God does not give us anything too difficult for faith to understand. In chapter I. we have creation, and God wraps all He wants to let us know about creation in one short chapter. The man that has the Word of God in his hand and the faith of God in his heart, and who believes what God says in chapter I., knows more about creation than the most learned man in the world. I am as clear as sunlight that what God says is true as to creation in chapter I. and the origin of man in chapter II. The origin of man is in Scripture, and no other account, no human theory, throws the light on it these few verses do. We find the birth of the Lord Jesus in Luke III., and He is traced up through Mary's line, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of Seth, Son of Adam, Son of God ! Christ was not only the eternal Son, but when born of the Virgin a veritable man come in flesh. He is also in incarnation said to be " Son of God."

Genesis II. tells how God made man out of the dust of the earth and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. In chapter I. God spoke and it stood fast, and there it was. The preparing of the earth for man to dwell upon it is very shortly given. Then God goes into council and made man. And after He had made man He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Now you have man in relationship to God. He made man

and He made him in His image after His likeness, an intelligent being. Then God brought Eve to Adam. She is a figure of Christ and the church. In the deep sleep of Adam we see the death of Christ, and as Eve sprang out of his side at the command of God the church sprang out of Christ in death. God's thought was to get out of this world a bride for Christ, one who would be the joy of the heart of His blessed Son. God wanted men to be happy with Himself, and we see a picture of this in chapter II. No spot was more blessed than Eden, in it was everything to fill the heart with joy and gladness; the knowledge of God, the company of God, and the care of God, this was the portion of two happy, innocent beings. The man was placed in the garden to keep it: God did not mean him to live a lazy life; He gave him occupation for body and mind, when placed in possession and given the liberty of the whole garden. These privileges were linked with responsibility. Adam was not only head over all creation, but in the garden God reserved certain rights. "You may have everything, but I retain that one tree, I keep that one tree as a test of your obedience." He placed Adam under law, his happiness depended on his obedience. Had not God a right to withhold that one tree? He well knew the terrible state which would result from our forefather eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so after he had disobeyed He prevented him eating of the tree of life and perpetuating his misery.

When you come to the end of Revelation XXII., by the side of the river is the tree of life, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not mentioned. The end of the book shows us what God contemplated in the beginning: man, profoundly happy in the paradise of God under the care of the second Man, the Lord out of heaven, and the church His bride associated with Him; all distance gone, and God happy, eternally happy, with His creature man; and all evil done away with for ever. Thus in the end not a single purpose of God will be defeated.

W. T. P. WOLSTON.

The Last Words of David.

2 SAMUEL XXIII.

" DAVID the son of Jesse " indicates what he was *naturally ;* " the man who was raised up on high," what he became *positionally ;* whilst " the anointed of the God of Jacob " points out what he was made *officially.*

David's Son and David's Lord is the great Antitype of these things. What inexhaustible themes for our souls' meditation ! Incarnate we behold in Jesus One who trod the lowly path of humiliation, well knowing it would lead to the shameful death of the cross. Unswervingly He trod the path marked out for Him in obedience to the will of God. For that very reason He has been exalted and given a name that is above every name. In the seventh chapter God says, " I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel . . . and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." God raised him up on high and gave him a great name ; but He raised Jesus up higher still and gave Him a greater name, a name " above every name."

Directed by the God of Jacob, Samuel officially anointed David. He was a man after God's heart entrusted with very special offices to set forth the antitype. We pass from David to Christ, and there we find One who is designated of God for the accomplishment of all God's will, and the One to whom is entrusted the bringing to pass all the blessing that God has designed for man.

It is interesting to study in connection with David's history that he three times met the enemy in various forms. In his own private history he was in conflict with the lion and the bear, and overcame them. On behalf of Israel, and for God's glory, he met Goliath, and the result of his victory over Goliath was deliverance for the people and glory for God. Then, in the eighth chapter of this book, having overthrown seven nations that arrayed themselves against him, the complete power of the enemy was broken and the throne of David established. All this has been

partly—and will be completely—accomplished in relation to Christ. He overcame the devil in His private history in the wilderness. He overcame the devil on behalf of God's people, and for God's glory, at the cross. He will overthrow the nations that rise up against Him by and by, when He takes His kingdom. His throne will be established in the face of all opposition, and the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This is a most interesting chapter, every line full of milk and full of meat. We might be tempted to dwell on the inspiration that lies behind his writing and speaking, as you get it in the second verse: " The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." Or we might be tempted to look at the third verse, where we get the character of the coming King, Christ, foreseen by the Spirit who inspired David; He alone being the answer to those few words, " He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Christ will take up that rule and He will fulfil it to the uttermost. In Him there never was a flaw, not a single departure from the will of God. Or we might look at the fourth verse, where we get the bliss and the blessing of the future kingdom; then we might pass on to the fifth verse, and try to encourage the faint failing Christian as he thinks of his own weakness and the little measure in which he responds to the grace of God. Even David felt it, and he says, " Although my house be not so with God." Yet in spite of it all you have that blessed grace which had made everything sure and ordered in all things for time and eternity. " He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

If you were to read the Epistle to the Romans, you would find one part of your blessing ordered for you and sure; then if you were to go through the Epistle to the Colossians, you would again find another aspect of the blessing that is ordered for you in all things and sure. Then, on into Ephesians and Philippians, and so right through the epistles, and you would find, set out in order, the blessing of this everlasting covenant that is so sure, sure to feeble David and sure to feeble saints now, ordered in all things and sure. Then we might go on to the end of the chapter, and see the

names and victories of those mighty men who fought in David's behalf, what they stood for, the strength in which they stood, the enemies that they encountered, and the difficulties that they overcame in the strength of the Lord.

It is all wonderful and attractive, but just one or two words on that fourth expression in the first verse, " the sweet psalmist of Israel." If you take up David's history, I think you will find what remarkable positions he is found in, and how he seems to be ever changing his position. He is driven from pillar to post, chased by foes outside, betrayed by treacherous friends within, and thus he passed through sorrows that we can little measure. I suppose of all the characters that are found in the Old Testament there is hardly any one person who is found in such a number of positions and tried in so many ways as David the " beloved," who afterwards became king. He seemed to compass in his own personality much of the experience of suffering humanity ; and by means of all the suffering through which he passed, God was preparing him to be the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

A greater than David has been here. I said among all the characters that we read of in the *Old* Testament, perhaps David presents the most wonderful combination of circumstances, the most wonderful extremes of experience. By that means God was working out the ability to express confidence in Him, and dependence upon Him, and joy in God when all else failed. But there was One to come in the *New* Testament who could take up all that David had written, and fulfil it in a way that even David never understood. He says, " The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." In all that David wrote of himself personally, there was the Spirit of God inditing the very language which One greater than David should come to use in a later day, and there, I think, lies the charm of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Sorrow is the preparation for song. In God's Word, you will notice that it is given, not only to believe on His name, but to suffer for His sake ; and I think it would be well if we understood that God is tuning the instrument and giving an extra turn to get a higher note. It would be well if only we understood the

ways of God and what His object is in allowing us to be tested and tried. Just as with the harp, a turn to the key enables the player to produce on the strained string a higher note.

David's sorrows were the means by which God prepared him to voice the sufferings of Christ. It is a marvellous thing that a human vessel should be chosen, and passed through sufferings, so that the language of David should be the vehicle for the blessed Saviour to express His sufferings as He passed along His pathway through this world.

This should encourage us, so that we may not be disheartened when we find how difficult things are; when we find the religious powers against us; when we find that we are misunderstood; when we find that one who has dipped his bread in the dish with us has betrayed us. When we find unreality and opposition, let us seek by the grace of God to understand that God would not have us murmuring or complaining, but He is really seeking to produce in us that confidence in Himself, and that dependence upon Himself, and that joy in Himself that will be a sweeter note to Him than if we had not had the suffering at all.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

"The God of Hope."

ROMANS XV. 13.

In our sorrows, our troubles, and even in our joys, we should turn directly to God Himself. There is nothing happier or more helpful than to turn every desire in our hearts into a prayer to God. God gives Himself names that are suited to the state and need of His people. He speaks of Himself as "the God of hope," "the God of all comfort," "the God of patience and consolation." Amid trials and troubles He is "the God of peace," and He alone can keep us in peace. I more and more feel that, to keep happy and peaceful, we must each personally have to do with "the God of hope." There is nothing like hope. A man may be ever so down to-day, but if he has something bright for to-morrow how it cheers him in the midst of present trouble.

If a man is penniless to-day and knows he will have a supply to-morrow, it enables him to bear the penury of to-day.

I know nothing so restful as having God before us, filling the future as well as the present. We should go on with God day by day; but if we think of to-morrow and fill our hearts with troubles that never come—for nine-tenths of the troubles and distresses of saints are due to anticipations of things that never come—do you wonder we are unhappy? We have God to-day, whom are we going to have to-morrow? If we have God to-day we can surely say, "We shall have God to-morrow."

Some years ago, on my return from a visit to Canada, I went to see a dear old brother and talked to him a little about what had gone on since we last met. I quoted, as I thought, the twenty-third Psalm. I said, "It is a wonderfully blessed reality that 'goodness and mercy *have* followed us all the days of our lives.'" He responded, "I think, dear brother, when you quote Scripture you ought to quote it correctly." "Have I not done so?" I replied. "Well, read," said he, "the last verse of the twenty-third Psalm and see for yourself if you have." This I at once did, and found it was, "Goodness and mercy *shall* follow me all the days of my life." "Oh! I see it is goodness and mercy *shall* follow me; it speaks of the future." It is the future that is so sure. That remark of his was a great help to me; I have never forgotten it. It requires no faith to say "has followed"; but it does to say "*shall* follow." Yes, we have God to-day and God in the immediate future, and it is God in this blessed character that we get in the fourteenth verse of Romans xv. He is "the God of hope," the God who fills the future with His own bright purposes. They will all get their accomplishment when Christ comes. It is a great thing to have that hope in our hearts, as a continuous thing, not merely the doctrine of it in our minds, but as a living, experimental reality in our hearts day by day; I have found the reality of this when I have had God Himself before me—the God that fills the future. No need to trouble about to-morrow if we have God for to-morrow. But it is in proportion as we trust God to-day we shall trust Him for to-morrow. If we learn a little of God to-day—how He thinks of every-

thing, of all the circumstances of to-day's life—it helps us for to-morrow. What a blessing to have God to-day and know it is always to go on like it is to-day. We cannot help seeing goodness and mercy in the past, but it is faith alone can count on goodness and mercy in the *future.* It is a great thing in this way to have God Himself ever before us.

The verse heading this paper is a prayer. It came from a heart that knew what he prayed for and knew the God to whom he prayed. In the previous verse it says, " In Him shall the Gentiles hope "—a quotation from Isaiah XI., " Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." He has many ways of doing this, sometimes by allowing trouble and sorrow. A brother once said to me, " Some saints sing loudest on their beds." Another has poetically put it, " We learn in suffering what we teach in song." This I am sure is true; saints learn what God is for them on beds of suffering as nowhere else, and He makes them sing, they rejoice in hope; they know there is a bright to-morrow, a glorious future, and God has given Himself the name of " the God of hope " for the help and comfort of His people. May this hope remain in your hearts and mine. " The God of hope fill you with all joy "—not a little bit, but " all joy and peace in believing." We do not get joy and peace by experience, but we get joy and peace through faith, faith in what God has for us in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures of truth. And it is important to notice here the way the Apostle, in the fourth verse of this fifteenth chapter of Romans, refers to all the scriptures in connection with hope. He says, " For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have HOPE."

Oh, that we might all indeed abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. I would remark here that if we grieve the Spirit of God we shall fail in this joy and hope. Therefore it says, " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." That " the God of hope " may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope—not in any power of our own, but through the power of the Holy Ghost —should be our constant prayer. C. WOLSTON.

Notes on Galatians.

CHAPTER II.

So far the Apostle has been occupied with establishing the direct and divine character of his commission apart from apostolic sanction from Jerusalem.

Verses 1, 2. For fourteen years he had been ministering on these lines, when an ecclesiastical question arose which took him to Jerusalem. Accompanied by Barnabas and Titus he went up "by revelation," but, so far from receiving from the apostles, he "communicated to them" the gospel which he preached amongst the Gentiles, but with becoming humility and privacy.

Verse 3. The first indication of the favourable reception of Paul's communications lay in the fact that Titus, a Gentile, was not compelled to be circumcised. This was the practical admission at Jerusalem that Judaism had no claim upon the Gentile converts; though apparently the Jewish converts were still in bondage to this initial rite of Judaism. Later, the Epistle to the Hebrews, by proving that the substance, Christ, had taken the place of shadow and figure, effected the emancipation of the Jewish Christians from all connection with their national religious system (Heb. x. 1; ix. 9, 24; viii. 5).

Verses 4, 5. This question of circumcision was the key to the whole controversy. It had disturbed Antioch, in Northern Syria (Acts xv.), through "false brethren unawares brought in," who, ignorant of the true character of Christian liberty, sought to bring the Gentile Christians into bondage by the apparently slender link of circumcision. Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem—though unauthorized by the apostles and elders (Acts xv. 24)—pressed at Antioch the obligation of circumcision on Gentile converts. Paul uncompromisingly and energetically resisted the innovation, refusing to give place by subjection, "no, not for an hour," finally referring the question to Jerusalem itself, not primarily to bring Antioch into line with Jerusalem, for the sake of harmony—important as unity is—but in order to

maintain the distinguishing characteristics of Christianity in the interests of the Church of God, which, composed of Jewish and Gentile Christians, stood, as the Apostle proves in the main argument of the epistle, absolutely outside the Mosaic system in its entirety.

Verses 6–10. They who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to Paul, but contrariwise accepted and recognized his special apostleship to the Gentiles—as they acknowledged Peter's to the Jews—giving to Paul and Barnabas "the right hands of fellowship." Paul thus maintained in uncompromising fidelity "the truth of the gospel" in its simplicity and purity.

