

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the **Word**, that ye may grow thereby.”—1 PETER ii. 2.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the **Word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed.”—ACTS xvii. 11, 12.

“The **Word** of the Lord endureth for ever.”—1 PETER i. 25.

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



AN OLD TEXT RE-EXAMINED.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.”—JOHN v. 24.

THERE are certain verses in the Bible that seem specially designed for the salvation of souls. To this end experience shows them to have been greatly blessed of God. They shine in the wide expanse of Scripture like the larger stars in the material heavens, which excite the admiration of the beholder by their magnitude and transplendent glow. High among these choice portions of the Word stands our text. Its divine truths have shed everlasting sunshine on many a soul that for years had been groping in the dark. From its ample store multitudes have been enriched, and travellers, not a few, to the shores of Eternity, sick and ready to die, have drunk at its flowing fountain and found life and health. The blind heard it, and they saw ; the lame, and they leaped for joy ; here the slave has found freedom, and the weary rest.

Let us separate its clauses that we may understand it the better.

1. "Verily, verily, I say unto you,
2. He that heareth My word,
3. And believeth on Him that sent Me,
4. Hath everlasting life,
5. And shall not come into condemnation ;
6. But is passed from death unto life."

The double "verily" at the very threshold engages our attention. It forbids our passing lightly over the words that follow. It invites us to weigh them well. We shall find it no will-o'-the-wisp luring us on to a morass, in the which we sink deeper and deeper every step we take. The ground beneath our feet is solid rock, firm as the everlasting hills, and more enduring than heaven and earth. These shall pass away, but My words, said the Saviour, shall not pass away.

We may with advantage emphasize the "I." "*Verily, verily, I say unto you.*" Ah! now we have reached the very fountain-head of truth. We are in the presence of the Son of God; for He is the "I." Would it not be well to close the ear to every other voice, to lay aside the commentators, and the learned doctors of divinity over whose pages we have been wont to pore, that we may the more intently listen to Him who deigns to address Himself to us—to you?

May we not also, without loss, forget for one brief moment the dear man who discourses to us so engagingly from the pulpit week by week, and set ourselves down at the feet of One who is greater than he? It is no slight on the servant to bid him kindly be quiet while his Master speaks; for the Master has much to say, and His words are full of meaning, though they are not many nor hard to understand.

2. "*He that heareth My word.*" Here a question naturally suggests itself. What is it to hear His word? If hearing with the outward ear is meant, then we are outside the scope of this text; for it is not possible that any should hear Him thus. Then are we permitted to look upon its crystal streams, but not to taste—to view with wistful eyes its amply-furnished board, while a barrier we cannot pass places the dainty morsels beyond our reach. But it is not to be interpreted so. The feast is for those who have an ear to hear, no matter what the day in which they live. Moreover, numbers heard Him when on earth, and profited nothing by what they heard. The seed was good, but it fell on barren soil. There are numbers still who hear His word, and read it for themselves, to whom it is no more than an oft-told tale. Hearing His word in the sense of our text goes deeper. It means the reception of His word into the heart; it means the inward man bowing to it, though at first the force and

fulness of the word be but dimly seen. Do any question this? We cite in support of our contention two examples. When the Lord spake of His having come down from heaven, and of men eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man as the only means of life, many murmured, and said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John vi. 60.) To such a tenet they were not disposed to subscribe. As a teacher of a higher morality, they were content to be enrolled among His followers; but, like men in these modern days, they would not have *the Deity of the Son of man* nor "*the doctrine of the blood*" at any price. It was too hard for them to hear; and they "went back, and walked no more with Him." They were not of those that heard His word. Pained by their defection, He asks of the others, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (v. 68.) Small may have been the measure of his intelligence, and the meaning of much the Saviour said had to be made good in later days in Simon Peter's soul; but His word was no stumbling-stone to him, no rock of offence. Peter heard His word. To him it was meat and drink. Such we take to be the meaning of our second clause.

3. "*And believeth on Him that sent Me.*" We were speaking to a man of some education and

culture as to how he spent the Lord's-day, and he told us he liked to walk abroad and gaze upon the fair face of nature, and rise from nature unto nature's God. We have our own private opinion about that sort of talk; but the reader will recollect that the Lord does not speak of our believing on God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. It is easy to believe in a Supreme Being, whose mighty hand fashioned the vast universe, with its myriads of wonders in earth and sky; but God might be known in that way, and yet the soul be lost. The Lord says, "*Him that sent Me,*" and those four words bring God before us as the sender of the Saviour, the One who gave His only begotten Son that sinners might be saved. Do you, reader, know God in that connection? Has that marvellous display of divine love thrown its mysterious spell around your heart, and led it captive? For it was love, and naught but love, that prompted a gift so great. You, perhaps, have been trying to love God, hoping thereby to win His favour. You have not realized that it was God who loved us, that He loved us when we were very far from Him, and sent His Son that we might be delivered from coming wrath. Yes, it is God, as the giver of His only begotten Son, that the Saviour here speaks of. Is God before your soul in that character?

Who can describe the blessedness of knowing

that "God is love"? There are times when some may be inclined in doubtful tones to say, Can it be? and they seek an answer in what has happened to themselves. It may be that some darling object has been taken from your bosom and laid in the quiet grave, and you ask, amid blinding tears, Can God be love?—if so, why did He come into my garden and pluck the fairest flower that ever blossomed there? But God is love in spite of that. These mysteries of sorrow we may not fathom now; they shall be fathomed by-and-by. Hie you away to Calvary, and stand before that cross, and your doubts shall be resolved. Gaze upon Jesus there. Muse upon His sufferings. Think of Him as forsaken of God, wounded, bruised, and stricken by more than mortal hand; and as you ask in growing wonder, Why is this? a voice shall break upon your ear, saying, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 9, 10.) What a comment on the words of our text, "*Him that sent Me*"!

4. "*Hath everlasting life.*" Notice particularly the word "*hath.*" Is there a simpler word in the English tongue? And this is no promise, but

the statement of a fact. "He that heareth . . . and believeth . . . *hath* everlasting life." This life is communicated to the believer now; and so really is this the case, that again and again in the sacred Scriptures are we assured of this blessed fact in terms of extreme plainness. It will be evident to the reader that we are not now speaking of eternal life as that state of endless joy into which the redeemed shall enter in God's due time, and in hope of which the believer pursues his pilgrim path. Nor do we speak of it as that to which every Christian is called—a life of holy fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, a life which has its dawn in the knowledge of God as thus revealed. But we speak of eternal life imparted to the feeblest believer from the very moment that he first heard the word of the Son of God and believed on Him who sent the Son, the Saviour of the world. To such a one God has given eternal life, given it in inalienable possession, so that it is his for ever, a life applied to his soul now, as it will be to his body in that hour when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. (2 Cor. v. 4.) But eternal life, although possessed by us, is not in us as if its source and spring were found in the creature that enjoyed it. We have it, but not independently of the One from whom it comes. Therefore it is said that "this life is in His Son." He is the source of it, even as the first man Adam was the

source of our natural life. But that life is ours. "He that heareth . . . and believeth . . . *hath*." So runs our text; and with this agree the words in John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life;" as also the testimony of the Lord in John vi. 47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life." And lest any should be shaken in their mind as to this, the apostle John was led to write his first epistle, that those to whom he wrote might know that they had eternal life. He wrote, not indeed that they might learn for the first time that eternal life was theirs, for surely in the gospel which they had received they were apprised of that momentous fact; but he wrote so that if any called this truth in question they might know, on apostolic authority, that it was no cunningly devised fable they had embraced. (1 John v. 9-13.) Let us then clearly understand and stedfastly maintain the truth of a new life having been given to the believer, shared by all alike. Let us rejoice "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son *hath* life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

Nor let the unestablished soul turn the eye within to search for evidence of eternal life being there. We warn you against such work; for were you to conclude that you had everlasting life, because of what you found within, your

conclusion would be based on shifting sand. Which is worthier of your confidence—God, or your changeable feelings and chequered experiences? “He that heareth . . . and believeth . . . *hath.*” Rest upon that word. You find it in your Bible to-day, and you will find it there to-morrow.

5. “*And shall not come into condemnation*” (*judgment*). Judgment is a very solemn matter. When Paul reasoned about it Felix trembled; and no marvel, for who shall justify himself before God’s holy throne? None, as we surely know. Yet it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. Evenly will Justice hold the scales in that woeful day, while the judgment of the court will be final, and from its decision there will be no appeal. Who but the foolish ever dreams of being able to argue his case, so as to secure an acquittal at the hand of the Supreme Judge? You, if you stand there, will be covered with confusion, though on earth you seemed to be one of the best of men. But in the clause of our text, with which we are now dealing, the Lord tells us that “he that heareth . . . and believeth . . . shall not come into judgment.” Never shall he stand upon his trial, never appear as a prisoner in the dock. And if there be no judgment for him, there can be no condemnation; for how shall a man be condemned by a court, before whom he has never been

summoned to appear? The Lord's words are conclusive, "*Shall not come into judgment.*" Elsewhere the cause of this exemption is declared. It is found in the fact that the blood of Jesus has been shed, and that in virtue of the blood God justifies the believer. Now, if you will reflect, it will be manifest that when God justifies anyone He cannot and will not judge him. God will never be the Justifier and Judge of the same individual, and the Saviour will never call into judgment those whose sins He has already borne, and to atone for which He suffered and died upon the cross. What rest of conscience it gives to know this, and to know it on the authority of God's own word; yea, of God Himself!

The judgment of the believer's person, and the judgment of his works, are different matters. It is of the former we have spoken, and of the latter scripture also speaks. These shall have their recompense in the day of Christ. Solemn but encouraging truth. How powerfully the apostle Paul was affected by it may be seen in 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. But this hardly comes within our present subject, and we therefore refrain from further enlargement.

6. "*But is passed from death unto life.*" "Death"! Such is the state in which men are—dead in trespasses and sins. Appalling condition, out of which the Son of God calls those that hear and believe. To this consent the words in verse

25, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." We are called unto life and liberty. For not only life, but life "more abundantly," is the portion of the believer now, since Jesus died and rose again. Quickened by divine power, quickened together with Christ, life in all the blessed liberty that redemption brings, life in resurrection power and character, now belongs to him.

Thus we have seen that everlasting life, freedom from judgment, and a passing out of a condition of death into one of life, appertains to him who believes in Jesus. What a heritage! May we be simple in the reception of the truth, and we shall find that when mixed with faith it will be a constant source of joy and peace.

And if any would search further into these wondrous things, we add (1) that eternal life, as the present possession of the believer, is unfolded specially in the first epistle of John. (2) The believer's deliverance from judgment is largely dwelt on in Paul's epistle to the Romans. (3) Our passing from death unto life is more particularly developed in the epistle to the Ephesians.

May reader and writer be led into more perfect acquaintance with, and deeper enjoyment of, these great Christian truths.

WORDS FOR THE ANXIOUS.

NUMBERS xxi. 5-9 ; JOHN iii. 14, 15.

THE bitten Israelite lay dying in the dust. His flesh is swollen ; his skin turned black ; his tongue parched with thirst ; life fast ebbing from him. Suddenly the cry is heard, "Look and live." "Where?" he asks, "where?" They point him to the brazen serpent as it glitters in the sunlight, and say, "There!" In an instant his fading sight is turned toward it, and with a rush the warm, healthy life-blood mantles to his cheek, the poison vanishes he knows not where, and to his feet he springs, rescued from the very jaws of death. So is it with the lost soul who looks to Christ—salvation comes to him in the look. The bitten Israelite could not possibly help himself ; every moment the poison spread further, and death came nearer. The physician could not heal him ; no medicine, no burning, no amputation could arrest its terrible progress, or keep back the approach of death. God alone could help him ; and God *did* help him, and by this typical serpent save him. I suppose you, dear reader, to be one who has not yet been saved. You need the pardon of your sins—eternal life ; in fact, everything. Like the dying Israelite, you are utterly unable to save yourself ; and therefore,

just because of this utter helplessness, this extremity of misery and woe, God points you to Christ on the cross as His eternal satisfaction for sin; and knowing all your need, He says, "Behold the Lamb of God! LOOK UNTO HIM AND LIVE." Complete healing came to the Israelite from looking to the serpent; infinite *salvation* will come to you from looking to Christ. The Scripture says, "Without shedding of blood is *no remission*" (Hebrews ix. 22); and the blood which alone remits is the *blood of Christ*. Here then, on the cross, Christ bore to the full all the sins of those who had believed, or should in after ages believe, on Him. Here, too, on this same cross, for their healing was He wounded. Isaiah sums it all up in two sublime verses: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath *laid on Him* the iniquity of us all." It was therefore God who laid our sins on Christ, and burdened Him with the weight of our iniquities. In verse 5 we have given us the reason of Christ's death on the cross: "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with *His stripes we are healed*." (Isaiah liii. 5, 6.) It is not therefore faith *in yourself*, faith in your resolutions of amendment, faith in any effort you may make, but faith in Christ, in His work, in His word. God will not save you for what *you*

are, but for what *Christ* is; and therefore the Holy Spirit asks you to look with faith to Christ, and with the whole heart believe that on the cross Christ tasted death *for you*. And when, dear reader, you do so look, you will be eternally saved.

I sometimes wonder how people can entertain doubts as to the ability of Christ to save them. It is like a man coming to a dead halt before London Bridge. Hundreds of heavy waggons, laden with merchandise, beside carriages and foot passengers, are hurrying over, as they have for years gone by, and yet he stands afraid to trust himself upon the bridge. The policeman asks him to "move on," but he still hesitates, and tells him he fears the bridge will not bear him. "The man is mad," mutters the policeman, and leaves him to himself. And can *you* doubt the power of Christ's death to save *you*? Has not that blood saved Paul, the chiefest of sinners? Has it not washed away the sins of all God's people? Has it not obtained peace for all God's believing people? and have not all their sins been fully borne by Him? And are *you* afraid to cast your weary heart, laden though it be with sins, upon Him, and believe that *now* His mighty sacrifice avails for your instantaneous salvation? Have you discovered faults in Him whom God has pronounced faultless? or does not that satisfy *you* which satisfied God? No, dear reader,

hesitate not. Do not look into the *future*, and sadly hope that in some as yet unreached time God will make with you a treaty of peace, but, standing before the sacrifice of the death of Christ, believe that *here* thy soul finds life; that here Christ, by His death, has *for ever put away thy sins*.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as *scarlet*, they shall be as *white as snow*; though they be *red like crimson*, they shall be as *wool*.” (Isaiah i. 18.)

Adapted.

A CRY FROM INDIA.

WE have just received the subjoined from a beloved brother in India, with an earnest request that we should make room for it in the pages of this magazine. We gladly do so, in the fervent hope that it may enlist the prayers of the Lord's people, and also catch the eye and speak to the heart of some whom the Lord would have go and labour for Him in those wide and ripe fields. Brethren, time is short. The years of our life on earth will soon be spent, and the golden opportunities of service for our absent Lord be gone to return no more. Shall India with its teeming millions stretch out her hands in vain? Shall we be deaf to her cry? Oh that the Lord of the harvest would from our very midst

raise up devoted men, who for His name's sake shall go forth to the dark places of the earth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ!

“AMBALA,

“November 12th, 1888.

“Some of us in this far-off land were much cheered with the article entitled, ‘*Among the Heathen*,’ which appeared in number fifty-eight of *Simple Testimony*. Our hearts have often been saddened because the brethren in England and other favoured lands have apparently so little thought for the heathen, and for the Christians in heathendom.

“In the sects it is just the reverse; there the interest in missions is very great, and however much they fail in other points, surely in this they have the mind of the Lord. We profess to believe that what the Lord is doing now is to gather a church out of all nations to be the body and bride of Christ. How then can we exclude two-thirds of the nations from the Church, and say that the Lord's time has not come? Are we not in this way acting just as the Jews of old, who said, ‘The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built’?

“It is doubtless true that brethren have their special testimony towards Christendom; it is also doubtless true that there is a wondrous day to come for heathendom at the appearing of Jesus Christ; nevertheless it is equally true that God is opening up hitherto inaccessible countries in all parts of the world, sending out His ambassadors, and gathering in souls out of all nations to form part of the body of Christ. Sad indeed will it be if those who have the greatest light sit with folded hands in apathy

while the Lord is thus working. A mighty work is being done, and heathendom is being stirred to its depths; for God is doing great things in anticipation of the advent of Christ His Son. It is easy to point out that the gospel being preached by the missionaries is defective in many points, and that the morality and knowledge of the converts is very low; but does not this point to the need of those better instructed in the truth coming forward to teach the truth committed to them? We hold a deeply responsible position, let us take care that we are not condemned by those who have far less light. On every side to the eye of faith the fields are white to harvest, and all that is needed is that labourers should enter in with faith and patient labour, and there shall be an abundant reward, though they may have to wait long for it.

“In this land of India from which I write a great upheaval is taking place; the old superstitions are being overthrown, and many are asking, ‘What is truth?’ though, alas! few are willing as yet to suffer for the truth. What a blessing it would be if those taught in the truth would come forward and make the truth known. Surely, when it is written, ‘Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest,’ we have the strongest of all pleas to be urgent on this behalf.

“May God grant that those who have the greatest light may awaken to their great responsibilities in this matter. If any are interested in India, and the work out here, I should be very glad to hear from them, and to afford any information I could. My address is,

“MAJOR JACOB, R.E.,

“*Ambala, North India.*”

THE PRAYERS OF HYPOCRITES AND HEATHENS.

MATTHEW vi. 5-13.

MATTHEW v.-vii. is the portion commonly called "the Sermon on the Mount." It was addressed by our Lord to His disciples in the presence of the multitudes. It was an exposition of the principles of the kingdom of heaven, although even then supposing the rejection of the King, and giving His followers a share in that rejection until the day when, in power, He shall be placed upon the throne of His glory. His disciples were viewed as His followers, the true remnant of an earthly people, placed in a certain relationship with God who is in heaven. The character of that God was made known by Him who alone could unfold it, for He alone fully knew it; and this character was to be reflected in His people to whom it was made known.

When the rejection of the King was fully consummated, the people demanding His crucifixion, and crying, "We have no king but Cæsar," God placed Him at His own right hand. "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." (Ps. cx.) This is His present position. The epistle to the Hebrews is founded upon the verse quoted.

While He is rejected, and seated, not upon His own throne, but upon the throne of God, a company is being taken out of the world, separated for Him, to be His associates in glory. What is the *full* character of that company the epistle does not declare (for, alas! those to whom it was written were "dull of hearing"); but it shows that even Hebrew believers were "partakers of the *heavenly* calling," the remnant of Israel was merged into the Church.

Briefly, then, believers at this present time are not an *earthly* people at all. Through the redemption which Christ has wrought we have a place in heavenly glory with Him. God has wrought us for this self-same thing, and given to us the earnest of the Spirit.

Yet, though not *an earthly people* in any sense, we are, for the time being, *a company upon earth*, and as such the principles found in this portion are of immense value to us. Let this, then, be clearly borne in mind in meditating upon these holy, precious words of our Lord. The *principles* are for our instruction, though the *details* may strictly apply only to an earthly people.

We now only touch the words of our Lord upon prayer. He warns against two dangers to which we are prone.

First, our prayers are not to be hypocritical. "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are." What is a hypocrite? The

word originally meant simply a stage-player—a man who acted a part. This is the word which our Lord used so frequently in speaking of the religious people of that day, for they were men who played this part before the eyes of others, but their hearts were far from God. So He says of their prayers, “They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, *that they may be seen of men.*” He would not therefore that we should pray after this manner. He presses upon us the fact that we have to do *with God* in prayer. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.” There no eye beholds us but His, and our eye is upon none but Him. We cannot dissemble in our hearts (Jer. xlii. 20) when we are thus consciously alone with Him. In His presence we are searched and tested, all our motives and secret springs are laid bare, everything comes out before Him.

Our Lord’s words do not exclude prayer with others, nor prayer in the assembly. We have instances of both in Scripture. When the Ephesian elders were at Miletus with Paul (Acts xx.), he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And similarly Paul’s company, when at Tyre, with the disciples and their wives and children, kneeled down on the shore and prayed. When Peter was imprisoned, “prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” (Acts xii.)

But even into public prayer must be carried the important principle of our Lord's words. Every one must own how deeply important it is that we realize that we pray *to God*. The sense of the presence of others is retained as realizing our fellowship, which they express by their "Amen." (1 Cor. xiv. 16.) At such a time we speak, not as individuals relating personal need, but as the mouthpiece of all the saints present, telling of collective needs, and those of God's saints and testimony at large. But we speak *to God* as surely as if we were alone in our closets, or otherwise our prayers are hypocritical. If a word be added to produce an effect upon others, or in the way of pretended eloquence that we may shine before others, we are hypocritical. Our prayer at such a moment is not prayer at all, but simply a pretence of prayer, carried on for the sake of those present. May the Lord in His goodness save us from hypocrisy in prayer, giving into our hearts the sense of the fact that we pray to God, and as before Him alone, who searches the hearts.

Secondly, our prayers are not to be heathenish. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, *as the heathen do.*" As He speaks to an earthly people, He makes mention of those who were outside their pale of privilege, in no acknowledged relationship with God. These were the heathen, or the nations outside Israel.

All understand the difference which exists

between a petition from *a son* to a father and one from a beggar who comes to the door in no sort of relationship. The former asks in simple confidence, knowing his father and his father's love—perfectly counting upon this, that whether his request be granted or not (that will be according to his father's wisdom) he has his father's ear and heart, who takes delight in having his son speaking to him. Not so the beggar. He approaches with the sense that he is an intruder, with down-cast looks and great appearance of sorrow. He unfolds his tale with abundance of words in a whining tone, if perchance he may move the heart to interest and pity. So was it with the heathen. "They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." What a precious incentive to simplicity and holy brevity! Standing in relationship with Him, His heart is fully engaged for us, and He has indeed fully measured our need before the words are set in order upon our lips. Then why ask Him at all? some will say. Because He delights that His children should speak with Him, and hold sweet communion with Him even about their very needs. This very communion with Him fits us morally for receiving the things which we ask, if they are given of His goodness. And the communion itself is sweeter than the mere reception of the things which He gives.

There may be importunity (as in Luke xi. 5-8), or there may be the saying of the same words, as it is related of our Lord Himself (Matt. xxvi. 44), who was ever divinely perfect. The heart, when sorely pressed with need, may tarry long in the presence of God, passing through deepest anguish; yet, even in the greatest exercise, what sustains the soul is the fact that He loves us, and knows all our sorrow and need.

These, therefore, are the two great principles pressed upon us with regard to prayer. First, that God alone be before us, that by the sense of His presence we be delivered from hypocrisy; second, that we speak with childlike simplicity to Him as standing in relationship with Him, and knowing His perfect love for us, and His interest in our smallest matters.

How beautifully these principles are embodied in the perfect model of prayer which follows (9-13) we cannot now point out, but we commend it to the careful consideration of our readers. As forming part of a heavenly company, sealed with the Holy Ghost, we may not use the words as "a form of prayer," but we should certainly learn much from these precious words of our Lord, which have been stored up for us by the Holy Ghost.

May our God stir up our hearts to increased prayerfulness, and that in a way which shall be acceptable to Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

J. R.

NEW YEAR, 1889.

“Satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord.”

DEUT. xxxiii. 23.

LORD, hast Thou left us this New Year
One wish ungratified ?

What need have they of earthly cheer
Whom Thou hast satisfied ?

What has this dying world to give
To those whom Thou hast blest ?

'T is in Thy presence, Lord, we live,
And on Thy love we rest.

But as the New Year dawns we pray,
Lord, keep us close to Thee !

May this year find us day by day
More in Thy company.

Less occupied with earthly care,
More hungry for Thy Word,
More cast upon Thyself in prayer,
More waiting on Thee, Lord.

And should we tread the wilderness
E'en yet a little while,
Keep us abiding in Thy grace,
And happy in Thy smile.

And watching for Thy coming, Lord,
More eager day by day
To hear the glad triumphant word
That snatches us away.

When we shall be with Thee for aye,
Thy precious blood-bought Bride,
With Thee in that eternal day,
And fully satisfied.

H. M. N.

“I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.”

PSALM xvii. 15.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. D. B. (Acts xxii. 16.)—Eternal forgiveness—that forgiveness which shall never be revoked—is not the result of submission to an ordinance. It is the gracious act of God alone who, in virtue of the blood of Christ shed once for all on Calvary, forgives all who believe in the Saviour's name. The testimony of Peter in Acts x. 43, and of Paul in Acts xiii. 38, 39, is conclusive as to this. Still the words remain about which you write: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," and, What do those words mean? Bear in mind that Saul had been a bitter persecutor of the saints, and a blasphemer of the holy name of the Lord Jesus. Outwardly he was a man of blameless life, religious, and exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers; but combined with all this there was the intensest hatred to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. On the way to Damascus, the One whom he so detested shined into his heart, and in His ineffable grace made Himself known to Saul. Who shall tell us all that Saul went through during those three days in which he was sightless, and neither ate nor drank? But though thus brought to know Jesus, and own Him in his heart as Lord, yet he had not formally abandoned his previous associations, and identified himself with those who called upon that once hated but now infinitely precious Name. Ananias is therefore sent unto him, and he exhorts him not to tarry, but arise, and be baptized, and thus wash away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. To his former place all his sins were attached; but in leaving it, and entering by baptism into the circle where the name of the Lord was owned, he would publicly wash away his

sins by definitely quitting the place to which his sins were bound. *This was particularly so with Jewish converts* (see Acts ii. 38), and Saul, as we know, was "a Jew, born in Tarsus." So, while it is true that nothing but the blood of Jesus could wash Saul from his sins as before God, yet here upon earth they were in an outward manner washed away by his openly separating himself from the Jews who had crucified the Lord of glory, and coming into that sphere where the name of the Nazarene was acknowledged and honoured; and this was by baptism as the divinely-appointed way.

As regards your second question, the connection you suggest between 1 Peter iii. 21 and Acts ii. 40, is worthy of thought, and sheds light on a passage the meaning of which is to some minds somewhat obscure.

G. S.—It is not possible for any soul whom God has quickened and called out of a state of death in trespasses and sins ever to relapse into that state and be lost. Where such an idea is held, it is certain that "eternal redemption" is not known as it is set forth in the Scriptures, nor "eternal life" in the Son, now communicated to the believer, and possessed by him. The Galatians (to whom you refer), as many of them as listened to those that preached Moses and circumcision, did not by so doing fall back into an unconverted state, but they fell away from grace, as is stated in Galatians v. 4. Alas! numbers who are divinely quickened have never known the meaning of those words in Romans vi. 14, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace," and hence they can hardly be said to have fallen from grace. But these Galatians had known something of Christian liberty, in the which Paul entreats them to stand fast. They were in danger of being entangled in the legal yoke of bondage, and Paul solemnly shows them that Christ and circumcision can no more go together than can

grace and law. The one entirely sets aside the other. No doubt the Galatians did not see as clearly as Paul did all that was involved in what they were doing, and we can but hope that his epistle wrought deliverance from the peril in which they stood. But for any one to suppose that falling from grace means falling from Christ, and so being lost, is strong evidence that his own soul needs to be established in the grace of God, and in the blessed and eternal effects of the atoning work of Christ upon the cross. Please look at Romans iii. 24 down to chapter iv. 8.

Referring to the remaining part of your letter, we certainly hold that where divine life is given there fruit will be found. The seed that fell into good ground brought forth fruit, though not in the same full measure in every case—some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred-fold. It is impossible that “the life of Jesus” should be in any soul without its ever being manifested. And what is fruitbearing, we may ask, but the showing forth in our mortal body “the life of Jesus” which has been graciously communicated to the believer in Him?

J. E. (Mark viii. 36, 37.)—Ought we not in considering these verses to take in the scope of the whole passage from verse 31 to the end of the chapter? The Lord begins to show the disciples the path that lay before Him—a path of rejection, suffering, and death at the hands of men. Peter, sincere though he was, sought in his foolishness to turn the Saviour from a path like that, and drew upon himself the Saviour’s censure. Then the Lord called the people unto Him with His disciples, and said to them all, that if any would go where He was going, they must follow the same road. They must first deny themselves, and then, if the will of God be so, be ready to suffer, and to lose their life for the Lord’s sake. Great should be their reward afterwards in the day of His glory. If any shrank from this, and should seek to save

their life here, would they be really gainers? No; for were a man to sweep the whole world into his net, and claim it as his own, what would it profit him in the long run? To lose one's soul is to lose everything of lasting worth, and having lost it, how shall a man buy it back, and redeem it from the ruin into which his own act has plunged it? What ransom will he give? Let us then face seriously what the Lord sets before us, and take heed lest, being ashamed of Him and His *words* in this evil day, He should be ashamed of us when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. There is no question here of a truly saved soul being lost. To introduce such a matter is to mar the force of the passage altogether. Other parts of God's word deal with that point. The truth the Lord here utters applies to whomsoever it does apply, nor should any seek to escape its searching power.

J. E. T. (2 Corinthians ii. 14-16.)—There is an evident allusion here to the triumphal procession which in the iron days of Rome was accorded to victorious generals. Many of the most notable captives taken in the war were chained to his chariot, some to be pardoned, and others doomed to die. Paul regarded himself as a captive, led about by God to swell His triumph over His foes. On such occasions incense was burned to the gods, the fragrance of which filled the air, and Paul by a change of metaphor now speaks of himself as an incense-bearer. But the incense that Paul burned, so to speak, was the gospel pure and unadulterated. Now the great subject of the gospel was Christ, and whatever the effect of his ministry, whether men were saved by it, or did it involve in greater condemnation those that perished, it was always unto God a sweet savour of Christ. Such was the preaching of the apostle, and such is the ministry of those who can in truth say, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

MEETNESS FOR HEAVEN.

“Giving thanks unto the Father, WHO HATH MADE US MEET to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

COL. i. 12.

THERE is an idea current, almost everywhere, that the Christian is being gradually made fit for heaven much as grapes ripen on the vine branches. This ripening process, it is thought, begins with conversion, goes on under the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and when perfected the believer is ready for glory, whenever it may please God to call him away.

Of course, it is not denied that the blood of Jesus has been shed for his sins, and that he has possibly received remission of them; but meetness for the heavenly land is connected in their mind rather with the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer, than with the work of Christ on the cross for him.

But let the reader cast his eye on the passage quoted at the top of this page, and let him notice particularly the five words printed in the larger type. It is not said that God is making us meet, or that He will make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, but that He has already done so. Is not that how the text runs? And do not the words declare an already accomplished fact? “Who *hath* made us meet.”

Of whom, however, is this said? Of certain saints at Colosse, who excelled in piety, good works, and devotedness to Christ? Nay, but of all the saints in that city without exception, and of all the saints since. You will observe that the epistle is addressed to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse (*v.* 2), and these are the persons who are made meet.

If you say, "But I, the reader of these lines, am not a saint, and I should be sorry to set myself up for one." What are you then? Search and see, and you will find in the epistles of the New Testament that this name is given to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you deny that you are a saint, you deny that you are a believer in Him; and what, therefore, can you be, if not a saint, but a sinner ripe for judgment? Your idea possibly has been that saintship is a great attainment, only reached by a few very holy persons. You are wrong there. But we are turning aside from our main subject; let us go back to it.

What lends support to the thought of meetness for heaven being a thing of gradual growth is the fact that those who think thus find themselves so imperfect, as who indeed is not? They *would* do good, but evil is present with them. They complain that their love lacks fervour, and their zeal in God's service consistency and strength, while their thoughts so often get entangled with

worldly things instead of being firmly set on things above. Believing that meetness for heaven involves the reversal of all this, they look for it to be brought about by the Holy Spirit helping them to subdue the evil of their nature, and by His gradually sanctifying it even as a little leaven leavens in time the whole lump into which it is thrust. This seems very good on the face of it; but, alas! when sincerely and earnestly believed it tends either to delude the soul or to sink it in distress bordering on despair. Such thoughts, wrong as they surely are, would not be entertained did they but see that the nature they were born with is never to become better, that it is no part of God's purpose to make it better, but that He gives to the believer another life, ever distinct from the former, though the old be not taken away, a life that associates the receiver of it with Christ in glory. In many cases these important truths have not been set before them, nor have they observed them in their own private reading of the Word. Hence they connect meetness for heaven with their shifting state, and anxiously expect the Holy Spirit to produce within them that fitness which our text declares to be theirs already, if forgiven and born of God.

If you would have abiding peace, be careful not to confound the operations of the Spirit of God with that mighty work of redemption which Scripture everywhere ascribes to the blood of

Christ. How could anything wrought in the soul, even by the Spirit of God, be an answer at God's bar for your misdeeds, your offences against His holiness? Important to the last degree as is the work of the Holy Spirit, yet we must not attribute to that work the settlement of every question relating to our sins. The praise of that belongs to the atoning and finished work of the Lord Jesus upon the cross. The work of the Holy Spirit *in us* cannot be spoken of as finished; whereas the atoning work of Christ *for us* is finished, and nothing remains to be done; for everything divine justice required ere God could justly justify any was rendered there by Him. Full satisfaction was made, and God in His holiness and righteousness greatly glorified. Therefore all who believe in Him not only receive eternal life, but remission of sins, and are justified from all things, not for a brief space, but for ever. Without this, it is needless to say, there could be no meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Is it your complaint, that you do not *feel* your sins forgiven? We do not wonder at it, and for your consolation we may add, that you never will. It is a matter that comes not within the sphere of feeling. What a poor up and down sort of thing it would be, had we to determine by the state of our feelings whether or not we were forgiven. Nothing more changeable, nothing less

worthy of trust. "The word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," speaks with no uncertain voice. Its testimony is simple, bright, and clear. Listen to this—"Be it known unto you . . . that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Could you have or wish for anything plainer?

Suffer your thoughts to rest on two things, the perfect work of Christ on the cross, where He bare our sins and made atonement for them, and the faithful word of God, whereby He assures you that all who believe are justified from all things. Can your feelings add to the value of the one, or to the trustworthiness of the other? Were they always at high-tide, would the blood of Jesus be more precious to God, or His word more sure? If you were in abject poverty, and someone gave you a sovereign, would the gladness that might fill your heart increase the purchasing power of that piece of gold? Would it buy you more loaves of bread and ounces of tea?

Ah! it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul (Lev. xvii. 11); it is the blood that cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7); it is the blood that was shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. xxvi. 28); it is the blood that redeems (Rev. v. 9); it is the blood that has made peace

(Col. i. 20); it is the blood that justifies (Rom. v. 9); it is the blood that makes us nigh to God. (Eph. ii. 13.)

“Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary,
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for *me*.”

The feeblest believer is sheltered by that blood, like Israel in Egypt on the solemn night of the passover (Exodus xii.); sheltered as Rahab was when the scarlet line hung at her window (Joshua ii. 18, 21); sheltered as Abiather was when David said to him, “Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.” (1 Sam. xxii. 23.)

There is no growth in our meetness for heaven; growth in other ways there is, but not in that. If the penitent thief could have come down from the cross and spent long years in service for Christ, would he at the end have been more fit for glory than at the moment when the Saviour said to him, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise”? If we are before God and the Father in the full value of Christ’s finished work, and in all the acceptableness of Christ Himself, can any love or service on our part contribute aught to what is already perfect and complete? Can you make snow whiter than it is? Do men gild gold, or paint the lily?

Look up and behold Christ in the glory of God.

There can be no doubt as to *His* fitness to be there. See Him on the throne. He is heaven's joy! He is God's beloved One! As you think of Him there, let the words of the Holy Spirit in 1 John iv. 17 come into your mind: "As He is, so are we in this world." Remember also Hebrews ii. 11: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of *one*;" and 1 Cor. xv. 48: "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." These words tell us of the believer's oneness with Christ in life, nature, and standing. "*As He is, so are we in this world.*" If this be so, can there be any advancement on that? Can you have a better robe than the best? Can you stand in higher favour than He? or be loved with greater love?

This does not exclude growth in other ways, as we have said. A child grows in his father's house, grows in stature, in intelligence, and in capacity to understand a thousand things once beyond his comprehension. But the relationships into which he was born do not grow with his growth; they remain as they ever were, being perfect at the very beginning. So with the Christian; he grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter iii. 18); he drinks in the sincere milk of the Word that he may grow thereby (1 Peter ii. 2); he grows in moral likeness to Christ, whose glory he beholds. (2 Cor. iv. 18.) As the seed grows

when sown in the earth—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear—so the believer grows. With all this the ministry of the Holy Spirit connects itself. But meetness for heaven is the result of redemption, and this is by the blood of Christ, the full worth of which is credited by God to every believing soul.

What perplexes many, as we have sought to show, is the continued presence of inward evil. How can they be fit for heaven with so much sin in them? How can they be as Christ is, seeing that in Him is no sin? But what we are in ourselves is one thing, and what we are when viewed as “in Christ,” and in those new and eternal relationships in which God in His grace has set us, is quite another. “Ye are complete *in Him*,” saith the Scripture (Col. ii. 10), but that does not mean complete in ourselves. The corrupt nature inherited from Adam is neither changed nor taken away when a man is saved, and though he receives a new nature, as born of God, the old remains. In his old Adam-standing, however, he is not; for he has died with Christ (Col. ii. 20), and has been buried with Him, and in God’s reckoning there is an end of him and of all his responsibilities as a child of Adam. His history, as of Adam, is thus closed in the death and grave of Christ. But if he is not in Adam, in whom then is he? He is *in Christ*. See how simply this is set forth in Col. ii. 13: “And you, being dead in your sins

and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Looked at as dead in sins, God, in the exercise of His sovereign grace, has quickened him together with Christ, and, moreover, God gives to the believer His Holy Spirit, without Whom he could not consciously be in this new place which Scripture affirms to be his.

What a portion is the Christian's! All trespasses forgiven, cleansed in the blood of Christ, complete in Him, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, sharing the life, nearness, and acceptance of Him in whom he stands, the Father known, himself made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and sealed with the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption, the Spirit being the earnest of what he shall inherit when glorified together with Christ in the day of Christ's glory. All this, and more, is the gift of grace, not of works, lest any man should boast, and is true of every soul who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, though he may have but feebly apprehended how richly he is blessed. It is no question of attainment, or experience, in which one might excel another. Christianity brings these great blessings, and bestows them alike on all who believe that the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of their sins, be they babes, young men, or fathers in the family of God.

IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER ?

SOME will answer, "Yes;" and others, "No." The question is one of the deepest moment. A right estimate of the world's present state intimately concerns us all. Human testimony is uncertain. Where then shall we turn? The reply is simple: *To the Word of God*. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." What then saith the Scripture?

Now there are three classes of persons upon the earth—the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God (1 Cor. x. 32)—and to find out whether the world is getting better, we must refer to passages of the Word which speak of all three.

Firstly, then, with regard to the Jew. In Acts vii. 51–53 the Lord's faithful servant and martyr charges their nation with four great sins—the breaking of the holy law of God, the persecution and slaughter of the prophets, the betrayal and murder of the just One, and the resistance of the Holy Ghost. Instead of repenting at his rebuke, they killed the one who bore the testimony, and not long after the awful judgment of God fell upon them. The mass were destroyed (Luke xxi. 20–24), and the rest scattered, to become a byword, a proverb, a hissing, and a reproach among the nations. (Deut. xxviii. 37.) And the

apostle saith, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part* is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,*" &c. (Romans xi. 25.) This blindness, as the text shows, will continue until the end of the period of the special dealings of God with the Gentiles on the earth—the commencement of the thousand years' reign of Christ.

But far worse is yet in store. Space will not permit us to advance all the numerous passages which treat of their moral state at the end of the present age. A few verses must suffice to give the reader an idea of their fearful condition just preceding the judgments of God. Jesus said, in John v. 43, "Another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." He spake of the antichrist yet to come. In 2 Thess. ii. we find this wicked one in the midst of the ancient people of God, actually seated in the temple of God, built anew in Jerusalem, showing himself that he is God. In Daniel xi. 36 he is presented as the king, doing according to his own will, magnifying himself above all, and upholding the grossest idolatry. Rev. xiii. 11–18 confirms it.

* "Blindness in part," because there is *a remnant* who are saved *now*, and brought into the blessings of Christianity (Acts ii. 39); and also both a spared (Zech. xiii. 9) and a martyred remnant (Rev. vi. 9–11; xx. 4) in the midst of coming judgments. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Romans xi. 7.)

And in Luke xi. 24 we have the Lord's solemn testimony, "When the unclean spirit [idolatry] is gone out of a man [figure of the Jewish nation], he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

These Scriptures clearly show that the condition of the Jews does not improve, but that the mass are now, and remain to the end, *a blinded people*, who will continue in their incredulity until they accept the man of sin, and become openly idolatrous, bringing down upon themselves again the awful judgments of God. But it is blessed to bear in mind that *after that*, ungodliness shall be turned away from Jacob, and that those who are spared of the tribes of Israel *at that day* shall be brought into blessing upon the earth during the succeeding thousand years' reign of Christ. (Rom. xi. 26; Rev. vii. 1-8.)

Secondly, as to the Gentiles. The Gentile world, represented by Pontius Pilate, together with the Jews crucified the Lord of glory. And in Romans i. to iii. we get an awful picture of the moral state of the world at large, ending with the solemn words, "We have before proved, both Jews

and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, as it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God," &c. (Rom. iii. 10, 11.) The result is that all the world are guilty before (or subject to the judgment of) God. (Rom. iii. 19.)

Now we know that through grace there was a mighty work of the Spirit of God at Pentecost and in the midst of the Gentiles afterwards. But looking for the moment outside the sphere of the Christianized Gentiles, what do we find? What is the moral and religious state of the nations that we call heathen? Are there not hundreds of thousands in India, China, Africa, and other parts to-day who are living without the knowledge of the true God (though His eternal power and Godhead should be understood by creation, so that they are without excuse—Rom. i. 18–25), and following all kinds of gross idolatry, oft accompanied with most revolting practices? The mass are walking (as Scripture testifies) to-day, as heretofore, "in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart," &c. (Eph. iv. 18.) "The whole world lieth in the wicked one." (1 John v. 19.)

Efforts are made, often earnest and noble, to bring in the light of truth among them, and doubtless through the mercy of God some are brought to Him. Education too, no doubt, has

morally raised many, but the heart of man un-renewed is ever a fountain of iniquity before God, and whether men are gross or refined, sin is ever sin, and the just judgment of God will surely do its solemn work, when this day of patient grace is over. And judgment after death is ever eternal in its *duration*, although its *severity* will be according to the privileges, light, &c., that men have enjoyed. (Luke xii. 47, 48, x. 10-14, xx. 46, 47; Rev. xx. 12, 13.) Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? We have many descriptions of the judgment that is at hand for the nations. (See Jer. xxv. 29-33; Joel iii. 11-16; Zech. xiv. 1-3; Rev. xvi. 14-21, &c.)

The Gentiles without God are ripening for judgment.

Thirdly, as to the Church of God. We have already remarked that through the work of the Spirit of God, commencing at Pentecost, there is a third class of persons on the earth—the Church of God. This company of sinners saved by grace is viewed in more than one way in Scripture. For example, as the body of Christ, and the house of God. As the body of Christ it is perfect, the work of God, and there can be no question as to the ultimate arrival in everlasting glory of all who form part of it. (Eph. v. 25-27.) But viewed as the house of God upon the earth, the responsibility of man comes in. And man wrecks everything he touches that is of God. Instead of everything being ordered

for the glory of God, Satan's power and man's self-will came in, and a vast profession sprang up, resulting in the state of things known as Christendom; a number of baptised nations with varied outward forms of religious worship, the mass of whom are in the unconverted state.

The corruption within this sphere at length became so great, that men themselves speak of the period when it was at its height as *the dark ages*. God wrought in the midst of it all in grace, and the Reformation took place. The word of God was recovered, which had been all but totally set aside by the traditions of men. This certainly for the moment was a better state of things. But, alas! what followed? In many countries the dawning light was shut out by persecution, fire, and sword, and though God never left Himself without a witness, Protestantism (so-called) lapsed into such a cold, formal state, that many rose up from time to time *to protest against it*.

Again, early in the present century a wondrous work of grace began, resulting in a wide diffusion of light and blessing, and a measure of response through grace to the same. But what is the spectacle to-day that meets the eye of the truly spiritual observer within the sphere of Christendom? On the one hand, the corruption of the Roman and Greek churches; on the other, a formal Protestantism, drifting either into Ritualism, or lapsing more and more into Laodicean lukewarmness, self-satisfaction, and indifference, and

a vast tide of infidelity rising more or less everywhere, threatening to overwhelm the existing state of things.

In the midst of all God continues to maintain His witnesses, both individual and collective, and His saints can praise Him for an open door and His preserving mercy; but it is surprising that any Christian can look abroad upon the scene, with an open Bible in his hand, and for a moment imagine that the world is getting better. Many follow their own thoughts, instead of God's. (Isaiah lv. 8, 9.) On all hands one meets with church and chapel building, instead of building up the body of Christ—church membership taking the place of membership of Christ. Education, good in itself, used to exalt the human intellect, and to question and set aside the word of God. Inventions of all kinds and the spread of civilization boasted of, and man made proud on account of his wisdom; whilst the One who gives the power for it is forgotten and robbed of His glory.

If the world is getting better, and the reign of peace to be brought about by the machinery of Christendom, what mean these vast armies of millions of men, armed to the teeth? these vast fleets, armed with every imaginable weapon of mutual destruction? What mean these vast prisons, and thousands of police? What mean these wars and rumours of wars? What mean these murders, suicides, riots, revolutions? The *world* getting better! The world that spat in the face

of the Son of God, and murdered Him ! Reader, follow not the imaginations of your own heart, but listen to the word of God. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that *in the latter times* some shall *depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," &c. (1 Tim. iv. 1.)

"This know also, that *in the last days* perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," &c. (2 Tim. iii. 1-5.)

"Evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Tim. iii. 13.)

"For *the time will come* when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall *turn away their ears from the truth*, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.)

Beloved reader, *the world is getting worse*. Christ is coming shortly for His own, and then shall follow the awful judgments detailed from Rev. vi. 19—the most awful that the world shall have ever seen. In 2 Thessalonians ii. we find that men, having refused the light of God's truth, will be *judicially blinded*. God shall send them strong delusion (or a working of error), that they should *believe a lie*, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. And in that day they will

worship the dragon [Satan], the beast, the anti-christ, and an image, &c. (Rev. xiii.) So that instead of the conversion of the world during the day of God's longsuffering and grace, and the worship of God in spirit and in truth, we find that the boasted progress of enlightened Christendom will end in *the worship of the devil!*

Then after that will the Son of man appear with His previously translated saints, Himself to judge the nations, and to establish the kingdom in righteousness and peace. But now, to-day, we have a vast falling away from God and truth, and the apostasy fast ripening for the judgment of God. *Be not deceived.* If you are not awake to the fact, it only shows the truth of the Word of God. Satan blinds men's minds, lest the light should shine in. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) "And men love darkness rather than light," &c. (John iii. 19.)

Yes, Jew, Gentile, and the nominal Church (or house) of God, are all ripening for judgment. Blessed be God, thousands in the midst of this state of things have been brought to a knowledge of Himself, and await His Son. Are you one? If so, may He give you and all believers to be exercised in heart and conscience, as to what is due to His name, that we may glorify Him the little while we remain on earth, by a faithful testimony to the name of His Son, in whole-hearted separation from all evil, doctrinal and practical, from everything that worketh abomination or maketh a lie.

E. H. C.

THE PATH OF FAITH.

“There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen: the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.”—JOB xxviii. 7, 8.

THERE is a path for faith, a path distinct and clear,¹ [near.²
And light is sown therein for those who would to Christ be
There, *nature* cannot walk; for nature walks by *sight*,
But *faith* must count on God alone; and Christ is there the Light.³

¹ John i. 43. ² John viii. 12. ³ Heb. x. 38; John viii. 12.

The vulture’s keenest gaze that path can never see:¹
No *power of nature* there can walk, or *strength of nature* be;²
For nature’s strength and pride may walk in paths below,
But he who walks the path of *faith* must *full dependence know*.³

¹ Job xxviii. 7. ² Job xxviii. 8. ³ 1 John ii. 6; Ps. xvi. 1.

That wondrous, blessed path the Lord Himself hath trod,¹
And every step He took was found well-pleasing unto God;²
He ever looked to Him the “path of life” to show,³
So perfect was His trust in God while walking here below.

¹ Ps. xvi.; Heb. xii. 2. ² John viii. 29; Luke iii. 22. ³ Ps. xvi. 11.

How sweet it is to know Christ is Himself the *way*,¹
And “*Follow Me*” His loving words to all who will obey!²
Christ is Himself the *power* to walk that blessed way;
Christ is the *path*, and Christ alone sufficient for the day.³

¹ John xiv. 6. ² John i. 43. ³ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

If we would follow Him, then *self* we must deny,¹ [lie;²
Accepting *suffering*, *shame* and *loss*, and *death* which there doth
For He who trod that path down here so perfectly
Has left His footprints all the way for *faith* alone to see.³

¹ Luke ix. 23. ² Luke ix. 24. ³ 2 Cor. v. 7.

How blest indeed are they who in this pathway tread,
Who count on God, and *God alone*, and by His hand are led!
From everything below, on Christ they fix their eyes—
The channel thro’ which God Himself their every need supplies.¹

¹ Phil. iv. 19.

From strength to strength they go; for Christ in glory there
Has filled the vision of their soul, whose image they shall bear:¹
They know His wondrous power is for them day by day,
And so they follow after Him whose footsteps mark the way.²

¹ Rom. viii. 29; Phil. iii. 21. ² Phil. iii. 12; 1 Peter ii. 21.

And soon He will descend to meet them in the air,¹ [there;
And then shall faith be changed to sight, when they behold Him
Then evermore with Him they’ll shine in glory bright, [white.”²
Blest “overcomers” who have gained from Him “the stone of

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. ² Rev. ii. 17.

“THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST.”

THE humiliation of the Son of God is a subject of the greatest interest, and one that is truly refreshing to the heart of the child of God. In it we witness His grace, shining along the whole way from the eternal throne down to the death of the cross. It was a wondrous pathway; each step leading Him lower, until the whole had been travelled, and the point reached, beyond which it was not possible for Him to go.

The Word says, Who “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor. viii. 9.) He was rich, but for our sakes He became poor. Wonderful statement! He was co-equal with God the Father, Jehovah’s fellow; Creator and Upholder of the universe, the eternal Word, one with the Father, yea, over all, God blessed for evermore, divinely and infinitely rich; yet, blessed be His name, “for our sakes He became poor.” Mark well the words, “For our sakes.” Of what priceless value they are. Oh that the power and reality of them might be felt in our hearts more and more!

What about ourselves? What were we? We were sinful, fallen creatures, guilty and condemned, lost, and away from God. Nothing

could exceed, out of hell, our miserable estate. God’s displeasure and wrath, our merited doom, a dark and terrible eternity before us, and no power of our own to save ourselves. “For our sakes He became poor.” From being infinitely rich, He became poor, subjected Himself to a poverty never known before. He emptied Himself, and lay a helpless babe in the manger in Bethlehem. From the throne of the Eternal, from the glory of heaven, to be born of the Virgin Mary—born in a stable: “And they wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.” (Luke ii. 7.)

And was not this glorious? Yes; but it was the glory of grace. It was “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Creatorial glory is His, glory as Lawgiver, glory as Judge of quick and dead; but here it is the glory of His humiliation to which He subjected Himself in order to possess the objects of His love, who lay in their misery and under just condemnation. None but a needy sinner can appreciate such glory.

The children whom God had given Him were partakers of flesh and blood, and “He also Himself likewise took part in the same.” They were under the sentence of death and condemnation; Satan’s lawful captives. He came “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Hebrews ii. 14, 15.)

Behold, then, this self-emptied One. He who

had become poor for our sakes, commencing His path on earth not in a palace, nor an inn, but a stable. "There was no room for them in the inn." In this poor world, with its boasted zeal for Jehovah, there was no room for God's own Son. An awfully cold reception they gave Him. That which set all heaven in motion, the incarnation of the eternal Word, passed unnoticed by this world, so far from the mind and heart of God were they.

Then all through life He had not where to lay His blessed head. The creatures of His hand were provided for by Himself, but the Son of man had not where to lay His head. (Luke ix. 58.)

He took the servant's form. Dependent upon, and obedient to His Father in heaven (for he had taken that place to do the will of God), and yet no creature was too vile for Him to serve. "I am among you as He that serveth," He could say to His poor disciples, who were striving among themselves who should be accounted the greatest. (Luke xxii. 27.)

Now let us turn our eyes to the cross; for that was the point toward which He hastened. "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." See where His love for us led Him. He "loved the church, and gave Himself for it." (Eph. v. 25.) The shame and spitting, the buffeting, the crown of thorn, His cruel and heartless condemnation, His crucifixion, the load of our guilt laid upon Him, God forsaking Him, and His being brought

down to the dust of death, all tell forth the greatness of His unresisting love, and set before our eyes the grace of that adorable One who voluntarily submitted to such an ordeal, and stooped to such infinite poverty.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. ii. 6–8.) It is thus that the Spirit of God delights to set before us His wondrous pathway, from the throne of God, and equality with Him, down to the servant’s place, and to death, “even the death of the cross.”

It was for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be rich. He who went down so low has been highly exalted by God, and set at the right hand of His Majesty. You can only measure the depths to which He descended by the heights to which God has exalted Him, putting into His hand as the Son of man all power and judgment, making Him Lord of all (Acts ii. 36), and issuing that irrevocable decree, that every knee shall bow to Him, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; and that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. (John v. 22, 23.)

We are enriched through His deep poverty.

Shall we speak of forgiveness? we are forgiven. (Eph. i. 7.) Of relationship? we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (John i. 12, 13.) Of heirship? we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. (Rom. viii. 17.) Of eternal life? it is ours in Christ. (1 John v. 12.) of an inheritance? an incorruptible inheritance is ours. (1 Peter i. 3-5.) Of the earnest? the Holy Ghost dwells in us the earnest, seal, and anointing. (Eph. 1. 13, 14.) We shall reign with Him; His throne, kingdom, and glory He will share with His loved co-heirs. "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Cor. iii. 21-23.) Are not these unsearchable riches? Think of our deep poverty, our guilty, hopeless condition, on the way to judgment; then think again of our present place of blessing and everlasting riches; of God's future purpose concerning His dear people. (Rom. viii. 29.) And to whom, and what, do we owe it all? The only answer is, To the Son of God, and His deep, deep poverty.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

"He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." (1 Sam. ii. 8.) To His name be everlasting praise.

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. H. S. (John xix. 36; 1 Cor. xi. 24.)—Your inability to reconcile these passages will be overcome by a glance at the new translation of J. N. Darby, or at Dean Alford's translation of the New Testament, or at the Revised Version. All of these omit the word "broken" from the latter passage, and with the omission your difficulty disappears.

EXODUS xxviii. 35.—We do not take the words "that he die not" to have reference to the sound of the bells, but rather to the way Aaron was to be clothed when executing his priestly office. Everything connected with his approach to God was laid down in great detail, and had to be scrupulously observed, "that he die not." You may refer to Lev. x. 1, 2; xvi. 13, in confirmation of this. With respect to your remaining questions, we have not sufficient light to warrant our saying anything about them.

A. W. (Rev. viii. 8, 9, 11.)—There can be no doubt that the language of these verses is symbolical. A mountain is the regular symbol of exalted power, in proof of which you may refer to Jer. li. 25. The sea may represent the surging masses of the people, into the midst of which the burning mountain was cast. The destruction of men followed, together with commerce, symbolized by the ships. "A great star from heaven" is one who holds a place of authority, though subordinate to another—the stars are symbols of such—a great personage, who should have been a source of light and order fell from his place, and poisoned the sources of that which ought to have been a blessing to man. The word "angel," in verse 13, should be "eagle"—the dark and most suited harbinger of coming woe.

J. E. T. (Exodus xvi. 3.)—There is no reason to think the flocks and herds brought out of Egypt would have sufficed for the children of Israel—six hundred thousand men, besides women and children—even if their owners had been willing to devote them to such a purpose, for we suppose there was not community of goods among them. But a moment's reflection will convince you that, speaking naturally, animal food alone would not sustain human life. Had their own resources been sufficient, there would have been no need for them to have been miraculously sustained. (See Numbers xi. 21, 22.)

W. B. D. (2 Cor. iii. 6.)—Strictly speaking, the new covenant is not with us at all. Jeremiah xxxi. 31–34 gives light upon the point, and shows distinctly that it is with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah the covenant will be made. Yet in the passage about which you enquire Paul speaks of himself as a minister of the new covenant. The reason is not hard to divine. Let it be remembered that in the blood of Jesus the foundation of that covenant has been laid. (Matt. xxvi. 28.) Two great blessings chiefly mark it; first, the knowledge of God; and, secondly, the forgiveness of sins. Both of these (and more besides) are ministered to men in the gospel as preached by Paul, and are ours now who believe; so that the blessings of the new covenant are enjoyed by the believer, though the covenant be not with him. As to the meaning of the words “letter” and “spirit,” it may help you to remark that verse 17 joins verse 6, the intervening ones being a parenthesis. “Now the Lord is that Spirit.” We understand this to mean that underneath the letter of the Word the glory of Christ lay hid. He was the spirit of what was made known. Break the shell and the kernel is Christ. But with this the Holy Spirit is identified, as it is by His working in the believer that all is known and enjoyed.

F. C.—We could not confess that to be the Lord's Table, which was fenced around with unscriptural formalities and regulations on the one hand, or carelessly thrown open to the admission of evil on the other. Nevertheless we believe that many dear saints of God, loving Christ, and walking according to the light they have, eat the Lord's Supper, though not at the Lord's table. With such the act is more of an individual one, and the thought of fellowship with others in the membership of the "one body" has but little if any place—hence much is lost. The remaining questions you ask must be answered by those who are in the circumstances that give rise to them; and we know that God does not withhold wisdom from those who seek it in singleness of eye.

A.—In asking how any one may know the mind of the Lord, you ask a large and an important question. If it be on matters in any way connected with the truth of God, we must turn to the Scriptures where the mind of God on all such subjects is made known. We have heard of people praying for guidance in reference to things about which the word of God is as clear as A B C. When once the Lord's mind about anything is seen in the Word, we have no need to pray for guidance concerning that thing. The Lord's will being known, nothing remains but to act accordingly. Sometimes we seek guidance about things which He would not have us touch at all, and we need not be surprised not to get it. But it is evident there are things concerning which the Scriptures give no distinct light, though they furnish principles that serve to guide and guard against mistakes. You see, God has not made the Bible to be a great code of rules and regulations to which any and everybody may refer and get His mind on every conceivable subject without exercise of heart and conscience, and without regard to the spiritual condition of the individual. There is guidance, sure and certain, otherwise the Christian would be often

walking in darkness, not knowing whether he was doing the will of God or not; but this guidance is connected with the state of our soul. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." (Matt. vi. 22.) So in Colossians i. 9, we are exhorted to be "filled with the knowledge of His will," but then it is in all wisdom and *spiritual understanding*. It is good for us that God has bound up the knowledge of His will with our inward state. We may not get light at all times the moment we ask for it, and God often suffers us to be long and deeply exercised as to it; but these exercises are of great price, and it would be an incalculable loss were we without them.

A. B. S. (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.)—Is there not an allusion here to the sufferings Paul had to bear in connection with his ministry, sufferings for Jesus' sake, and which often went so far as to make him despair even of life? (2 Cor. i. 8.) Obedience to the heavenly vision (Acts xxvi. 19) led him along a path where death lurked at every corner; but he did not forget that One greater than he had been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Fellowship in His sufferings Paul did not shrink from; nay, he ardently desired it, even to the being conformed to His death. (Phil. iii. 10.) Here we must carefully distinguish between Christ's sufferings for righteousness and His suffering for sin. In the former we may share, in the latter He was alone. It is of the former Paul speaks in this passage, as we view it. He bore about in his body the putting to death of Jesus, inasmuch as he was in the same path, and for Jesus' sake was in jeopardy every hour, in deaths oft. And God permitted all this that everything that would hinder the manifestation of the life of Jesus in the apostle might be kept down. A somewhat similar thought is found in Col. i. 24, where Paul speaks of his sufferings as the sufferings of Christ.

A QUESTION ASKED AND ANSWERED.

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

LUKE X. 25.