Verse 11. But a severer ordeal awaited Paul "when Peter was come to Antioch." Peter had been a personal companion of the Lord Himself; was the first one marked out as a stone in the new spiritual structure of which Paul was minister; and had witnessed the transfiguration on the mount and the agony in the garden. Moreover, Peter's testimony to a risen Christ had been owned to three thousand souls at Jerusalem; and later he had fearlessly confronted the Jewish Sanhedrim when the shadow of death lay across his path. Now protest against troublers and perverters of the gospel was one thing; but protest against one of such standing and note as Peter quite another. How then will Paul meet Peter when he "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel"? Without any hesitation he resists Peter's action; as he tells us, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

Verses 12–15. What was it that stirred Paul to take such a course? None other than the question that had once agitated Antioch, and which now assumed a new and dangerous phase when countenanced by Peter, viz. that of circumcision. According to "the truth of the gospel" and the liberty of the Spirit, Peter had eaten with the Gentiles until certain came from James, when "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision," practically imposing that rite upon the Gentiles, as the condition of his eating with them again. Peter's influential personality and example carried weight with "other Jews," "insomuch that Barnabas also was carried

away with their dissimulation." Publicly, "before them all," Paul reproved Peter's lapse from uprightness and "the truth of the gospel." That which had borne fruit in public called for condemnation in public—a principle of importance for our guidance in a day of public departure from fundamental doctrines and the first principles of Christianity.

Verses 16–18. But "the truth of the gospel" has a double bearing upon believers, as brought out in detail in the Epistle to the Romans, first as "justified by the faith of Christ," and secondly as "dead to the law," both of which are absolutely stultified by linking together Christianity and the Mosaic economy at any point (ver. 21 and chap. v. 2–4).

The imposition of circumcision was, in principle, inseparable from justification by the works of the law, and thus antagonistic to "the truth of the gospel." The barrier between Jew and Gentile had been removed by the cross, so that both could meet on the ground of a common faith, "the faith of Christ." This Peter had recognized by eating with the Gentiles—a thing forbidden by the Jewish ritual—and in so doing was divinely authorized by a vision "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts x. 28). Before apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, Peter rehearsed the vision, eventually appealing to them in vindication of his action in the words "What was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts xi. 17). The full admission of Gentiles to equal position of privilege and blessing with the Jewish Christians was then publicly endorsed. But now Peter re-erects the barrier which once he destroyed, thus making himself a transgressor. But did Christ instruct Peter to rebuild a barrier which once He authorized him to destroy? Impossible. Can Christ be the minister of sin? God forbid.

Verses 19, 20. But justification by faith of Jesus Christ is only one aspect of "the truth of the gospel." There is something deeper, namely, the justified man's relations to the whole Mosaic law, concisely stated by the Apostle: "I through the law am dead to the law . . . I am crucified with Christ." This constitutes another part of the teaching of

Romans (chap. VII.) and bears directly upon the question at issue; for if "dead to the law," by being "crucified with Christ," it is clear that the link between the justified man and the law is absolutely dissolved in the only way by which responsibility to law can cease, namely, by death. Circumcision cannot apply to the man who is dead with Christ. He has passed out of all connection with Judaism, and in the resurrection life of Christ is of a new order, outside the reach or sphere of law. In Him and with Him the believer died; consequently he is dead to the law in order to live unto God; or as Romans puts it, "Ye are become dead to the law by the [dead] body of Christ! that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead. . . . But now are we delivered from the law, having died in that wherein ye were held [N.T., see also R.V.]: that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans VII. 4–6).

Though "dead to the law," "crucified with Christ," Paul adds, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the only true and normal status of a Christian, Christ living in him in resurrection life, i.e. subjective life, which is maintained by objective occupation with the Son of God: "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."

Thus Paul carries us along the line of justification by faith; dead to law; crucified with Christ; Christ living in the believer: until finally he presents Christ as the Son of God, the heart's supreme Object, well known in the double character of the One who loved and the One who gave Himself.

Verse 21. Finally Paul's doctrine cannot be charged with frustrating the grace of God—an indirect reproof to Peter, for God in grace gave His Son to die for us, which would have been superfluous "if righteousness came by the law."

M. C. GAHAN.

(To be continued.)

Remember, Abide.

THE shadows were deepening, the night thickening, the darkness increasing, and the clouds gathering whilst Satan was arraying his hosts against Jesus.

In the house of the chief priest—who prophesied that He should die in order to gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad—priests and Pharisees were plotting His death. The Lord Jesus was not for the moment occupied with the clouds, not thinking of the judgment; His thoughts were far away from Satan and his host. Of what was He thinking? He has a little band around Him in an upper room, and He has closed the door upon a cold, heartless world that had no appreciation of Him. He is making a last loving appeal to the hearts of those who had been attracted to Him. He took the loaf from the table and gave thanks. What did He give thanks for? I got a little light upon that act, one day, which greatly affected me; I believe the Lord gave thanks for what was symbolized by that loaf. So great was His love, so mighty its flow, that only Calvary could tell out how great it was. So He gave thanks for the body which the Father had given Him, by means of which He could glorify God and carry out divine counsels as to us: "This is My body, which is given for you."

Then He adds, "This do for a remembrance of Me," saying in effect, "I cherish your remembrance above everything else, I want you to think of Me in death." Then we learn in 1 Corinthians XI. that as the ages roll on, and others take the disciples' place, He wants them also to have Himself in continual remembrance. So from the glory He says, "This do for a remembrance of Me." This is not exactly a command. If your mother were to say to you as she lay dying upon her bed, "My last request is that you shall come as often as you can, and lay a flower upon my grave as a proof that you cherish me in your memory," I am certain of this, that none of you would answer, "Mother, I will try to obey your command." You would not hurt her feelings with such a reply. No! You would say, "Mother,

I shall be delighted to do it." It seems to me, that is how the Lord appeals to us all; it is a word for our affections. We prove our love by responding to that last loving request. An old brother one day said to a young believer, "Have you not love enough in your heart to respond to that last loving request of the Lord, 'This do in remembrance of Me'?" Said he, "Is the Lord's supper as simple as that? Is it simply my love going back to Him and showing itself in this act?" "It is," said the other, "it is love's response to the Lord's desire." "Oh!" said he, "let me remember Him next Lord's day." From that moment he responded to the Lord's request, "This do for a remembrance of Me."

John xv. was spoken on the way to the cross. The Lord had instituted the supper; here He is saying to His disciples, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." This verse begins and closes with the words "Abide in Me," and in the middle, "I in you." Why does the Lord ask us to abide in Him? It is that His Father may be able to gather fruit. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." The Lord seems to say, "I shall have something if you remember Me, but I want the Father to have something; I want that in you which shall gratify His heart, something that He shall gather up that will abide when everything else is swept away—fruit that will remain when everything else is gone." When all is swept away that is not of God, fruit will be gathered up into glory, and there it will be throughout the everlasting ages—it will remain.

Some may ask, "What is fruit?" It is the reproduction of Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost. As you abide in Christ, as you draw constantly from Himself, Christ will be seen in you and will come out in your life and service; and God will never let one bit of what is of Christ fall to the ground. He will gather it all up. This is the result of abiding in Christ. At Hampton Court there is a wonderful vine: those who saw its thousand bunches of grapes used to marvel how, year after year, it was laden with fruit. The secret was out when it was discovered that it had struck its

roots out until they had reached the Thames. Thank God, we have a secret; the river of God is full of water, the Holy Spirit is here; we drink of Christ's fullness and fruitfulness follows. The great thing for us is to keep in close touch with the Lord Jesus Christ, to take care that nothing comes in to hinder our communion. Would we be effectual servants, draw others to Christ, and be continually bearing fruit? If so, we must keep near Jesus, abide in Him, and walk in the Spirit. Take a mighty magnet, bring it in contact with iron that has no magnetism in itself, and that magnet will so charge the piece of iron with its attractive power that it will itself act as a magnet. This is what we need—to keep so near to Christ, so to abide in Christ, that fruit will be found in us, others will be attracted, and God the Father glorified.

Remember Me! Oh, He wants our hearts' affections. "Abide in Me," then the Father will find the fruit that the Lord Jesus came to produce. And do not forget that the little company He left in this world is to perpetuate His memory, and say like the psalmist of old, "I will make Thy name to be remembered in all generations" (Ps. XLV. 17).

E. E. CURTIS.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 22. The natural relationships in which we stand to one another come now into view, that the light of our heavenly position in Christ may be brought to bear upon and be seen in our carrying out the will of God in them. The subject side in each comes first: wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife in God's order. And this leads to your question.

What is the particular aspect of headship in chapter I. *and chapter* V.?

Verse 23 speaks of headship in connection with the

husband's relationship to his wife, whilst chapter 1. speaks of Christ as Head over all things to the church.

Just as in creation order the husband is head of the wife, so in the order of God's counsels as to the assembly Christ is its Head. Chapter 1. had brought us to the full result of God's ways to accomplish them in everything being put under the feet of Christ, only adding that He was given to be Head over all things to the assembly, already recognizing Him in His place of universal supremacy in her own relationship to Him as her Head. (And) " He is the Saviour of the body."

What body is here meant, and in what way is salvation spoken of?

It is a parenthetic clause to express that while the Apostle was inspired to make use of the marriage relationship symbolically as to Christ and the assembly, He had not lost sight of the bodily condition to which the relationship belonged—the Saviour of the body, redeemed by His blood, indwelt by His Spirit, and because of that great fact to be quickened in resurrection; meanwhile cared for by Him, the body for Him and He for the body, its Saviour to the end. But this could not be said of the husband as to his wife, hence the " but " (not " therefore," as A.V.) with which verse 24 begins. " But as the church is subjected unto Christ, so the wives are to their husbands in everything." It is not her state, as English versions have it, but her place in God's order—the wives the reflection of the assembly's place as to Christ.

There is something very beautiful in the way that the Apostle had hardly touched upon the relationship, the nearest and most precious of all naturally, when the Spirit takes the occasion of bringing out what was still lacking for the heart of Christ in the truth of the assembly as hitherto presented in the epistle. When we come to " husbands, love your wives " our thoughts are immediately carried to the love of Christ for the assembly.

Verse 25 speaks of Christ having loved and given Himself for the assembly, whilst verse 26 speaks of sanctification and cleansing. What is the difference between the two last-named things?

What an amazing revelation of His love it all is! The truth of the body, though in fact what makes the marriage relationship apply, as we see lower down, did not suffice to express the place it has in His love. A love of the *past*, indeed, that not merely laid down life, but gave Himself in all the glory of His person for the assembly, but that engages Him in constant *present* activity of service for it—sanctifying and purifying it with the washing of water by the Word, with a view to the moment, yet *future*, when He will present it to Himself all His heart can delight in for ever. The process spoken of in these two things—at least in sanctifying, for purifying may be translated as "having purified"—is carried out by the washing of water, which is defined to be characteristically the Word, which is the testimony to the assembly of all that Christ is in glory to form it like Himself—we are changed into His image by it and grow up unto Him in all things who is the Head, while all that is inconsistent with Him is removed by its action.

In what way will it be true of the assembly that it is "a glorious church"?

Glorious in that in the moment of presentation it will be in everything like Christ Himself in glory, so that when He is manifested we shall be manifested in glory with Him and He will be glorified in the assembly. No "spot" of defilement will be found in her nor wrinkle of old age. In the eternal state (Rev. xxi. 2), more than a thousand years having elapsed since her espousals were celebrated in the heavenly glory (xix. 7–9), she comes down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. "But that it might be holy and without blame" is added in our verse, referring to Ephesians i. 4, that it may be seen that the assembly will then answer perfectly to what God chose the saints that compose it in Christ before the foundation of the world. The A.V., altering the "without blame" of Ephesians i. 4 into "blemish" here, obscures the beautiful connection.

Christ is said to nourish and cherish the assembly; what gracious activities do these terms set forth?

From verse 28 the Apostle looks again at the natural bond for still further elucidation of the application of it

to the subject so near the heart of Christ. Men ought to love their wives as themselves: for according to the original institution of the relationship Adam's wife was his own flesh, and so to be nourished and cherished even as the assembly by Christ, for we are members of His body. It gives us the blessed thought that, besides the formative ministry of Himself to her by the Word, no tender detail of loving thought and care for the assembly would be wanting on the part of Christ.

Verse 30: "*Members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.*" *Does this intimate that all believers have not only a part* IN, *but are a part* OF *Christ's mystical body?*

As to the original text I have no doubt that the R.V. is right here in omitting "of His flesh, and of His bones," with the three most ancient manuscripts and the Memphitic, a very early version, and most editors. It would be a very natural amplification by transcribers of the quotation from Genesis II. 23. But the added words seem to tend to weaken the force of the main statement of the verse, "We are members of His body," and to turn the actual subsisting relationship of the assembly united by the Holy Ghost to Christ as a body to its Head into something shadowy and mystical. That all who are Christ's are His body is what makes the marriage relationship applicable in illustrating that of Christ and the assembly. It is not another relationship; but that as Adam was able to look upon Eve who was his own body, himself, as his wife, so Christ regards the assembly.

Verse 32 calls this a "great mystery." Does that mean it is too great to be understood?

That is never the meaning of "mystery" in Scripture. It is what can only be known by revelation, and thus to those who may be said to be initiated in what is revealed. Here it is simply "this mystery is great; but I speak as to Christ and as to the assembly."

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

. . . . . .

How can we righteously appropriate the blessings of Christianity if we evade their consequent responsibilities?

The Remnant in Thyatira.

"I KNOW *thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience." "But unto you I say, the rest in Thyatira. . . . I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come"* (Rev. II. 19, 24, 25).