WE are not disposed to regard this lawyer as a straightforward man asking an honest question, and we should but delude ourselves were we to view him in that light. There is no reason to look upon him as an anxious enquirer, to whom eternal life was a priceless prize, for the sake of which he was willing to surrender everything. Had he been so he would have come in a different state, and received a different answer. But he stood up *to tempt* the Lord. Miserable and impious occupation! Ignorant of the common condition of man, and therefore of his own—ignorant of grace and of his personal need of it, he proudly asks at what point in a life of good works his title to eternal life would be established. Coming on such a ground, and in such a way, the Lord could only refer him to Moses. “What is written in the law? How readest thou?” The man answering said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.” “Yes,” said the

Lord in reply, adding significantly, “ *This do*, and thou shalt live.”

Ah ! but had the lawyer done this ? and was he doing it then ? The answer may be gathered from his further question, “ And who is my neighbour ? ” This betrays an uneasy conscience, whose condemning voice he fain would silence if he could. But bringing the matter nearer home, I would venture to enquire of you, my reader, whether you know anyone who has always loved God supremely, and his neighbour as himself ? And were the circle widened until it embraced the whole earth, do you think, among its many millions, there could be found one individual who had done this ? The question happily is not left for us to answer ; it has been answered already. Here it is—“ God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.” And with what result ? “ Every one of them is gone back : they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, *no, not one.*” (Ps. liii. 2, 3.) If, then, the keeping of the law were the only means of life, who would ever inherit it ? All would be shut up in hopeless condemnation, seeing that none have rendered, nor can render, what the law requires.

Yet the law is holy and just and good. It could not be otherwise if God be the giver of it. Evil in man it supposes ; for why forbid coveting

if there were no disposition on our part to covet? But while recognizing the sinful tendencies of our nature, it makes no allowance for them; the holiness of the law would be gone if it did.

Here let me briefly deal with a common fallacy, that inasmuch as we are unable to fulfil the requirements of the law, we cannot be justly condemned for our failure. Stay, stay, dear friend; by what road do you reach such a conclusion? Were you thrown out of employment, and had no means of paying your rent, would you tell your landlord, that seeing you were not in a position to pay, you were therefore clearly not responsible? Surely that plea would not prevail. Would you not rather own your responsibility, and cast yourself upon his grace?

The claims of the law are inexorable. It never relaxes them on account of human weakness. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) Thus runs its dread sentence, and who among thoughtful men imagines he can make good any claim for eternal life on such a ground? If eternal life is to become ours, it must reach us some other way, and this way the Lord proceeds to unfold in the parable that follows. Let us quote it:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and

departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way : and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was : and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him ; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

There is little need to ask who is meant by the man that *went down* from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves by the way. Humanity at large may see itself in him. From the gates of Eden to the flood, from the flood to Sinai, from Sinai to Calvary, from Calvary to this hour it has been *a going down*. I know that some of the leaders in the world of science tell us that the race is going up—up from the tadpole to the monkey, and from the monkey to the man. But then we are not all men of science, and such views are too ridiculous for any but the wise. Besides, they involve the casting overboard the Word of God, and we are not yet prepared for that. It may be profoundly interesting to be told

that the human race sprang from so lowly a stock, and we ought to feel obliged to those who tell us so; but if the giving up the Holy Scriptures as a revelation from God is the price we are called upon to pay for the privilege of believing this, then we demur, and beg leave to decline with thanks. To make our parable fit in with modern ideas, the man should be represented as *going up* from Jericho to Jerusalem. But no, let it stand, if you please, as it came from the lips of Him who is infinitely wiser than the wisest, and whose words shall abide when the cobweb theories of men shall have perished for ever—"A certain man went down." Far from God men are, individually they are so; they have gone down and fallen among thieves, who, after wounding them and robbing them, have flung them mercilessly into the ditch to die.

Unconverted reader, look into this mirror which a faithful hand holds up, and behold your unhappy state as it actually is. You are that wounded, robbed, and dying traveller. Satan has deceived you, sin has pierced you through with many sorrows, the world has played you false; everything is gone, and life itself is flowing fast away. But, see! here comes a priest; perchance this holy minister of the law may help. "Ho, ho, priest, help; a dying man is here!" The priest sees him, and pursues his way as if he heard no call. A Levite now draws near; perhaps this representa-

tive of the law in its less exalted functions may afford some help. "Ho, ho, Levite, help; a dying man is here!" He comes and looks, and passes by as the priest before him. For such the law had no help, and priest and Levite stalk silently away. Yes, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." No help then may the sinner look for from the law; it promises life to those who walk in its precepts perfectly, and its curse rests on those who do not.

Do you still think that in some way your salvation is to be effected by your own exertions? Are you diligently endeavouring to keep the holy law of God, and faithfully observing the religious ceremonies enjoined by your spiritual guides? Imperfection you are conscious of, but you hope God will be merciful to that, if you continue to do your best. Oh, think us not uncharitable and fault-finding if we say, in reply to all this, that you are on the wrong road, and the goal you hope to reach lies in another direction altogether! You are journeying eastward, and that lies toward the west. You are seeking salvation on the principle of law, as if the ten commandments, and the ceremonies and services of "the Church," were so many rounds in the ladder by which you were to climb to the heavenly city. Now Scripture speaketh expressly, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." How so? Because

no one ever kept it, no one has continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Gal. iii. 10.) And is not this the very teaching of our parable? Did priest and Levite, the exponents of the law on its moral and ceremonial sides, bring salvation to the dying man? Did they lift him out of the ditch? Nay, but they passed him by without one pitying look or sympathizing word. The law had nothing for such a man save its curse, nor has it aught else for you.

Grace, and grace alone, grace as opposed to law, grace pure and unmixed, is the sinner's only hope. If the state of the dying traveller is a true representation of our own, then do we need some good Samaritan to look upon us, to have compassion, to come to us where we are, to bind up our wounds, to lift us out of the ditch, and to take care of us, some one who will of and by himself do everything. Such an one we have in Jesus. In Him the soul may find an answer to its every need, may find it *now*. Are you groaning under the solemn sentence of a broken law? It is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) Are you troubled about your sins? It is written, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) Do you feel your exceeding sinfulness? It is written, "I came not to call the righteous, but

sinners to repentance." (Mark ii. 17.) Do you fear you are too bad to come to Jesus? It is written, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) It is thus that God in His word sets His beloved Son before you as the Saviour provided by Him for sinners. Will you not believe the good news, and now, just where you are, and as you are, receive Him as *your* Saviour, your very own?

It is to be observed that the Samaritan, after having bound up his wounds, did not leave the man where he was. He set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him, and finally gave special charge concerning him to the host. To the very end salvation is of the Lord. Alas! the thought is too common, that after divine grace has saved us we may break down, and ultimately perish after all. Break down we surely may, but ultimately perish is another matter. Saved by grace as far as past sins are in question, and then put under law, so that salvation may be retained, and heaven reached at last; such is much of the Christianity of the day! But this is *not* Christianity. Those whom Jesus saves He keeps, keeps to the end. None shall pluck them out of His hand, nor separate them from His love. Moreover, they are brought to God, and made members of that body, of which Christ in heaven is the Head. Godliness is indeed enjoined, and abhorrence of evil of all kinds;

but while insisting on this we must hold fast the doctrine of free grace.

On the surface of the parable lie great lessons of Christian benevolence. Into these we do not go; we have sought rather to read the deeper meaning of this touching story. We shall do well, however, not to neglect them. Too often we follow the steps of priest and Levite instead of the good Samaritan, and show in our bearing toward others a hard and legal spirit instead of a gracious one. May we be found more like Him who was called "a friend of publicans and sinners." Nor did He disdain the name.

THE SHEPHERD.

O H! what can He do with the weak,
 Where "Each for himself" is the cry?
 Where the young lions lack what they seek?
 Where the feeble are ever pushed by?

Most sad was the question I asked,
 As I sat me down lone and dejected;
 But the answer was sent me unasked,
 An answer I little expected.

"What then can He do with the weak?"
 "Why *He carries them*," came the reply.
 "In His bosom alone you must seek,
 For the feeble who on Him rely."

"He carries them, *carries* the feeble and frail—
 Just the ones that the world pushes by—
 In His bosom He bears them when dangers assail;
 He carries the feeble on high.

J. J. J.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

SUCH is the Lord's own description of His earliest followers; but "salt which has lost its savour" characterizes too many present-day Christians.

The one thing Christianity has well-nigh lost is influence. It no longer has a powerful effect upon the outside world as of old. It neither rouses the hatred of man nor extorts his admiration. The philosopher makes a scientific study of it, searches for its probable origin, and speculates on its ultimate decay. The moralist admires its precepts and ignores its doctrines. The artist paints it to display his skill, and the musician performs it to gratify the world. The novelist borrows from it a title for his book, while the tragedian would have it contribute material for his play. The world has taken stock of Christianity, and consigned it to the limbo of old-fashioned and effete philosophies.

But Christianity is not to blame for the altered sentiments with which it is regarded. It is the same faith for which apostles lived and martyrs died. In spite of the march of intellect and scientific developments Christianity is unaltered and unchanged. No human wisdom can increase or human hatred detract from its intrinsic glory.

It stands alone in its unique and varied beauty as a divinely perfect provision that can meet the deepest longings of the human heart.

Such is Christianity as seen in the teaching of its divine Founder, and exemplified in the lives of its earliest confessors. Why then, we may ask, has it fallen into such discredit that the world dares to overhaul and speculate about it as it would some heathen mythology? The answer may well cause us the deepest humiliation. It is because its precepts are so little exemplified in the lives of its professors.

The world persists in taking the conduct of Christians as a proof of the teachings of Christianity, and with indiscriminate judgment puts down their every characteristic as evidence of what their convictions have made them.

Of course, we should be able to say with the apostle, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" but we are so obviously unlike our Lord in many ways that we are disposed to shirk our place as "an example of the believers." (1 Tim. iv. 12.)

The truth is, if Christianity has lost its hold over the Church, can we wonder that it so little influences the world? Can it be that our very familiarity with the Word is making us proof against its power?

I have no desire to dwell upon the worldliness and lack of heart for Christ which we see all

around us. There is enough evidence of Satan's tare-sowing on every hand to fill us with genuine sorrow and humiliation; but I would turn from this to consider the pathway of the individual saint of God in the midst of the failure, and in spite of it.

If I call attention to what is seen of the Christian life, it is not that I forget the hidden motives and hopes of which the visible is only the evidence, but because I wish to look at the Christian's testimony from an outside point of view, and specially in its relation to the world.

Our unconverted acquaintances, being conversant with the more prominent teachings of Scripture, expect to find us altogether different from themselves. As strangers, they think we shall be seeking little from the scenes around us; and as pilgrims, be much occupied with the place whither we are journeying. Knowing the heavenly hopes and divine blessings of which we speak, they think we shall never be cast down, never be sad, never depressed. As those following in the footsteps of Jesus, they look for no irritability, haughtiness, or impatience; and they expect that our lives will be passed in a calm, unruffled tranquility, the result of unwavering faith and undimmed hopes. Though working unnoticed and unappreciated, they suppose that, like our Lord, we shall be engaged at every opportunity in ministering to the spiritual and temporal wants of

those around us, and with unwearied care and tenderest sympathy seeking out the tempted, afflicted, and distressed. Through all, sustained by a hidden power and filled with a heavenly joy, with singleness of mind seeking only the glory of God. In a word, judging us by our own standard, the world looks to see in us whole-hearted devotedness and complete self-surrender to Christ.

Shall we endeavour to produce these heavenly graces in ourselves? By no means. These are but the fruits, and will always appear if the conditions are favourable. Let us rather seek a much more real and closer walk with Christ, in true communion with His heart, drinking in of His fulness, and living so really in the sunshine of His presence that our lives, our conduct, and our very manner will bear the impress of our heavenly intercourse. Only thus can we hope to be in any measure what our Lord would have us—the salt of the earth.

S. E. McN.

ALONE WITH THEE.

ALONE with Thee ! and doth my spirit quail
 Before the weariness and steepness of the way ?
 Alone with Thee ! and doth my courage fail
 Before the sultriness and burden of the day ?
 Alone with Thee ! no human prop to aid,
 Nor dare I lean upon an arm of flesh.
 Alone with Thee ! most glad, yet half afraid,
 I walk to find Thy mercies ever fresh. J. J. J.

PRIVILEGES OF THOSE WHO KNOW
THE FATHER.

GOD revealed Himself under many titles to His people of old, such as the Lord, the Lord God, the Almighty, the Most High, &c. When we come to the pages of the New Testament we find the Lord Jesus gathering a little band of Jewish disciples around Himself, and speaking to them of their Father in heaven, or their heavenly Father. (Matthew vi.; Mark xi.) And in the gospel of John, where He is viewed as rejected in the first chapter, and speaks of His death in the third, we find a constant reference to the Father.

By nature all are far from God and under judgment, but the result of the work of Christ is that believers receive eternal life and the Holy Spirit, and are brought into relationship with God as children. The Spirit too bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and by Him we cry, "Abba, Father." (Romans viii. 15, 16.) All distance is removed for ever. The Lord Jesus, when risen from the dead, said to Mary Magdalene, Go, tell My brethren, I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God. Hence we read elsewhere, "Behold, what manner of love *the Father hath bestowed*

upon us, that we should be called the sons [or children] of God. . . . Beloved, *now are we the sons [or children] of God.* (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

Throughout the gospel of John we have unfolded, in the precious teachings of our Lord, blessings, privileges, and responsibilities, which appertain to the children of the Father. Let us glance briefly at them. We are assured that if young believers meditate upon these blessed and encouraging portions of the word of God, in dependence upon His teaching, they cannot fail to reap comfort and help for their souls.

Amongst other truths we may remark the following :

The Father's will.	The Father's love.
The Father's hand.	The Father's culture.
The Father's house.	The Father's ear.
The Father's care.	

1. *The Father's will.* In John vi. 39, 40 we read: "And *this is the Father's will* which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." In these soul-assuring verses the children of God are viewed as given by the Father to the Son—a precious truth, of which our Lord speaks seven

times in John xvii. (*vv.* 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24), and He tells them that it is the will of the Father that not one of them should be lost. Who shall frustrate Him? It is His all-powerful will that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting life, and the Lord will raise him up at the last day. The Son of God is no longer here; but every one who sees Him now by faith, and believes on Him, hath everlasting life, and will be raised by His almighty power to share eternal glory with Him.

2. *The Father's hand.* In John x. our Lord presents Himself as the Shepherd of His flock, assuring His own of their eternal security, saying, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, *neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.* My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and *no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.* I and My Father are one." The whole power of Satan and man may be ranged against His people, but not one shall perish. The two most powerful hands in the universe hold them safe. None shall pluck them out of the Lord's hand, and none is able to pluck them out of His Father's hand. Many foolishly talk of being able to pluck themselves out, but the Son of God says no one shall do it.

3. *The Father's house.* And not only is it the

Father's will that all His own should be eternally saved—kept by His all-powerful hand, but His house is for them at the end of their pathway here below. Jesus Himself has gone to prepare a place for the children of God in the home circle of the Father's house. Soon the Lord Himself shall come to take them there. (John xiv. 1-3.) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shall be translated to glory, caught up to meet Him, to enjoy His blessed presence there for ever.

4. *The Father's care.* Meanwhile we have the further provision of His grace in the gift of the Spirit of truth, the Comforter. The Son prayed the Father, and on the day of Pentecost His prayer was answered, and the Comforter came down to care for the family of God during their journey to the glory beyond. He dwelleth with and in the saints of God. The Lord Jesus came and went away again, but the Comforter abides for ever. Blessed provision of the Father's care!

5. *The Father's love.* In John xiv. 21-23 too we have the precious promise of the enjoyment of the Father's love for all who keep His word and commandments. Also, in chapter xvi. 27, our hearts are assured that the Father Himself loveth those who love His Son, and believe that He came out from God. And, in chapter xvii. 24, the Lord expresses His will in perfect communion with the will of His Father, showing that the

love of both the Father and the Son will never be satisfied until all His loved ones are in glory, beholding the given glory of Christ for ever.

6. *The Father's culture.* In John xv. the Lord presents Himself in figure as the true vine, and His people as the branches. Here we are looked at as responsible to abide in Him, and He in us, that we may bring forth much fruit, to the praise and glory of the Father. In communion with the Son of God alone can we produce in our lives that which is suited to Him. It is not here a question of eternal life and security, which is already settled in chap. x., but a question of fruitbearing by a faithful discipleship when we have eternal life.

7. *The Father's ear.* In John xvi. we are reminded of another precious truth, that the Father's ear is ever open to the feeblest prayer which ascends from the hearts of His people. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall *ask the Father in My name*, He will give it you." (vv. 23, 24.) What blessed encouragement to be dependent upon Him, ever turning to Him in prayer and supplication in every detail of our daily life, and preferring our requests in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ! There is nothing beneath His notice. Hence we read elsewhere, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," &c.

(Phil. iv. 6.) "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.)

And now, in closing, be assured, beloved reader, that if our hearts are entering into these precious privileges with a true sense of the love and grace of the Father in making them known to us, then *worship, praise, and thanksgiving* will flow spontaneously. This is the hour that our Lord spoke of in John iv., saying, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: *for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*" (v. 23.)

Man in his natural state, has no part nor lot in the matter. Even the one who is born of God, but who does not yet know what it is to enjoy peace nor to taste the Father's love, cannot *worship*. He will sure to be occupied with himself or his state. Whereas only those who have received eternal life and the Holy Ghost, and are in communion with the Father and the Son, can draw near with confidence of heart, and liberty of spirit, and pour out their souls in worship and adoration to God and the Father. May each reader of these lines become fully established in the grace of God, in the blessed privileges of which we are here reminded, so that out of hearts filled to overflowing with the Father's love, worship in spirit and in truth may ascend to Him as sweet incense, in the name of the Son, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

E. H. C.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION.

GENESIS xviii., xix.

INTERCESSION with God in behalf of others is a service in which every believer may engage, but the power for its exercise can only be known in separation from the world, as we see illustrated in Abraham and Lot. No one could lift another out of a swamp if he were in it himself. Abraham was outside Sodom and in communion with God, whilst Lot was inside Sodom and out of communion.

Sodom is presented in Scripture as a picture of this present evil world, with judgment threatening and ready to fall, though mercy lingers long.

Abraham represents a true believer of this present time—one who is in spirit outside the world, a citizen of heaven, a pilgrim and stranger on earth, such as can look up and sing—

“Yonder’s my place and portion fair,
My heart and my treasure’s there,
And my abiding home.”

Lot too represents a believer. He was the subject of divine grace, and was saved from the judgment which fell on Sodom, even as every believer now will be saved from the world’s judgment. (See 1 Cor. xi. 32.)

But there is something more than this, for we read in Galatians i. 4, He “gave Himself for our

sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." We are, therefore, not to rest content with the knowledge that we shall never come into judgment, blessed as it is (John v. 24), but seek *now* to be superior to the world's favours, and separate in heart and life from its ways. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John ii. 15, 16.) The love of the world deprives the child of God of the enjoyment of the Father's love, of the privilege of bearing testimony for Christ, and of the power of interceding for others. What can make up for such a loss as this?

A Christian woman in Sutherlandshire had a choice plant in her window, and for some time could not account for the crippled condition of the leaves on its one side. At last she observed that it was constantly pressing against the window-pane, and this explained the mystery—the side that touched the window deformed the plant. A simple but striking illustration of a Christian who, through fellowship with the world, both blights his testimony and hinders his soul's prosperity.

It was after this manner that Lot so sadly

failed. The bright side of his history is connected with God's faithfulness and unchanging grace. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Timothy ii. 19), and He "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (2 Peter ii. 9.) It is on the side of RESPONSIBILITY that Lot's moral deformity is everywhere seen. Unlike Abraham, who stood apart from Sodom, Lot went where he could have no peace nor power to testify against the evil which was constantly vexing his righteous soul. Accordingly, when forced to raise an alarm because of what was coming, he seemed unto his sons-in-law as one that mocked. How solemn! and what a warning to all those who name the name of the Lord! May we each seek for power to be free from every thing that would hinder communion, unfit us for the Lord's service, and stifle the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet Him."

Lot was drawn into Sodom by "the lust of the eyes," and had to be drawn out by the hand of the angels who were sent by God in answer to Abraham's intercession. (Chap. xix. 29.) Shortly after Lot had left Sodom, and Abraham's intercession ceased, fire came down from heaven and destroyed the city, with its guilty inhabitants, a sample of that eternal judgment which will be the portion of all them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 7; 2 Thess. i. 8.)

How little do the unsaved thousands around know to what extent they are dependent on the prayers and intercessions of God's people in their behalf, for His extended mercy, for the lengthening out of this day of grace, and for temporal good which they are glad to have, though forgetful of Him from whom they receive it all. See 1 Tim. ii. 1; James i. 17.

But the day of grace will soon end, the door of mercy be closed, intercession over, and the Lord's people called away to heaven. Then, like Abraham, who stood before the Lord, and looked out on the burning city, the saints will see the judgments fall one after another on this doomed world. Oh, how many in that day, waking up when it is too late for salvation, shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! Fellow-Christian, let us remember that now is the time for sinners to be saved, and now is our time to intercede for such, according to 1 Tim. ii. The man that stood and pleaded with such earnestness for Sodom in Gen. xviii. 32 ceases his intercession at last, and then stands with calm composure (in chap. xix. 27, 28) viewing the wonder-working power of God in judgment on that guilty city. If we have no tears to shed over sinners on earth, we shall have none to shed in heaven. If we have no power to plead for such here, we shall have none there.

The day for weeping and intercession will be over. May the language of each saved one's heart be—

“Fain would my pity, Lord, reclaim,
And snatch the firebrand from the flame.”

If we want sinners to be saved, let us pray, and if, alas! we do not desire their salvation, God does; for He says He will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. May we have both power to pray *for* such and to plead *with* them. H. H.

SELF *VERSUS* GOD.

WHATEVER form of exaltation self may take, it must ever be at the expense of the claims of God. In all ages, therefore, from Adam downwards, it has been incumbent upon God to take cognizance of the fact, whenever and wherever manifested.

The beautiful scene upon the mount of transfiguration is full of instruction for every child of God in this respect, inasmuch as it carries us back to two remarkable instances of self-exaltation, which occurred in the lives of Moses and Elijah respectively, and the consequent action of God thereupon.

The first instance we find recorded in Numbers xx., where, in verse 10, it will be seen that Moses, when *about to act* in God's name by procuring water for the thirsty hosts of Israel,

betrayed, in an unguarded moment, by the use of one word—the little word “*we*”—his forgetfulness of the claims of Jehovah.

“And he [Moses] said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; *must we* fetch you water out of this rock?”

God took note of this, and directed Moses to appoint his successor. (Deut. iii. 23–28.)

“Charge *Joshua*, and encourage *him*, and strengthen *him*: for *he* shall go over before this people, and *he* shall cause them to inherit the land.”

Joshua! Significant name—for it means “saviour”—and type of Jesus, pointing Moses onward surely to Him of whom also we read in Mark ix., “They saw *no man any more, save Jesus only.*”

The other instance is given in 1 Kings xix. 10, 14. Elijah had *just acted* in Jehovah’s name, securing an answer clear and loud from the “God that answereth by fire.” At the threat however, of a woman his faith failed him, and, full of himself, he fled.

Hitherto he had gone here and there only at the command of the Lord; but now, alas! he goes *his own way*, leaving his proper sphere of testimony far behind. Hence we find that by one word—that little word “*I*”—he too betrayed his forgetfulness of Jehovah’s claims.

“*I* have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts . . . and *I*, even *I only*, am left.”

God took note of this fact likewise, and Elijah also was instructed to appoint a successor, whose name was Elisha, the meaning of which is, "Salvation of God."

"Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room."

Elisha! Significant name and type, pointing Elijah surely to Him of whom John the Baptist said, "*He* must increase, but *I* must decrease."

It is not a little remarkable that the river Jordan largely characterized the commencement of the ministry both of Joshua and Elisha, as well as that of their great Antitype, the Lord Jesus; and it was, moreover, upon His coming up from those waters that the heavens were opened unto Him, and that He was greeted with a salutation similar in its character to that which afterwards "came to Him from the excellent glory" when "in the holy mount," the latter, however, having the significant addition thereto, "HEAR HIM" (Luke ix. 35; Matt. xvii. 5), as an answer to the thoughtless exclamation of Peter, full as it was of the elements of self, "Let *us* make," &c. (Luke ix. 33; Matt. xvii. 4.)

Surely it behoves every saint of God, especially in this day of activity and unrest, to have a conscience fully exercised in regard to this most serious subject; for it may be laid down as an axiom in divine things, that in proportion as self's importance and self's doings are before one's

mind as motive power for action, by so much must Christ of necessity be displaced.

We see this very fully developed in Rev. iii. 17, 18, 20. Laodicea was full of self—rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing—no, not even of Christ, who, alas! no longer “in the midst” (Matt. xviii. 20), is seen standing, knocking at the door, *outside*, and saying, “If any man HEAR My voice,” &c.

Dear fellow-believer, “have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but *emptied Himself*, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, *He humbled Himself*, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly *exalted Him*, and gave unto *Him* THE NAME *which is above every name.*” (Phil. ii. 5–10. R.V.)

N. L. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ONE WHO IS ANXIOUS TO KNOW THE TRUTH.—The phrase about which you enquire—“*Inside the veil and outside the camp*”—is common enough among certain Christians, and has reference to Hebrews x. 19, 22, and xiii. 13. The former speaks of the believer’s place before God, the latter of what should be his place here on earth as associated with a rejected and crucified Lord. In the thoughts of a Hebrew no

place was so sacred as "the holiest of all," for there between the cherubim of glory Jehovah dwelt. Within the veil none could pass and live save the high priest; nor could he enter without blood. By this the Holy Ghost signified that the way into the holiest was not made manifest. Access to God inside the veil there was none; but now the veil is rent, the way into the holiest is made manifest, and the believer being born of God, and having his conscience purged by the blood of Christ, can enter in spirit into the immediate presence of God, knowing that the blood of Jesus has met the claims of the eternal throne, and that God has declared He will remember His sins and iniquities no more. "*Inside the veil*" then is our place, our abiding-place. It speaks of nearness to God and of the worth of the blood shed on Calvary.

"*Outside the camp,*" as we have already said, is our place on earth. To the Hebrew Christians, to whom the epistle was first addressed, "the camp" was the whole order of Jewish worship, to which they had been bound by the strongest possible ties. But seeing that, as a system, it was no longer owned of God, they were called to break with it, and to go forth unto Jesus without the camp, bearing His reproach. Such words would naturally recall to their minds Exodus xxxiii. 7. To us "the camp" is where Christ is not. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, *there am I* in the midst of them." Everything antagonistic to this is "the camp," and we, as they, are to go forth unto Him without the camp, content to bear His reproach, for reproach there assuredly is in connection with the outside place.

THE CALL OF ABRAM;

OR,

THE LAND OF THE ALTAR AND THE TENT.

GENESIS xi., xii.

THERE is no reason to suppose that Abram escaped the idolatry that had crept into the family of Shem. The words of Joshua to the gathered tribes at Shechem confirm us in this thought: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and *they served other gods.*" (Joshua xxiv. 2.) Under the debasing influence of demon-worship they had come. If in the midst of the gross darkness that was spreading itself abroad God, the *living* God, had here and there a witness, Abram was not one. This makes the sovereign grace of God the more conspicuous, for it was out of this thickening gloom Abram was called. The God of glory appeared unto him, and called him with a mighty voice. How and under what circumstances, whether by dream or vision, we are not told. But there stands the great, grand fact. What a revolution this must have wrought in the soul of this man! What an awakening! How contemptible the idols he once served, and with what

loathing he would turn from them! What a sense too must he have had of the grace of God, who had dealt with him in this unlooked-for way. It is a wonderful moment when for the first time God makes Himself known to a sinner. So Abram found it beyond doubt; so the sinner at Sychar's well (John iv. 26); so Saul of Tarsus; and so every sinner since.

But this was not all. He who had thus revealed Himself to Abram bade him quit his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and go into a land which He would show him. Obedience to the call of God involved separation from his then present surroundings. The links with Ur of the Chaldees must be broken. Cherished associations, social and religious—associations interwoven with his earliest and tenderest memories, these must be relinquished if Abram would walk in the path to which God had called him. But God filled the vision of his soul, and he hesitated not, but obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went.

The believer of to-day is the subject of the same gracious and powerful call. In him is exhibited the sovereign grace of God. Not because of any personal worth has he been called out of the great crowd and out of the moral darkness that once enveloped him. The secret must be sought for in the eternal love of God, supreme and sovereign in the way it acts.

Here let me ask a question of the Christian reader. Have you distinctly before your soul the blessed truth that you have been called of God—*called out*, called with a heavenly calling? Before your conversion you were of the world, sharing its condemnation, and marching gaily enough to its awful doom. Then God was unknown, the Saviour unknown, the Holy Spirit unknown, and your mind blinded by the god of this world. Out of this state God, who called Abram, has called you, and now light, life, and liberty are yours. You do not hope for pardon of your sins, for you have received it; you do not hope to become a child of God, for you are one; and being a child you are an heir; heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. (Rom. viii. 17.) Wonderful words! the blessedness of which is only known in part even when they have been dwelt upon for a long, long time. This, however, is not all; for He who has saved you has severed your connection with the scene around, that you might be a witness for God in the midst of a world that knows Him not. *Do you see this?*

At first Abram did not fully rise to the height of God's call. He left Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, but into Canaan he came not. They reached Haran, and dwelt *there*. Nor is it hard to divine the reason of his stopping short. Natural ties were not without their in-

fluence; and those who stood within his family circle, but were not the objects of the same special and divine call, held him back. And thus it often is. "Suffer me *first* to go and bury my father," was the answer of one to whom the Lord had said, "Follow Me." (Luke ix. 59.) So with Abram, he lingered at Haran till Terah died. Then the words of God's call seem to have rung in his ear afresh. Then he remembered his short-comings, and once more "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

Family ties are powerful still. How many are hindered and impeded in their upward course because of these. "What will they think and say and do at home if I should take this step?" is the question anxiously debated in secret by many a heart. Faithfulness to God requires that the step should be taken; obedience to His word demands it; a heavenly voice says "Come," and the path lies clear before them. They are called to Canaan, but they stop at Haran; they fear the consequences of a further move; they dread being branded as *extremists*, and shrink from encountering the opposition which their action would provoke. Courage, dear souls, courage! "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me,

is not worthy of Me." (Matt. x. 37.) Such are the words of our Lord.