NOWHERE, perhaps, is there a more deeply interesting story; nowhere longer and more unwearied patience; nowhere truer, or perhaps so true, hearts for the truth and for Christ, and for faithfulness to Him against a corrupt church, as in the saints of the Middle Ages. Through toil and labour, hunted and punished in spite of a system far more persevering, far better organized, than heathen persecutions, violent as for a time they surely were; with no fresh miraculous revelation, or publicly sustaining body, or profession of the church at large, clothed with universal acknowledgment as such, to give them confidence; with every name of ignominy that people or priest could invent to hunt them with, they pursued their hemmed but never abandoned way, with divinely given constancy, and maintained the testimony of God, and the promised existence of the church against the gates of hades, at the cost of rest, and home, and life, and all things earth could give or nature feel. And Christ had foreseen and not forgotten it. Weakness may have been there, ignorance have marked many of their thoughts, Satan may have sought to mix up mischief with the good and sometimes succeeded; and men, at their ease now, delight in finding the feeble or faulty spot, and perhaps succeed too; but their record is on high, and their Saviour's approbation will shine forth, when the books ease-loving questioners have written on them will be as the dust on the moth's wing when it is dead; and shame, if shame can be where we trust many of them may meet those they have despised, cover their face. This the Lord owns in Thyatira. It made no part of the church for men then. It makes none for many wise people now. IT IS THE FIRST PART FOR CHRIST.

J. N. DARBY.

The World and the Father.

JOHN XVII. 25, 26; I JOHN III. 1–3.

IN John XVII. the Lord is speaking to the Father about the men the Father had given Him out of the world, and also about those who should believe through the testimony about to be rendered by them in the gospel; and these words were spoken in the hearing of the apostles that they might know the interest which both Father and Son took in them as long as they were down here, and for our encouragement are they also recorded.

The Son had glorified the Father. The work which the Father had given Him to do He had finished. On the platform of earth He could do nothing more for the glory of the Father, and therefore He asks to be glorified in order that upon another platform, that of resurrection, He might continue this glorifying of the Father. But the way in which He speaks of glorifying the Father from the resurrection platform is by giving eternal life to the men the Father had given Him. This is the way in which He is *now* glorifying the Father. But as He was leaving them in this world, a world which was hostile to Him because He was here in the Father's name and hostile to them because they were to be here in His name, He commends them to the care of the holy Father.

In verse 25 He does not speak of the *holy* Father, but of the *righteous* Father, and that because the Father must now judge between Him and the world. The world had rejected Him, branded Him as a malefactor, said that He had a devil and was mad. What would the Father say? Would He justify the world? He alone could decide the question, and to the decision of the Father the Son confidently appeals; He commits Himself to Him who judges righteously. He says, as it were, "I leave the issue entirely in Thy hands; Thou art sure to do that which is right."

How has the Father decided? He has raised Him from the dead, highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every

knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal things; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The world is not as yet aware of the way in which the Father has decided. It staggers on blindly in the darkness of unbelief; but *we* know, for we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. But the world will one day know all about it, and for that day we wait in the patience of Christ and for that day He also waits.

The day of manifestation will surely come, and when it does come it will be a great day for Christ, a great day for His people, and a great day for the world. It will be a sorrowful day for those who are His enemies, but for those who submit themselves to Him it will be a day of salvation and great joy. The eyes of men will then be opened, the veil lifted off all faces, and the name of Christ will be excellent in all the earth. That name that is now despised will be the only name honoured in that day.

But what about those given to Him of the Father? and what about those who have believed through their word? He says: "These have known that Thou hast sent Me." He had given them the Father's word, and, He says, "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." He says again: "They will put you out of the synagogue: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Must not the Father decide also between such and the world? It may be asserted that He has already decided, He has given us the Spirit and brought us into the relationship of children. As far as we are concerned the Father has decided this momentous question, for surely a momentous question it is. We are brought into the place of children, the love of God in our hearts, the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirits that we are God's children, and enabling us to cry in the ear of God, Abba, Father. But the world did not know Him, and it does not know us; it persecuted Him, and it persecutes every one who follows in His footsteps; it cast out His name as evil, and it cast out as evil the name of His disciples also. Who is to decide this question, which is a source of continual irritation

between His people and the world? Who could decide it but the One who judges righteously?

How is He to decide it? In the day of manifestation we shall be like Christ. We will appear in the same glory as Himself. He says: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

This question will then be for ever settled, never to be raised again. The rapture will not settle it, though in one sense it is as much settled now as ever it will be. It is settled as far as our relationships with God are concerned. But it has yet to be settled in a public way; the world has yet to know that the Father sent the Son and has loved us with the same love with which He is loved. The manifestation of Christ and of His own with Him will set that question for ever at rest, and nothing else can.

May the Lord hasten that day in which He alone shall be exalted, and in which His name shall be excellent in all the earth.

J. BOYD.

Sanctification.

JUSTIFICATION is connected with righteousness, sanctification with holiness.

There are two aspects of sanctification in Scripture, one "positional," the other "practical."

Positional sanctification is that aspect of the truth which gives us an assured position before God.

Practical sanctification is the taking up of that position before God, and seeking by God's grace and the Spirit's power to be consistent with it and act up to it.

Positional sanctification is found in 1 Peter 1. 2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through *sanctification of the Spirit,* unto obedience and sprinkling of

the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." Notice, sanctification of the Spirit comes before obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, showing that the work of God's Holy Spirit is to set us apart to obey as Christ obeyed. It is an assured position in the mind of the Spirit, not yet worked out as to practical details. Again in 1 Corinthians 1. 2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both their's and our's." The word "saint" signifies a sanctified person, a set-apart person. We are not called *to be* saints, we are saints by calling. What should follow is saintly conduct. We do not need to say that we are saints if our conduct is as becometh saints. There is one quality that tells in testimony more than anything else in this world, and that is humble, unobtrusive, real, downright saintliness.

The word "sanctified" does not necessarily mean *we* are *made* holy, it simply means being set apart. In Isaiah LXVI. 17 we find men who sanctified themselves to do evil, set themselves apart to do evil. God sanctified the seventh day, set it aside for a definite purpose, before ever sin came into the world at all.

We are set aside for a definite purpose. What is that purpose? It is to be here in this world for God's glory, kept as simple as little children, drawing from the Word of God, finding out what His mind and His will is, and carrying it out in practice, sanctified wholly—spirit, soul, and body.

If God has saved us through the work of Christ, the Holy Spirit is never going to leave us alone as long as we are down here, and if we are not saintly in our conduct the Holy Spirit will begin to deal with us in order that we may become so.

There is a beautiful verse in 1 Corinthians XI. 32: "We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." That is to say, God is determined to preserve His grace to us, and His government will not shrink from going to the extreme length of taking a believer off this earth, through judgment, if need be. The believer is always fit for heaven through the work of Christ, but may

not be fit for earth through his own bad conduct as a Christian. If we judge ourselves, God will not judge us ; but if we will not judge ourselves, then God will chasten us, in order that we may answer to practical sanctification.

Practical sanctification is that in which we advance. We start from the fact that we are sanctified by God's Holy Spirit, and our privilege is to uphold the position that God's grace has put us into. It is a great help to see this principle in Scripture. We are never called upon to work up to a position, but we are called upon to work and walk because we are in a position. We cannot, however, realise the sanctifying power of the truth unless we know the truth. We must know it in our hearts first, as the result of being prayerful students of the Scriptures. We want to have a consuming passion to live here for God's glory, then everything else will fall into its own place.

God chastens us with a view to sanctifying us. His chastening has very much of the tenderness of a father when chastening his children ; it is not vindictive, it is tender, gracious, gentle. Of course, when saints go to great lengths the discipline may be more severe, as it was in 1 Corinthians XI. ; but this never alters the fact that Christ is made unto us Sanctification, as well as Righteousness and Redemption.

1 Corinthians 1. 30 is a very interesting verse. Christ is made to us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Christ was the *wisdom* of God at the cross ; He is the exemplification of *righteousness* in resurrection, sets forth *sanctification* in His ascension, and will accomplish *redemption* when He returns again. Redemption is the full, complete thing at the end. Christ on high is the measure of our sanctification—it is all by the Spirit ; but there is an Object given to us, we have a Model to go by : " He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

The word chastening has a very broad meaning, that of discipline. There is discipline in an army, but a very small fraction of that discipline is punishment. David was chastened on account of sin ; Job, in order that he might learn himself, and Paul that he might be better fitted for God's service. It is not necessarily for failure we are chastened.

God sees certain tendencies in us, and He disciplines us in order to preserve us from that which would lead us astray. A brother might be preaching the gospel, or teaching saints, and God may pass him through some trial to enable him to carry out His service better. A Christian was taunted by an infidel thus: "There you are, a poor cripple, in pain and disease; here am I with a healthy body and can enjoy life." The Christian replied, "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. XII. 8). Somebody is going on well, and God says, "I will help you to go on better." The Lord prunes the vine that it might bring forth more fruit. God's house is holy, and He says, "I must have My children in correspondence with Myself." We are chastened in order that we might be partakers of His holiness.

We are, positionally, as truly set apart as Christ is now in the presence of God; He is made Sanctification to us there. But the Spirit of God sets us apart here, and our measure is Christ. We must be true in *practice* to what God has made us in *position*. The neglect of two things is the most fruitful cause of the lack of practical sanctification: one is prayer, and the other the constant prayerful study of the Word. Added to this, we must keep the Lord before us. If we have any object short of Christ there will be failure.

A. J. POLLOCK.

God's Centre. "*He that gathereth not* WITH ME *scattereth*" (Luke XI. 23).

It is not Christians but Christ who is become God's centre. We may gather Christians together, but if it is not Christ in one's own spirit, it is scattering. God knows no centre of union but the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Himself the object, and nothing but Christ can be the centre. Whatever is not gathering round that centre, for Him and from Him, is scattering. There may be gathering, but if not "WITH ME" it is scattering. We are by nature so essentially sectarian, that we have need to watch against this. I cannot make Christ the centre of my efforts if He is not the centre of my thoughts. (*J. N. D.*)

The Spirit's Presence.

JOHN XIV. 15–17, 25–27 ; XV. 26, 27 ; XVI. 7–15.

WE are all of us in danger of getting over-occupied with the tremendous opposition that is arrayed against the truth, and forgetting the great possibilities connected with the presence of the Holy Spirit here on earth. One of the most wonderful facts in Christianity is, that the Holy Ghost has come from the risen and ascended Christ and made the body of each believer His dwelling-place.

There are seven passages in the Gospel of John where the work of the Spirit is unfolded. In the first chapter He is seen descending upon the Lord Himself. In the third chapter we have new birth by the Spirit. In the fourth He is the well of water springing up into everlasting life, the power of life, and the power of worship. Again in chapter VII. we have that same Spirit so filling the believer that he becomes a channel of blessing here in this world. Then in chapters XIV., XV., and XVI. we have the activities of the Spirit of God in three distinct ways.

Having believed in Christ dead and risen, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit till the day of redemption ; and we may accept this fact as simply as we do the truth that the precious blood of Christ has cleansed us from our sins ; but it is one thing to be in possession of a thing, it is another to enjoy it. We have indeed received the Spirit, but we may grieve Him, and thus miss the joy and power of His presence. If there is one thing more than another calculated to grieve the Holy Spirit, it is lack of interest in the things of God. If we turn away our ears from God's Word, neglect Christ's interests, and get our minds so occupied with the things of earth that we have no time to listen to the Spirit of God, we are certainly grieving Him. If we are not finding increasing delight in the things of God, if our spiritual tastes are growing dull and there is not the enjoyment we once found in Christ, it is sure evidence that the Spirit of God is grieved. He would ever speak to us of the preciousness of Christ ; does He find a listening ear ? No one cares to tell their affairs to uninterested listeners. His

object is to teach us all things and unfold the things of Christ to us. The Lord said to His disciples, " He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have spoken to you." We have, written in the gospels, a wonderful fourfold record, indited by the Spirit of God, of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Are we letting Him unfold the perfection of that life to us ? There is a type in the Old Testament which shows its preciousness to God. When the manna fell, God said, " Fill a pot of that manna for Me, and lay it up before Me for ever." Then, in the book of the Revelation, it is said to the overcomer, " I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." It is still there before God, and the Spirit of God is here, that we may know the wonderful thoughts of God concerning His beloved Son. If we let Him thus teach us we shall find that the gospels transcend everything in their greatness for our hearts. It is in this way that we shall understand communion. Some saints seem to be up and down like the waves of the sea. Feelings come and feelings go ; perhaps they do not feel so well one day as the next ; but do not let us confuse that kind of thing with communion. Communion is intimately connected with appreciation of the preciousness of Christ. If we are in a path that is not according to the mind of God we shall lose the enjoyment of Christ ; but if we are treading in simple dependence the path of God's will the Spirit of God will bring the preciousness of Christ to us. We may test what we are going on with by asking ourselves, Is Christ growing more precious to me day by day ? Am I finding increasing delight in Him ? If our souls are not in the joy of Christ, let us find out the cause, and in self-judgment yield ourselves to God, whose great desire is that we should know Himself better.

The next action of the Spirit of God is in chapter xv.: " He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." If our souls are not in communion with Christ, happy in the ever-increasing joy of Himself, our testimony will not be worth much. We may be able to quote Scripture, may know it from Genesis to Revelation, but our testimony is not worth anything if it is not based on communion of heart with the

Father and the Son. There will be nothing in it, because it is only as Christ is translated into our lives and we are living Him that there is real testimony. If there is not a practical acquaintance with divine things it is no use talking about them ; but if our hearts are led by the Spirit of God into communion with divine things, all the love of God set forth in His beloved Son, all that wonderful relationship in which Christ is to Him, and into which He delights that your heart and mine should enter, then we shall become true witnesses. The Spirit of God is here for the very purpose of maintaining the witness of Christ in the very scene out of which He has been cast, and He will associate us with Himself in the testimony of that blessed Name in proportion to our communion.

The Lord in chapter XVI. says, " In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer : I have overcome the world." The Spirit of God stands in relation to *communion* in chapter XIV. ; to *testimony* in chapter XV. ; and to *overcoming* in chapter XVI. He not only recalls the wonderful life of Christ lived here, ever treasured up before God, but He also testifies to a risen and ascended Christ. He comes forth to tell us of the glory of Christ there, and to enable us in the power of that glory to be overcomers in this present evil age.

In chapter XVI. the presence of the Spirit of God is spoken of as a demonstration. It is rather difficult to express the meaning of that in one word. " Reproving " gives the idea that the person who is reproved is conscious of the reproof, and " convict " or " convince " are words which do not express its true meaning, for it does not follow that the world is convinced, or convicted, consciously, it is a secret made known to those who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are indwelt by the Spirit of God ; they know that the presence of the Spirit of God is a demonstration of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

We are to be overcomers ; not moved by the world's principles nor carried along by the stream of things, because we know that the world stands *convicted* of the rejection of Christ. The world as a system has cast out the Son of God. It would have been a righteous thing for the world to have

given Him His throne; but the princes of this world did not know Him and they crucified the Lord of glory. But the principle of righteousness is established at the right hand of God, righteousness is with the Father, and the sin of the world is demonstrated by the presence of the Spirit of God here. Of judgment also because the prince of this world is judged. The judgment of this world has been pronounced in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; its prince has received his death-blow, and we are living surrounded by a system which is a judged system, soon to pass away with all its lusts. The Spirit of God tells us what His thoughts of this world are, but He does not stop there, He tells of another world. He is here as the servant of the Father and the Son. What a wonderful thing that a Divine Person should take that place in order that our hearts might be brought into the good of divine things, and be led into the enjoyment of another world, that has Christ as its centre, that marvellous system of eternal glory which will soon come into display, when God shall be all in all. In it divine grace has secured our place in full, unmingled, unalterable blessing. If the Spirit of God fills us with *that* world, we shall not run after *this* world, but we shall go through it with hearts in communion with the things of God, and because our hearts are in communion our faces will shine and a true witness to Christ will be the result in our lives.

Let us get the Son of God before our souls; all God's purposes are centred in Him, upon Him. God is building everything for eternity. The second Man is the Lord out of heaven, and everything shall without fail be established in Him. The Spirit of God is here to carry out the will of the Father concerning the Son, and lead the saints into the good of all that is in God's mind for them, testifying of Christ, glorifying Him, taking of His things, showing them to us. Does this not set our hearts coveting to know something of these things? Would we not like the Spirit of God to show us these things? He has come to unfold the thoughts of the Father concerning the Son: "All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you."

JAMES GREEN.

A Letter for Pilgrims.

"THE Hebrew" is a term first applied to Abraham when he removed his tent to Mamre. The root of the word is "to pass over," hence passengers or pilgrims. It is thus a fitting title for those who confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on earth. The Epistle to the Hebrews opens by showing how God in Old Testament days spake on earth by *prophets*, but when Jesus was here it was God *Himself* who spake in the person of His Son, without a medium, and now He speaks from heaven. Formerly the subject was His holy requirements from man—now the character of His speech is different; it is no longer a question of what man should be for God, but God shows what He Himself is for man.

He speaks from the place of authority, His throne in the heavens, and as we give ear and look up we see the effulgence of divine glory revealed shining in the face of Jesus Christ. His majesty as the great Creator is not only seen, but we also behold Him as the Purger of Sins, and thus gaze on redemption glory. God is disclosed as a Saviour for man—a sight which does not terrify, but, on the contrary, wins and captivates the heart. Every spell, every other charm was broken for Saul of Tarsus, when he saw this heavenly light, nor did he rest on earth again. The Son of God—whom the glory revealed—loved even Saul, the chief of sinners, and had given Himself for him. This astounding fact transformed his life; henceforth his object was to reach Christ in heaven.

Is it also ours, who received Paul's testimony? If we know Christ as our precious Saviour from the land of judgment and the house of bondage, are we so constrained by His love and drawn to Him that the earth becomes a wilderness? Are we pilgrims who, detached from things here, are travelling to the place where our affections lie?

If God has brought us out of Satan's kingdom, He will also bring us into the land of our inheritance—God's dwelling-place. The means employed—so this letter informs us—are the Word of God and the Priesthood of

Christ. The Word points out the way, otherwise we should wander without any guide. It has a double action; not only does it indicate the path, but it strips us of all that hinders progress. Living and powerful, it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart and detects the movements of the carnal mind. If partakers of the heavenly calling, we are not in the flesh; still the flesh is in us, but we take sides with God against it. Hence we welcome the action of His Word, which, like a two-edged sword, cuts down the flesh unsparingly. Thus equipped, we face the world and its god, those enemies which oppose our onward march, and by the priestly grace of Christ we shall overcome.

The path is not easy, but we have a great Leader, who has run the race before us. He knows the difficulties of the way and has reached the goal in triumph, therefore He is able to carry us through. Naturally we shrink from difficulties, but without them we should not know the sympathy of Christ nor the strength of His arm. It was much easier for Peter's companions to remain in the ship than to walk the Sea of Galilee, but they were deprived of Peter's thrilling experience. Moved by affection for the Lord, and in response to His call, this disciple stepped overboard and walked on the water. True, he began to sink when for a moment his attention was diverted from Christ, but the Lord was near him. In answer to his cry, " Lord save me," uplifted by the hand of Jesus, he learned that the Lord possessed a power which is superior to wind and wave.

Affection for Christ may bring saints into a sea of trouble, but it is at such times they prove, like Peter, the presence and support of the Lord! Christ's priestly service is twofold. Touched by our weakness, He first extends His powerful hand to help His people along the way; then as minister of the heavenly sanctuary He brings us to the " holiest " and maintains us there. Incidents recorded in John's Gospel illustrate this twofold service; in John XI. Jesus came to Bethany to weep with the bereaved, to comfort them in sorrow; His grace sustained them in trying circumstances and afterwards His mercy relieved their trouble: Lazarus was restored to life. Then another scene opens

in John XII., in which sorrow and death have no part. Lazarus, the risen man, is there, and the loved ones of Bethany are with Christ in surroundings suitable to Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. His fragrance, like that of the precious ointment poured forth, fills the house, and Mary worships at His feet.

Such experience will be ours if we appropriate the priestly grace of Christ. Not only shall we find Him a refuge in the day of trouble, but know Him as the great Priest over God's house, who in spirit conducts His people into the "holiest" where He dwells. There we shall sit in His presence with great delight, while God, not only in His attributes, as Moses saw Him, but in His nature, comes more into view, and we bask in the sunshine of His holy love.

The call of God made Abraham not only a pilgrim, but a worshipper. If we respond to the closing appeal (Heb. XIII. 13–17) the tent and the altar will be linked together in our spiritual experience. Christ is our Altar. In going "forth unto Him without the camp," we approach our Altar, and by Him we are privileged to offer to God the sacrifice of praise. Soon, however, the tent will be dissolved, and the voice, which first reached us in the far country, will be heard, bidding us welcome to the courts above. Until then let us seek to maintain our character as pilgrims and to enjoy our privilege as worshippers, not forgetting when opportunity serves to do good and to communicate of our substance, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

W. TAYLOR.

Service.

CONNECT your service with nothing but God, not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on any one whatever; for if you do you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith and one's *own communion with God.* Saul even may be a prophet when he gets amongst the prophets; but David

was always the same, in the cave or anywhere. Whilst the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet a man's service must flow from himself, else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. It is, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." But also, "*Let every one prove his own work,*" and then shall he have "rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." There is no single place grace brings us into but is a place of temptation, and that we cannot escape, though we shall be helped through. In every age the blessing has been from individual agency; and the moment it has ceased to be this it has declined into the world; it is humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.

When there are great arrangements for carrying on work there is not the recognition of this inherent blessing which "tarrieth not for the sons of men." I don't tarry for man if I have faith in God. I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man.

All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the *individual.* Paul and Barnabas (Acts XIII.) were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the church at Antioch; but they had no communication with it till they returned, and then there was the joyful concurring of love in the service that had been performed. He that had talents went and traded. Paul says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act, accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk; but if he cannot do this the energy is not there, and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness. Love for Jesus sets one to work. I know no other way.

. . . . . .

TRUE service begins with Christ, who is the Head, and when Christ is forgotten, then the service is defective; it has lost connection with the Spring and Fountain of all service,

because it is from the Head that *all* the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth. The body is of Christ, and every one who would serve it will best learn to do so by knowing His heart and purposes towards it. In a word, it is Christ who serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands." If we are not *derivative* and *communicative from Christ,* we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service; though if true to Him the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances will judge by the blossom, and not by the fruit; and after all, the service is not for the sake of the church, but for the sake of Christ; and if He be served in the church, though the church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect in our minds Christ from our service; and this much more than any of us, perhaps, have fully discovered. Whether in reading or praying or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as towards Christ, and Him alone! How often may sentimentality and natural feeling affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him!

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WHEN I read such a writing as 2 Corinthians, I begin to feel, if I had not before, what a thing real Christian *ministry* is, and that *teaching* is but a little part of it indeed. The toils, the sorrows, the self-emptyings, and the contradictions of various sorts which that dear man of God went through and exercised in his service for Christ tell me something of the nature of ministry, and, dear brother, I turn to myself, and the contrast is humbling. I have taught a good deal from the book of God and written a good deal about it; but in the midst of all this real ministry for Christ has been a small measure indeed, when I read such a writing as 2 Corinthians or 2 Timothy.

I am seeking now to *realize* a little more in my own *soul,* and if I speak or write, to have the souls of others more simply before me.

Notes on Galatians.

CHAPTER III.

VERSES 1–9: Overcome by subtleties, "bewitched" by false teachers, the Galatian's spiritual insight had grown dim as to a crucified Christ and all that the cross meant. They had "received the Spirit," had started well, and in consequence had suffered persecution. The Apostle asks, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain?" The miracles wrought amongst them and the Spirit ministered to them were by the hearing of faith. They were the fruit of faith, not of works of law. It was by faith that Abraham was accounted righteous, and those who have faith are the children of Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles. The justification of "the heathen" was involved in the promise: "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Three things are inseparably connected—faith, promise, and blessing; in striking contrast to law, works, and the curse.

Verses 10–14: Four scriptures are quoted. The first as proof that the minutest failure in obedience to the law results in the curse: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. XXVII. 26). The second, that justification by law is not God's principle of action, for "the just shall live by faith" (Hab. II. 4). The third, that law and faith are absolutely irreconcilable: "The man that doeth them" (*i.e.* works of law) "shall live in them" (or "by them") (Lev. XVIII. 5). "The law is not of faith," it is not possible to supplement shortcoming in obedience to law by faith. The fourth, that nothing but redemption from the curse of the law avails, in order to blessing for Jewish Christians. It is necessary to be righteously clear of the one before benefiting by the other: "Christ hath redeemed us" (Jews) "from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles" (Deut. XXI. 23). Two things are consequently clear, namely, that blessing for the Gentiles has its origin in the promise to Abraham, and that such blessing is only obtained through faith.

Verses 15 and 16 are of extreme interest, showing that the original promise or covenant to Abraham had its confirmation in and to another, and " if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ." What was gratuitously pledged to Abraham, as regards the Gentiles, only found its accomplishment in Christ, the Seed of Abraham ; hence blessing for these waited " till the Seed should come." Centuries elapsed during which Gentile blessing was in abeyance ; but now in a peculiar sense, as applied to Gentiles, " Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified." If, through Judaizing teachers, these had slipped back into the shadow and lost the substance, it was for the Apostle to illuminate their hearts again with the noontide blessing and recall them to its full divine character.

Verses 17–20 : But it was necessary that the subtilty of that which had " bewitched " them should first be exposed. The Apostle does this by simply stating that promise preceded law by four hundred and thirty years. He thus sweeps away the sophistries built upon the insistence that Judaism having been given by God, its authority must therefore, in part if not in whole, remain. " The covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." The priority of the covenant to Abraham guarantees the first blessed result of unconditional promise to Abraham and to his seed, namely, inalienable title. Law came in, " was added because of transgressions " ; and for a period— " till the Seed should come." It was inaugurated " by angels " as distinct from the Seed, " which is Christ." Sin existed for centuries before the law was given. It was " added " to charge sin home on the conscience—" by the law is the knowledge of sin " (Rom. III. 20). " I had not known sin, but by the law " (Rom. VII. 7). Moreover, the law was " ordained in the hand of a mediator, and a mediator supposes two contracting parties ; but the covenant or promise given to Abraham was an act of sovereign

grace, wholly on God's side, and unconditional. " A mediator is not of one, but God is one."

Verses 21, 22: Is the law then antagonistic to the promises? Certainly not; but the obedience which the law of God demanded as His due could only be rendered as the fruit of a life communicated, but which the law was incapable of imparting. Life being given, law would be more than fulfilled; life through the Seed, Christ, becoming the source of positive fruit-bearing, according to its nature. " But the scripture hath concluded all under sin " (*cf.* Rom. III. 18), that the promise involving life might be given to them that believe.

Verses 23–26: The Apostle here introduces some words explanatory of Israel's position under law: " But before faith " (*i.e.* the subject-matter of faith, Christ Jesus) " came, we " (Israel) " were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster " (lit. pedagogue, the one who was responsible for the education of boys until of age) "unto" (or "up to") "Christ, that we might be justified by faith," and, as already stated in chapter II. 16, " not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." " But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all " (Jews and Gentiles who have faith) " the children " (lit. sons) " of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Verses 27, 28: Baptism was the public profession of the putting on of Christ, whether for Jew or Gentile. In Christ " there is neither Jew nor Greek." These distinctions disappear, " for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Verse 29: Keeping in mind that the Apostle is treating more particularly of Gentile blessing in connection with " the Seed," the next point is of peculiar interest, for " one in Christ Jesus " involves being derivatively " Christ's," that is " of Christ " (N.T.). This would seem to be the particular point to which the Apostle has been directing his argument; for if identified with Christ, the true " Seed," believers become " Abraham's seed "—the identical terms in which Christ Himself is spoken of—consequently heirs of blessing according to the promise.

The whole Jewish period and Mosaic economy is treated here as a parenthesis. The Apostle links together the promise and the appearance of the seed to whom the promise was confirmed, omitting the parenthesis; thus intimating that the blessing had no link at any time with Judaism even admitting it to be a divinely given system. Judaism extended over centuries without bringing blessing in its train to Gentiles, but behind and beneath it lay promise of blessing for these, destined to unfold itself only "when the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." Thus under the Apostle's ministry promise unfolds itself in different aspects: (1) inalienable title (ver. 17); (2) divine life (ver. 21); (3) sonship (ver. 26); (4) oneness in Christ (ver. 28); (5) of Christ, derivatively, hence (6) Abraham's seed, and consequently (7) heirs of blessing according to promise (ver. 29).