But now we see Abram in Canaan. Here God appears to him the second time, with a further unfolding of His gracious purposes. Nothing of this kind was vouchsafed to him in Haran. If we would enjoy heavenly intercourse we must be in the pathway of God's pleasure. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." (John xiv. 21.) Can anything compensate for the loss of these divine manifestations to the soul? In immediate connection with this Abram built an altar unto the Lord. For the first time we behold him as a worshipper. In Haran he had no altar, for how shall a man *worship* who is conscious of stopping short of the place to which God has called him? Pray he might, and great his need of prayer; but worship is another thing, and this can only be truly offered when the soul is in communion with God, and when the conscience does not condemn. Divinely-given intelligence concerning many a precious truth of Scripture is not enough to constitute a man a worshipper. Without this no doubt our worship will be defective, but intelligence alone never yet reared an altar to the living God. True unhindered worship can only flow from one deeply conscious of the riches of divine

grace, and who seeks in uprightness of heart and without reserve to answer fully to the mind of God.

Here also is the first mention of Abram's *tent*. If the altar speaks of worship the tent tells of pilgrim-life. Henceforth in the history of the patriarch they are found in close connection. It is ever so. If we know what it is to worship God in the Holiest as one whose conscience has been purged by the blood of Christ, if we know aught of worshipping the Father as one who stands in the relationship of a child before Him, called too unto His eternal kingdom and glory by Jesus Christ, we cannot but be pilgrims here. No labour of his own can make a man a pilgrim any more than his own works can make him a worshipper. To you, my reader, it may not be necessary to say that it is possible to assemble in the stateliest edifice ever consecrated to Christianity, to engage in the most imposing ritual, to take part in its most solemn service—it is possible to have the whole being thrilled with the deepest religious emotions by the plaintive peals of the organ and the exquisitely modulated voices of the surpliced choir, and yet there shall not be one note of praise, not one atom of spiritual worship in the whole thing. *Christian* worship indeed is of another order. Intended for God's ear alone, it must be in accordance with *Christian* truth, and offered in the power of the

Holy Spirit, otherwise it is but an empty sound, which may please the ears of men, but is nothing short of an abomination in the sight of God. So a man might withdraw himself from worldly society, rigidly abstain from everything that militates against a religious life, clothe himself in the coarsest garb, live on the plainest food, shut himself within the walls of a monastery, and do nothing but pray, fast, and do penance all the day long, and after all be no more a pilgrim than a player at a pantomime or a jockey on the race-course. A true pilgrim may be arduously engaged in daily toil, working with his hands the thing which is good, but his heart finds its treasure in another sphere. His portion is in heaven—citizenship, home, and dear surroundings, all are there—and as the exile-patriot longs for the land of his birth, so the heart of the pilgrim-saint longs for the heavenly land. In spirit he is there already—links with earth are broken; and he can sing—

“’Tis the treasure I’ve found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below.”

In Haran Abram led no pilgrim life. Out of Ur of the Chaldees he had come, but he had not reached the land of the altar and the tent. So now, many a saint holds himself aloof from the world, and cares neither for its pleasures nor its plans. You could not say he was worldly; neither

could you say, as to the state of his soul, that he was heavenly. He is tarrying at Haran. Some tie binds him to that place, and coming short of Canaan, he misses the joys that are found there.

In the closing part of our chapter (xii.) we see how the marks of a worshipper and a pilgrim may soon be lost unless we are sustained in unwavering faith in the separate place to which we have been called. A grievous famine arose in the land, and Abram's faith is tried. Alas! he goes down to Egypt to sojourn there, and his altar and tent disappear. What room was there for these under the shadow of the world's wing? The feebleness of his faith shows itself further in his devices to ensure his own safety. Deeper and deeper in the mire would he have sunk had not God appeared on his behalf and rescued him from the position into which he had been betrayed by his lack of faith. So Abram quits Egypt, and is once more found in Canaan, even at the place where his tent had been at the beginning, at the place of the altar, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

What lessons are here—lessons of the deepest moment and of the greatest practical value! What encouragements, what admonitions, what warnings! May God graciously help us to profit by them.

“SAVED . . . NOT OF WORKS.”

SAVED! yes, thank God, *saved!* Saved in the full and bright and happy consciousness of the fact!

Eternal praise to His grace, there does not remain one doubt nor one fear as to salvation!

I may have many a misgiving as to other things, for the soul must be exercised in ten thousand ways as it moves homeward and heavenward, and this chiefly in order that the work of transformity to Christ may be daily deepened in me as a child of God. But, blessed be God, I do not cherish one single question as to salvation. And why? Simply because God has written of every believer that he is saved.

Let me refer you, dear reader, to the passage quoted (see Ephesians ii. 8, 9); and pray ponder closely the wording of that remarkable sentence. It stands alone, in its peculiar blessedness, as a statement intended by God to give certainty and full assurance to the heart of every one of His dear children. Would that it were better known, more frequently studied, and more abundantly unfolded. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it

is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

Observe, it does not read, "*Being saved*," but, "*Ye are saved*." The fact is accomplished. It is no continuous work, no progressive attainment. It declares that salvation is as certain, here and now, amid the temptations and snares of the world, as it can be in glory, when such things are no more.

This fact, the present salvation of the believer, cannot be over-estimated. Faith always thankfully accepts what God has said. It is unbelief that either doubts Him altogether or else wickedly diminishes the force of His words.

Granted that God speaks of the Christian as saved, shall we dare to question? Shall we allow our fears as to possible failure on our part to touch the verity of the word of God? Shall we not rather humbly take the Word just as it stands, and rejoice in the truth it conveys? Most assuredly. All will fail but that Word.

But we find elsewhere, that "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Now does the one truth not affect the other? Nay, both are equally true, for God's word is never self-contradictory; but each statement is found in a different connection, and must be looked at in the light of its surroundings.

Ephesians ii. 8, 9 views the Christian as saved already. Elsewhere he is looked at as *on the*

road to heaven, not yet there, and therefore exposed to the trials of the way. His “enduring to the end” thus becomes intelligible, and is the proof of the genuineness of his faith and of the sustaining grace of God toward him. Enduring to the end, he is saved. And thus we find a remarkable difference in the point of view of Ephesians and that taken elsewhere. Everything is according to the counsels of God, and effected by His own power. It does not contemplate the road, and can therefore say, “Ye are saved.” On the other hand, in Romans viii. 24 it is said, “We are saved in hope”—for salvation there includes the redemption of the body—a firm and solid hope doubtless, but yet “we hope,” for it is evident that we have not the redemption of the body yet. That is, in Romans salvation is viewed as future—“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (chapter xiii. 11)—because it contemplates the full and grand result in glory; just as it speaks of the believer as justified and made a child of God, and moving on as such through “tribulation” and present suffering in anticipation of the glory of God.

If a person be in a place he does not speak of hoping to reach it; if on the way thither he does so. This explains the difference between Ephesians and most of the other epistles. The one gives, in the main, counsel; the other gives Christian responsibility.

I am warranted therefore to say that "*I am saved.*" Oh, what grace, that I, once a poor, vile sinner, guilty and hating God, finding my pleasure in the world by which His Son was crucified, am now saved from hell, from judgment, from sin, from Satan, and am brought to God! that I, once stained by sin, and inherently depraved, having in my flesh "no good thing," nor capable of producing one single work whereby to merit His favour, am now, here on earth, consciously saved! Wonderful indeed, but divinely true!

"Saved . . . not of works"! not on the principle of works. And why? Because if my works could save me, then I might boast indeed. There would be no sin in my pride. I could claim heaven on the ground of my worthiness, and rightly allow in myself for ever any amount of the very thing which, of all others, is detestable to God; that which lies at the root of all sin—pride or self-sufficiency. But this is impossible. I can no more give myself new birth than bring myself into the world. I am indebted to God for the new birth as for the breath of my nostrils. Life, whether natural or divine, is alike the gift of God; only to communicate the latter there is the necessity of something besides the exercise of divine power. In order to give Adam life natural, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, "and man became a living

soul;” whilst in order to give life divine there was the necessity for the death of Christ, to be accomplished in God’s due time, both as the propitiation for our sins, and as the corn of wheat which, through death, might bring forth much fruit. Without dying the corn of wheat would have abode alone, and life and pardon there would have been for none. In giving natural life God displayed but an act of power; but to give divine life the question of sin had to be raised, and in the cross was fully settled. The first was only physical, the second was moral and spiritual. And, in this respect, the new creation transcends the old. In the old we witness God’s power and wisdom; but in the new we see His righteousness, truth, love, and grace. The old is subject to vanity; the new is indestructible.

If our works had any part in this creation, there would be the elements of failure in it; and hence it is “not of works.” But the fact that it is only and wholly of grace makes it absolutely certain and stable. The secret of much of the doubting that exists as to salvation, is simply because “works” are introduced more or less as part of the plan.

How often one hears the statement, “We must do the best we can.” But who of us does that? And if we did, we should be met by the words, “Not of works.”

No, thank God, the one perfect foundation is

laid in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God's grace is the cause, the blood of Christ is the merit, faith is the instrument, and works are the evidence before men—works flowing from life.

1. Grace—for "God is Love."

2. Blood—for "the Son of man must be lifted up."

3. Faith—for it is "not of works."

4. Works—for it is not a mere assertion of faith, but one that is visible in fruit.

Hence, had God not been "Love," our salvation would never have been devised. Had Christ not died, our sins could never have been remitted. Had our works been called for, not one of us could have responded. Had there been no evidence of good works, then faith would have been a mere theory. But "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This gives us a full and charming summary of the whole gospel, and our present saved condition.

Notice, it is "*not of works*" as the principle, but it is "*unto good works*" as the object. Good works accompany salvation, but they never go before it. Up to that point they are only sinful.

Now, nothing is of more practical importance

for the children of God than that they should know that they are saved, and that this blessed salvation is exclusively of God, and that in their lives there should be the bright confession of it to others.

We like our own children to be happy. We love to see the smile on their faces, and to hear the music of their song. God does the same. He has given us a relationship with Himself that is inviolable, and He would have us enjoy it. He would have us walk in the light of His presence, and the purity of His company, so that our salvation might be a thing seen by others—one of immense value to ourselves, and one we would fain make known on all hands.

It is a solemn thing. Oh, when we remember that it cost the life of the blessed Son of God, when we remember His agony in the garden, and His suffering on the cross, how can we speak flippantly of salvation? To procure it for us was no light matter to the Lord Jesus. It cost us nothing indeed, but it cost Him “all that He had;” for He “gave Himself” for us. And shall we regard it lightly, or value it cheaply? God forbid. “It is the gift of God.”

May the sense of the sacredness of this unspeakable gift be deepened in each saint, and increasingly valued, and God be thanked and worshipped by hearts more divinely attuned to His infinite grace in our salvation.

J. W. S.

LOVING HIS APPEARING.

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”—2 TIM. iv. 8.

WHO are those who love His appearing? for such will not only have “a crown of life,” but “a crown of righteousness.” Precious thought! What then are we to understand by *loving* His appearing? Observe, it is not here His coming *for* us, but His revelation from heaven, His appearing in flaming fire, and His saints *with* Him. It gives us joy to know that now *in heaven* He is not only crowned with glory and honour, but angels, authorities, and powers are made subject unto Him.

“The crown is His, and His by right
The highest place in heaven.”

On earth, however, He is still, with very many, the rejected Stone, notwithstanding God’s proclamation by His servants of forgiveness of sins, and of the gift of eternal life and glory to every one that bows to Him as his Saviour and Lord. Every loyal heart must deeply feel the appalling indifference there is to the Lord Jesus Christ, and His present interests, almost on every hand. But we remember the solemn testimony of Scripture,

that this is the prelude to the utter rejection by Him of the professing Church as His corporate witness on earth, *after* He has removed His loved and loving saints to meet Him in the air, and *before* His appearing with them to judge the quick and the dead. How quickly these anticipations may become matters of fact!

“The Stone which the builders rejected” will soon come forth in power. “The Stone cut out without hands” must ere long fall upon the nations, and grind them to powder. Alas! how few seem to think of this, and how many are trying to satisfy themselves with a kind of Christianity without Christ, which they call religion! At this moment what a mass of precious souls, and especially among the educated, are being deceived by the infidelity of *rationalism*. They think themselves competent to judge of the things of God by their natural powers, and thus set aside the divine authority of His Word, instead of allowing it to judge them. On the other hand, multitudes are being ensnared by the infidelity of *ritualism*, which refuses to accept the “once for all” finished work and eternal redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may be assured that the only deliverance from these fatal deceptions is resting on Christ, and finding peace and joy in what He has done, and what He is. Blessed be His name, with arms opened wide, and a heart full of tenderest love, He said, “Come

unto Me . . . and I will give you rest." What a boon is rest! especially rest of conscience as to our eternal safety. This no one but He can give. No one else ever proposed it. Those only have it who have it from Him. Precious indeed are His words, "*I will give you rest.*" Yes, He *gives* it.

Our Lord spoke of another rest — rest of heart, which those would "*find*" who pursued a certain course. It is, therefore, a conditional rest. Rest connected with being heartily and practically yoked with Him, and learning of Him. The *taking* of His yoke is a distinct work and experience in the soul. Oh, those sweet words, "Take My yoke," "Learn of Me," "*Find* rest to your souls." His is the only "easy" yoke, and the only "burden" that is really "light." You cannot describe it, but the heart knows it. Rest of conscience He *gives*. Rest of heart the believer *finds* if abiding in Him, walking with Him, and learning of Him. Sweet intimacy! This is Christianity; and those who know it experimentally doubtless look forward to another rest—endless, eternal rest; for "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Hebrews iv. 9.)

In the days of the apostles, believers knew they were called not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake; and if not always suffering *for* Him, they were suffering *with* Him. They knew also the preciousness of Christ as the satisfying

and joyful object of their hearts. It was truly said of some, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." (Phil. i. 29; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Peter i. 8.) Such was the freshness and fervency of believers in the early days of Christianity. Their hearts were taken up with a Person who loved them, died for them, and redeemed them from all iniquity, and who assured them that an incorruptible inheritance was "reserved in heaven" for them, and that they were "kept by the power of God," through faith, for it, until His revelation from heaven *with* them. What marvellous words of comfort!

This surely is the time of our Lord's rejection. The world will not have Him, and Christendom for the most part, as was the case at Laodicea, has Him outside the door. Yet He is knocking, if it may be only one faithful soul will hear His voice, and open the door, for personal communion with Himself. To true hearts this is very affecting. Those who love Him best feel it most. He is not here, but His coming draweth nigh.

In the death of the cross, instead of Satan overcoming Him, He, through death, rendered Satan's power null; and instead of Jew and Gentile getting rid of Christ by their "Away with Him," "Crucify Him," He was righteously exalted to the right hand of God, invested as

the glorified Man with all authority and power, and is soon coming to subdue all things unto Himself, according to the will of God. Though He manifests Himself spiritually to our souls, and is always in the midst of two or three who are really gathered together in His name, yet personally He is absent. We see Him not. Some keenly feel He is not here. Faith knows Him crowned with glory and honour.

Do we *feel* His rejection? Are we troubled on account of His absence? These are searching questions, and test what our state really is. If we can reply that we deeply mourn His absence, then we are necessarily detached in heart and walk, not only from the world which is so rapidly going on to its righteous doom, but from all round about us in the professing Church that is contrary to His word. How is it possible that we can be *loving* His appearing, if not seeking to please Him, and therefore *tasting* the sorrow of His present rejection? Do not the two always go together? Those who really mourn His absence, and because of it feel the loneliness and desolation of their path, cannot but cleave to Him with purpose of heart, while keenly feeling the folly and unbelief of those who "keep things alive," as they say, with their concerts and amusements, when our Lord's revelation from heaven in flaming fire is so near.

Again we press the question, Does our Lord's

present rejection give a decided complexion to our course in this scene? If so, surely the prospect of His having His rightful place *on earth* ere long, cannot but thrill our hearts with inexpressible delight. When we think of His coming out of heaven in His own glory, the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels, accompanied by His glorified saints, and wearing His many crowns, we may well exclaim, What a blaze of infinite and eternal glory! while our hearts are ready to sing—

“Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him Lord of all.”

It is the Lord Himself who thus appears. He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. He died for all, has sent the gospel to all, has waited patiently on all, and now the divine long-suffering has reached its climax, men “wail because of Him.” What a wailing that will be! Worse than useless then to cry to the rocks to fall on them, or to the hills to cover them, or to go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth for fear of Jehovah, and from the glory of His majesty, for He must reign till His enemies are made the footstool of His feet. All must be put in subjection under Him, according to the will of God. Yes, He will judge the quick and the dead at His *appearing* and His kingdom. First the quick or living in various judicial ways and occasions as the Scriptures point out; for

He will put down all rule, and all authority, and power. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death; and the last part of His reign will be occupied in judging the dead after their resurrection, every man according to *his works*, and therefore the impossibility of one of them being saved; hence our Lord called it "the resurrection of damnation" or judgment. How unutterably solemn! But how blessed to our souls is the thought of our Lord's exaltation to His rightful place, and of the Church, His Bride, reigning and sharing the inheritance with Him. On earth all the tribes of Israel will have each its portion in the land according to the prophetic word (Ezek. xlvii., xlviii.), knowing that Jehovah has been merciful to their unrighteousness, will remember no more their sins and iniquities, has delivered them from bodily sickness, given them abundance of peace and plenty, under the glorious reign of their true Messiah, the Son of David. What a time too, when Gentiles will go up to Jerusalem to worship, and attend the house of prayer for all nations. Our Lord Jesus will then be revealed as the only Potentate—King of kings and Lord of lords, Governor among the nations, and King over all the earth. We can think of Him too as the last Adam, according to the eighth Psalm, having dominion over this creation as by Him delivered, and brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Is it not a deep joy to those who cleave to Him,

and are often ready to weep at His still being the song of the drunkard, and rejected by so many, to know for a certainty that in a little while on this very earth, as well as in heaven, and in the infernal regions, every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ?

How does this contemplation of our Lord's glorious appearing and reign affect our *hearts*? Are we *loving* His appearing? Let us pause, and well consider that, if so, He is not only the commanding object of our souls, but we are in a place where He is not, and where the prevailing sentence is, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." How soon He may come and receive us unto Himself, to appear in glory with Him! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) May we be so occupied with our Lord where He is, so learn of Him, and live for His honour, that we may more and more "love His appearing!"

"If here on earth the *thoughts* of Jesus' love
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above;
If even here the *taste* of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings;
What will the *sunshine* of *His* glory prove?
What the unmingled *fulness* of *His* love?
What hallelujahs will *His* presence raise?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise?"

“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.”

MANY will scarcely credit the statement, that in every town there is an almost untouched field for gospel work “white already to harvest.” Yet I have no hesitation in making such a statement, and do so with the express object of directing the sympathies and endeavours of the Lord’s people to a much-neglected sphere of service.

There is a section of the human family who in the immediate future will be, either for good or evil, as mighty a power in the world as others have been before them. I do not refer to children or young men, but to those who are neither one nor the other, yet in many ways combine characteristics of both.

A moment’s consideration will satisfy any one that boys who are too old for the Sunday-school or the children’s tract, and yet not likely to feel at home in a young men’s class, are in danger of being reached by neither agency, and, for want of care and guidance, are very likely to drift right away from any sphere of Christian influences, while there are many who have never attended such classes who might yet be reached by a work specially amongst themselves.

Between the fourteenth and eighteenth years is often the most important and eventful period of a man's life. With unformed character and untried principles, and lacking the judgment and discretion which experience brings, a youth frequently leaves the home circle and influences to face untried temptations and hidden snares. If unconverted, we can hardly be surprised should he fall a victim to the craft of the destroyer. I feel I am scarcely exaggerating when I say that the first venture into business life and associations is the most momentous step that can be taken. The untrained energies are often like soldiers lacking a leader, and ready to accept the first that offers. Happy he who starts in life on the Lord's side!

Surely much good might be done could we reach those who will shortly be called upon to take this step, as also those who have had to begin a business career while yet no more than boys.

Who does not admire the downright honesty of youth—the contempt for affectation, hypocrisy, and meanness, the energy and independence not yet subdued by the discipline of office life. The thoughtlessness of childhood is displaced as the mind expands; and the heart, filled with new hopes and bright possibilities, is ready to receive the glad tidings of the gospel, though once it was too heedless, and soon may be too hardened, to retain the precious seed of the Word.

Does the reader think I am mistaken in laying special stress on these early years? Let him ask any prominent Christian at what age he was converted, and he will find in nine cases out of ten it dates between the fourteenth and twentieth years.

We have Sunday-schools and young men's classes, as well as special meetings for various social conditions. Why not for telegraph messengers, shoeblacks, bookstall boys, and youths in workshops and business houses? Many are sadly in need of a helping hand and a word of sympathy and cheer. How can we leave them to fight alone the battle of life? I know many who have entered the workshop or the office simple, straightforward boys, only to drift with the tide—ensnared by the world and taken captive by the devil.

To reach these youths is a work full of promise, but one which requires special wisdom and tact. He will help most who can look at the world from their point of view, and feel with them in their hopes or trials. In order to influence another you must have his confidence, and to get this you must give your sympathy. This is a universal principle of great importance.

S. E. McN.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. S. BRIGHTON.—Matt. xi. 14; John i. 21. It may help you out of your difficulty if you remember that in the former passage we have what the Lord said of John, and in the latter what John said of himself. Now we know that John ever had lowly thoughts; he was a man little in his own eyes. Therefore, when the Jews sent to enquire of him who he was, he took the place of a nothing and a nobody—only a voice to carry its appointed message, and then to die away and be forgotten. But though John in true humility thus spake of himself, yet his ministry was “in the spirit and power of Elias,” according to the word of the angel Gabriel to his father Zacharias (Luke i. 17), and confirmed by the testimony of the Lord Jesus in the verse about which you enquire.

QUAERO.—Mark iv. 21–24. In the preceding verses we find the Lord Jesus busily engaged in preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and this ministry He also committed to His disciples, and they were faithfully to fulfil it; for no man lit a candle to place it under a bushel, but rather to give light. Let them then spread the light abroad, and not keep it as a hidden, secret thing. If they did this, and, according to their several abilities, meted out the truth they had heard to others, more should be given—faithful in a little they should receive in greater abundance. Such we take to be the meaning of this passage.

Mark x. 29, 30. Does not the Lord here intimate

that whatever earthly loss anyone may sustain for His sake and the gospel's, he should have more than its equivalent now, though with persecutions, and eternal blessing in the world to come? The verses should be interpreted according to their spirit, and not the letter.

S. S. S.—When the people of God are gathered together in assembly, either for prayer, worship, or “to break bread,” the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is in the midst, according to His word in Matthew xviii. 20, and He is there to guide by His Spirit if the principles of 1 Cor. xii., xiv. are acknowledged. This being so, no one, however highly gifted, can claim *the right* to give out a hymn, read a portion of Scripture, lead in worship, or teach or exhort. The Lord is the only One who has *a right* to do anything, and He can lead by whom He will. For any individual to resolve to read a portion of Scripture, or to act in any way, much less to make a rule of doing so, is to fall into the Corinthian error censured in 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

With respect to your second question, we agree with you in thinking that service to the Lord should be regarded as a privilege rather than a duty. Still, if a Christian does not rise to his privileges in the sphere of service, he may be justly admonished to fulfil his responsibilities on the lower ground of duty. In this connection see Luke xvii. 10; Romans xv. 27. Besides this, there are duties belonging to the various relationships in which we stand, so that we can hardly banish the word “*duty*” from our vocabulary, however much we may be disposed to view many of our duties in the light of privileges.

THE TRUE SECRET OF JOY AND PEACE.

“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing.”—Rom. xv. 13.

IT is a singular fact, which perhaps the reader has himself observed, that whenever anxious souls are spoken to concerning salvation they at once begin to talk about their feelings. If any doubt this let them speak to some one in spiritual distress, and before half a dozen sentences have escaped the lips the truth of this statement shall be established. It is very strange, but that it is so cannot be denied.

And this fact is all the more singular in that nowhere in the entire range of revelation are feelings ever spoken of in connection with the soul's blessing. *Feeling* forgiven, *feeling* saved, *feeling* we have peace with God, are phrases foreign to Scripture. Nothing akin to them is to be found from cover to cover of that blessed Book.

Along with this vicious use of the word *feel* goes the word *hope*, never employed in its scriptural sense, but always as implying uncertainty, or want of knowledge. “I do not *feel* my sins forgiven,” says one; while another, in reply to a question as to whether he is saved, replies, “I *hope* so, but am not quite sure.”

Broadly speaking, a man can never decide by

his feelings whether he is saved or lost, though he may have the deepest conviction of his being in one or the other of those two states. But that conviction is not the product of his feelings, but of the Spirit of God, who has enlightened his conscience through the Word.

Permit me to suppose you in a large way of business. Your confidential clerk one day tells you he fears the firm is going to the bad. Asked his reasons for thinking so, he hands you a list of the firm's assets and liabilities. The result of your examination sends you to your home convinced of your being a ruined man, and feeling miserable enough. But whence those dejected feelings? They proceed from the knowledge of your position as witnessed by your books. You do not know you are ruined because you feel miserable, but you feel miserable because you know you are ruined; a testimony outside of you has wrought conviction within. In like manner by the Word of God a man knows himself lost, and by the same Word a believer may know himself saved.

Let us enter this cottage where lives a poor widow, who somehow has sunk head over ears in debt. A kind friend comes in, who, having heard of her distress, has been round to all the tradespeople and paid every shilling, and has now called to tell her what he has done. In a few cheery words the tale is told which should have brought comfort to the mind, and set the heart at ease.

In answer to the assurance that she need feel no further anxiety about her debts, inasmuch as they had been all paid, she says, in a desponding tone, "Well, I *hope* they are."

"But they are paid," replies her kind friend with a smile. "You may be quite sure of that, for I have paid them myself."

"I *hope* they are," rejoins the other, as she wipes away her tears with the corner of her apron; "but I would not like to be too sure."

"But they *are* paid," says her friend for the third time, laying stress upon the *are*, and placing a bundle of receipts upon the table.

"I wish I could *feel* that they were," is the answer; "but I am afraid to be too positive, lest I should be mistaken after all. If they were paid should I not *feel* happier than I do?"

By the pained and astonished looks of her friend you can tell how grieved he is that his word should be thus disbelieved. The debts had been paid, the receipts produced, and the one who had done this kind deed was himself there to tell the debtor that all was settled, and the only return he gets is, "I *hope* so;" and, "I wish I could *feel* that they were."

Smile, dear reader, you may at this simple scene, and pronounce the picture drawn on distorted lines, and not true to life. Alas! it is too true; and what if we say that it is a faithful representation of yourself?

For is it not certain that you lack assurance? Settled peace you have not. You are not able at all times to read your title clear. Not that you question the fact of Christ having died for sinners, but you are not sure of your having an interest in the atoning blood. If under the ministry of the Word a ray of hope pierces the dense clouds that commonly envelop your mind, it is soon gone, and you are left once more the victim of darkness, doubt, and despondency. But there is a way out of this terrible slough in which you have struggled so long, a way both sure and simple, a way that is at hand. Our text shows you the golden gate, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing.*"

Those two words reveal the whole secret. It is not in feeling, or in hoping, but *in believing* that the soul finds joy and peace. Faith silences every doubt, and changes hope into solid certainty.

Do you ask, "What am I to believe?" Just what God has said in His word about the Lord Jesus. You have believed what He says about yourself, that you are a guilty sinner, a ruined sinner, a lost sinner, now believe what He says about His Son, and joy and peace will be yours.

Did it ever strike you that it was to settle the great open question of your sins, that He who is the Maker and Upholder of all things, became a man and suffered on the cross? The work to be done was so stupendous that none but He could

carry it through. But He has done it, done it by Himself, and having finished it He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. i. 3.) Joy and peace are bound up with your believing *that*.

A Saviour seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens is the grand proof that His work is finished.

“If the Lord Jesus had your sins laid upon Him on the cross, what has become of them?” we asked of an anxious soul a little while ago. There was a pause, and then the face beamed, and the answer came, “Why, they are gone.”

Yes, blessed be God, gone for ever! The burden has been borne, the cup has been drunk, the just judgment of God against sin has been endured. On Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, our sins were laid, and He by Himself has put them away for ever. This is what you have to believe in order to have joy and peace.

And if you declare that all this you firmly believe, and yet have not joy and peace in that your difficulty lies in your not knowing whether that work was done for you, we reply, How do you expect your difficulty to be overcome? Are you looking for a miracle to be wrought on your behalf—a dream, a vision, an overpowering of the senses by some exalted experience? Alas! that you should look for what you may never get. Be it that your name is Mary Martin, you will

never find in any part of the Bible that it was for Mary Martin Jesus died. But you will find it said that He died for *sinner*s, died for the *ungodly*, and is it not enough for you that your character should be described? Must you be expressed by name ere you will believe? Ah! the reason of your not finding peace is that you want to get it in your way, and God has your true blessing too much at heart to let you have it in any other way than His.

If you had lived in Lancashire in the time of the cotton famine, and had placed a notice on the door of your house to the effect that you would give a loaf of bread thrice a week to every needy person who cared to call for it, could any have justly said they knew not whether that notice availed for them because their name was not set down? If they were needy that was enough, for to every such person your offer was addressed. It is thus with the gospel; for "whosoever," "all," "every one," are the terms divine grace employs to set forth those for whom its priceless blessings are designed. Why then should you ever raise the question as to whether the blood of Jesus avails for you? To do so is rank unbelief.

Are you looking to be holier before you dare believe that the finished work of Christ was done for you? But were you as holy as the angels, that would not help you one whit. That work avails for the unholy, for the black, foul, filthy,

loathsome sinner. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all* sin."

Look at the dying but reviling thief upon the cross: did he become holier before he turned to Jesus with his repentant cry of "Lord, remember me"? Assuredly he did not, yet the blood availed for him. Look at Saul, the infuriated persecutor and waster of God's Church: did he become holier before the Saviour in glory arrested him with His gracious but mighty hand? Assuredly he did not, yet the blood availed for him. Look at the Corinthian believers, many of whom had been guilty of the most atrocious sins: did they become holier before they were saved? Assuredly they did not; yet the blood availed for them (1 Cor. vi. 9-11), and if for all these, why not for you, even though your sins are more in number than drops in the ocean, and blacker than the blackest night?

What have your feelings to do with all this? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Cease then to talk or think of them, for they have no more to do with these matters than with the rising of the sun, or the shining of the stars. Before your eyes God sets forth His own Son, who for ruined man has once suffered and died. The answer to all your guilt is found in the blood shed upon the cross of Calvary. Believe these glad tidings, and the God of hope shall fill you with all joy and peace *in believing*. Faith first,

and then joy and peace. If you look for the latter before the former is in exercise, you look for effect without the cause, or, to use a homely phrase, you put the cart before the horse.

A dearly-loved relative is travelling by rail. News comes that there has been a terrible accident, and that he is among the killed. You are deeply affected by this overwhelming calamity. In the midst of your grief a telegram arrives, telling you your relative is safe and uninjured. At once your sorrow is turned into joy. What causes this sudden revulsion of feeling? Why, the telegram and your belief of its message.

Do you not now see the meaning of our text, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing*"?

Divine truth, when believed, gives certainty, and then feeling and hoping cease to be the burden of our song. That you may know it, dear reader, for yourself is our earnest prayer.

ON SINGING.

"Is any merry? let him sing psalms."—JAMES v. 13.

THIS passage of Scripture was noted by a young man who had been excessively fond of worldly songs, but who had been recently brought to a knowledge of the truth. He said to himself, "That plainly leaves no room for either comic or sentimental songs."

God anticipates both the sorrowful and the joyous times of His beloved children, and He directs that *both* are to have their expression to Him.

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.” The affliction is not to produce murmurs and complaints, but prayer to Him. “And they have not cried *unto Me* with their heart, when they howled upon their beds,” Jehovah said of His people of old. He would not have it so, but His afflicted ones should pray.

Then the saints of God have their times of joy, when the heart is merry. How much we need in such seasons the holy admonitions of Scripture to restrain our hearts in their lightness and freedom from the pressure of care. How apt we are to give them rein, and allow them to run into the folly of the flesh, and to border upon the frivolity of the world. “The end of that mirth is heaviness.” “Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.” (Eph. v. 3, 4.)

How then is our joy to find expression? “Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” The Christian’s joy is of a holy character, and should find its expression to God in holy songs of praise.

The redeemed of God are a singing company. The first mention of singing is in Exodus xv., and that is the oldest song upon record. It was

sung by those who had been down-trodden slaves in Egypt, where they poured out their cries and tears. God had interposed to save them, for He had set His love upon them. He screened them from His own just judgment by the blood of the slain lamb, and then brought them forth from the house of bondage. It was His own gracious work from first to last. This they celebrated in their holy song of joy and triumph which they sang upon the shore of the Red Sea.

Again they sang near the close of their wilderness journey. (Numbers xxi.) Jehovah gave them water, an up-springing well, a foretaste of the land to which He was bringing them, "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." They drank, and sang in the gladness of their hearts.

So we, who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, have title and power to sing. Redeemed "with . . . the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter i. 19), and brought from beneath the dominion of sin (Rom. vi.), as the free-men of the Lord we may sing our holy songs of triumph to Him. We are sealed too "with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Eph. i.) As brought by His power into present enjoyment of heavenly blessings, we can sing to God our Father.

Eph. v. 18 says, "Be not drunk with wine"—that which excites and stimulates nature, giving joy of a fleshly, worldly character—"but be filled with the Spirit." He is our spiritual energy, who ministers to us divine and heavenly joys; and it is by Him that these joys find expression in holy songs. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Thus all is divine, our poor human hearts forming the channel. Divine joys ministered to us in the fulness of the Spirit, and these joys finding expression by the same Spirit to the Lord.

Let it be remembered that we sing "*to the Lord.*" Israel sang to Jehovah. (Exodus xv.) We lose sight properly of each other in singing; the Lord Himself is before us, and we sing to Him. We do not seek to produce an effect upon others by singing, although our singing to the Lord may produce an effect upon them. Thus it was with Paul and Silas at midnight in their dungeon. Strange place and season for merriment! Yet so it is with the Christian. By the power of the Holy Ghost there is, thank God, many a heart merry in His love and salvation, while the back is sorely smarting. They sang praises *unto God*, and the prisoners heard them. We cannot but think that those precious praises, at such a time and in such circumstances, must have produced a deep impression upon the hearers. But the

servants of Christ sang not for this. Their hearts were joyful in their God, although they had been "shamefully entreated," and this joy must needs have its expression to Him.

If we sing to the Lord we shall never sing carelessly. But, on the other hand, many imagine that God requires *beautiful* singing, and hence choirs are formed of even ungodly men who can sing well. The music they perform may be truly exquisite, judged from a musical standpoint, but is it by the Spirit of God? "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God."* We may venture to say that to God's ear there is more true melody in the heart's praise of some poor old woman, whose voice is cracked with age and sorrow, than in the most beautiful anthems sung by an ungodly choir. Wherefore? One is by the Spirit of God, and the other is merely the fruit of the flesh. It is as by the Spirit, and associated with all the fragrance of Christ, that our song is acceptable before God; otherwise it is iniquity.

In the assembly Christ is the Leader of praise, as it is said (Ps. xxii. 22; Heb. ii. 12), "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." As in choirs formed in a worldly way, each singer waits for the direction of the leader; so in the assembly, we wait to catch the sound of

* The best reading of Phil. iii. 3. (See R. V.) The word worship includes all our service toward God.

His praise, and sing (as it were) with Him. Oh, how inexpressibly sweet it is so to sing to God our Father!

There is a little word, in 1 Cor. xiv. 15, which needs to be borne in mind, and especially in singing at home, where we are apt to be more careless than in the assembly: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." The apostle speaks of unknown tongues, in which a man might then speak by the Spirit of God. "If I pray in an unknown tongue," he says, "my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." That is, in his spirit he has the sense that he speaks to God, and this is well and happy; but then, unhappily, he does not intelligently enter into his own prayer; he does not understand the words which he uses. So his spirit, moved by the energy of the Holy Spirit, prays, but his understanding is unfruitful. So says the apostle, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also."

Now, though we may not attempt to sing in an unknown tongue (the days in which these tongues were used by the Holy Ghost are past), yet what better are our songs if while we sing our minds are wandering, perhaps occupied with the tune only, or, it may be, with other things altogether? In such a case we might well say, "My understanding is unfruitful." We may even have in our souls the sense of our singing being a holy, happy exercise, and yet our minds are not intent

upon the words we sing. Have we not sometimes become painfully aware of this by uttering words in mistake which were not even sense, and we have discovered that, however exuberant our spirits may have been, we have not been intelligently with the mind uttering anything before God? Again, how frequently a hymn of deep solemnity, it may be relating to the suffering of our precious Saviour, is sung boisterously, making manifest the same fact that the meaning of the words we sing is not entered into. "What is it then? . . . I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

Our best songs are but feeble. How are we comforted as we look onward! The "songs in the night" which God graciously gives shall be merged into heaven's perfect anthem of praise.

In Rev. v. heaven's choir sings a new song. It is not a celebration of God's creatorial rights to the earth, but the song of the worthiness of the Lamb. It is the redeemed who raise that song. Its vibrations fill the wide creation, and each circle repeats the praise according to its own place. The innermost circle, the redeemed, alone sing, and addressing the Lamb personally say, "THOU art worthy."

Brethren, we are called to eternal joy in communion with the Father and His Son, in the power of the Spirit. Let our mirth be *now* of that holy character, finding expression to God in holy songs of praise.

J. R.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

“Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.”

EPHESIANS v. 25.

HERE upon the cloud descending,
 Lord, Thyself we see,
 Give our hearts to know more fully
 How to follow Thee.
 How to serve Thee, blessèd Saviour,
 In Thine absence here ;
 How to think of all Thy loved ones,
 Unto Thee so dear.

Thou in glory art *our* Treasure,
 This our hearts well know ;
 But *Thy* chief delight and treasure
 Is Thy Church below.
 And 't is only in Thy presence,
 In the heights with Thee,
 We can view *Thy saints so scattered,*
One, O Lord, with Thee.

Thou the Head, and we the members,
 Precious in Thy sight ;
 Given to Thee by the Father
 For Thine own delight ;
 Soon to be presented *faultless*
 (Fruit of all Thy love),
To Thyself without a blemish,
 Blessèd Lord, above.

Still there *is on earth* a structure,
 Growing up to Thee ;
Living stones within God's temple,
 Fitted there by Thee.
 All the powers of Hades 'gainst it
 Never can prevail,
 For the *firm foundation* standeth,
This can never fail.

Yet, alas ! to *outward* vision
 Nothing fair to see,
 But a shattered wreck and ruin
 Can we ever be.
 Yet, in spite of all our failure,
 Humbling though it be ;
 Poor and feeble, yet *dependent*,
 Lord, we *count on Thee.*

Seeking ever to remember,
 Midst the wreck around,
 Blessèd Lord, *Thy one chief treasure*
 Still on earth is found.
 And our hearts Thy blessèd interests
 Would maintain while here ;
 Going out to all Thy loved ones,
 To Thy heart so dear.

Learning first, in Thine own presence,
 All Thy mind to know,
 Then to seek that each beloved one
 More like Thee may grow.
 So that when, from heaven descending,
 We Thyself shall see,
 There may be a *watching* people
 Here to *welcome* Thee.

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? WHOSE
SON IS HE?”

THANKS be to God, He has communicated to us His own thoughts about His Son. The mystery of the Son—the union of God and man in one Person—is incommunicable to creature-intelligence. (Matt. xi. 27.) “No one knows the Son but the Father.” But this only fills the believer’s joy to overflowing; for it is to this wondrous Person that he comes, and from Him receives the revelation of the Father; and resting there, he learns of Him, and finds rest to his soul.

Beloved reader, have you come?

Many are blazing abroad *their* thoughts of Christ; but amid the strife of tongues God has given from time to time many a sweet and mighty testimony of Him. Angel and demon have testified of Him. The faith of a by-gone generation, ere the hoary head lay pillowed in the grave, has lifted up its voice exultingly. (Luke i. 67–80; ii. 28–35.) The virgin’s song, the watching shepherds, amazed by the heavenly vision, alike tell aloud His glory and His grace. The conscience-stricken sinner, an Israelite without guile, the wondering disciples, a doubting saint, all own Him Son of God. The Christian’s faith, in the full power of the indwelling Spirit, sees in Him a

glory as of an only begotten with the Father (John i. 14); and the voice of the Father Himself declares, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight."

Yes, the holy angels, those glorious, unjealous beings, proclaimed God's good pleasure in men when first in the history of eternity they looked upon the face of God "manifest in flesh . . . seen of angels." (Luke ii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) Man indeed He was, but their God. Jehovah too, entering as such into covenant relations with a nation on the earth; for the angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people" (whose? Jehovah's) "from their sins." The very meaning of the name Jesus is "Jehovah a-saving," even as He was prophetically called Emmanuel, that is, "God with us." (Isaiah vii. 14; Matt. i. 23.)

My reader, do you know the saving power of the name of Jesus? "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Mighty as those ministering spirits are, they waited in devoted, adoring service (Heb. i. 6) on the Man, the Son of man (John i. 51), upon whom the Spirit, Himself God, descending as a dove from heaven, abode—proof that He was Son of God. (John i. 34.) He takes away the *sin* of the world. In power will He purge the universe of God. Are your sins forgiven, purged by His

precious blood? He baptizes with the Holy Ghost. He is Son. He is God. (Heb. i. 8. Compare Heb. i. 3, ix. 28 as to sins; and John i. 29, Heb. ix. 26 as regards sin.)

Not to angels has He put in subjection the habitable world which is to come, but to man, and that Man, Jesus, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. We see Him thus (Heb. ii. 9) the Heir of all things, the Creator of all things (Heb. i. 2; John i. 3), the Sustainer of all things, and the Redeemer whom, through infinite grace, the believer can call "ours."

Precious soul, have you yet rested on that finished work, accomplished for His own glory and to express His love—a love that could not rest until we poor sinners were suited to and worthy of Himself?

He is Man, yes, Son of man, who suffered death that, having made all things as God, He might possess them, being Man in association with the redeemed according to the counsels and purposes of God. (Heb. ii. 10.) Since the children partake of flesh and blood, He also, in like manner, took part in the same; but God hath highly exalted Him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings. (Phil. ii. 10.)

The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand, and shows Him all things

which He Himself does. Blessed, obedient One, taking the place of man for the Father's glory, quickening divinely too, so that he that hears Thy word, and believes Him that has sent Thee, has life eternal, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life! Son of God Thou art; and authority is given Thee to execute judgment also, because Thou art Son of man! Nor in the days of His flesh did the demons dare to dispute His power. They believed and trembled and obeyed, crying, "I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God;" and again, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not." *They* cannot know Him as Saviour. No, it is man to whom He came in lowly grace, the Saviour of the lost; to man belongs the terrible dishonour of having crucified the Son of God. Wicked spirits say, "Thou art the Son of the most high God;" but man, "Is not this the carpenter?" The former could reply to Sceva's sons, "Jesus I know" (Acts xix. 15); but the world knew Him not, even when come to it in grace—*the world He had made*—and His own received Him not. (John i. 11.) The awful distinction of not knowing God when they saw Him is peculiarly man's.

Varied were their thoughts of Him; but then, as now, with their ruined, sinful state unfelt, there was no true discernment of what He was. God hates the thoughts of such, and human wisdom cannot find Him out. Man has wilfully given up the

knowledge of God (Rom. i. 21), and cannot regain it; but where there is submission to the testimony of God against oneself, to that soul He reveals Himself in grace—to him that is of an humble and contrite heart, and trembleth at His word. Man, proud of his wisdom, goes far in owning Christ, but *never* far enough, and his conclusions, therefore, are always false, or impotent and foolish. According to such, nothing is too good to say of Him except the full truth. Some make of Him the greatest born of woman—a John the baptist; and others, an Elias, worthy of corporeal translation into heaven; others again, a Jeremias, the tender, sympathizing, suffering prophet, or one recalling men to forgotten responsibilities. (Matt. xvi. 14.) But none of these is He, though His Spirit wrought in all. *He is "the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (v. 16.) If David's Son, He is David's Lord. Son of man indeed, but Adonai at Jehovah's right hand (Ps. cx. 1)—Adonai that sitteth in the heavens. (Ps. ii. 4.) "Be wise now therefore . . . be instructed. . . . Serve the Lord with fear. . . . Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Observe here that not alone are the natural thoughts of men all astray, but in Matthew xxii. it is the chiefs and religious rulers of the people who are confounded by the person of the Son of God. Religion they had, as many such have to-day;

whether political (*vv.* 15–22), sceptical (*vv.* 23–33), or legal (*vv.* 34–40), or a mixture of the three, as some who call themselves by the name of Christian now; but the Son of God forms no part whatever of it. Ask still the question, The Christ, whose Son is He? “And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.”

The Son of God is an unwelcome visitor where the need of the blood to make atonement for the soul is yet unrecognised.

Some to-day, as the Pharisees of old, claim to believe in what the Scriptures say of Christ, and yet have never repented and confessed their sins, and owned their need of a deliverer from the wrath to come. And indeed some say they needed not a substitute to die for them. This latter is but a Satanic and hypocritical pretension.

With whom did Christ first publicly associate Himself? It was with those who, warned of John the Baptist to repent and flee from the coming wrath (*Matt.* iii. 2, 7), had been baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins. (*v.* 6.) Among them Jesus comes to be baptized; He, it is true, to fulfil all righteousness (*vv.* 13–15); and then behold a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight.”

It is needless to notice further the questionings of the thoughtless crowd or the jibes and revilings of the infuriated priests. Harping on the note

first struck by the hand of Satan, they repeat, "If Thou be the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 40-43; iv. 3, 6, 10), though the Gentile centurion could say without the "if," "Truly this Man *was* the Son of God." (xxvii. 54.) They say not, If Thou be the Son of man—this were a fact too patent to deny. Yet it is as Son of man they shall see Him sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (xxvi. 64.) For the believer it will be in the glory of His Father (xvi. 27); for He is Son of God and Son of man, Creator, Redeemer, the Christ, Root and Offspring of David. Moreover, He is Jehovah-God—"Before Abraham was I AM" (John viii. 58)—whose glory Isaiah saw and spake of Him. (John xii. 41; Isaiah vi. 1-7.)

Oh that every reader of these lines may know, as Isaiah in vision did, the efficacy of that sacrifice, which takes iniquity away, and purges sin, and gives suitability and boldness for the glory of the Lord of hosts! He is the eternal Word, without beginning; for whenever there was a beginning He was already there (John i. 1); was with God, and was God.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) Dost thou believe on the Son of God? or ask, Who is He that I might believe on Him? He is Jesus of Nazareth, rejected by the world, and crucified, but risen and exalted, now receiving all who come to Him,

and giving them eternal life in pursuance of the Father's will.

Beware! oh, beware of the doctrines of demons detracting from the glory of that blessed One—the Saviour Jesus! He is the Mediator between God and men; for He is God and Man in one glorious person, and was able thus to shed His blood, the precious ransom-price. Beware of seducing spirits that confess not Jesus Christ come in flesh, and submit not to His authority; for this is that power of the antichrist who is to come. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son has not the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father also. (1. John ii. 22, 23.) “This is the true God, and eternal life.”

W. T. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—We are not surprised that as a result of your searching the Holy Scriptures you have failed to find any references to our being made the children of God by baptism. When we urged you to follow that course, like the Bereans of old (Acts xvii.), we were sure you would find none, for the very simple reason that there are none to be found. It is a doctrine that has no place at all in the word of God. If you ask, How then do we become children of God? we quote in reply the words of the apostle John, “As many as *received Him*, to them gave He

power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John i. 12.) You will observe there is no mention here of baptism, but of the reception of Christ, of believing on His name. Those who do receive Him now by faith, those who believe on Him—for believing and receiving are but different words for expressing the same act—are privileged to take the place of children of God; for His children they certainly are. Moreover, the verse that follows the one of which we have made mention tells us that God's children have become so by being born of Him. Flesh and blood had nothing whatever to do with it, nor the will of men either, it is entirely of God.

In the first epistle of John you will find frequent reference to our having been born of God, but no allusion to baptism in the remotest way. No one is born of God apart from faith; hence, when the instrument is spoken of by which the new birth is accomplished, we find it to be the word of God—not baptism—and having faith in that Word, the individual is born again. So the apostle James says, "Of His own will begat He us with *the word of truth.*" (James i. 18.) So the apostle Peter, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by *the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) Plain indeed are these divine statements; too plain to be easily set aside. I know there is a verse in John iii. which says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" but this only confirms what we have said. For why should we understand the Lord as referring to actual water, such as is used in the baptismal font? You will remember this is not the only occasion that the Lord Jesus spoke of water. In the very next chapter He speaks of it, and contrasts it with the literal water drawn from Jacob's well. Here are His words, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall

never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 14.) Clearly this is not real water. Then, in chapter vii. 38, the Lord declares that forth from the one who believes in Him shall flow "rivers of living water." This too cannot be actual water. Why then should it be considered so in chapter iii.? Is it not doing violence to the general analogy of Scripture to interpret it as alluding to the water of baptism? Besides, we have seen that it is by the word of God we are born again, and if you will kindly look at Ephesians v. 26, you will perceive that "washing of water" is by the word—it is distinctly declared to be so; and in John xv. the Lord Jesus says to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through *the word* which I have spoken unto you."

Then as to the possession of eternal life of which you speak, it is never presented in Scripture in connection with baptism, but with *faith*. The passages which declare this are too many to transcribe in full, but we will just jot down some of them for your reference: John iii. 14–16, 36, v. 24, vi. 40, vi. 47, xx. 31. In all of these you will see that *believing* is mentioned in one form or another. It is the believer on the Lord Jesus that has everlasting life, not the baptized; for, alas! we know that multitudes have been baptized, and yet are as destitute of eternal life as the stones of the street.

But there is one thing which we fear you have not sufficiently considered, and that is, the question of your sins, and how it is to be settled. For not only do we need eternal life, but our sins have to be answered for, and put away according to the requirements of God's throne. Has the solemn fact of your being a guilty, condemned sinner (Romans iii. 19) ever exercised your conscience? Have you owned yourself to be such before God? And do you clearly see that nothing short of a sacrifice of infinite value

could set God free to be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus? (Rom. iii. 26.) Such a sacrifice has been offered once for all, and every poor sinner who has faith in that precious blood receives remission of sins, is perfected before God for ever, and his sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more. (Heb. x. 12, 17.) This is the gospel of God set forth in the Scriptures for perishing sinners. On the ground of that mighty work accomplished on Calvary, God can invite sinful men to be reconciled to Him, and can point to that cross as the proof of the greatness, depth, and reality of His love. As many as believe this gospel are forgiven, justified, saved, reconciled to God, have everlasting life, and shall never come into judgment. Very different this from a system of ordinances, which, if faithfully obeyed, would still leave us under "wrath and everlasting damnation," and set us crying to God not to take vengeance on our sins. May God graciously grant you joy and peace in believing; and need we say how glad we shall be to answer any further questions if what we have written is not quite clear?

J. E. (2 Cor. xi. 13, 15.)—There can be no doubt that the false apostles mentioned here were not only unconverted men who had crept in among the saints of God and taught error, but were actual ministers of Satan, and adversaries of the truth. And this was all the more dangerous as their outward conduct had a show of pious zeal and self-abnegation. The low state of the Corinthian assembly had deadened their spiritual discernment, and they fell easy victims to these "deceitful workers." The soul needs to be near to God to detect the working of Satan beneath a religious garb. *How much there is of it on every hand now!*

AN INQUIRER.—The question you ask is one which each must answer for himself. It is one of faith and conscience, and therefore intensely individual. We

cannot walk in the faith of another, nor can we urge another to walk in our faith. To his own master he stands or falls. If a Christian esteems it wrong to be in such a position, to him it is wrong, and his conscience is defiled by his remaining in it. But the matter must be decided by each one for himself before God, according to Romans xiv. 22. More than this we cannot say.

INQUIRER.—We do not consider it competent in the present broken state of the Church of God for any assembly of believers to call themselves "*The assembly of God*" in any given place. If gathered according to divine principles, they would be on the ground of God's assembly, even if only numbering two or three, but that is a very different matter.

W. R.—2 Cor. v. 3. We take this verse to be a pointed word addressed to the consciences of the Corinthians, by which they were to understand that what the apostle was speaking of would only be true of them if they were truly Christ's. The word "*clothed*" is in contrast with "*unclothed*" in verse 4; and when this is seen, the bearing of the passage is more easily perceived. For Paul is treating of what would take place at the coming of the Lord. Then for us who are alive—clothed with our mortal bodies—mortality shall be swallowed up of life. This is the object of earnest Christian desire, only let us take care that though we may not pass into the unclothed state, but be alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord—clothed with flesh and blood—let us take care, I say, that we are not found naked, even as Adam was after his transgression, and before the Lord God clothed him with coats of skin. In other words, let us take care that we are truly Christ's, and not mere professors, destitute of that divine righteousness spoken of in verse 21. You may also refer to Rev. iii. 17, 18.

AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN.

“ I FIND it very difficult to lead a Christian life,” said a young man to me lately.

He had been converted, and had to a certain extent confessed that blessed fact to many ; but yet, like multitudes in similar circumstances, he found the Christian life *difficult*. And why ? Why should a life of practical godliness be difficult ? Why do we find many, specially amongst the young Christian men of the day, oppressed by what they call the *difficulties* of the way ? They believe ; they accept the word of God ; they refuse to be caught by the infidelity that surrounds them ; they desire to live for Christ ; they thankfully own the value of His blood, and admit in measure His claims over them as their risen Lord ; and yet with all that they complain of difficulties, and of their inability to live up to the standard. Now where does the fault lie ? Granted that salvation is known and enjoyed, that eternal life is consciously possessed, and that the experience is that of Romans viii., as contrasted with Romans vii. ; that is, that the soul has acknowledged that “ *in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing,*” but that, on the other hand, it can truly say, “ *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ*

Jesus. . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"—if it can really through grace rejoice in this liberty, then how comes it still to find *difficulty*?

Clearly that difficulty is not one that arises from ignorance of doctrine. The soul in this case does not require truth in order to deliver or set it free from sin. That deliverance is known. No, the hitch does not lie there. A clear gospel has been heard and accredited; and the soul, so far as mere knowledge is concerned, is right enough. Lack of scriptural information is not the point. Thank God for a firm grasp of a gospel that delivers the soul from the entire question of sin, and that places it before Himself in conscious acceptance! But this does not touch the *difficulty* in question.

Truth is moral as well as intellectual; and seeing that we are made of heart as much as of head—the heart having far more influence over us than the brain—it is necessary to own this effect of the Word on our ways. The heart is king, and the other members are its vassals. The *will* is liege-lord, and ever claims the throne.

Now, young men, what you want is a heart—*a heart devoted to Christ*. Oh, how difficulties vanish before the omnipotence of a devoted heart! It is *half-heartedness* that is the cause of all your trouble. You are ashamed of Christ. Your confession of His name is sadly restricted. You often play the coward. Your flag is not nailed to the mast. Oh, what liberty of soul is found in making a final committal of yourself, and in taking a stand of uncompromising decision for the Lord! Reservation is fatal. To hold Christ in one hand and the world in the other is misery to yourself and dishonour to Him. A divided heart means chronic defeat.

You plead circumstances. Well, proper circumstances are no hindrance; but if your line of life is improper; that is, *unscriptural*, leave it. Better be poor with Christ than rich without Him, or only a part of Him. God will never fail the man who follows the Lord. *Christ wants followers*. True service flows from true following. If you do not follow you cannot serve; and in order to follow there must be heart-affection.

Difficulties is not the word. Say that they are *impossibilities*, and then you will know in whose strength to face them. The path of faith is not difficult—it is impossible.

To cross the Red Sea was impossible; yet faith marched through dry-shod. To traverse the desert was impossible; yet faith was fed by the food of

angels, and refreshed by water from the rock. To pass the Jordan was impossible; yet again faith walked through the flood, and placed her foot on the shores of promise.

If a thing be only difficult we will face it in our own strength, and perhaps be beaten. If it be impossible, we repudiate all confidence in ourselves, and go forward in the grace and power of the living God, and the mighty giant falls by a stone from the sling. "Grasshoppers"? Yes, but God can use "a worm to thresh a mountain," and a Paul to establish the Church.

Courage, dear young fellow-Christians! Throw your hearts unreservedly into the interests of Christ, and speak no more of *difficulties*. Love knows none.

Three years after I was converted I went on my knees and asked the Lord the meaning of, "*That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.*" (2 Cor. v. 15.)

And the result? Well, I saw it had been *self hitherto*, but it was to be *Christ henceforth*.

Ah! the sweetness of His love who died for me filled my soul, and now His claims as risen Lord asserted themselves worthily over my affections. A new vista opened, and a new life lay before me.

You will find it in full power if you read the epistle to the Philippians.

In chapter i. Christ is the Life.

In chapter ii. Christ is the Pattern.

In chapter iii. Christ is the Object.

In chapter iv. Christ is the Power.

There we find Christ both the Motive, Power, and Object of the Christian life. What more can be needed ?

There is a new motive—not self, but Christ. A new power—not natural energy, but Christ. And a new, blessed, and worthy object to command my entire life—not our poor, ignoble interests, but a living, loving, glorified Saviour.

“One thing I do,” said the apostle Paul, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Did Paul sit at the foot of “Hill Difficulty” and shed effeminate tears of unmanly irresolution ? Did he shrink from the lions that terrified “Timorous” and “Mistrust” ? Far from it ! No ; man of like passions though he were, his heart was so intense, and his pursuit so keen, that none of these things moved him, neither did he count his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy. Happy man ! Bright, victorious witness !

I am persuaded, dear young fellow-Christian, that these wretched difficulties are but the phantoms of half-hearted indecision, and that they would vanish like vapour if you had but the moral courage to put down your foot in the bold, gracious refusal of all that is of the world.

The first injunction in the book of Proverbs is, that you say “*no*” to evil. (See chap. i. 10, &c.) Oh the immense moral power of that virtuous little adverb! Moses knew its value when he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” And our life, in order to be complete and full-orbed, must be negative as well as positive. Each coin has its reverse and its obverse. Each true Christian must assert his “*no*” as well as his “*yes*”—“*no*” to sin and the world, “*yes*,” by grace, to Christ and His blessed ways.

Go and bathe your heart, dear friend, in the ocean-fulness of His love. Let it be suffused by and satisfied with the story of His grace; and then seek that you *henceforth* may be marked by one bright idea, the glory of Him who died for you and rose again.

J. W. S.

The Danger of Delay.—Are you a procrastinator—putting off till to-morrow that which your heart tells you should be done to-day? I came one night beneath a railway arch; and as I passed along, on a shutter were being carried the mangled remains of one who, in the morning of that day, I had seen strike his spade into the earth in glee. He had been warned again and again. “Come away! It will be down upon you. Come away!” His reply was, “Not yet.” Once more the affectionate voice of the workmen cried to him, “Charles, come away!” “Not yet.” In another moment tons and tons of earth came down upon him, and he paid the penalty of putting off attending to the kind, inviting, warning voice. Oh, how many are there whom “Not yet” has slain!

THE POTTER'S HOUSE.

“The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel,” &c.—JER. xviii. 1-6.

LET us in spirit pay a visit with the prophet Jeremiah to the potter’s house, and may both writer and reader be caused to understand the words of the Lord.

What did the prophet see? The potter busy at work, fashioning a vessel on the wheels. And as he watched their swift revolutions, behold, “the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter.” We fancy we see the look of disappointment upon the faces of the workman and the prophet as the beautiful vessel upon which he had spent such pains became suddenly marred in his hands and worthless.

But a vessel he must have, and hence, returning to his work, he made it *again another vessel*, as seemed good to the potter to make it. The second time the work succeeds; he forms a vessel

suiting to his taste. Evidence of the workman's skill is perceptible throughout; perfect symmetry and matchless design characterize his work; not a single flaw. The potter is satisfied; it has turned out exactly as he wished; the vessel is as it seemed good to him to make.

Jeremiah remains a silent spectator of the scene. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord," &c. We are at no loss then to perceive the signification; for the Lord's words show us that the potter is a figure of Himself, and the clay of Israel.

Israel was chosen by the Lord for His own glory on the earth. The Lord fashioned this privileged people as a choice vessel for His own praise. How marvellous the plans and purposes of the divine workman! How excellent the skill employed in the work! But, alas! alas! the vessel was marred in His hand. Israel is marred. The Lord was disappointed in His people, and was compelled to set them aside. To this day are they a marred vessel on the earth, a people scattered and lost.