It is evident that blessing of this order excels anything that came within the actual terms of the promise given to Abraham, and yet was involved in it. "The Seed" occupies the vision of the One who gave the promise, so the scope of blessing is not limited to the terms of the covenant; it reaches out in the mind of God wider and deeper, involving the association of a Gentile company in the most intimate relation with the Seed Himself. Thus the promise of blessing, given to Abraham and his seed, lay like a cable beneath the water of God's dispensational dealings with Israel untouched, unimpaired, and unaffected, emerging in due course, and given effect to by redemption.

M. C. GAHAN.

Daily. "*If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily*" (Luke IX. 23).

"Daily"—this is the trial. A man might heroically do it once for all, and he would have plenty of people to honour him and have books written about him; but it is terribly difficult to go on every day denying oneself and no one know anything about it.

Worthy of the Calling.

THE various occurrences of the word " calling " in the New Testament present different thoughts and are intended to produce corresponding effects on our minds and ways. Many of these have been touched on with greater or less fullness in the pages of this magazine ; but I seek to draw attention to one which clearly calls for much consideration.

" Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power : that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ " (2 Thess. I. 11, 12). What " calling " is this ? The context must explain. A glance at the chapter will show us that these Thessalonian believers, recently converted under the ministry of the Apostle Paul, had but a feeble grasp of a deeply important line of truth—the dispensational, or that which addresses itself to the manner and times of God's dealings with His people on earth. They had the idea that the coming of the Lord, to remove the church to glory, was immediate, and that it was so near that attention need not be paid to the ordinary affairs of life. Some of them grew idle—ceased to work for their daily food. This was clearly wrong, however right it is for faith to expect the Lord momentarily.

Further, they were exposed to the fires of persecution for their faith in Christ, and these burned so fiercely that they got under the false impression that the " day of the Lord " had actually come. They thought that judgment had overtaken them. False teachers had encouraged the error, so that altogether they were perplexed and in great need of the help given them in this second epistle. It must have dispersed the cloud and cleared their sky. In it they were taught that they were subjects of a kingdom in which they had to suffer. This may seem paradoxical, but it is most certainly true. The King suffered and is still refused ; His followers need not expect any other portion. Their calling (and ours) is to be associated with a suffering cause and

kingdom. That has been, is, and will ever be true of Christianity. For vital Christianity is no more popular to-day—though the fires of persecution may be mitigated—than it was in the days of its inception in its archetype, Paul. At the beginning of his ministry he was let down the walls of Damascus in a basket, endured countless sufferings throughout his course, and died on a Roman block at the end. He was not wanted by the world at any period of his splendid career.

Let us, beloved fellow-Christians, clearly apprehend that the kingdom of God must suffer. "He that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Soon the tables will be turned. The troubled shall rest, and the troublers be punished. God's kingdom shall triumph; man's shall perish. Rest with Christ shall be ours; everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord shall be theirs. Our calling in the near future is glory, our present calling, for which may our God count us worthy, is to suffer in true and hearty sympathy with His kingdom and its rejected heavenly King. All we need is hearts, loyal, subject, devoted, and true to Him till that day.

J. WILSON SMITH.

A Perfect Man.

OUR souls linger in adoration over the holy mysteries of the person of Jesus, as prophetically set forth in the Psalms and historically recorded in the gospels. He not only was God manifest in the flesh, the Revealer of the Father to men, but a true and real Man, who fully entered into and carried out the obedience due to God. As man He perfectly answered to the mind of God. His wonderful pathway—the hidden springs of His being—the motives which actuated Him, are prophetically set forth in Psalm XVI. Each verse breathes some trait which makes up perfection in a man. We see in Him preservation, association, separation, consolation, satisfaction, instruction,

and anticipation. His sevenfold perfection is thus set forth.

Verse 1 divulges the secret of *preservation:* "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put *my trust.*" True, real man as He was, He was cast upon God in complete dependence, confided in Him with unwavering trust through all the chequered scenes of His earthly pathway; lived not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. Our souls may well linger and adore, as we see Him refusing to make stones into bread at the bidding of Satan; and yet, at the bidding of His Father, making bread for five thousand hungry mouths. Both acts expressed His perfect obedience, all He did was in answer to the will of God.

Verse 3 speaks of *association;* the saints, the excellent of the earth, were those in whom He found His delight. If "wisdom's" delights were with the sons of men, Jesus found His delights in *wisdom's children.* They might be poor fishermen, uncultured, unlearned, babes, nobodies in the world's eyes, but they were to Him the "excellent," in whom He found His joy. The Father found His delight in Him; His delight was in them, not because of what they were personally, but given of the Father to Him, He viewed them in the light of the Giver, loved them, as thus given, linked Himself up with them; they were His associates, "His own," a company who had been attracted to His person by the drawings of the Father.

Verse 4: How intense at the same time was His *separation* from the world. He might accept the hospitality of a Simon, but He must expose His host; He might visit Samaria in grace, but He would let them know that salvation was of the Jews. He would not present the drink offerings of the altar of Bethel; false worship was an abomination to Him, His lips were never polluted by taking up the names of those who had another god. He had come to reveal the Father, to gather worshippers who would worship in spirit and in truth.

Verse 5: "The Lord is my inheritance and my cup." His *consolations* were outside this world, He had His joys elsewhere. In the darkest, dreariest day; when Capernaum,

Chorazin, Bethsaida had utterly disappointed Him, having despised grace, refusing to repent, He still had a "cup" full of richest consolation: the Lord was His portion; there He could turn and find His rest, satisfied with the Father's will that the wise and prudent should miss the way through their very wisdom, and babes—simple, confiding, weary men and women—should find rest by resting in the One who lay in the Father's bosom. An inheritance—magnificent in extent, far greater than Adam's—is His, for all things in heaven and earth are His portion; but here He speaks of what is "pleasant" and "goodly." In the Lord He had a present portion infinitely more blessed than any universe could afford. He lived *with* the Father, found satisfaction in Him, a full "cup" all His pathway here. Every step shows how perfectly, how truly, how really His manhood shines out, sustained by joys found in the Father's world.

Verses 7 and 8 indicate the nature of His *instruction.* Morning by morning He listened for counsel. By the word that proceeded out of God's lips He was kept from the paths of the destroyer. In the dark and desolate night seasons, in the secret of God's presence, His reins instructed Him. Alone with God, He received guidance at every step; apprehended the true nature of all through which He was called to pass; not only took the "form of a servant," but fully entered into all that was involved in the intelligent understanding and perfect obedience due to the God whose will He had come to do. He was the one perfect Man who was ever obedient through a pathway of suffering. The Lord was always before Him, He had no other motive and object than ever to do the things that pleased Him. He passed unmoved amidst all the conflict and turmoil here, Jehovah ever at His right hand, supporting, sustaining Him in His dependent pathway.

Verses 9–11 speak of *anticipation.* The closing verses disclose how perfectly He had all the feelings proper to a man. Hades and the grave lay in His pathway; sorrow and suffering beyond pen to describe or mind to conceive; but away beyond the sorrows of Gethsemane and the blackness of Calvary, He soared on the wings of hope,

with a gladdened heart, to the path of life leading to the "presence" of His God and Father, where fullness of joy, pleasures unending were found. The Lord was at His right hand here, but He looked onward to the right hand there. How His soul delighted in it! How He anticipated it! This was the joy set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame. Other joys will be His as the result of His sacrificial work, but here it is the supreme joy of a Man who lived wholly for the glory of God, anticipating a return to the "presence" of His Father. For this He endured the cross, despising the shame. In Psalm XXI. we behold Him crowned with a glorious crown, honour and majesty laid upon Him, life everlasting, blessings of goodness showered upon Him, glorying greatly in the salvation of God; but excess of joy, its highest point, was reached, when the Father's countenance beamed on Him. "Thou hast made Him *exceeding glad with Thy countenance*" (ver. 6). Better—far better—than crown or kingdom, majesty and glory, life and blessing, was the presence of God His Father. Behold Him there!—a Man—delighting in the approval and finding His supreme joy in the company of the Father.

Would we follow His steps, walk as He walked, be preserved as He was, we must put our trust in God, ever look up in dependence, seek the company of the "excellent," walk in separation from evil, find our joy outside this world, seek instruction from the Word of God, guidance in the secret of His presence, and anticipate the joys only found in the presence of His God and Father, now our God and Father, into whose presence we shall be introduced when He conducts us to where He is at His second coming.

H. NUNNERLEY.

Heaven Opened. "*Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened*" (Luke III. 21).

Does heaven open thus *on* me? It is open *to* me, no doubt. I pray because it is open; but it opened because He prayed.

The Lord's Work Among the Young.

Is there scriptural warrant for gathering children together to teach them the truth? We will quote two passages which we judge warrant this. The first: "God our Saviour, who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. II. 3, 4). The second: "As we have therefore *opportunity*, let us *do good* unto *all*" (Gal. VI. 10). The scope of the word "ALL" in these passages surely embraces children, and from them we gather that salvation, and the knowledge of the truth, is clearly in the mind of God for the entire human race, young and old, male and female.

We are to "*do good.*" Teaching the Scriptures and preaching the gospel is doing good. We are to do good "*to all.*" This word "all" includes youth and manhood, young as well as old. We are to do good as we have "*opportunity.*" This clearly indicates we are to use every occasion which presents itself for the purpose of doing good. The Lord's Day is surely a very valuable opportunity for gospel work, as both scholars and teachers are at leisure on that day.

Some have raised objections to children being gathered together on the plea that Sunday-schools are carried on in every corner of Christendom, and by all sorts of people, so that those who know the truth should stand apart from them. With equal truth it may be urged that because PREACHING, SINGING, and READING the SCRIPTURES in public is carried on by others we ought to give these things up. The question is not whether such things are practised in Christendom, but whether we can do such things in accordance with the Word and will of God.

Socialists and Romanists are gathering the young people together in order to propagate all kinds of error, but surely that makes it more incumbent on Christians to teach the Scriptures in their integrity to the young, as they have opportunity. If there is so much pernicious doctrine taught around us there should be more earnestness and

devotedness on our part to spread the truth. In this work it behoves us to be in deadly earnest to gather the young, and preach and teach the pure Word of God; all the more as we see how insidiously Rome on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, are propagating their deadly errors by means of Sunday-schools.

We desire to add that we have not the smallest thought of weakening the responsibility of Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as Ephesians VI. 4 enjoins. This scripture takes in weekday teaching in the family as well as Sunday, and applies to everything connected with the children's welfare. We fail to see how children of Christian parents would lose anything by being associated with others for instruction on special occasions.

Alas! How many children are fatherless! How many homes Christless; wholly dark as to the knowledge of God! The only rays of divine light which enter such places are carried from Sunday-schools, so the more we value the truth for our own children, the more we should seek to disseminate it among those who are ignorant and out of the way, and our own households will not lose thereby.

J. C. ROWAN.

"All Things:" "All Truth." *"He shall . . . bring all things to your remembrance."* *"He will guide you into all truth"* (John XIV. 26; XVI. 13).

There can be no new revelation, inasmuch as the Spirit brought "*all* things" to the apostles' memory and led them into "all truth."

There can be nothing beyond "all truth," and hence all pretension to a new revelation and the development of new truth—meaning thereby truth not contained in the sacred canon of inspiration—is an effort on man's part to add to what God calls "all truth." No doubt the Spirit may unfold and apply, with new and extraordinary power, truth contained in the Word; but this is obviously a very different thing from our travelling outside the range of divine revelation, for the purpose of finding principles, ideas, or dogmas which shall command the conscience.

Joy.

We are so disposed to measure our experiences by the power of truth, that the soul is very commonly below the place where *faith* would put it. But faith deals with *other things*. My *conscience* may deal with my *experiences*, and I may be humbled by the character and the measure of them ; but my *faith* deals with *God* and *His wondrous revelations*. If, for instance, I have but little delight in the sense of His everlasting love to me, it may humble me in some sense ; but then, *faith* receives the fact of *my Father's* delight in these same thoughts of everlasting love to me. His counsels of goodness, of which I am the object, are His constant joy ; and to accomplish those to perfection, His settled purpose ; and *faith in me* apprehends that, and I have joy in believing that way of God's affection, though I may have poor experiences in my own frames and feelings. There is music in heaven over the repentant sinner, and the little tiny pleasure that we take in the same fact is the echo of that music, though it may be a very faint and distant echo.

The *ascending* love is never equal to the *descending*. A child never loves a parent with the same intentness that a parent loves a child ; and more than this, *the parent is very satisfied to have it so ;* not that the parent is indifferent to the state of the child's affections towards him, but still, the parent is well pleased that his love for his child never does, and never can, get a full recompense from the bosom of his child. And thus with our heavenly Father. He cannot be indifferent to the state of our affections towards Him ; but still, He understands (to speak after the manner of men) that His love never can, and never will, receive its full answer from us. And He is more than satisfied to have it so. He finds it more blessed to give than to receive. He is in the higher place Himself, and His place has its necessary attributes attending it ; the descending affections flow more largely and with a richer and a more generous tide than the ascending. It is their property, nay, their prerogative to do so. With all this, then, *faith* deals ; it takes up *God's* delight in His own thoughts and counsels about us ; it

understands how we were His object before the foundation of the world, *that* wherein He could both glorify and delight Himself; it trusts the reality and the fervency and the unrepentancy of His love, and learns that no counsels or plans of glory and of joy are too magnificent for such love to take in the cause of those on whom it has fixed itself; and it forbids conscience to disturb its rest. It will not allow the complainings of a self-judging spirit to trespass upon that music which it is listening to in the bright courts of the Father's house in heaven; it rises and seats the heart in the purest scenes. Like Moses, it carries the sinner beyond all the regions of fire and smoke and darkness and the voice of words. It leaves the angry thunder of the law, the charges of the accuser, the disquieting recollections of many shortcomings, yea, and these complaints that come from present conscious coldness and narrowness in our experiences—it leaves all these and everything kindred with them *below* and ascends to God Himself. *God* is the object of faith, and if God be happy in His thoughts about us, so is the *faith* of a believing soul. If God's presence on high be gladdened because of the triumphs of grace among sinners upon earth, so is the heart of the believer. If the Father spread a feast, the prodigal by faith takes his place at it. And if there be peace, and nothing but peace, in the sanctuary of the heavens, so is there peace, and nothing contrary to it, in the believer's heart. For faith, in its blessed ascent, rises to God; it passes as much above the uneasy, grieving sense of the narrowness and coldness of our own experiences as it passes by and above everything else. But how blessed this is! Oh, what a journey faith takes! What stillness marks its way, or if broken—not by prayer, but *by praise*. What can be compared to the grandeur of its movements and the elevation of its rest and dwelling-place!