But how blessed to know that there is a moment coming when once again the Potter will remould the clay, and Israel shall be a beautiful vessel upon the earth for His glory, the fruit of His own perfect skill. The Lord will put His own comeliness upon His people; His law shall

be written in their hearts (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34); no longer stony, but hearts of flesh. And Israel shall be "another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel."

But may we not gather further instruction, under the Spirit's teaching, from this interesting passage?

As with Israel so is it also with *man*. God created man for His own glory, after His own image and likeness. Man was a beautiful vessel of clay, the workmanship of the divine workman. Wondrous indeed the power and skill displayed in the work. But, alas! this vessel too was marred in the hand of the potter, and man became a moral ruin on the earth.

Now it is deeply important to receive God's thoughts about man's state. We are very slow to accept His judgment with regard to it, and to believe that our case is as bad and as hopeless as it is. And yet how plain His word. Scripture after scripture testifies to our fallen condition. (Rom. iii. 23; 1 Cor. i. 21; Eph. ii. 1-3, iv. 17-19; 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.) But men are blind, and their very blindness adds but one more proof of the fact. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

And not only so, but one would think that the scene around, its misery, disease, and death, the daily record of horrors contained in the million-fold issue of newspapers would open men's eyes in some measure to their state, and lead them to consider their latter end. (Deut. xxxii. 29.) But no, men love darkness rather than light, and hundreds of thousands swiftly tread their short path of life, blind, and content to be so.

Some time ago the writer with two Christian companions was passing the night in a town beautifully situated in a fertile valley, surrounded with wood-clad hills, and mountains in the distance. It was a lovely evening in June, when Nature was clothed in its most beautiful garb. Having visited one or two in the town, and finding we had an hour to spare before dark, we strolled outside. Coming upon an isolated hill covered with trees, we climbed the narrow winding path which led to the top. The view of the surrounding country was exceptionally beautiful, and the setting sun added to its charm. But what was our surprise to find ourselves in the midst of a large *cemetery*, with hundreds of tombs among the trees, or in the open plateau which crowned the hill.

Casting the eye to the left, on the face of the opposite slope stood an immense structure. This upon enquiry we found to be the county lunatic asylum. Again looking off to the left, amongst

other buildings a large hospital met our view. And fronting us, towering on a rocky height overlooking a river, stood a large castle and prison.

To this beautiful locality thousands of tourists direct their steps every year. How many, we wonder, look upon it with the same eyes as we did! The scene was lovely, but sin was manifestly there, and marred all. How powerful this silent testimony to the utter ruin of man, and yet how few have eyes to see it! And this is only one spot among thousands on this sin-stricken earth, where a similar testimony may be seen. How fearful the effects of sin in the human race! A prison for men, because of the terrible fruits of their evil *will*; an asylum for those who lose the *reason* given them of God; an hospital for the poor *body* racked with disease and suffering; and a grave at the end of their toilsome pilgrimage on earth!

What further proof need we of the fall of man? Surely the vessel is marred, utterly marred in the potter's hand.

And, reader, after death the judgment. (Heb. ix. 27.) God has said it.

But, oh, how blessed to turn our thoughts away for a moment from such a scene, and to read in the wondrous Book of God the glorious words, "If any man be in Christ, there is a *new creation*"! (N. T., 2 Cor. v. 17.)

Yes, God has returned again to His work. He

hath made it again as seemed good to the potter to make it. The first vessel, the first Adam, the first man, is marred, utterly marred. God has cast it aside as a worthless thing. The cross of Christ, His Son, is man's judicial end; in one aspect the testimony of God to man's utter ruin and worthlessness. The vessel was marred in Paradise at the outset. Traces of its original beauty remain, but the vessel itself is utterly worthless, and God in grace has begun over again. God wanted a vessel for His glory, to suit Himself, and He has made one as it seemed good to Him. This vessel is *the new creation*.

Glorified as to sin in the finished work of Christ, God raised His Son and glorified Him, *the beginning of the creation of God*. (Rev. iii. 14.) And now all believers in His name, washed from their sins in His precious blood, are a new creation in Him.

"If any man be in Christ, there is *a new creation* [N.T.]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God," &c. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.)

"For we are His workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus* unto good works," &c. (Eph. ii. 10.)

"Having put on [N.T.] the new man, which *after God is created* in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 24.)

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that *created him*: where there is neither Greek

nor Jew . . . but *Christ is all, and in all.*" (Col. iii. 10, 11.)

Wondrous work of God, *the new creation!* Here the foot of Satan has never trod. The empty grave of Christ stands between all in Christ and the enemy of God. No defilement there; no sin there; no evil there. All is perfect; all is in Christ, in Christ for ever before God. No patch-work mending of the old vessel, but an entirely new vessel altogether. No human busybodying here. "Not of works, lest any man should boast. For *we are His workmanship.*" (Eph. ii. 9, 10.) This is God's masterpiece; the heavenly Potter's most excellent work. A new vessel, all His work, both manufacture, pattern, and design, and suited to His eye and heart. No possible flaw here; *all is of God, as it seemed good to Him to make it.*

How blessed for all who are the subjects of His grace! What do you think about it, dear reader? There is no salvation out of Christ; and nothing suited to God but what is His own work. Then why expend useless efforts in trying to improve the flesh, and vainly seek to mend the vessel that God has long given up as marred, utterly marred, and worthless? Wherefore labour for that which satisfieth not? (Isaiah lv. 2.) God has begun over again. By faith we receive pardon, are justified, and have eternal life. And having believed, we are sealed. (Eph. i. 13.) And having eternal life and the Holy Ghost, we are in Christ

a new creation, where all is of God. We form part of the new vessel, so to speak, the blessed and eternal handiwork of God Himself.

But God has further purposes and plans soon to be matured. Meanwhile many in Christ are left for a moment on the earth. What for? *To glorify Him.* So to do we must search and obey His Word. God looks for conduct suited to the favoured position and portion into which His grace has brought us. Many are the exhortations to practice addressed to all that are a new creation in Christ. Space fails to call the reader's attention to more than one.

“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. And let the peace of God [Christ] rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” (Col. iii. 12–17.)

E. H. C.

ZIKLAG BURNT WITH FIRE.

1 SAMUEL xxx.

ZIKLAG was David's last refuge from the pursuit of his enemy, king Saul, after he had been driven from one stronghold to another by Saul's unrelenting, jealous hatred.

David was no coward; on the contrary, he is described as a "mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters;" but though many instances are recorded of his prowess, not one do we find of his hand being uplifted in self-defence against the man whom he knew and owned as the Lord's anointed. He left his "judgment with the Lord," and the Lord took care of him. But notwithstanding his brave heart, and the many deliverances God had given him from his foe, faith and courage failed at last, and "David said *in his heart*, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand." (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) Thus we trace in this "man after God's own heart" the exceeding weakness of the earthen vessel when dependent upon itself, and when the eye is withdrawn from Him who is mighty to save, and in whose strength alone we are really strong.

God *can* help us in our darkest moments, and *no* danger is beyond His power to avert, *no* difficulty beyond the grasp of His omnipotence.

So David escaped, and placed himself under the protection of Achish king of Gath. What a descent! He who had made God his refuge, and under whose wings he had rejoiced, now leans upon an arm of flesh. Out of communion, faith in abeyance, and unbelief in the ascendant, he who had hitherto been content with a pilgrim life, its inconveniences and dangers only furnishing fresh occasions for the display of God's never-failing care, now asks of Achish "a place in some town in the country" that he might dwell there, and the king of Gath gave him Ziklag. In giving him this place Achish no doubt believed that David's own countrymen abhorred him, and that consequently he would be his servant for ever. (Chap. xxvii. 12.) But if this was his thought, and perhaps in faithless moments David's too, it *never* was the thought of God's heart; for in divine counsels this persecuted man was destined to be not only king of Israel, but the royal forerunner of the Messiah, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Such were the purposes respecting David of Him who is "great in counsel and mighty in work." And, dear reader, the thoughts of God respecting His saints now are just as great or greater, though after another order. Chosen in Christ "before the

foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," and destined to be conformed to the image of His Son in glory, such are God's counsels about His people. (Eph. i. 4, 5; Rom. viii. 29.) And even as to temporal things God gives right royally, and our puny expectations are often beggared by the greatness of His bounty. Let us trust God at all times, and under all circumstances. Let us commune with our hearts, and tell them to be quiet from vain imaginings and foolish fears—often groundless—and learn to trust Him wholly.

After a time war was again declared between Israel and the Philistines, and David with his men is called by Achish to go forth against his own countrymen, and against his master, Saul, the Lord's anointed. What a position for David! Surely, confessing past faithlessness, he had reason now to cry to God for help and guidance in so great a strait. But whether he did so or not, God's care was over him, and delivered him from this terrible difficulty. In the sight of Achish David had indeed found favour, but the lords of the Philistines viewed him with angry distrust, and the king, yielding to their demand, bade him and his men return. Thus, in the providence of God, he was not suffered to take part in the

battle which cost the lives of his master Saul, and his deeply-loved and loving friend Jonathan.

David obeyed and returned, but no home welcome awaited him and his men at Ziklag; no children's voices greeted them on the thresholds of their homes. All were gone away, and Ziklag was in ruins; their last refuge burnt with fire. Then, over the desolation, what a wail of grief burst from David and his six hundred! They "lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep." Houses, wives, children, treasures—all gone! What utter desolation! But "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The fruit of David's faithlessness is now before his eyes. He had chosen the easier path, and this is where it had led him.

By-and-by the bitter grief of the people changed to angry resentment against their leader, and they "spake of stoning him." Then, in great distress, David turned the eye of faith to God, and encouraged himself in Him. Not in vain did he do so. God was watching over His servant and His servant's interests, and knew that this deepest of all the sorrows he had yet experienced was but the darkness preceding the dawn.

It is worthy of remark that David never remembered this treatment of his men against them when he shortly afterwards came to the throne.

"When Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by

Urim, nor by prophets." With poor, despised, and outcast David, now restored in soul, the case was different. The God whom he had loved and trusted for so long, and to whom Saul only rendered the homage of the lips and heartless ceremonies, answers *him* at once, telling him to pursue the troop that had done the mischief, because that he should surely "overtake" and without fail "recover." So he went, he and his six hundred, according to the counsel of the Lord, and eventually recovered *all* they had lost, and more; for, of the spoiling of their enemies, David sent presents to his Jewish brethren in many of the cities of Judah.

David was but two days in desolate Ziklag, when the news came of the death of Saul and Jonathan. There was no unseemly triumph at this permanent deliverance from his foe. Mourning, weeping, fasting, and rent garments tell what David thought and felt; while over Saul and Jonathan he uttered the most touching lamentation—"How are the mighty fallen!"

After this David again enquired of the Lord as to whether he should go up to any of the cities of Judah, and to which. The Lord answered him at once, telling him to go up, and to Hebron. Thither he went, and there the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the house of Judah.

Happy transition from ruins to a kingdom—a kingdom given, owned, and blessed by the Lord!

Turning now from the history of this man after God's own heart, can we not, as children of God, learn a deep lesson from this interesting story? We see David's failure in faith, and its consequences; we also see him bereft of every earthly joy and comfort, looking out of this dark sorrow to the light of God's presence, where his soul gathered fresh strength to enable him to rise and meet his difficulties, instead of sinking in despair. And, in the same way, our God would have us take our overwhelming griefs to Him, tell Him all about them, wait for *His* directions as to them, and then perhaps, like David, we too shall prove that the hour of our deepest perplexity, when all seems utterly lost, is just the time when God's bright purposes concerning us are nearest their accomplishment.

His purpose regarding His servant David *was* accomplished in His own way and in His own time. And so will the thoughts of His heart towards us be fulfilled also, both for things temporal and eternal; but let us see to it that we are not retarding the fulfilment of *our* heart's desire, or the still greater and better desire of *God's* heart for us, by our unteachableness, headstrong waywardness, and foolish, vain endeavour to "*bring to pass*" (Ps. xxxvii. 5) by our own unrestful efforts. Our times are in the Lord's hands. Oh, to rest in the Lord, and wait *patiently* for Him!

A. B.

“HE EVER LIVETH!”

HEBREWS vii. 25.

“HE ever liveth!” Oh, my soul, what precious words
for thee!

He who in love gave His own life, who *died* to set thee
free;

“He ever liveth” now in heaven, to keep His people
here,

And while He sits upon the throne, oh, what is there to
fear?

“He ever liveth!” Tell it forth; and sure as *He* o’er-
came,

So sure shall each loved, precious one, who trusteth in
His name,

Though griefs and cares may press around, and trials ever
new,

The Christ of God, who ever lives, will bear us safely
through!

“He ever liveth!” Truth most sweet, it calms the troubled
breast,

And soon with our blest, living Lord we shall for ever
rest;

But while we tread the wilderness, which His own feet
have trod,

He in the glory ever lives, our Advocate with God.

O God, we thank Thee that Thy Son, whom Thou in love
didst give

To *die* for us, now raised up, for us doth *ever live*,

To keep us on our desert path until, before Thy face,

Faultless He shall present us there, as trophies of Thy
grace.

E. W.

A VOICE FROM INDIA.

SINCE writing the last appeal* there has been great cause for thankfulness in that the Lord has stirred up many in England and in America to write and express deep interest in the Lord's work abroad ; and we have been much cheered to know that in many places prayers are ascending to the Lord of the harvest on behalf of the work out here. Moreover several brethren have written to say that their hearts are exercised before the Lord as to whether He would have them come out to labour in this country or not. As yet none have been able to say, "The Lord has made my way clear to me, and I am coming." Nevertheless we are sure that He who delights in blessing, and is certain to answer the cry of faith, will, in His own good time and way, send out the needed labourers. And blessed will he be who thus comes out, not in the energy of the flesh, but as sent of the Lord, and in dependence on Him alone. He may have indeed to sow with tears, but assuredly he shall reap abundantly with joy.

We who are in India will indeed gladly welcome anyone who may thus come ; yet we would plainly warn any who may be thinking of such a path that unless sent of God they will only break down. We do indeed need to see clearly that the flesh profiteth nothing, for it is the work of the Spirit of God alone that abides. Knowing this, we look up in confidence to Him who has begun to stir up the minds of the brethren about this matter to carry on the work which

* See No. 61, January, 1889.

is thus commenced, so that those who have such light and privileges as we have may delight to dispense them freely to those less privileged. God grant that others with less light may not have to rise up in judgment against us in this matter.

In the meantime the Lord has been graciously working to raise up witnesses on true scriptural ground from among the people of the land. A catechist in the Presbyterian Mission, who has a wife and six children, has lately resigned his post in order to labour in dependence on Christ alone. He has been received into fellowship, and has gone to labour as an evangelist in the Patiala State, where one-and-a-half millions of people have as yet had no preacher of the gospel among them.

Another evangelist, who lives at Simla in the hot weather, and keeps a little shop, and travels as a pedlar and preacher in cold weather, was received into fellowship this week. He is very uneducated, and has only learnt to read slowly and with difficulty; but he is a dear, simple soul, and has firm faith in God, who will, I doubt not, much bless him. He had been learning much from God in secret, and was quite prepared to receive the truth as a little child when presented to him.

With these two preaching the gospel, and Musa Shah also (of whom mention has been made in "Letters of interest"), it is only to be expected that the Lord will gather in souls from among the people of the land. And then will assuredly arise many difficulties on which I need not enlarge here—anyone acquainted with India will understand. Indeed, the missionaries tell us that what we hold, though it may work in England, is quite unworkable in India. We, however, who know that the ground is divine, are sure that He with whom all

things are possible, will assuredly carry on His work, and by means of base and mean things glorify His Son and exalt His name. Of course, the difficulties—and they are great—cast us all the more on the Lord, for we see our helplessness, and how easily we may, if not led of Him, dishonour rather than glorify His name.

Another matter of deep interest just now is this: A gifted man, who was formerly a noted Mohammedan controversialist before he became a Christian, has received some truth, and desires to be received into fellowship. It was, however, thought that it would be better to see more of him. He is now labouring in the heart of the native Christians of the Sealkot and Gudaspur districts, and proclaiming with much fervency the truth as far as he has learnt it; and many are much interested, though there is much opposition. Six of the Christians in that part seem determined to leave their sects, and henceforth to meet as Christians only. They desire to meet those in fellowship, and I greatly long that some teacher might go there. But who is to go I know not, especially as the place is rather difficult to get at. It is the first time, as far as I know, that anything of the sort has happened in India, and is very much on the hearts of the few out here who take interest in the work.

God forbid that, in order to magnify the claims of God's work in heathendom, we should underrate the claims of Christendom. On the contrary, we would fully admit that the case of Christendom is even more urgent than that of heathendom, because with the former the day of grace has nearly closed, while with the latter there is yet hope after the rapture has taken place. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) Nevertheless, seeing that

the Lord enjoined that His death and resurrection, and repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem, it is surely not too much to say that every Christian should have the deepest sympathy with the work of the gospel among the heathen, and that every Christian should mourn and humble himself over the sad fact that, after more than eighteen hundred years since the Lord's commands, still more than half the people in the world have practically never heard the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Of course, only a very small proportion of the Christians in more favoured lands can actually go out to the regions beyond. But everyone can take a deep interest in the work; and any who will thus take an interest, and humble himself or herself before the Lord with supplications and prayers about this, will assuredly be a mighty helper. Why is it that from among those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ so very few have gone to labour in heathen lands? Is it not because of the little interest in the matter taken in the various gatherings? And if in the gatherings there were much prayer for the Lord's work abroad, might we not say that labourers would be forthcoming? May we not say, "We have not, because we ask not"? The Lord is waiting to be gracious, though we have been very backward hitherto. God grant that we, with our greater light, may lag back no more in the work to which He is assuredly calling us.

Moreover, though I am only personally acquainted with the Lord's work in Upper India, yet news comes from all parts of India, from China, Japan, and else-

where of souls being gathered into Christendom and into the house of God. Have we no responsibilities towards these? Is it nothing to us that these have heard nothing but kingdom truth, and that though many are born of God, yet know nothing of the place of sonship, with its joy and liberty, which we enjoy, and have practically never heard of the Church of Christ? May it not be that many of the internal troubles that have come upon us are owing to this very thing, that we have freely received but have not freely given; that we have been selfish, and have reaped the results of selfishness? Therefore the hand of our God has been upon us, that we may be roused out of our sloth, and that we may seek with all our hearts that His name may be glorified over all the earth.

Assuredly a very critical time is coming in India. I allude, not to the storms that are imminent as to politics, but as to the church of God out here. There is no love among Indian Christians for our English sects. To them they are meaningless names; and they would gladly be rid of them, were it not for English money and for personal affection for the missionaries. The bands that have held these Christians hitherto will not hold them very much longer; and many are already protesting against them, though, alas! they know not the truth. Are we going to give them the truth which the Lord has given us for this very purpose, or will we force Him to raise up other instruments to do His work? Blessed be God, He is not dependent on us. He will do that which He please, and well is it for us that it is so. If we are one with Him in that which He is working out, then we shall indeed reap a rich reward; but if not, He will

still carry out His purposes, but we shall be the losers. But surely He will not speak to us in vain as to this.

We believe that the Lord is soon coming, and it is well. But are our hearts really exercised as to what He shall find when He does come? We rejoice in the twos and threes gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus in Christendom. Are we not also to long that among those now being gathered out of heathendom there may also be twos or threes gathered to the same Name, and, on the same ground, waiting for the same Lord, while knowing with us their place as sons of God and membership of Christ? Many of them are doubtless very illiterate and ignorant, and those from whom they are drawn are doubtless very debased. But are we, the followers of Him who was the Friend of publicans and sinners, to love them any the less on this account?

Let no one indeed come out to labour hoping to enjoy an easy time of it, or to see what the country and the people are like; but let him who comes have the firm conviction that he is sent of God; that God will clear his way for him, and open the door of witness; that God will sustain him all along the way, and not only satisfy his soul, but supply as well for all his earthly need, and that God will assuredly take care that he shall not fail of a rich reward. He shall go out in the strength of the Lord; his soul shall be kept in peace in the midst of deep waters, and he shall have rejoicing in all that which the Lord has given him to do.

As before, I would state that I will gladly answer any one who desires information, but having much correspondence I can only write briefly.

MAJOR JACOB, R.E.

Ambala, North India, March 14th, 1889.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

INQUIRER.—To speak of the Holy Spirit as being nothing more than natural conscience or a mere influence is deadly error indeed. We believe the Holy Spirit to be as truly a Divine Person as the Father and the Son, and this the Scriptures clearly testify. Was it conscience that descended on the Lord Jesus when baptized of John in Jordan? (John i. 32, 33.) And did He by conscience cast out demons? (Matt. xii. 28.) Were His disciples sent to teach and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of conscience? (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Or could this be said of a mere influence? Did conscience say, “Separate *Me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have called them”? (Note the *I* and *Me*.) And did conscience send them forth to their appointed work? (Acts xiii. 2-4.) Are believers exhorted not to grieve an influence? (Eph. iv. 30.) And is it with a natural conscience they have been sealed? (Eph. i. 13.) Is conscience the earnest of the future inheritance, or is an influence the earnest? (Eph. i. 14.) Is it either conscience or an influence that “speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”? (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2.) Many such questions we could ask—questions which suggest but one answer, and that answer an emphatic denial of the Holy Spirit being either conscience or an influence.

FOR CHRIST.

WE Christians are in the world, although not of it. We are not put here by accident or left here by mistake. We are placed by God Himself in the very circumstances where we can best further His interests and be most pleasing to Him.

In the purposes of God the Church was to be a united and irresistible testimony to the power of divine grace. Though miracles and signs might cease, there should still be three witnesses for God—sufficient to convict mankind, and qualified to guide sinners to the refuge of divine mercy. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (2 Cor. xiii. 1.) The Word—plain, direct, searching. The Holy Spirit—a mighty unseen power urging on the conscience conviction of sin. The Church—a visible present unity, to which the world might turn for practical illustration of Christian principles. The first two remain in unaltered integrity, and the world stands condemned. Had the last not failed, who shall tell what the result might have been? The overwhelming witness of a united, living Church, lacking one inconsistent member, would have been a testimony more potent than any other miracle.

It is useless to regret the failure of a corporate testimony, save that each may confess as his own

the common sin of all. There is still the place of individual witness, and let us covet the high honour of occupying it in the Lord's name.

In 1848, when the siege of Rome was drawing to an end, and the flower of young Italy was slain before the walls, Garibaldi gathered his devoted followers around him to make one desperate effort to check the enemy's advance. Willing to die in a cause that was dearer than life, for two long hours they fought in the breach, and their irresistible energy held the whole French army at bay. Thus can men combat in an earthly cause. How much can we dare or do in our Master's name?

Reader, on every hand an impious infidelity is assailing the precious truth committed to our care. False friends distort its meaning, and cover it with the rubbish of their own inventions; and the few who are true at heart are irresolute and disunited. Too many are engaged in unseemly dissensions or useless speculations. Nice points of doctrine are being discussed while the enemy is undermining the citadel of truth.

Let us awake from our slumber of indifference, and definitely take our stand for God. May every half-hearted reader henceforth be out and out for Christ, and all "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Should we reach a death-bed, where things of time are weighed in the light of eternity, we shall all wish we could live our

time over again, and be for Christ in reality, and not in name only. Let us learn the lesson now while we may profit by it, and not hereafter when it will be too late.

There can be no effect without a cause, and mere exhortation to devotedness will not produce it. It is only as we meditate upon all the cross has revealed to us of the heart of Jesus that we shall be willing to endure all things for His dear name, and do anything that brings Him glory. It is His devotedness to objects so unworthy, so worthless as ourselves, that alone can awaken in our selfish hearts an answering echo. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.)

Are we ashamed to bear His name through a world that hates it? He was not ashamed to bear our sins, and all the wrath of God against them. Do we shrink from giving up some doubtful pleasure for His sake? He sold all that He had to purchase our redemption. Do we feel that association with the poor and despised of His flock is hardly respectable, or consistent with our position in society? Neither was it respectable or consistent with His position in heaven to die as a malefactor between two thieves. Will not living godly in Christ Jesus involve us in much persecution? It will; but since He suffered untold sorrows for our sins, we may well bear our light affliction, which is but for a moment, with the assurance that if we suffer we shall also reign with Him. (2 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12.) S. E. M. N.

RESCUE THE PERISHING.

A GROUP of individuals, the exact number of whom I cannot tell, was safely housed close to the seashore. From the windows they could look out on the wide sea.

There had been a great storm, and the fierce winds had driven upon the near rocks a goodly ship freighted with many a precious human life.

Hope of escape there was none unless help reached them from the land, and night was coming on to add a thousand horrors to the scene.

Now and then a huge wave broke over the ship and swept into the abyss some priceless soul, whose dying shrieks were heard above the roar of the angry sea.

Will no one attempt their rescue? Shall they go down to the deep with the words of the Psalmist upon their lips, "No man cared for my soul"?

See! there is the lifeboat ready to be launched, and One on board who beckons and calls to the group for some to join Him in seeking to save the perishing. Strange to say, His calls were unheeded; yet there was not one in that company that had not been rescued from a similar fate, rescued by that same boat, and by the very One who now stood beckoning them, and who bore on His hands and feet deep scars, which told of the

storm He had braved for them. Could they forget this? And would they not venture forth under His leadership? Some at least might be snatched from the terrible wreck.

Let us draw near and listen to what they say.

“He is clearly not calling us,” said one. “Our mission is not that. Such work belongs to others, not to us.” Whereupon he drew his chair nearer the fire, and placing his feet on the fender, soon sank into a profound slumber.

“It would give us pleasure to see them saved,” says a second, “but what can we do? If they are to be saved they will be, and we can neither help nor hinder. It had better be left to God to do His own work in His own way and in His own time.”

“You see,” says a third, “were we to engage in such an enterprise we should find it very inconvenient. It would disturb our plans, and mar our comfort, and the excitement of the thing would be more than my nerves could stand. Besides, do you not think we are called to a higher service?”

And when another of their company, with a vivid recollection of his own rescue, ventured tremblingly to say, “But *He* calls, and time is short, and many from the doomed ship have already perished,” the only answer he received from some was cold looks and significant shrugs of the shoulders, others maintained a rigid silence, and a few whispered to one another that such a person could never have been in the line of the testimony.

But the lifeboat must be manned, and if none from this favoured group will go others shall have the honour. Men with true hearts and brave step forward and place themselves by the great Captain's side. Off goes the boat, followed by angel-eyes; for heaven looks down upon the scene. The wreck is reached; and as one after another is brought off there is joy in the presence of the heavenly host—joy that has its beginning with Him whose voice is heard high above all, saying, "Rejoice with Me."

Reader, does our parable need to be declared? Lift up your eye, and you shall see the sinking ship. The unsaved multitudes all around are on board. The gospel is the lifeboat. Christ bids you man it, and assures you of His presence. "Lo, I am with you alway." His call is urgent, and the need is great. Walk not in the steps of the slothful, who are content to leave this work to others; and if you know not how to begin ask God to teach you, and He who calls you to this service will not leave you long without an answer.

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." (Judges v. 23.)

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezekiel iii. 18.)

“THE SAME NIGHT.”

WHAT a depth of meaning is often expressed in two or three words in the Scriptures! The three at the head of this paper are most touching in the connection in which they are found.

You will find them in 1 Cor. xi. 23: “For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus *the same night* in which He was betrayed took bread,” &c. The whole subject is familiar to every Christian—the Lord’s Supper.

What do these three words specially teach us?

We might have conceived that the work the Lord Jesus was about to do would have occupied *all* His thoughts, and engaged *all* His attention. But no; He thinks of the love of His disciples, and would fain recall that love, so prone to wander, back to Himself, again and again.

So He institutes that feast of remembrance—the emblems so touching, speaking of the wondrous sacrifice of Himself for God’s glory and our need.

And He did not under-estimate the ordeal He was just about to pass through. After the Supper was ended, He went to the mount of Olives; and as the dark shadow of the cross fell athwart His pathway more deeply than ever, and the thought of being forsaken of God pressed upon

Him in all its near reality, we read, "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke xxii. 44.) He knew that darkness, which no human eye could pierce, would thicken round Him; that suffering of untold bitterness, which no human mind could gauge, would be His in its terrible intensity. Yet He yearned for the answering love of those for whom all these things would be endured. Thus He gathered His loved round Himself for their last meal.

Saints of God, is this not enough to melt us to tears? Can it be possible that any blood-bought one can lightly esteem this privilege? Does not the Lord look for the answering love of our poor hearts as we gather around His table? Ah! surely there is a simplicity of language, and an exquisite pathos in those portions of Scripture which give us the institution of the Supper.

As He sits at that table, He speaks words of loving counsel and encouragement which must have burned in the souls of His disciples. Read John xiii. 31 to the end of chapter xvii.—scriptures which we would delight rather to ponder and meditate upon, than attempt to discuss or expound. He said in the garden, "Now is *My* soul troubled, and what shall I say?" yet a few moments before He had said to His loved ones, as they clustered around Him at that last, sad meal, "Let not

your heart be troubled.” He was just about to be forsaken of God, and exposed to the cold blast of judgment, yet to His disciples He could speak of the Father’s house, and the place He was going to prepare by His presence there for them.

He goes out into the night, and is dragged through scene after scene of revolting cruelty and high-handed injustice, till at length the darkness closes around that central cross, and all God’s judgment upon sin is dealt out upon Him.

But now He is in the glory with redemption and resurrection glories crowning His brow, once wreathed with thorns. Afresh from the glory does He tell out His desire that His own should remember Him in the appointed way.

Ponder these things; let our hearts dwell upon His matchless love; and then in some feeble measure there will be the answer from our poor wayward hearts. “We love Him because He *first* loved us.”

“TILL HE COME.” (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

Again does the Holy Ghost express a world of meaning in a little compass.

The Lord’s table is the link between the cross and the glory.

As we sit around His table, the three precious words, “*The same night,*” carry our thoughts back to the cross; so the three words, “*Till He come,*” carry our thoughts on to a future which may be ours at any moment.

It is well-nigh 1900 years ago since the Lord Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly," and the eager response was given, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Empires have risen and crumbled into decay; generations have come and gone; and still that promise is unfulfilled.

It is now more than fifty years ago since God was graciously pleased to revive in a marked way the truth of the Lord's coming.

Sleeping Christendom was aroused by the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom." Matthew xxv. says of the foolish virgins, "While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came."

There is a spirit of anxious enquiry in Christendom. Many professors, thank God, have found oil for their vessels with their lamps. But, alas! many, not liking the reality of these things, are seeking satisfaction by tearing every leaf out of the Bible which meets not with their approval, or agrees not with their notions; many are expunging from their theology cardinal truths, upon which everything hangs, and resting satisfied with a shell without a kernel—with that which can charm the ear, but cannot satisfy the conscience.

The Lord is very near. Christendom is restless, as if expecting something. Satan is raging. The flood of wickedness is rising on every hand.

Oh, may the divine hope of the Lord's near return burn brightly in our hearts! As we gather around Himself, and at His table whereon

are set those emblems which speak so forcibly of a Saviour, once in death for us, may our hearts be carried forward to the time when we shall see and be like Him who is now living and glorified. Then these remembrances, blessed as they are, will for ever cease. Faith changed to sight; hope to glad realization; and love dwelling supreme in that scene of ineffable bliss.

May these six words command our heart's attention: "The same night," and, "Till He come."

A. J. P.

THE MORN DRAWS NEAR.

"I am the Bright and Morning Star."—REV. xxii. 16.

"Behold, I come quickly."—REV. xxii. 12.

THE morn draws near, and soon the Lord shall come;
 The One for whom our souls have learned to sigh,
 The One who loves us with an endless love,
 Has told us in His Word that He is nigh.
 Unseen, we love Him. How we long to see
 The Son of God, in whom is God's delight!
 The chiefest of ten thousand, perfect Man, [night.
 Whose love has cheered us through the long, dark
 He calls us brethren—great the mystery!
 Joined by the Holy Ghost to Him on high, [down
 We're one with Him. 'Twas love that brought Him
 To this dark scene, for us to bleed and die.
 "I quickly come," He says, and no delay will make;
 That word shall speed the moments swiftly by.
 To live to Him be our one object now,
 And then be with Him for eternity.

F.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

THE question is sometimes asked of us as to how far it is right for a Christian to be united in marriage with an unbeliever. By a Christian I mean a truly saved person; and by an unbeliever one who has not faith in our Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul.

Before saying what we have to say on this subject, we would remind the reader that the children of God are called, and set apart unto the obedience of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter i. 2.) We understand the apostle's words in this way, that just as the blessed Lord when on earth loved to do the will of God, and found in the doing of it His meat and drink, so should it be with the believer now. He does the will of God, not by constraint, as if he were under law, but delights to do it. God's will governs him. This being so, what determines a thing to be right or wrong is the will of God. The question, therefore, with which we began may be stated thus: Is it according to the will of God that a believer should be joined in marriage with one who is not?

You may find yourself from time to time, dear believer in Jesus, in circumstances that make you deeply feel your need of divine guidance. We know Him who has said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth

unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James i. 5.) But in reference to the matter we are now discussing, there is no need to wait on God for direction. His will is already known, and all that is needed on our part is an obedient heart. And it is a happy thing that on such a subject, where the affections if engaged are apt to warp the judgment, God has spoken in no uncertain voice. The hallowed pages of the Old Testament, and those of the New alike deal with it, and the testimony of the one is confirmed and strengthened by the other.

Have you ever noticed in your reading that the Israelites of old were expressly forbidden to sow their fields with divers seeds? Why did God bid Moses tell them that? Could not such a matter be left to the discretion of the farmer who, knowing the nature of the soil, would be able to decide whether it would be to his advantage to sow with mingled seed or not? Why was it not permitted to him to plough his land with an ox and an ass together? Could he not be trusted to see that no harm should come of it, and that the weaker vessel should not be overburdened and cruelly used? And for what reason were the people not to clothe themselves with garments made of woollen and linen? Were they not competent judges of what would be most comfortable and conducive to health?

(Deut. xxii. 9-11.) All such reasonings were silenced by Jehovah's thrice-repeated "Thou shalt not." Can you doubt that under these seemingly singular prohibitions lay a great abiding principle, too likely to be forgotten; and do you need to be told what that principle is?

Turning for a moment to 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, we find the Spirit of God, by the pen of Paul, speaking to us on this wise, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Place this passage by the side of that in Deut. xxii. 9-11, and each will throw light upon the other. What an illustration of that fine saying of Augustine, that the New Testament is enfolded in the Old, and the Old unfolded in the New.

And this is clear and beyond dispute, that

Moses, the man of God, solemnly warned the tribes of Israel against making marriages with the people of the land whither they were going. "Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son," were his emphatic words. Full well did he foresee the result of such unholy unions. "They will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods." Vain for them to say that it would not be so. The enemy of God, and of their souls, might suggest that naught but good could come of such alliances; for thereby the idolatrous partner would be weaned from his idols to serve the living God. Delusive dream!—the child of disobedience and unbelief. Instead of good, nothing but evil should come of it; for Jehovah would be forgotten, and other gods served, until His anger would be kindled against them, and they should be suddenly destroyed. (Deut. vii. 1-4.) Do any require an example of this? They may find one in high places, even in Solomon, of whose sin in this respect Nehemiah vehemently reminded the Jews, who had themselves trespassed against God in this very thing. (Nehemiah xiii. 23-30.)

If this was so with an earthly people, will any be bold enough to say that what was forbidden to them is allowed to the children of God now, heavenly as they are in birth, character, and hopes? Shall the Jew be denied such marriages,

and the Christian be suffered to contract them? Shall we sow our fields with mingled seed? Shall we yoke the ox and the ass together? or wear a garment of linen and woollen? And if any persist in doing this, can that soul hope to escape a just recompence of reward? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.)

Two things God has bound together; namely, obedience to His will, and our true and lasting happiness. Surely we know God well enough to believe that He would not forbid us aught that was for our real good. It was here that Eve fell, and lent her ear to the serpent's lie. Every admonition, every warning addressed to us in God's word, proceeds from the same infinite love that has thought of our eternal need, and so richly provided for it. Shall we not bow to His will, and seek from Him the needed strength to place our own beneath the foot? Many a plausible reason may be urged to tempt you to such a step. You think perhaps you could be so useful in that home whose door is thrown open to you, and which you are invited to enter, though the one who invites you is no lover and follower of your Lord. Other circumstances join to press you forward. Your present surroundings are not the most

agreeable, and this would free you from them. Your friends are fewer than they were, and the years are passing by. Yes, and a thousand other pleas equally affecting might be found, but where is God in all this? Are you not His child? Does He not love and care for you? Shall He, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground—shall He, I say, not carry you in His bosom, even to grey hairs and old age? Trust Him then in your weakness. He will be a Father unto you. Let His will be your pleasure, and whatever may be the consequences, leave them to Him. Obedient and subject, His blessing shall be yours, and you shall prove the truth of that sustaining promise, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Heb. xiii. 5.)

We conclude in borrowed words, more weighty than our own. “It is absolutely impossible that a Christian should allow himself to marry a worldly person, without violating all his obligations towards God and towards Christ. If a child of God allies himself to an unbeliever it is evident he leaves Christ out of the question, and that he does so voluntarily in the most important event of his life. It is just at such a moment when he ought to have the most intimate communion of thought, affection, and interest with Christ, that He is totally excluded! The believer is yoked with an unbeliever. He has chosen to live without Christ; he has deliberately preferred

to do his own will and to exclude Christ rather than give up his will in order to enjoy Christ and His approbation. He has given his heart to another, abandoning Christ, and refusing to listen to Him. What a fearful decision! To settle to spend one's life thus, choosing for a companion an enemy of the Lord's. The influence of such a union is necessarily to draw the Christian back into the world. He has already chosen to accept that which is of the world as the most beloved object of his heart; and only things of the world please those who are of the world, although their fruit is death. (Rom. vi. 21, 23.) What a dreadful position! Either to fail in faithfulness to Christ, or to have constantly to resist just where the tenderest affection ought to have established perfect unity. The fact is, that unless the sovereign grace of God comes in the Christian man or woman always yields, and enters little by little upon a worldly walk. Nothing is more natural. The worldly man has only his worldly desires. The Christian, besides his Christianity, has the flesh; and further, he has already abandoned his Christian principles in order to please his flesh, by uniting himself to one who does not know the Lord. The result of such an alliance is that he has not a thought in common on the subject which ought to be the most precious to his heart with the person dearest to him in the world. They will have nothing but quarrels; as

it is written, 'How can two walk together, except they be agreed?' (Amos iii. 3.) If not, they must first yield to worldliness, and then take pleasure in it; but this sad result is lost sight of when they first place themselves in the position which renders it inevitable. . . . May God grant to the reader of these lines, and to all His children, to seek His presence day by day."

A Touching Sight.—"Some time ago I was wandering from rock to rock among the Highlands searching after health, and there, day by day, one of the most touching sights I ever saw was to be seen. When the heat of the sun was up, an hour before mid-day, without exception there was a general move among all the cattle feeding on the pastures there. What was it for? The dam led her offspring to the shelter of the rock; the dam went and lay down under the jutting precipice or in the split cavern, and her offspring followed and laid down there too. Fathers, mothers, lead your children to Christ; go before them to the cleft rock, lie down under its shadow, and let them follow you there. Oh, let your example and your inviting voice call them around you! Be telling of this salvation to your child. Tell it to your *enemy*, it will make him a friend; tell it to the *stranger*, it will make him at home; tell it in the workshop; be not afraid to confess Christ while you strike the anvil. Oh, it will make your heart rejoice! Tell it in your walks, and tell it at home; tell it in your sickness, and tell it in your health; and tell it to your Lord in praise."

SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

IN Genesis i. we see that God provides food and everything that is necessary to life before He creates a living creature; and in John vi. the Lord speaks of life in connection with food. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life." Now in the history of souls, especially of young believers, we find one great effort of the enemy is to keep them from feeding upon Christ. He cannot get them, perhaps, to read an out-and-out novel; so he presents a story-book, a fiction, or what may justly be called a religious novel; and this in most cases is eagerly read, and the soul of that young believer is getting less and less of Christ, and more and more conformed to the world. What mercy, if the Lord wakes him up before he goes fast to sleep under the influence of the devil's drugs! One who through grace perceived a snare of this kind wrote to a friend, "Please tell — that the little book he left me to read smells of Satan's dispensary." The heavenly food has a smell, a fragrance of its own. There is nothing like it, so that one who knows it can easily detect what is spurious. Whoever loves the pure word of God, and owns its divine and sole authority over the soul, shudders at the light way in which it is put into these books, where it ought never to

be found, and where, if found, it will judge. A jest on one page, and the Bible quoted on the next! Let us be careful how we use the word of God; and never let us use it unless our souls are in communion with Himself in speaking one to another. We know Christians who are ruined for Christ because of this very thing. Nothing is easier than for a Christian to be spoiled. Galatians v. 7 shows this plainly. Take heed lest *you* be spoiled.

Now for the remedy; for it is useless to speak unless we can point out the remedy. One has done so in the following words, to which the writer says Amen. May the reader prove it. "There is a great danger of the intellect outstripping the conscience and the affections. Hence it is that so many seem at first to make such rapid progress up to a certain point; but there they stop short, and appear to retrograde. Like an Israelite gathering up more manna than he required for one day's food, he might appear to be accumulating the heavenly food far more diligently than others; yet every particle beyond the day's supply was not only useless, but far worse than useless, inasmuch as it 'bred worms.' Thus is it with the Christian. He must *use* what he gets. He must feed upon Christ as a matter of actual need, and the need is brought out in actual service. Christian, see carefully to it that you are not only saved by Christ, but also living on Him. Make Him the daily portion of your soul. Seek Him

‘early,’ seek Him ‘only.’ When anything solicits your attention, ask the question, ‘Will this bring Christ to my heart? Will it unfold Him to my affections or draw me near to His person?’ If not reject it at once; yes, reject it, though it present itself under the most specious appearance and with the most commanding authority. If your honest purpose be to get on in the divine life, to progress in spirituality, to cultivate personal acquaintance with Christ, then challenge your heart solemnly and faithfully as to this. Make Christ your habitual food.”

Oh for the reverence of our fathers for God’s holy Word! May He graciously stir up our souls in these last days to search it as one that seeks for hid treasure, and to be found doers of it. As another writes, “Our business is to act according to the Word, come what may. The result will show that the wisdom of God was in it.”

“God, Thine everlasting portion,
Feeds thee with the mighty’s meat;
Price of Egypt’s hard extortion—
Egypt’s food no more to eat.

“Art thou weaned from Egypt’s pleasures?
God in secret thee shall keep;
There unfold His hidden treasures,
There His love’s exhaustless deep.

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

ELIJAH'S PRAYER.

1 KINGS xviii.

WE read in the following passage of scripture concerning king Ahab, that he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him (1 Kings xvi. 33). Prompted by the wicked Jezebel, to whom the king was united; he taught the children of Israel the worship of Baal, which was attended, as we shall see, with severe chastisement from God.

Ahab and his people were the subjects of two remarkable prayers. It is to the second that the reader's attention is invited. These prayers were offered by the prophet Elijah, and are referred to in the epistle of James as follows: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (James v. 17, 18.)

The first prayer was offered when Israel's sins were ripe for correction, and when Elijah, invested with authority from God, came to Ahab, saying, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (1 Kings xvii. 1.) The second prayer was offered when the holiness of

God had been vindicated at the altar of sacrifice, when the people in self-judgment exclaimed, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God," after which the prophets of Baal were slain.

Elijah had been contending for God's claims at the altar. He had seen His people humbled and put to shame for their folly; and having slain the false prophets, he dismissed king Ahab, saying, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." No doubt the king would rejoice to receive this dismissal, and Elijah be greatly relieved by the absence of the king. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi. 14.) Ahab would be pleased to go to his feasting, and Elijah left free to isolate himself with his servant for prayer. The words of this prayer are not recorded, but the Holy Spirit's comment upon it is this: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James v. 16.) Both the position which Elijah's servant occupied on this occasion, and the words that passed between his master and him, are deeply interesting. He was not called upon to pray; but whilst his master was bowed in prayer, he was commanded to "look towards the sea." The servant scanning the horizon, the prophet engaged in prayer; the former looking out for that which the latter was asking for.

When prayer is accompanied with expectation,

as in the case of Elijah, we then "look out" for that for which we are looking up. This was not so in the case when Peter, who had been prayed for by the assembly, was brought out of prison by the angel. When the apostle stood at the door of the house, where they were still praying, and the maid announced his arrival, they said, "Thou art mad."

"Unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain."

One Lord's-day evening during the past winter two Christian women, well known to each other, attended a little room in the village of C—— where the gospel is occasionally preached. Hungering for the word of life, they went to the room that night hoping to get food for their souls. But no preacher came, and they were the only two persons present. They agreed therefore to spend the time in prayer, asking the Lord of the harvest to send one of His labourers to visit them. The next morning a postcard was received from a servant of the Lord, who was staying at a neighbouring place, saying he would be pleased to come over in the evening to minister the word of God. They received the preacher with pleasure, and his postcard as an answer to prayer. No one "who knows the worth of prayer" would wonder after this that those women should have been left in such a trying position that evening.

The prophet Elijah's prayers are doubtless recorded for the encouragement of God's children in all ages. They assure us that where righteousness

is practised by His people, and the spirit of prayer is found, blessing will be the sure result. And, in addition to this, we are lovingly exhorted, in Heb. vi. 12, to be followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. The *faith* that counts on God and the *patience* that waits His pleasure are beautifully blended in Elijah's prayer. The latter was tested so long as his servant said, "There is nothing." This he did six times, after which the prophet said, "Go again seven times," thus reminding us of James i. 4: "Let patience have her *perfect* work." The seventh time the servant saw "a *little* cloud, like a man's hand." Small as it appears to have been, it was large enough for the one to see that was on the "look out." "Who hath despised the day of small things?" "The trial of your faith worketh patience." May we have faith and expectation, so as to look up and to look out for blessing, and patience to wait till some little cloud appears. After this "the hand of the Lord was upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab." Can it be possible that a weary pilgrim could outrun the king's horses? Ah, yes! "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah xl. 31.)

"Revive Thy work, O Lord—
 Rich blessings send in showers;
 Be Thine the glory, Thine *alone*,
 Thy blessing, Lord, be ours."

H. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. Z.—The question you ask in reference to the sealing of the Spirit is one about which much has been said and written. It is clear that while the Spirit of God may and does work on the conscience of many an unsaved man, yet it is the believer only who is sealed by God with the Holy Spirit, in proof of which you may refer to John vii. 39 and Eph. i. 13. Nor is it difficult to determine at what point in the soul's history the Holy Spirit is given, if indeed our judgment is formed by scripture alone. Peter's preaching in Acts ii. and x. shows that when there is faith in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for remission of sins, then the believer receives the Holy Spirit—he is sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. In the case of Cornelius and his friends this is strikingly exemplified. "To Him," said Peter, "give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." (Acts x. 43, 44.) They heard "by the hearing of faith," and at once received the Spirit. (Gal. iii. 2.) Why should it be otherwise now?

What is commonly called "deliverance" is another thing; and many a soul who knows the forgiveness of sins, and is consequently sealed, has yet to learn the meaning of it in conscious power. It is connected with the experimental side of the truth taught in Romans vi., vii., and the first part of chapter viii., where it is shown that the believer is dead to sin and dead to the law in his having died with Christ; and receiving a new life in Jesus Christ our Lord, he is viewed as passed out of the state to which law applies. But while this is doctrinally true of every believer, it is not true of every believer when his actual state is

considered ; for, alas ! how many are still entangled in the meshes of the law, and are struggling for that freedom described in Romans viii. 2, and struggling in vain ! We well remember when it was thus with ourselves. We had no doubt of our forgiveness, and firmly believed that God had given unto us eternal life ; but what troubled us was the corruption of the flesh, and how to overcome it we knew not. The effect of this was deep and frequent mental distress which the knowledge of forgiveness did not relieve. It was no question of righteousness, for we knew that its claims in respect of our sins had been fully met by the atoning blood. It was rather a question of holiness—of living unto God. Here at length we found out that we had no strength. Precious discovery ! Sweet then to see that the flesh was a condemned thing, and hopelessly bad, that our old man had been crucified with Him, our history closed as a man in the flesh, that the flesh was no longer I, and that there was a new I not connected with the first but with the last Adam, and that we were in Him, the risen, victorious Man. No longer in the flesh, but in the spirit ; not in Adam, but in Christ.

Then as to your third question, we fear not a few, who can and do in the main cry “Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 6), are not entirely free from doubts and fears. This may be due to defective teaching or to a want of simplicity in the reception of the truth. What delivers from these is the knowledge through the Word of the complete putting away of sins by the blood of Christ.

F. K.—We believe that the words “They that are Christ’s” (1 Cor. xv. 23) embrace the Old Testament saints as well as those of the present period, and are our warrant for holding that the former will share in that resurrection which takes place at the coming of the Lord.

A CALL TO SERVICE.

“Son, go work to-day in My vineyard.”—MATT. xxi. 28.

IN another part of our present issue the reader will find a letter from a beloved servant of Christ calling attention to the crying need of many towns and villages of our land where the gospel in its fulness and simplicity is rarely preached, and where the great distinctive truths of Christianity are never brought to the notice even of converted souls.

The brush, we think, might have been laid on with a heavier hand, and the picture painted in darker colours on a larger canvas, and it would have been truer to life. For not only is there this spiritual dearth over all the land, but the tide of a cruel infidelity is rising rapidly, whose sullen waves are beating upon our shores, and threatening us on every side. Already from many of the pulpits Christianity is shamelessly excluded in everything but name, and the men that fill them—boasting of a broader platform and greater intellectual freedom—are feeding upon ashes, the dupes of Satan, the victims of a deceived heart and a perverted will.

And let the flaunting placards pasted on the notice boards of buildings, professedly set apart for religious uses, tell what way the stream is

running. Of old, sinners were warned to flee from the wrath to come, now they are regaled with "*a sacred cantata*;" then they were melted to tears with the story of a Saviour's sufferings and a Saviour's love, now they are excited to laughter with comic songs and sentimental nonsense—lured down to the pit by entertainments prepared and patronized by the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, who with mocking irony require them to pay in money for the wrong which they receive.

In another quarter, and under a still more subtle guise, the foe marshals his forces. The truths for which our forefathers laid down their lives, for which they were flung on prison floors, and willingly went to the martyrs' stake, are being undermined and buried out of sight under the cloak of religious zeal. The great, grand doctrine of justification by faith, apart from works, as taught by Paul in Romans iii., iv., v., and in his epistle to the Galatians, is swept out of sight, and "*sacraments*," declared to be efficacious only when received from priestly hands, are set before the people as divinely-appointed means of salvation.

All this is serious enough, and in view of it we may well ask, What should our position be? Are we alive to the burden that rests upon us? And can we honestly say that we are doing what we can? doing what the Lord would have us do to meet this terrible condition of things?

Unfeignedly do we bless God for devoted workers already in the field. We give thanks for every soul that seeks, publicly or privately, by word of mouth or through the printed page, to spread the truth of God in all directions. But, alas! how few the labourers in comparison with the greatness of the need.

And why is this? Is it that the great Head of the Church has been sparing in His gifts? Has He forgotten that evangelists, pastors, and teachers are still required "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"? Nay, there is no lack on His side. The gifts have been given, but many of them are lying dormant, unused, undeveloped, partly from one cause, partly from another. In some cases, because it is not seen that a gift lays the receiver of it under obligation to use it for the glory of Him by whom it has been given, and needs no sanction of men before it can be employed; and in others, because Christ and His claims hold not the first and chief place in the heart.

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it," is surely what the Lord is saying to us to-day—a door of service, a door of testimony for Him. Are you entering in? Plead not as an excuse your own insufficiency. No one dreams of denying it, and least of all the Lord. Five loaves and two fishes in your hands would

not go far, but in *His* they are more than enough to feed five thousand men. Put your little into His hand, for He can either give much or make a little go a long way.

But apart from special gift qualifying for special work, to which all are certainly not called, there are ways and means by which every Christian may do something. Those that were scattered abroad at the persecution that arose about Stephen went everywhere preaching the word. As far as we know there was not a man of distinguished gift among them, but these simple Christian men and women could not hold their peace. Silence was an impossibility. They must speak of Christ wherever they went. When some of them reached Antioch, and spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus, the hand of the Lord was with them, and great numbers believed. (Acts xi. 19, 21.) We may not be able to preach Christ to crowds, but like them we can bear testimony to individuals; and who knows what shall be the result of a word lovingly and earnestly spoken, or a tract discreetly chosen and prayerfully given away?

Saints and sinners alike have to be cared for. Let us think of them both. The flock of God is dear to the heart of the Shepherd, and He has bought it with a great price. We must love the flock for His sake, but take care that you love the whole, and not a part only. Beware of a narrow heart and cramped affections. Embrace in your loving interest all who belong to Christ,

and seek to serve them because they are His. Labour that they may enjoy all that is theirs in Christ. Many of them hardly know a present salvation, still less those heavenly truths that distinguish Christianity from everything that went before. What "an open door" is before you when you think of the saints of God, numbers of whom are huddled together in many a Lo-debar, starving, and only waiting some kindly hand to lead them to the green pastures of divine truth. If you cannot do much, do a little; do what you can, and your labour shall not be in vain.

Then as to the sinner. Be on your guard against thinking lightly of the preaching of the gospel to the perishing. Spread the gospel. God would have it preached to every creature. If, in thinking of the saints, you have nothing narrower before your soul than the whole Church of God, have nothing less before you, when thinking of the sinner, than the whole world. The circumference of the globe defines the parish of the evangelist. But the repentance even of *one* sinner is a cause of rejoicing in heavenly courts. It matters not whether he lives in the slums of Whitechapel or in the gilded saloons of St. James's, in the remote village or the metropolitan city, if he be brought to repentance, heaven shall rejoice. Labour then for the *one*, if you cannot for the many. It is no new thing for heaven to be glad, but it is wonderful to think of, that when one, only one, sinner repents, the joy of heaven deepens, and the

faces of the angels beam with greater gladness. Long and loud are their rapturous hallelujahs, as they hear One calling unto them, and saying, "Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost." Think much then of the gospel. You are not in fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost if you do not. Pray for the gospel. Pray for those who preach it. Encourage them with your sympathy. Uphold their hands.

Are you doing anything to fill the preaching-halls with the unsaved? These rooms are not set down miles away from the habitations of men. Within an area of five hundred yards how many live. Do you ever knock at their doors with a tract, and in kindly tones invite them to the gospel service? If you do not succeed the first time, go a second, and a third, and a fourth. Show them that you are in earnest, and that if they do not realize their danger you at least do. Peradventure you will gain them at last, and if not, the tract you leave may be blessed to their soul.

Time is short, and life's little day will soon be spent. It behoves us to be up and doing. Low before the Lord should we lie, for we have been so lax in our efforts, and there is good reason to confess it before Him in deep humiliation and self-judgment. But even now, at this late hour, if we shake off our indifference and bestir ourselves, His hand shall be with us, and we shall see sinners converted in larger numbers, and saints led into richer pastures, edified and blessed.

ASSOCIATION.

Read ISAIAH viii.

AT the present time there is a wide-spread and an increasing desire for association in various ways. Every thoughtful mind must be impressed with this fact. Associations of every kind are formed and carried on vigorously, each being more or less successful. There are clubs of a social kind, both of men and women, of boys and girls. There are mutual aid associations to give assistance in time of sickness and death. There are benevolent associations professedly to care for the poor and destitute. There are trade associations, both of masters and men, for the purpose of protecting their own interests. There are religious associations of most varied character; some assuming to be deeply pious, others openly combining religion and the world. All this is known to our readers in greater or lesser measure. In view of it we ask you to read carefully Isa. viii.

Having done so, some may exclaim, "But what is all this to us? It speaks of Israel, and the Assyrian, and many things which we do not understand." Quite true, dear reader. In a word, the writer describes prophetically what shall take place in the last days, when nations shall join in confederacy with Assyria against God's earthly

people Israel, but at the end they shall be "broken to pieces." Meanwhile the wise are instructed to have no part in any confederacy, but to sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, fearing Him alone; and He shall be a sanctuary for them, while the unbelieving shall be tested and judged. Then Messiah's voice is heard prophetically, from verse 16, with the expression of dependence upon God, and patient trust in Him. In this place of dependence He associates with Himself His own people, whom God has given Him.

Then, again, it may be said, "What is that to us? We are not Israel, nor have we to do with the Assyrian." But you will remember that it is said, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." (Rom. xv. 4.) So even this chapter must have something to say to us. And the Spirit of God has helped us by quoting a portion of it in Hebrews ii. If we turn to it, we read in verse 13, "And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Now both these sayings are quoted from our chapter. All will recognize the latter as the opening words of verse 18. The former is really the end of verse 17; only it is quoted from the Greek version of the Old Testament; hence the difference in the words—"I will look for Him" becomes, "I will put my trust in Him."

These words then, it is evident, are connected

with our Lord Jesus, and we Christians are put in the place of the "children." But it is important to notice where the Spirit of God stops in His quotation, for His silence is as perfect as His speech. In our chapter the words run on, "are for signs and wonders in Israel." This is not quoted, for it could not be applied to Christians; it belongs to the remnant of Israel in a future day. At the time the epistle to the Hebrews was written, the "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5) was Christian, having the place and portion which believers have now. In the future day, which Isaiah viii. fully contemplates, the remnant will be waiting for an earthly place and portion. Hence in writing to Christians the Holy Ghost quotes only those words which He can apply to them now.

Let us now dwell a little upon Hebrews ii., and then we will return to our chapter, hoping to see a little clearer its present application.

There are three points taken from Psalm viii., which speaks of the Son of man. (1) He is made a little lower than the angels; (2) He is crowned with glory and honour; (3) All things are put beneath His feet. Now these are applied to Jesus, who is the Son of man. He became a little lower than the angels. Why? For the suffering of death, that He by the grace of God should taste death for everything. Only through the blood of the cross could God reconcile all things to Himself.

Only through the death of the Lord Jesus could we be reconciled (who once were enemies) and brought nigh to God. He suffered death for the accomplishment of the purposes of God, and for the blessing of His own, and has won the everlasting homage of our hearts.

2nd. We see Him crowned with glory and honour. His work of suffering is ended; He has reached the throne and the crown. Where? Not upon earth, but on high. He is not yet seated upon His own throne, but upon His Father's. Jehovah has said to our Lord, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." There He sits, waiting in patience for that moment of which Jehovah has spoken. Blessed Saviour, we hail Thee there, and our hearts adore Thee!

3rd. All things are placed beneath His feet. This we do not yet see. He waits, as we have seen, in patience.

But is He to be alone in glory? Every heart that loves Him owns that He is worthy to be there, and rejoices in His exaltation. But shall He be alone? No; God speaks of "bringing *many sons* unto glory." Then who are they? Shall angels be His companions? No; for they do not belong to the order of the Son of man to whom all things shall be placed in subjection. They are *men*, redeemed by His precious blood.

Man in his natural state could not bear Him company. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto

you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth *alone*." (John xii. 24.) He was that one pure corn of wheat; the one unsullied, unspotted man of perfect preciousness to God. But where were His companions? Apart from death He could have none. Solemn truth! Some speak of atonement taking place in His incarnation. Many speak of His association with us. It is taught that we may, and should, speak of Him as *our* Elder Brother, as one who has adopted our nature. Let us meditate upon these solemn words, "Except it die, IT ABIDETH ALONE: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." So He, in the grace of His heart, passed through death, glorifying God about sin, and as the result of that death He has a company of the same nature and order as Himself, whom He can associate with Himself.

So our next quotation in Hebrews ii. is from Psalm xxii. Every Christian, perhaps, has, more or less, meditated upon that wonderful utterance of the Spirit of God, wherein are described prophetically the sufferings of Christ when upon the cross. There He was absolutely alone. He cried, "*My* God, *my* God," and yet was forsaken of Him. It is this solemn fact that gives character to the whole of the psalm. These words were actually used by our precious Saviour, and could fully be true only of Him. For others trusted in God, and were delivered; here was One who ever trusted,

and yet was forsaken. Well may it be asked, "Why?" Dear reader, can you answer? As the Son of man He glorified God in offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Thus was He necessarily alone as regards men, and He was forsaken of God.

But being heard (v. 21) as the Accomplisher of that mighty work He is no longer alone. "I will declare Thy name unto MY BRETHREN; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." (v. 22.)

This was fulfilled when our Lord arose from the dead. He said to Mary Magdalene, who had waited at the sepulchre until she found Him, "Go to *My brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." (John xx. 17.)