J. G. BELLETT.

. . . . . .

HUMAN science can be laid hold of by human intellect; but no man knoweth the Son, save as the Father reveals Him, by the power of the Spirit through the written Word.

Nearing the Goal.

"*The night is far spent*" (Rom. XIII. 12).

STRANGE and portentous sounds fall upon our ears; the forces of evil are being let loose; iniquity is rising to its height; the spirit of lawlessness and rebellion fills the air. Infidelity, blasphemous and brazen-faced, stalks defiantly through the land. Spiritualism, controlled and energized by Satan, is ensnaring its victims by thousands. Secret societies of desperate men are plotting the destruction of crowned heads, seeking to put down all rule and authority. Under the outward garb of religious profession every kind of evil is practised. From pulpit and platform the Word of God is assailed, its teachings perverted, its authority denied. The gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord is despised, its claims ignored, and the dogmas and doctrines of men and demons substituted in their place. Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, "deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. III. 13).

In the midst of all the darkness and confusion the eye of faith can penetrate behind the scenes, pierce the midnight gloom, and trace the workings of ALMIGHTY LOVE. Just as of old in the material creation (Gen. I.), so now the Holy Spirit is moving in divine energy over the chaotic waste; and God is graciously gathering, out of the wreck and ruin, those who shall be co-heirs with and companions of Christ throughout the ages of eternity. Every true believer in Jesus forms part of that highly favoured company. This is the *day of salvation,* and God is working out, with ceaseless activity, His purposes of grace and love. Day by day, hour by hour, the slaves of Satan are being set free and brought under the happy and peaceful sway of God's dear Son. If the world which has turned its back upon God is ripening to its doom, each moment brings the saints nearer to the haven of rest. The night indeed is far spent, but our comfort is that "*the day is at hand.*" That bright morning without clouds will soon dawn. Meanwhile the Lord Jesus is attracting the hearts of His own to Himself, forming bridal affections in those whom the Father has

given Him out of the world, and thus creating the welcome response to the coming One, "*Even so come, Lord Jesus.*"

Let us rise to the dignity of our place and portion in Christ; and while we wait His return to usher us into the Father's house, let us not be unmindful of those who are in darkness and distance and estrangement from God, exposed to all the evil influences of a world which lies in the "wicked one." If God has saved us out of the world it is that we might be here for His pleasure, and that we might bear witness in life, lip, and ways to the grace of a Saviour-God. Freed from the enemy's power, our sins forgiven, our old man crucified—judicially ended at the cross, quickened together with Christ, and associated with Him in resurrection, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are free to look up with childlike confidence into the Father's face. How fitting, then, to surrender our bodies entirely to the will of God.

If our hearts are ready to droop at times, as we survey the surging tide of wickedness around us and man's utter disregard of the claims of God, let us remember that, whilst not interfering in an outward or public way in the world's affairs, God is by no means indifferent to all that is going on, and never gives up His sovereign rights. The present period from Pentecost to the second coming of Christ is the day of unmerited grace, in which the glad tidings concerning His Son is freely preached to every creature under heaven. If God lingers, and stays back the judgment, it is because He is full of compassion, and "His longsuffering is salvation." But this glorious day of gospel light is nearing its close, and just as surely as it has fulfilled its mission—revealing the heart of a patient and long-suffering Saviour-God leaving rebellious man without a shadow of excuse—so surely will the day that follows it demonstrate the judgment of God by consigning to everlasting perdition every soul of man who has refused to bow the knee and heart to His beloved Son. God has decreed that His glorious Son is to have the supreme place in His universe, and neither men nor demons will be able to stand in the way of its accomplishment. We delight to accord Him His rights now, and look onward to the goal which will end this present state of things.

G. F. EDINGTON.

Notes on Galatians.

CHAPTER IV.

Verses 1–7: Jewish believers before the Seed came were assuredly heirs of promise, but, like minors under age, differing nothing from servants—" under tutors and governors," " in bondage under the elements of the world." " But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son," a veritable man, " made of a woman," and " made under the law," *i.e.* of the seed and stock of Israel, to whom law was given, in order " to redeem them that were under the law," and bring them into the liberty of sons, by the gift of " the Spirit of His Son." Sons already " by faith in Christ Jesus," God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son to produce conscious knowledge and enjoyment of sonship. This crowning blessing of Christianity involves heirship—" if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." We thus have the liberty of sonship, and the consciousness of being heirs of God through Christ, by the gift of the Spirit. Thus the Apostle sets before the unstable Galatian churches the privileges of a Christian, in contrast to the bondage of Judaism, with a view to establishing their souls in their position as sons in the full liberty of the Spirit, and delivering them from a danger which has ever since menaced the church of God.

Verses 8, 9: But there was something more serious still involved in a return to Judaism: it was in fact a return to idolatry; for Judaism, since the death of Christ, had no more place before God as a system of worship than the idolatrous systems out of which the Gentiles had been called. To return to it was turning again to " weak, beggarly elements," for once Christianity was established, Judaism became an impotent and impoverished system, no whit better than Gentile idolatry.

Verses 10–12: These two retrograde steps from sonship to servant, from Christianity to idolatry, were marked by the observance of " days, and months, and times, and years," for these were part of Judaism, a system displaced by Christianity.

Verses 13–15 : Some physical infirmity " in the flesh " affected Paul when preaching the gospel to the Galatians, but this had not hindered the reception of his ministry, but rather drew out their sympathetic devotion. " Where is then the blessedness ye spake of ? " For them to lose this blessing they had previously known outweighed everything else with Paul ; over this he deeply mourns.

Verses 16–19 : But was this plain and faithful speaking of the Apostle to result in estrangement ? He was not their enemy, but there were subtle and plausible adversaries who sought to come in between the Apostle and these beloved Galatian saints, in order that they might follow them. So the Apostle laboured again in birth-pangs that Christ might be formed in them, that the truth of the gospel might prevail and these enemies be frustrated.

Verses 20–31 : Paul now changes his line of argument. They had heard the voice of promise confirmed to the Seed, with all its wondrous development of blessings in the Son ; he now calls upon them to hear, and take heed to the voice of law : " Do ye not hear the law ? " Chapter III. treats of Christ as Abraham's " Seed," chapter IV. of Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, in allegory. One was the son of the bondwoman " after the flesh," the other the son of the freewoman " after the spirit." The bondwoman and the freewoman stood for the " two covenants ; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free." Jerusalem, in bondage with her children, illustrates Judaism ; " Jerusalem which is above," Christianity. When Isaac was weaned Ishmael became an outcast and a wanderer, representative of the Jew during the present dispensation. " Cast out the bondwoman and her son : for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

The principles and ceremonies of Judaism, though disowned of God, possess—for some minds—a fictitious value. These obsolete forms and ceremonies, invading and intruding themselves into Christianity, constitute the most subtle obstacle and hindrance to the truth of

the gospel and the true knowledge of the church. No spiritual alliance with Judaism should be tolerated, or spiritual recognition of its connection with Christianity owned by those who are, as Isaac was, children of promise. If chapter III. closes with the conclusion as to what Christians are, according to the mind of God, viz. " All one in Christ Jesus " and " of Christ " the Seed, chapter IV. concludes with what they are not : " So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

M. C. GAHAN.

Ephesians.

CHAPTER VI.

Q. Verses 1–3. *Why is there the promise of long life to obedient children ?*

A. I do not apprehend that it is so. That the commandment to honour thy father and mother was the first under the law to carry a promise with it is only used to strengthen the exhortation to obedience in the Lord of children to their parents, which was " right " in Christianity.

Q. Verses 5–9. *Why are the names of God, Christ, and the Lord brought in in connection with the duty of servants to their masters ?*

A. It must be borne in mind that the " servants " of the Epistles are not such as we know as household servants, save in 1 Peter II. 18. They were bond-servants and the property of their masters. In God's grace the light of Christian relationships is cast upon their trying position, in a very special way, both in this epistle and Colossians III. 22–25. Thus faithful service to their masters would be accepted as done to Christ, by those who are owned in it as bond-servants of Christ. This was the will of God for them, and would be recompensed by the Lord in the day of reward. He would take account of every good thing done, whether by bond or free. Each name is seen to be in perfect place, to encourage the heart of the poor slave.

Q. Verse 10. *How can we be "strong in the Lord"?*

A. We now come to the close of the epistle, and the equipment with which we are furnished for the inevitable conflict in seeking to maintain a heavenly position and carry it out into practice in everything. Only first the source of strength for it is presented to us as "in the Lord, and in the power of His might," which recalls the resources of the power that is to us-ward according to chapter I. 19 (where "His mighty power" is the same in the original); so that none may be faint-hearted in having to meet the foe.

Q. Why is it called the armour of God? And what the significance of the wiles of the devil (ver. 11)?

A. Nothing but an armour of God's providing, and divine in character, would be of any avail in such a conflict. The wiles of the devil, by which he seeks to meet saints who are in the faith of their souls seated in the heavenlies in Christ, involve a very different character of conflict from the open opposition with which he meets them as strangers and pilgrims in the wilderness as a roaring lion. It is far more subtle and insidious. The word for "wiles" is the same as in chapter IV. 14 and refers to the same form of evil. The New Translation gives there "systematized error." It is religious, and seems to consist largely in the counterfeiting of everything that is of God—the nearer the resemblance to the truth the more successful and satanic the wile in its power to deceive.

Q. Verse 12. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers." How are these to be distinguished from spiritual wickedness ("wicked spirits,"* marg.)?

A. Clearly the Lord would not have us under-estimate the forces arrayed against us, though we are not informed further as to these awful powers of evil, save that they are characterized as "universal lords of this darkness" (as more literally rendered): "the spiritual [powers]—or 'hosts' (R.V.)—of evil" (N.T.) would be the active agents of this all-pervading power of Satan. The sphere of the conflict is "in the heavenlies," that of our position in Christ all through the epistle.

Q. What is the difference between being able to withstand and to stand?

A. To be able to withstand in the evil day it is needed that we should take unto us the whole armour or panoply of God. The latter word, taken from the original Greek, conveys the force, because it is not so many detached pieces of armour, but a complete suit covering the person *cap-à-pie.* To withstand in such a contest is to stand, for it is no question of gaining ground in it by saints seated in the heavenlies; all is accomplished when we can stand against the wiles of Satan that would cast us down from our excellency (Ps. LXII. 4).

Q. What is the significance of the various parts of the armour (vers. 14–18): (1) *"Having girt about your loins with truth"? What truth is in view here?*

A. No particular truth, but the revelation of God in Christ, and thus of everything as it really is, to be applied as the holy girdle to our inward parts, the mind and heart kept thus in order before God, instead of the wandering of the desires, leaving us open to the suggestions of the enemy. Every fresh truth received is given us to be so used.

Q. (2) *Righteousness is said to be the breastplate. Is it practical or imputed?*

A. "Having put on" (for the verbs in the first three have this more active force) "the breastplate of righteousness." It is practical; for the armour is not that we may stand before God, but in conflict with Satan. Hence it is of the last possible importance to maintain a good conscience by righteousness in practical ways. 2 Corinthians VI. 7 can speak of the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. Paul exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and only thus a bold front can be presented to the enemy.

Q. (3) *What is the "preparation of the gospel of peace"?*

A. "Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." It is to be characterized in our ways with the peace in which conscience and heart have been established before God. It is not a question here of carrying

the gospel to others, but of being formed in our relations with all with whom we come in contact by the peace we enjoy with God, as, for instance, checking a hasty word or action.

Q. (4) *Does the "shield of faith" mean confidence in God as a practical everyday thing?*

A. That this is the main force of it is clear from the use of it, "whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Satan's fiery darts are specially that by which he would seek to weaken in any way the heart's absolute confidence in God, for instance, seeking to instil a dark doubt of His love or suspicion of any of His ways with us.

Q. (5) *What is "the helmet of salvation"?*

A. "And take" or "receive"—the verb is a little less active now—"the helmet." It protects the head, the most vulnerable part. "O Jehovah Adonai, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle" (Ps. CXL. 7). "Of salvation"—not the hope of it, as in 1 Thessalonians v. 8, in connection with the ordinary trials of the way, but possessed (chap. II. 8) and known to be ours as accomplished for us, and needed that we may be able boldly to lift up the head in the day of battle. It will have been observed how so far the panoply of God has to do with our subjective state; parts 1, 2, and 3, the flesh and self subjugated; then, 4, confidence in God maintained—the order in this being perfect. With the head protected comes the confidence with which the soul can stand in the presence of the enemy and use the only piece of armour given for offensive warfare.

Q. (6) *In what way is the Word of God the sword of the Spirit?*

A. It is to be noted here that the sword of the Spirit is not the Word as a whole (*logos*)—the revelation of God in Christ which takes in the whole book, but the spoken word (*rhema*), the word out of God's mouth by which, and not bread alone, man lives: it is the individual passage that applies to the wile of the enemy, whatever it may be, and this supplied and wielded by the Spirit. So it was with the Lord in His perfection, when Satan could not resist the

" It is written " with which he was met at every point and vanquished.

Q. (7) *Then lastly, counting it up as you and John Bunyan do, amongst the points of the armour, there is entire and continual dependence upon God, expressing itself in prayer, stated here more fully than anywhere, " Praying at all seasons, with all prayer and " (with the more earnest) " supplication in the Spirit, and watching unto this very thing with all perseverance." Does this imply that we may pray without the Spirit ?*

A. I hardly think so. There are many characters of prayer in which the heart may unburden itself before God, as that of importunity. But only that is contemplated here which is in the Spirit, as befits the gravity of the occasion, the soul being engaged in conflict of such a character. " Watching thereunto " would be called for by the ceaseless attempts of the enemy to distract from prayer, which connects the soul in its felt weakness with the resources of God's power. Then as an integral part of it there is " supplication for all saints."

Q. Does not the expression " all saints " lift the mind and thoughts out of sectarian narrowness, and embrace the whole church in our supplications ?

A. Surely it would, if sectarianism had come in so early in Ephesus, or wherever it may be found. But no heart that holds the truth of the church in communion with God can have any narrower circle of interest than all that are Christ's. Thus in chapter I. 15 their love went out to " all saints." If the Apostle asks for them, in chapter III. 14–21, that which was needed that they should enter into the comprehension of God's thoughts for the glory of Christ, it is " with all saints." And so here prayer, if it be in the Spirit, could not be narrowed to anything less than the interests of Christ in the whole church. " And for me " ; for, as ever, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, conscious of nothing but weakness in himself, counts upon the prayers of the saints here, that he may open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel (ver. 19).

Q. What is the difference between the mystery here and —chapter iii. 4—*the mystery of Christ ?*

A. None that I know of. The mystery—Christ and the church—is inseparably connected with the glad tidings as Paul preached them.

Q. What is the meaning of "an ambassador in bonds"?

A. Simply that he who had been so largely identified with the work—others, no doubt, sharing his position as "ambassadors instead of Christ"—was now bound with a chain and limited in his activities in this way, and thus should have all the deeper place in the prayers of the saints.

Q. Verse 23. *Is "love with faith" love to each other and faith in God? or is it responsive affection to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?*

A. It is hard to separate these things, but as faith worketh by love, he would greet them with love as the spring of everything and faith as that in which it would be displayed, the last verse showing that the epistle had a larger scope in the Apostle's mind than local saints at Ephesus.

Answers by
J. A. TRENCH.

Canaan and the Way There.

IN the brief compass of the first nine verses of Deuteronomy VIII. we get presented knowledge of SELF that we may distrust self—knowledge of GOD that we may confide in Him—knowledge of our CALLING that we may respond to it and walk in accordance therewith. These things are written for our learning with a view to our affections being wrought upon, our consciences reached, and our wills broken.

The heart is deceitful above all things, God alone knows its deceptive nature; but the tests and trials, the exercises and perplexities we pass through are intended to reveal to us its true character; they are sent in order that we might be weaned from self-confidence, and at the same time learn that man lives not by bread only, but by every word of the living God. Trials which do not produce distrust of self

and a fuller trust in God have failed of their object, for all our testings are with a view to bringing *two hearts* to light: one, the heart of God our Father, who deals with us as sons, chastens us because we are in that relationship—which is, indeed, the ground of His dealings with us, for whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth, and this with a view to produce a perfect and unwavering confidence in both His love and wisdom;—for chastening is our portion on our journey to the Father's house, but it is a *Father's hand* that is upon us, a *Father's heart* that is ever toward us. On the other hand, all His ways with us are intended to expose the utter untrustworthiness of *our hearts* in order that we may learn that the flesh profiteth nothing and in us good does not dwell.

"When the will is broken there is subjection, when the understanding is enlightened there is acquiescence, when the affections are engaged there is rejoicing in the Lord." "Trial when we are not going on well is needful, chastening and a blessing in result." We may therefore rest in assured confidence that a Father's hand will never cause His child a needless tear, and though adverse winds may blow and our voyage be a stormy one, there is a safe harbour awaiting us; our vessel will shortly sail into port, leaving the tempestuous waves of this sin and sorrow stricken world behind. We shall then find ourselves in the rest God has provided, basking eternally in the sunshine of the Father's presence.

Israel was *called* to a land flowing with olive oil and honey, a land of brooks and fountains, of vines, figs, and pomegranates; we are called to enjoy the *Giver* of all these things, to know the One from whom and through whom they all come. Ours is a heavenly portion; our blessings are spiritual, they are beyond all computation; they embrace in their wide range every blessing God has showered upon Christ, but they are outside and beyond this world—as Canaan was outside and beyond the wilderness—but each moment we get nearer the end of our journey. Meanwhile the revelation of the things God has in store for those who love Him are intended to profoundly affect us and produce practical strangership. J. PALMER.

God's Foundation.

THE foundation of God standeth sure, as sure amid the terrible confusion of the twentieth century as in the days of power and apostolic energy of the first. It is steady, immovable, divine. Now this is an immense comfort to the man of God. There is that on which he can always rely.

The church may have drifted down from Ephesian warmth to Laodicean indifference. Things may be all out of order. It may and must be an impossibility to point out that church as a compact body giving true expression to the will of God. The greatest claim to this, as in Rome, is the deepest shame. The general failure is self-evident and a general restoration is hopeless.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," spite of all that remains. And what is this foundation? To give an answer to this question has called for abundant speculation. We find the word "foundation" in many places in Scripture, but in each its meaning can only be determined by the context. So here. A very cursory glance over the Second Epistle to Timothy shows us that the writer realized a sad breakdown in the profession of Christianity, that he was feeling it—all in Asia had forsaken him, while such as Hymenæus and Philetus, as also the followers of Jannes and Jambres, together with such as Alexander the coppersmith, were all attacking, virulently and without remorse, the very truth which God had committed to the saints.

The ear was itching for novelty just because it had turned from the truth, and anything fabulous and foolish was greedily swallowed instead.

The Apostle felt all this in his day, and it is superfluous to say that the intervening centuries have but intensified and confirmed to us that of which he complained.

All was, and is, as bad as could be. The long night has been piteously dark. The church has eagerly awaited the dawn. She has sought to hold the fort, to stem the tide, and face the ever-truculent foe.

The contest seems in vain and yet she is sustained. The power of the living God is pledged to carry her through, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

That pledge is His foundation. It is irreversible and irrevocable. It is a rock amid ocean; a solid footing amid quicksands; an anchor sure and firm; a divine guarantee for faith's most absolute confidence amid storm and convulsion and universal collapse. Thank God for His foundation!

May He give to all His poor, tempest-tossed people, in a day of reproach and perplexity, when courage is well-nigh gone, to reckon on that foundation, to know that, come what may in the way of ecclesiastical failure and apostasy, there is one thing that cannot fail, nor alter, nor break down. "God's foundation standeth sure." If it be God's, how could it fail?

No, but we are prone to forget this, and to have regard more to that which is seen and temporal than to that which is unseen and eternal. But it is only in the latter that there is stability. May our eye be on God. J. W. SMITH.

The School of Grace.

THE first dawn of the grace of God upon the soul sheds the light of salvation there and removes the burden of guilt from the conscience, dispels fear from the heart.

For those to whom salvation is thus brought God has a school in which grace is the teacher. Its pupils are enfranchised; on its charter is written: "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace." Here they are under the teaching of the God of grace, the blessed God who is revealed in Christ, and are taught to *deny ungodliness*. Their privilege is to "reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." Their bodies, once enslaved by worldly lusts, are to be devoted to God and trained for His service.

Alas! there are many dull scholars in this school; vast numbers of Christians who give some of their time and money to the Lord's service, but are not really devoted

to Him in true affection, hence they do not make progress in the school of grace.

Those who are truly learning will not be inflated or puffed up with spiritual pride, but will think soberly of themselves and learn by experience their particular line of service. Every Christian should serve the Lord, but unless we are scholars sitting at our Master's feet we shall miss our true vocation, and either attempt something beyond our strength, or let our hands hang down and do nothing ; but if we learn the perfect will of God, prove that it is not irksome, but " good and acceptable," intelligent service will be the outcome.

Grace will teach us to live *righteously,* i.e. to act consistently with the relationships in which we are placed. Christians are set in relation to each other as brethren and grace teaches us to love one another.

We also have relationships outside the Christian circle. Some are called to serve an earthly master. Grace will teach us to render faithful service to him, even though he be ill-tempered. Onesimus, the runaway slave, was an unfaithful servant before his conversion, but when grace reached him he retraced his steps and became profitable to his master. If we are employers of labour we shall be taught by grace to give unto our servants that which is just and equal, knowing that we have a Master in heaven. As subjects of the king, grace will teach us to honour him and pay tribute ; in fact, we shall render to all their dues, owing nothing except love, which is a debt we can never discharge.

Further, we are taught to live *piously.* Grace brings God into our lives, so that whatever we do is done with respect to Him. We come under divine control and the character of God is expressed in us. If our hearts are established with grace, we are able to bear the infirmities of the weak and to show mercy with cheerfulness. No longer intent on pleasing ourselves, we seek to please God and our neighbour, even as Christ pleased not Himself. Conformed no more to this world, we shall be transformed by the renewing of our minds, which will be centred on Christ the " heavenly One," who is coming soon to complete the work of God's

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redeeming grace. A great feature of the coming day of glory will be the display of God's exceeding grace in creatures like ourselves.

Knowing these things will greatly affect us now, their influence will be seen and felt in the affairs of everyday life. They will enable even a slave to adorn the teaching of God our Saviour by showing fidelity to his master.

The Lord give us the desire to make progress in the school of grace, so that God may be glorified.

W. TAYLOR.

Christian Parents.

"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord."—EPH. VI. 4 (N.T.).

THIS is an important truth for parents, and which flows from the church being a company apart. It is evident that God desires that the children of Christians should be brought up as Christians. I must act as a Christian with regard to my child, and not otherwise; I must exercise towards him the discipline of God, and bring him up as a disciple—we do very wrong if we act otherwise. . . . If a Christian mother introduce or allow her child to go into the world, she must expect a strong reaction when her child is in the midst of the world; but God is faithful to the mother who acts faithfully according to the instructions of the Lord. The moment there is a duty, God is there; and God is faithful to make us succeed, though we may have to pass through many a painful hour. But, alas! we like what is most easy; neither is it right for us to use the word as a law to make a child obey. We frequently hear parents say to their children that, if not good, God will punish them, thus putting them under a law; this ought not to be. I ought to be a Christian with my child. God cannot bless parents who make a severe law of the Christian religion with their children; and much less when they allow themselves to go back to worldliness and worldly motives. They ought to be Christian as to their children, and to act towards them according to the truth into which God has brought themselves.

J. N. DARBY.

The Race.

HEBREWS XI.

In Hebrews xi. we find witnesses to the power of faith, men who were carried through by the power of faith; by faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions. If we are to be found to-day superior to everything, overcoming the difficulties in the road, it must be by the power of faith; the Spirit of God shows us what their faith wrought and how through faith they victoriously passed through everything. Animated by their example, we are exhorted to run with endurance the race that is set before us, *looking off unto Jesus*, the Author and Finisher of faith. He is the *One* who began and ended the path of faith, who never swerved to the right hand or to the left; He started, continued, finished, and is now at the right hand of God.

The path of faith runs athwart this world; the vulture's eye has not seen it and the lion's whelp has not trodden it. This is the path Jesus trod and we are to follow His steps.

> There is but that one in the waste,
> Which His footsteps have marked as His own;
> And we follow in diligent haste
> To the seats where He's put on His crown.

Difficulties there will be, but we are to look away from the difficulties to Jesus, and in the energy of faith overcome the difficulties, run a straight course, leave a straight track behind us; but we can only do this by fixing our eye on the end of the race, only keeping Christ in glory before us, looking off to Jesus. Consider Him! He endured the contradiction of sinners, resisted even unto blood striving against sin. In the path of faith and obedience to the will of God He laid down His life, resisted unto blood.

It may be that *you* are impeded by something which will need to be definitely laid aside, some hindrance, some weight. I do not know what your weight is, but I have had

to discover my own. When people begin running in dead earnest they very soon cast aside every weight that impedes them. The great privilege of every believer is to be here absolutely for Christ, and to use the present opportunity in His holy and blessed service; but if we are set upon this, He will surely show us the things that hinder us, but it may be that we shall have to learn what the hindrances are on a bed of affliction. Maybe you have mapped out some service and you find you are laid aside, but you do not know how your Father may be helping you in that. I have seen very bright Christians far ahead of me in the race, nearer the goal than myself, doubled up with not a muscle they could use in their body. The most dire affliction often turns out to be the greatest possible blessing; all that happens is permitted by the great and infinite wisdom of a Father who loves us perfectly—"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Joseph's way to the second place in the kingdom lay through the pit and the prison; he probably thought as he lay in the dungeon, "All these things are against me," but they were steps towards the throne; thus God our Father often helps us to spiritual heights by rolling affliction upon us, and we learn it is only in divine strength that we can press upwards and onwards.

We are also to remember there are other runners besides ourselves, we are not alone in the race, there are some feeble ones whose hands hang down. We must seek to strengthen the feeble knees, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but rather let it be healed. We should be very solicitous as to each other, look well to our ways lest a brother who is weak or lame be turned out of the way. This is a quotation from Isaiah xxxv. 3, 6, where it says: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. . . . Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." It also adds, there shall be a way, a highway, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there. The only path secure from the ravening power of evil is this way of holiness, only those treading it shall see the Lord. God our Father who chastens us does so in order that we may be partakers of His holiness.

But other things may come in to hinder us on our journey:

roots of bitterness may spring up. Whenever a bit of feeling rises in our hearts against a brother, let us get on our knees before God, confess it as our own sin, and if any root of bitterness springs up put our heel on it at once, for if allowed to remain it will cause trouble and possibly many be defiled.

Another hindrance to progress may be some gratification of our natural feelings: like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, gaining a present advantage, but thereby forfeiting future privileges. This is a warning to us not to miss that which is abiding and eternal for the sake of present gain.

In verses 22, 23, and 24 we have come to a beautiful system, a system of grace and glory: Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, to God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant—all to be fully expressed in the day of millennial glory, fruit of the grace that flows from the heart of God, which we are now to reach in the faith of our souls.

Difficulties are sure to meet us in the race, but these will only be an opportunity for faith to overcome them. May we ever keep the goal in view, press on to that glorious day when the Lord Jesus shall welcome us, and seek by steady perseverance in the race to earn His "Well done, good and faithful servant."

It is well to remind each other that our being in glory, in the joys of the Father's house, our entrance into those courts above will not depend on our running. Grace, sovereign grace alone, through the redemptive work of Christ, secures eternal glory; this must never be confounded with rewards for faithful, diligent devotedness to Christ. May each of us be able to say at the end of our race, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

E. E. CURTIS.

Notes on Galatians.

CHAPTER V.

VERSES 1–10. It remained for Paul to exhort the Galatian saints, in the light of all that he had set before them, to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free; for Christian liberty is founded upon divine intelligence, not on blind committal to dogma. It was not a question of the personal influence of Paul, but of "the truth of the gospel." The Apostle's anxiety was intense lest they should be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage." If circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing: they became thereby debtors to do the whole law, for circumcision was of the law, not of the gospel. They were fallen from the ground of absolute grace in adopting justification by the law instead of waiting for "the *hope* of righteousness" in its full final display. Judaism had dimmed and eclipsed this hope by interposing legal obligations. They had thus fallen from pure grace—departed from the "faith which worketh by love"—and had been hindered (lit. stopped) in the race. Leaven had got in amongst them and affected the whole lump. Viewed in themselves—in the light of what they were doing—Paul stood in doubt of them (chap. IV. 20), but viewed in the Lord he had confidence as to them that they would not be otherwise minded, but stand fast in liberty, and the troubler bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

Verses 11–15. To preach circumcision would have been an end to the offence of the cross; but Paul chose to suffer persecution rather than link up Judaism and Christianity. Verse 12 should read: "I would that they would even cut themselves off who throw you into confusion" (N.T.). The fairest flower may conceal a treacherous insect; so Christian liberty may be used to cover hidden evil, hence the Apostle exhorts: "Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." Seek not, under cover of liberty, fleshly gratification, but walk in love—divine love—first-fruit of the Spirit (ver. 22). Be willing to die, even, for others (1 John III. 16). "By love serve [lit. be slaves to] one another. For all the law is fulfilled

in one word, even in this ; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." " Love," being the fruit of the Spirit's dwelling in the believer, " worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law " (Rom. XIII. 10). Christianity thus furnishes that which law, pure and simple, failed to effect ; for love ensures the maintenance of suitable relations Godward and manward. Law never communicated life or love.

Verses 16–18. What is it then that alone can preserve the liberty of the Christian, whilst restraining the licence of the flesh ? " Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh " is the divine answer. Every believer has to tread an individual pathway, step by step, moment by moment. He cannot anticipate the future, but he can be careful at every step to " walk in the Spirit," ever seeking to mortify the lust of the flesh, and yield himself wholly to the control of the Spirit who is the restraining power, so " that ye should not do those things which ye desire " (N.T.). It is not the law imposing its demands upon the flesh, but the Spirit of God's Son (chap. IV. 6) successfully restraining the otherwise uncontrollable energy of the flesh. Deliverance is here viewed in its practical character, the correlative of chapter II. 19, 20. To be " crucified with Christ " is to be " led by the Spirit " ; so that death with Christ is made good in the believer practically by the Spirit. In the Epistle to the Romans it is said : "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," for the control by the Spirit constitutes practical sonship. In Galatians " led by the Spirit " involves not being under the law ; the spirit of a son not being reconcilable with the spirit of bondage, which law genders.

Verses 19–24. The flesh is a fountain of evil ; its hideous " works " are " earthly, sensual, devilish " (James III. 15), and are here viewed in contrast to " the fruit of the Spirit," which essentially composes the graces expressed in Christ as a Man on earth, and now reproduced by the Spirit in the believer. The exotic, far removed from its own proper habitat, may but feebly express the perfection of the plant as it blooms in its own climate ; so the Christian, though belonging to Jerusalem above, may fail to suitably express

the life that is his in Christ Jesus: nevertheless its characteristics are to be traceable, and should develop themselves in conformity with the graces enumerated, "for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Law has no place amidst such fruits as these.

Verses 25, 26. It is not enough then to live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit, *i.e.* apply the presence and power of the Spirit to the daily walk, for evidently it is possible to have life by the Spirit without walking by the Spirit.

This chapter, since it is occupied so much with the energy of the Spirit, fittingly links itself with chapter IV. 6, 7. There we learn how the Spirit displaces the relationship of servant by that of sonship. Here we further learn that the sons and heirs are waiting for the day of emancipation and inheritance by the Spirit (ver. 5): are waging uninterrupted conflict with the flesh by the Spirit (ver. 17): are not under law when practically led by the Spirit (ver. 18): are manifesting the fruit of the Spirit (ver. 22); and having life by the Spirit, are walking in the power of the Spirit (ver. 25). For such, compulsory obedience, after the manner of the law, is needless; for the Spirit of sonship delights in the Father's will, and reproduces in measure the graces and perfection of Christ the Son, of which it is said: "Against such there is no law." Israel received the law on the ground of self-confidence; the Christian receives the Spirit on the ground of confessed impotence (Rom. VI. 14-18).

CHAPTER VI.

The epistle closes with general exhortations to the saints of the various Galatian churches.

Verse 1. If any were overtaken by a fault, it was the privilege and responsibility of those walking in the Spirit to "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness," and in the sense of our own weakness, which makes us meek toward others.

Verses 2–6. If these Galatians wanted law, let it be the law of Christ—that which governed Him—viz. bearing one another's burdens, as He Himself "bare our griefs and

carried our sorrows." But while bearing others' burdens each one has his own burden according to which he should prove himself, when, if the conscience is good, he shall "have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his burden," *i.e.* of responsibility. Those who were taught had responsibilities towards those who were their teachers as to contributing to their maintenance in all good things (1 Cor. IX. 7, 18).

Verses 7–10: "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Of what nature is the harvest to be? Sowing to the flesh means a harvest of corruption, sowing to the Spirit one of life everlasting. In every word and deed there is a sowing which will, in time, bear testimony to its intrinsic character.

Well-doing in a world of sin and sorrow and hostility may produce weariness, "but in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." The sphere of service is universal, embracing "all men," while "the household of faith" have a special claim.

Verse 11. Paul wrote this epistle in large letters with his own hand, perhaps owing to defective sight, instead of, as customary, by an amanuensis with salutations in his own handwriting (1 Cor. XVI. 21), the danger being peculiarly urgent, namely, the surrender of the foundations of Christianity by the Galatian saints, which struck a deeper pang of anxiety into the apostolic heart than even the evil at Corinth.

Verses 12–18. Once more circumcision, the burden of the epistle, owing to its tendency to legality, looms up before the vision of the Apostle, and warning words fall from his lips. What was the real key to the energetic insistence by Judaizing teachers of the urgency of circumcision? It was the foil of those who only desired "to make a fair show in the flesh," whereby the home-thrust of persecution might be parried; for the acceptance of the cross of Christ broke necessarily every link with Judaism and committed its disciples to persecution, which these were not prepared for. On the other hand, such were guilty of the grossest inconsistency, for while circumcision made them debtors "to do the whole law" (chap. V. 3), they had no inten-

tion of keeping it. Nor had they any higher thought than glorying in the flesh; for self-righteousness was essentially flesh's boast, and legal observance the title to a position in Judaism. This cross that these shrank from Paul gloried in, for the double reason that by it the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world. The cross of Christ is the condemnation of the world and the judicial end of the old man, to make room for a " new man " ; for " in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." This new order should be the governing rule or principle of life; upon such peace and mercy and upon " the Israel of God." He concludes with the benediction " The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." The Apostle desires that they should be conscious of grace abiding with them—the very grace that had come in to deliver them from this present evil world in the manner indicated by the epistle itself.

The epistle may be briefly summarized as follows: Paul's apostolate was of purely divine origin, neither " of man " as source nor " by man " as to authority. The subject-matter was directly and divinely communicated—all was by revelation, this giving authoritative weight to his words. Attacked by false brethren and subverted by Peter's influence, Paul stood for the cardinal truths of the gospel. The ministry of justification by faith, of death with Christ as crucified with Him and so beyond the reach of law, of a risen and glorified Christ, source of life and object of the heart in heaven. Promise with its wonderful fulfilment in the " Seed " and its result for believers is unfolded. The Spirit setting the believer practically in sonship's place in unfettered liberty. The patient waiting for the " hope of righteousness " without a cloud or doubt. Fruit produced by God's Spirit in contrast to works. Finally, viewed in Christ risen and glorified, every believer partakes of new creation. The rite of circumcision for Jewish believers or legal obligation of any kind having no bearing upon those belonging to an entirely new and heavenly order.

" Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ " (chap. iv. 7).

M. C. GAHAN.

Eating a Sin-Offering.

I CHRONICLES XXI.

GOD deals very tenderly and graciously with His people, bearing long with them, warning and reproving them; but if they refuse to repent and obey, He allows them to reap the consequences of their folly and disobedience.

Satan is a mighty instrument in the hand of God for effecting His purposes, but he cannot touch us without God's permission. Happy it is for the believer, whatever he meets with in his pilgrim path, to recognize and acknowledge God's hand in it all, no matter what instrument God may be pleased to use. God hedged Job about, his house, and all that he had, so that Satan could not touch him, nor anything that he had; but when God took away the hedge, Satan took his seven sons, his three daughters, all his stock, and nearly all his servants; and we might have said, "The Lord hath given, but Satan hath taken away." But no, Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job would recognize only God's hand in it all (see Job I. 21, 22).

God allowed Satan to provoke David to number the people; and Joab pleaded with David not to do it, but without avail. Joab evidently saw what the consequence would be, namely, that in the then moral condition of the people, they would not pay the necessary half-shekel, and therefore there would be a plague. "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them" (Exodus XXX. 12, read from the eleventh to the sixteenth verse). Nor could Joab complete the numbering, as the plague broke out while he was in the act of taking the census (see I Chron. XXVII. 24). Thus God allowed disobedient David to fall into Satan's trap. The moral effect of this on David was to bring the sin home to his conscience: "I have sinned

greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech Thee, do away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly" (ver. 8). Where there is real self-judgment, and full, unreserved confession of sins to God, He is ready to forgive. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9). But God's governmental principles must be maintained, and, though our sins are forgiven, we have often to reap, while here, their bitter fruits. And the Lord sent Gad to David for him to choose between three years' famine, three months' war, or three days' pestilence.

Verses 13, 14.—This put David into a great strait, but he wisely left it with the Lord to chasten him as He thought good, only desiring that he might not be suffered to fall into the hand of man: and the Lord sent the pestilence (according to Exodus xxx. 12) and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

Verses 16, 17.—David now took the people's place before God, doing that which was typified by a priest when he ate a sin-offering, namely, owning the sin of the people as his own sin. Ah! one must be very near to God to be able to do this! When a Christian who is walking with God, knows or hears of a fellow-Christian sinning, he should not talk about it to others, but, throwing the mantle of charity over the sin, he will plead with God in secret about it, interceding on behalf of the failing one for his restoration. How like our blessed Lord, of whom it is said, "If any man sin, *we* have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous!"

When a professed servant of the Lord fails publicly, Satan, if he can, will publish it in all the newspapers, but it is better to act like the Lord than like Satan. Let us speak to the Lord about our brethren, and speak to our brethren about the Lord. But even earnest pleading on behalf of a failing brother is not necessarily eating the sin-offering, unless the one who intercedes identifies himself before God with the failure of his brother; not saying, "O my brother hath sinned a great sin," but, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity and have done wickedly."

Ezra ate the sin-offering for Israel. The unholy affinity of Israel with the heathen caused Ezra to rend his garment and his mantle, and pluck off the hair of his head and beard, and sit down astonied. At the evening sacrifice, having rent his garments and his mantle, he fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, and said, " O my God, *I* am ashamed and blush to lift up *my* face to Thee, my God: for *our* iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens " (Ezra IX. 3–6).

Daniel also ate the sin-offering when he confessed the sins of his people which they had committed seventy years before, identifying himself with them in their sin (see Daniel IX. 2–19); praying and confessing, as his own, " the *sin of my people* Israel . . . before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God " (Dan. IX. 20). And how thoroughly David did this, taking the sin to himself, charging himself with it all: " *And David said unto God, Is it not I that commandeth the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Lord my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on Thy people, that they should be plagued.*"

Thus did David eat the sin-offering for the people.

JOHN GASKIN.

. . . . . .

WE have borne the image of the first Adam, in all the consequences of his sin and ruin, and we shall bear the image of the second Adam.

Before then we are assured: " As is the heavenly One, such also are the heavenly ones." This is what we are now.

We are given a righteousness in Christ, who is the accepted blessed Man in the presence of God: " As He is, so are we in this world."

A Pilgrim Song.

"I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."—Ps. XXXIX. 12.

A PILGRIM and a stranger,
I journey here below;
Far distant is my country,
The home to which I go.
Here I must toil and travel,
Oft weary and opprest,
But *there* my God shall lead me
To everlasting rest.

It is a well-worn pathway,—
Many have gone before,
The holy saints and prophets,
The patriarchs of yore.
They trod the toilsome journey
In patience and in faith:
And them I fain would follow,
Like them in life and death!

Who would share Abraham's blessing
Must Abraham's path pursue;
A stranger and a pilgrim,
Like him must journey through.
The foes must be encountered,
The dangers must be past;
Only a faithful soldier
Receives the crown at last.

So I must hasten forwards,
Thank God, the end will come;
This land of my sojourning
Is not my destined home.
That evermore abideth,
Jerusalem above,
The everlasting city,
The land of light and love.

There still my thoughts are dwelling,
'Tis there I long to be!
Come, Lord, and call Thy servant
To blessedness with Thee!
Come, bid my toils be ended,
Let all my wanderings cease;
Call from the wayside lodging
To the sweet home of peace!

There shall I dwell for ever,
No more a stranger guest,
With all Thy blood-bought children
In everlasting rest.
The pilgrim toil forgotten,
The pilgrim conflicts o'er;
All earthly griefs behind us,
Eternal joys before!

PAUL GERHARDT (1607–76.)

Our Hope.

I REJOICE in the thought that every setting sun is bringing us nearer and nearer to a world where *suns will never set*—where we shall walk together for ever in an atmosphere of light and glory—where all the desire, longings, and hope of our hearts *will be fully met!* How blessed to feel that we have SUCH A HOPE! While the world around us is following after *shadows* and walking in *a vain show*, we who *know* and love the truth have hopes which will not, cannot deceive.

SIR E. DENNY.