Blessed message! Surely it thrilled the hearts of His poor disciples when they heard it! He is not ashamed to call us brethren; for He looks upon us as the fruit of His own death; and He introduces us into the circle of relationship so perfectly known to Himself, declaring to us the name of His Father and God. We participate in the life which He has as a Man risen from the dead, and are associated with Him in a perfectly new order of heavenly character.

Time would fail to speak at length upon this wonderful truth.* Hebrews ii. only introduces

* The reader may see *Either in Adam or in Christ*. J.N.D.

us to it, saying that "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee."

Here follow the two quotations from Isaiah viii. The one upon which we dwelt from Psalm xxii. places us with Him in the presence of God, His Father, and there is PRAISE. Now we find ourselves in view of the confederacies of men, and there is TRUST. "I will put my trust in Him." And as we are associated with Him in the circle of praise, so are we associated with Him before all that man forms. What believer's heart has not rejoiced in the former? We have learned from His lips to sing praise, as placed in the relationship of children with our Father and God. And have we learned the latter? Do we quietly trust in God, as associated with Christ, in view of all men's schemes?

Other passages of Scripture besides Isaiah viii. show us that the last days are peculiarly marked by the idea of confederacy and association; and it would be well for every beloved reader to ponder in the presence of God, and see how far the associations of the present day are paving the way for the last grand confederacies. It is a solemn thought; but if it is a true one, shall we be found helping on in the least degree that which

is so hateful to God, and which shall be broken to pieces in the judgment? Surely not.

And we have plain precepts of Scripture. We read in 2 Cor. vi. 14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The reference is to the ordinance of God given in Deut. xxii. 10: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." An Israelite might say, "But why may I not yoke together an ox and an ass? What harm is there in it?" Jehovah's word was peremptory—"Thou shalt not." An ox was a clean animal in Jehovah's judgment (see Lev. xi.), and an ass was unclean, and He positively forbade that they should be yoked so as to work together. Was not this sufficient? And so positively does He now forbid that a believer should be unequally yoked in any way with unbelievers. Some confine the meaning of this passage to marriage. Marriage surely is the closest of bonds, and so falls within the scope of this scripture; but even beyond this, any association of any kind which causes a believer to walk or work with an unbeliever, as seeking common ends with him, is clearly forbidden. We may have to work in the same house or shop, in the same employment, but this in itself is no bond of union. But the moment we go beyond this to band together for common objects, we are "yoked together." "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

But some may say, "Then we shall suffer; we shall be thrown out of work; everything and everyone will be against us. We may be sick, and have no provision; or even die, and our friends scarcely know how to bury us. Fire may destroy our possessions, or an accident may deprive us of health. We shall be sneered at by all because we refuse to join their benevolent schemes." All this and more has been said; but is it the language of faith? Is it not rather that of dark unbelief and sad distrust of God?

Let us listen: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary." Is not this enough, to have God Himself as our never-failing retreat, our refuge, and our protection? Again we hear the voice of Messiah: "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." As He sits, the Man of patience, at God's right hand, waiting and expecting, until His enemies be made His footstool, shall not we, as associated with Him, wait in patience here, expecting our God's intervention in His own good time? Suffering there may be, but to this are we called (1 Peter ii. 21); but in suffering our hearts are sustained by the knowledge of the goodness and love of our God.

And we have His promise to sustain us—"And

I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Is it not better to have our Father's care (who is the Lord Almighty) than all that man's skill can devise, or all that could possibly be gained by human organization?

Yet some may say, Shall we not unite in *religious* association? But, beloved reader, we pray you to consider this one thing, that we are already, as believers, divinely associated with the Christ of God. As we are associated with Him, so are we with one another. Indeed other portions of Scripture speak of our forming "one body," so close and so perfect is our association. What need therefore of human association? Let us simply own that which our God has wrought in grace, in uniting us to the risen Man in glory, and to each other here upon earth.

May every heart be drawn out in praise to our Father and God, as in the consciousness of relationship with Him, whose name has been declared to us by our precious Saviour, who died for us that we might thus be associated with Himself. And may every heart find quiet confidence in our God, shunning every bond and tie with the unbeliever, no matter what may be the end which it is proposed to attain; walking in obedience to His sacred Word, and uttering in face of every difficulty these precious words—

"I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM."

A TALK WITH YOUNG BELIEVERS.

THE object I have in addressing you, dear young believer, is to set before you, in a few simple words, the absolute necessity of your seeking to live for and to express Christ in your daily walk, so that you may glorify Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you. There is nothing that will commend Christ to those around you so much as a quiet, consistent, godly life. The world reads Christ in the believer. "Ye are our epistle . . . known and read of all men." (2 Cor. iii. 2.) How important then that we should keep self out of sight, and manifest Christ instead. Paul so blessedly speaks of it in 2 Cor. v. 14, 15: "The love of Christ constraineth us . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." The Christian is continually watched—Satan watches and the world watches. It is therefore necessary that he should ever be on his guard, to watch himself, his temper, his actions, his thoughts too, from which so many wrong actions spring. There are two distinct ways in which the young believer can bear a testimony to Christ; first, by lip; second, by life; and both are important, but the first is of little worth without the second.

We get a beautiful illustration of this in John ix. The effect of the poor blind man's coming in contact with the precious Saviour was, that his eyes were opened. Blind from his birth, who could give him sight but God Himself—the Saviour-God? The change was so manifest, that at once he became the subject of conversation amongst those who had known him intimately.

Is the change so great in you, dear young friend, that those you move among day by day take knowledge that you have been with Jesus? Or are you content with knowing *in your heart* that the Lord Jesus has saved you, but you fear to confess Him lest you should be thought peculiar and religious, and lest your friends no longer care for your company? I know from experience that it is not easy to confess Christ. It is easy to talk about worldly matters, but how very often opportunities of testifying of the blessed Saviour, have not been made use of because of "the fear of man" which "bringeth a snare," or the fear of consequences which are often only imaginary. I suppose you find it very much easier to speak about the Lord to someone who lives at a distance, or when you are away among strangers. But the Lord would have you begin at home. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done *for thee*, and hath had compassion *on thee*." (Mark v. 19.) The man in John ix. was one of this sort. His friends

and neighbours at once saw that there was a great change in him ; he was altogether a different man. " Yes," you say, " I can quite understand that ; a man born blind now able to see, it must have struck them very much." But there has been a greater change wrought *in* you, and a wonderful work *done for* you, and it ought to be equally manifest.

There is another thing that comes out so blessedly in John ix. We see that as the man is true to the light he has his light increased, till at last he learns that the One who has blessed him is none other than the Son of God. It is beautiful to observe that the confession was drawn from him by others. He had no need to go and say, " Don't you know that I am the man that was born blind, and now I see ?" It was so manifest that the question was put, "*How* were thine eyes opened ?" The believer, young or old, should have no need to say, " I am converted, I am a Christian ;" and he should be ready always to give an answer to *every* man that *asketh* a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear. (1 Peter iii. 15.) He at once, being ready, tells them *how* it was accomplished, and *by whom*. " A MAN that is called JESUS." He confesses *the Saviour*. The Saviour had done for this poor man a very simple work in comparison with what He has wrought for you. He laid clay on his eyes, and bade him go to the

pool of Siloam and wash. But for you He has, in His tender, compassionate love, laid down His life, delivered you from Satan's power, washed away your sins, and brought you to God. You are now by grace an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ; and soon He is coming again to take you to be with Himself in heavenly glory. What a Saviour, and what a salvation!

The next persons who question him are the religious people of the day—the self-righteous, self-sufficient Pharisees. And there are plenty of such around us now. They are very religious, and greatly occupied with forms and ceremonies, but alas! they do not *know the blessed One as their own personal Saviour*. Having never felt their need, never owned their ruined condition, never been in the presence of God, they think that conversion is a sham, that there is no such thing, and that it is only an imagination of the mind. What an answer to such from the lips of a new-born soul, “He is a *prophet*.” Now a prophet in the New Testament does not always mean one who foretells. It sometimes means one who brings the soul consciously into the presence of God. You remember that the woman of Samaria said to the blessed Lord in John iv., “Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.” She felt she stood in the presence of One who knew her whole history, who could and had searched her through and through. So with the blind man; he felt that the One who had

opened his eyes was a prophet, and he delighted to confess Him as such. Later, when the people generally (the Jews) ask him, he confesses, "If this Man were not *of God*, He could do nothing." As he confesses, his light increases. The more we live and speak for Christ, the more we shall increase in the knowledge of Him, for He delights to manifest Himself.

It is of all importance to see also the moment and the place of manifestation. It was when he was "cast out." His *confession* led to his *rejection*. He was refused. Why? Because he testified of the *person* and *work* of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is the fear of this rejection that often prevents the believer from confessing Christ. But surely if our hearts are true to Christ, and full of Christ, it will be our delight to confess Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. But how blessed to find that when he was cast out he soon found himself at the feet of Jesus. So with us. The Lord Jesus has been rejected and crucified, and He has now an *outside* place so far as this world is concerned, and if we are true to Him our portion will be outside also. It was after this man was cast out that we see him at the feet of the Saviour. The place of manifestation was an outside place, but *outside with Jesus*. Then the Lord puts that beautiful question to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Here the glory of this wondrous Saviour is

displayed, for He is none other than "the Son of God." What a revelation! What an effect! "And he worshipped Him."

May the Lord lead you, dear young friend, to confess Christ by *lip* and *life*. Never be ashamed to show distinctly that you are on the Lord's side, and that you are for the Lord. Count not the cost to yourself, but, like the apostles of old, rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame *for His name*. (Acts v. 41.) May the language of your heart be—

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

E. G.

IS CHRIST SUFFICIENT?

THIS is surely a test question for every Christian. Those who have come to Him and found rest for their conscience by faith in His finished work, taken shelter under the blood, and learnt the value of the "one sacrifice for sins," can say, as regards the need of an awakened conscience, "*Christ is sufficient.*"

We start on the journey with this clearly settled; and we may well go forward with calm, unchangeable assurance, when we consider that God has been glorified by the work of the cross, and that every requirement of His righteousness

has been fully met by the atoning work done there. Well, then comes the journey, where we are tested.

The Israelites sang the redemption song when they had crossed the Red Sea ; they could rejoice at what Jehovah had done for them ; but then the wilderness lay before them, and the forty years' wandering there brought out what they were. They murmured, and afterwards God gave the manna ; it was His provision for the wilderness. "The children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited." (Exodus xvi. 35.) It was, in type, Christ, the true bread come down from heaven ; but now the question arises, Will the people be satisfied to feed on this bread from day to day ? Numbers xi. gives us the answer. We shall quote what is recorded there for our instruction : "The children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat ? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely but now our soul is dried away : there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." Here the sad and painful fact comes out—fruit of a want of whole-hearted decision for the Lord—they got tired of the manna. Once communion with God is lost, the soul looks back to the world from whence He has delivered us.

Is this not so in the present day ? Is it not possible, and even common, to maintain a right

church position and a correct walk outwardly, while the freshness of first love to Christ is gone, and He is no longer the only object before the heart? It is a day of religious activity; but amidst the large amount of Christian work and effort which abounds on every hand, may we not ask the question, Is Christ sufficient? We can say He surely is—His *work* to meet the need of an exercised conscience; and *Himself* the object to engage the heart, the food to sustain the life He has given. It would not do to depreciate true service in the least. There is much need of a full, clear preaching of the gospel to sinners, and an effectual ministry of the word for Christ's flock. Would that all Christians were availing themselves of every opportunity to fulfil whatever little service He has given them to do. But while feeling and pressing the importance of this we cannot conceal from ourselves the want on every hand of intimate acquaintance with Christ Himself, which can only be acquired in the quiet of His own presence, and in communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. We simply wish to call attention to the prevailing tendency in Christendom, which must be apparent to any thoughtful Christian who is not carried along in the current. It is the practice to look for some excitement, and to offer various attractions in order to draw the masses together. It is difficult to get people to come to a plain statement of

the Gospel of Christ; and even, taking the mass of Christians, how few desire to come together to calmly search the word of God and for prayer. It is true God is working amidst all the confusion around. He is carrying on His blessed work whatever the instruments may be; but the tendency is to make much of the *means*, with a consequent decline of simple faith in His applying His word in the power of the Spirit to the conscience; in other words, there is the danger of making it our work, not His.

The general tendency which prevails around is always a snare, even to those who truly desire to go on with God; hence the necessity of being on our guard against slipping down to the level of a corrupted Christendom. Nothing can preserve but that dependence and obedience which uses the word of God as its sole resource and guide; and the Word too as learnt by the teaching of the Spirit in communion with Him who gave it.

A merely intellectual knowledge, severed from heart-acquaintance with Christ, who is the living centre of all truth, will not give spiritual power, or preserve against the seductions which Satan spreads out to entrap us on the way. We want so to keep the truth connected in our own souls with Christ Himself, that it may not become a theory which we acknowledge with our minds, while our hearts' affections grow cold, and there is little active and ready response flowing out

from the heart to all His love to us. We need not look for a recovery of the Church of God to what she once was in those early days, but as we draw on to the close of the dispensation, as the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, should not each true-hearted believer desire to prove, in his own soul's experience, that Christ is sufficient, absolutely and entirely sufficient, even if every outside prop were removed? And when we have learnt this, there will be the ready response, as He says, "Surely I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." B.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of "Simple Testimony."

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Various letters have at different times appeared in *Simple Testimony*, and have also been circulated amongst many brethren, pressing upon us the urgent need of labourers for the Lord's work in India and in other countries. Surely it becomes us to thank God for these desires after the interests of our Lord Jesus Christ in "regions beyond," and to seek to foster them, and to continue in much prayer to the Lord of the harvest that labourers may be raised up and sent forth. But I am fearing lest, whilst turning attention to "heathen" lands, we should overlook the present pressing need at *our own doors*; and my object in now writing is to bring *this* need before your readers. We are living in the last of the last days. The history of the church of God upon the earth is nearing its

close. The Lord is coming. It is a wonderful moment. Far and wide in Christendom the truth of God has been disseminated. Far and wide has the gospel travelled. It is for us to rejoice that it is so, but yet "with trembling;" for, alas! we know that, notwithstanding all the activity, all the effort to reach men, there is but feeble response to the truth, either of the church of God or of the glad tidings of His grace; and we need remember that whilst the near future is so bright for the true believer, yea, for "the Church," as the body and bride of Christ, yet how dark and terrible will the coming day be for the Christless professors, yea, for the "house of God" as a professing system upon the earth. But, notwithstanding the wide circulation of truth, we are at this present time met by the undeniable fact that there are in *this* country many towns and villages, both large and small, where but little is known by those, professing Christianity, of the gospel of God in its divine beauty and simplicity. The ministry of the Word among such is, for the most part, confined to the mere fact—blessed fact surely!—of the sinner's need having been met by the precious blood of Christ; and the most advanced are, generally speaking, content to rest satisfied with a knowledge of this. Indeed, it may be said that the ministry of the Word seldom extends to the presentation of the *glorified* Christ at God's right hand; and, as a consequence, souls are left in doubt and perplexity as to salvation. Then, again, how little is known or taught of the perfection of the finished work of the Son of God, and of the consequences resulting therefrom to us. How seldom are such truths as divine righteousness, the complete justification of the be-

liever, his perfect deliverance and present standing in divine favour in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the condemnation of sin at the cross, the removal in judgment of the first man from the eye of God, spoken of. And rarely is it that God's side of the cross is presented—how He has been glorified by that finished work, how His righteousness has been established, His truth vindicated, His holiness maintained, His majesty sustained. Then, as to the blessed truth of the “church of God,” the mystery unfolded in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, how little is known! How seldom it is alluded to! And one sorrowfully adds what little *heart* there seems to be to enter into it and to seek to apprehend it! “New creation” truth and “prophetic truth” also there is but little intelligence about. But I will not add more. May the Lord exercise our hearts about the great need “at home,” and move us to much prayer to Him, both *privately* and in the *assembly*, that He would raise up and send forth into these “home districts” labourers, wholehearted and devoted to Him, to minister the *truth of God*. May abundant blessing be with every labourer already in the field, whether at home or abroad. May their labours result in the conversion of sinners, in the gathering of many saints to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the richest blessing of His people, to His own praise and glory.

With love in Him,

Your affectionate brother and fellow-labourer,

R. D. EDWARDS.

SOUTHWOLD, *June*, 1889.

DEPENDENCE;

OR,

A LESSON FROM THE VINE AND ITS
BRANCHES.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 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. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.”—JOHN xv. 1-8.

THERE is no question here of how anyone may gain eternal life, or, having gained it, how it may be kept. That matter is settled long before chapter xv. of this gospel is reached, as the reader may see if he will turn to chapters iii. 14-16, 36; v. 24, vi. 47, x. 28. It is the believer in Jesus who is said to have everlasting life. He has it as a divine gift, bestowed upon him from the very first. “He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.” In that life every

believer shares, whether he be a babe born but yesterday into the family of God, or such an one as "Paul the aged," or John, the beloved disciple. There is no difference. It is the common life of all believers, and if a man has it not, he is no believer on the Son of God at all, though he may believe in Christianity as a religious system, and call himself a Christian, as distinguished from a Jew, heathen, or infidel. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John v. 12.) Such is the plain, emphatic language of Scripture—plain enough, thank God, for the simplest soul.

The lasting security of the believer is also assured. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall *never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." (John x. 28.) Who is it that says this? Who is it that holds the sheep in His hands, yea, who gathers the lambs with His arm, and carries them in His bosom, and declares they shall never perish? It is He to whom all power belongs, who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, who hath weighed the mountains in scales, who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Shall He whose power is so great, whose faithfulness hath never failed, who fainteth not, neither is weary, shall He, I say, not keep His

sheep? He has said they shall never perish, and bold indeed must that man be who holds that, in spite of the Saviour's words, there is the chance that some of the blood-bought flock may yet find themselves in hell.

But alongside of these truths, which beget strong confidence in divine power and grace, are other truths which preserve from self-sufficiency and carelessness of walk, and lead the humble-minded believer into paths of *dependence* and *obedience*. It is the former of these that we find written with exceeding plainness across the face of this familiar scripture, and illustrated in a way that brings the reality of it home to the dullest mind. For who has not often seen a vine with its spreading branches? and who is there that does not know that the branch is absolutely dependent upon the vine? Severed from it, its power to bring forth fruit is gone; withered and worthless, men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. Thus, by a figure so commonplace as that of a vine and its branches, the Lord illustrates and enforces the great truth of our entire and ever-present dependence upon Himself.

As to the disciples themselves, to whom this teaching was first addressed, they were about to be sent on a mission such as never had been entrusted to mortal men before. Endued with heavenly power, they were to be His witnesses,

and as His ambassadors there should be committed unto them the ministry and word of reconciliation. (2 Cor. v. 20.) God also would bear witness with them, "by signs and wonders, and various acts of power, and distributions of the Holy Ghost, according to His will." (Heb. ii. 4.) With all this in view, how unspeakably important that they should be made to know that they were dependent upon Christ—daily, hourly dependent, even as a branch upon the vine that bare it.

It is true we are not called to such service as theirs, though all may witness for Christ in one way or another. But however small the niche we fill, however narrow the sphere in which we move, we need to bear in mind that to fill that niche aright, and to move in that sphere to the glory of God, we must realize our utter dependence on divine power. The Lord does not say, that without Him we shall be unable to do great things, but without Him we can do *nothing*, absolutely *nothing*. In one way there are many things we can do without Him, but not one of them so done will ever be reckoned as fruit by which the Father will be glorified. Of course, the Lord's words "Without Me ye can do nothing," must be looked at in connection with the subject He is speaking of. Fruit-bearing is the Lord's theme here, and it is evident that fruit can be borne only by our abiding in Him.

The forgetfulness of this is the prolific source of sorrow, vexation, and disappointment. How many things we attempt to do in our own strength, and the result is so different from what we hoped for and expected. We are apt to think ourselves equal to little things, and to forget that without Him we can do *nothing*. We are ready to believe that those who preach and teach need to feel their dependence, but we do not so readily see that the common things of daily life can only be done aright in strength that He supplies. How much of our fretfulness, chafing of spirit, and irritability of temper, may be attributed to the overlooking of this.

And here let me ask a question, What is fruit-bearing? Look at those rich clusters of grapes that hang on yonder branch, so large and ripe, and covered with delicate bloom. How came they there? They are the outward and visible sign of the life within—life manifesting itself in a way that pleases him under whose culturing hand the vine is. So the fruit that the believer bears is but the display in varying forms of the inner life developed in conscious dependence on Christ.

The humblest everyday deeds of a believer's life are fruit for God if wrought in dependence, and as under His eye. The woman at the wash-tub, the toiling mother with her children, the weaver at the loom, the ploughman in the fields, the

blacksmith at his forge, the carpenter at the bench, the merchant in the warehouse, each and all, if partakers of the life of Jesus, may, in the doing of their daily rounds of duties, bring forth much fruit. It will be so in truth if God can look down and say, "There is one who is seeking in the very circumstances in which he is set to show out the life which I have given unto him." Christ displayed in us is fruit, precious fruit, for the heavenly Husbandman.

Prayer is the expression of dependence; hence prayer is introduced in verse 7; and the dependent soul is assured that whatsoever it asks it shall be done. "Without Me ye can do *nothing*," our Lord, indeed, has said; but what is there that He will not do in us, and for us, and by us, if we diligently cultivate the spirit of prayerful dependence upon Himself? But we are slow to learn that we have no strength. No strength to plane that board for Christ, no strength to scrub that floor for Christ, no strength to do or to suffer aught for Christ apart from Him. All these things might be done in the strength of nature, but not done *for Him*; and it is in the doing of them for Him that they become fruit by which the Father is glorified. Here is the philosopher's stone that turns the baser metals into purest gold.

Nor need the knowledge of our utter want of strength to bring forth fruit discourage us in the

least. The learning of it leads to power, for it casts us upon divine resources. We abide in Him even as the branch in the vine. How well Paul learnt this lesson, and in what way he himself tells us in 2 Cor. xii. 7-10. But each must learn it, and no one can learn it for another. Each must have the sustaining word immediately from Christ. "*He* said unto *me*, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." When this is so we lament not our weakness, but rejoice in it. We are glad that we have no strength so that the power of Christ might have its dwelling-place on us. We abide in Him, and He in us; for when we are weak, then are we strong.

May the Lord grant unto us to feel and own that we are nothing and nobody, an *empty* vessel at which no weary traveller can slake his thirst, and from which no living water can flow apart from the source of it—only a helpless branch, having no power to bear fruit save as it abides in the vine. But for our encouragement we may remember that "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah xl. 29-31.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PORTION :

FULL PARDON, PERFECT PEACE, HEAVENLY POSITION,
AND ETERNAL PROSPECTS.

THE ways of God are all perfect, and worthy of Himself. The blessings He bestows upon sinners who believe are rich beyond compare, the fruit of eternal counsel, administered in perfect righteousness, and for the glory of His own great name.

As to desert, we deserve nothing but eternal judgment. All that we receive is the fruit of sovereign grace, flowing through righteousness, on account of the infinite value of the finished work of Christ. God blesses us according to His estimate of the glorious worth and perfect work of His own Son, and to satisfy His own love.

God wants His people to be happy now upon earth, as well as in the eternal future. He has done everything to bring it about, and we are simply the recipients of His bounty. In the natural state, we are as beggars on the dunghill, but God takes us up and sets us among princes. (1 Samuel ii. 8.) No Christian should go dragging through this world as a pauper. He is, so to speak, a millionaire, only his riches are heavenly

and unseen. And we are called to go through this world with a sense of this in our souls. A man may be poor or rich as to this world's goods, but if true to the call of God, he will pass through this scene as one who is possessed of untold wealth in another, using whatever he may possess here as a steward in responsibility to God. Paul could say, "As having nothing, and yet *possessing all things.*" (2 Cor. vi. 10.) And in 1 Cor. iii. 21-23 it is said, "*All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*"

Let us seek to bring four truths before our readers that it is our blessed privilege to know and enjoy. The first is—

Full pardon. This is the starting-point. It is impossible to enjoy anything of God until we are pardoned. Without it we are drawing every moment nearer to the lake of fire. In our natural state we are sinners, far from God, and without the slightest ray of hope apart from His grace. To die with one unpardoned sin would suffice to shut us out from heaven for ever. God is holy, and cannot have sin in His presence. And, alas! how many have we all committed in thought, word, and deed, when He has said of man that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"! (Genesis vi. 5.) Our

hearts cast up sin and iniquity, as the troubled sea casts up mire and dirt. (Isaiah lvii. 20.)

But how blessed to read in the gospel of God of a free and full pardon of all our sins! "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) This is true for all who believe. He is a propitiation for the world at large, and a substitute for all believers. Every one such may say, "He died for *my sins*. The whole judgment fell upon Him, and God raised Him up and glorified Him." This is enough. God is satisfied, and now forgives freely and fully all who believe. "Through this Man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*," &c. (Acts xiii. 38.) "I write unto you, little children, because *your sins are forgiven you* for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) "In whom we have redemption through His blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephes. i. 7.) Not some of our sins, but all. All were future when Christ died. He bore the judgment of *all* or *none*, and when we believe then *all* are forgiven. The criminal question of our sins is settled for ever. God will never raise it again. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) It is a full pardon of all, once and for ever.

As to future sins, which so many are troubled

about, we do not know whether we shall live to commit any. We should be found waiting for the Lord's return, and He will come in a moment. But if left a while here, we are left to live Christ, and not to live in sin. We are fully forgiven, *to sin no more*. But should we sin, God has made a provision for this in the advocacy of Christ, as oft explained in these pages. But nothing is clearer than that a believer *ought not to sin*. Our starting-point then is a *full pardon*, without any reserve, and for ever. The second truth is—

Perfect peace. Peace follows pardon. God wants His people to have perfect peace. The death and blood-shedding and resurrection of Christ are the foundation of peace, as well as the ground of pardon. But we must learn not only that we are *pardoned*, but that God raised Christ from the dead that we might be *justified*. This is something more. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our *justification*. Therefore being *justified* by faith, *we have peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1.) God not only *forgives* us, but He *justifies* us. Forgiveness is preached to us through Christ, and "by Him all that believe are *justified* from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) "It is God that *justifieth*. Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God

imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 6-8.) Fully pardoned, justified by God Himself, *perfect peace* is the result. He "made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20.) All is done for us. It is His own blessed work from beginning to end. He reconciles His enemies, and brings them into peace with Himself through the finished work of His own Son. *Full pardon* and *perfect peace*. At peace with Him we stand in grace, and can rejoice in hope of glory. (Rom. v. 1, 2.) And we are a reconciled people for ever.

And not only so, but it is also our privilege to enjoy the peace *of* God, which passeth all understanding, as well as peace *with* God. This is peace of heart in the midst of the circumstances of this poor world, and is enjoyed when we in simple faith and prayer trust all to Him. The third truth is—

Heavenly position. Yes, such are the riches of God's grace that not only have we full pardon and perfect peace, but a heavenly position before Him for ever. We are *in Christ*.

Christ not only bore our sins, but in Him sin in the flesh was condemned. He died to sin, and lives to God. (Rom. vi. 10.) We *died with Him*, are justified from sin, and have a new standing

altogether on the other side of death. God would have us *reckon ourselves* as "dead indeed unto sin, and *alive unto Him in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom vi. 11.) Does our reader so reckon? And in Christ we stand where no foe can touch us. Completely and eternally delivered, we have a new standing altogether in Christ before God. And as He has died to all condemnation, and is risen beyond it, so we as in Him are free likewise. "There is therefore *now no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.)

And when we pass on to the Colossian epistle we find that we are not only *alive in Him*, but *risen with Christ*, bound up, so to speak, with Christ in the same bundle of life. "If ye then be *risen with Christ*, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God . . . For ye are dead, and *your life is hid with Christ in God,*" &c. (Col. iii. 1-4.)

And further still. In Ephesians we are viewed according to the eternal counsels of God as *seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* (Eph. ii. 6.) Here we are presented in a *heavenly position* and in a *heavenly sphere*; for we are a *new creation in Him*. Christ is at the right hand of God, and we are seated together in the heavens in Him. Glorious truth!

This threefold presentation of the believer's position in and with Christ may be compared to a house with ground-floor and two upper floors.

Unconverted, we are, so to speak, in the cellar, where all is pitch dark. Grace brings us out, and gives us the whole house. The ground-floor answers to our standing in Christ in Romans viii.; the first-floor to our identification with Christ in resurrection-life; the top-floor to our heavenly position in Him. We are to enjoy the whole house, and to keep clear of the cellar. Many, as it were (if we may use so homely a figure), just get their heads above ground, and their feet remain on the cellar stairs. This is how they are situated practically. But it is the Christian's blessed portion to enjoy the whole three floors, only we must beware of thinking that we climb up by means of a staircase. Faith grasps the blessed truth that all is ours, and divine power leads our souls into the practical enjoyment of it. Our pardon is *full*, our peace is *perfect*, our position is *heavenly*. The last truth is—

Eternal prospects. Blessed be God, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are *not seen are eternal*." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) Our prospects are *eternal*. The world goes in for earthly and temporal prospects. Ours are heavenly and eternal. To have our prospects down here, is to drop down to Jewish ground. Israel's hopes are earthly, under the sun. Ours are above the sun, in the Father's house, and the heavenly kingdom. Eternity is before us. With full pardon, perfect peace, a heavenly position, we are

called to walk as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, with our eyes fixed upon Christ, and *rejoicing in hope of the glory of God*. *Here* all is unstable, uncertain, fleeting, temporal; *there* all is fixed, certain, abiding, eternal. *Here* all is wreck and ruin; sin has marred everything; *there* all is solid and permanent. *Here* we are surrounded with the miserable failures of men; *there* shall we be surrounded with the infinite perfections of God. *Here* we are surrounded with the groans of the old creation; *there* all is new, the perfect and eternal handiwork of God, and beyond the reach of Satan altogether.

How blessed is the portion of the Christian! Is it yours, dear reader? Can you rejoice in a *full pardon, perfect peace, and heavenly position, and eternal prospects?* Or are you an unpardoned, unhappy, and lost sinner, speeding rapidly down the stream of time to eternal woe? If so, what you need is *Christ*. Believe on Him, and all these precious things are yours. And if you are a believer, but still tossed to and fro with doubt, get into the presence of God about it, search His Word, and believe it, and you too will enjoy the assurance of it all. May the Lord graciously lead every believing soul who reads these lines to enjoy the Christian's blessed portion *now*.

E. H. C.

THE TENDERNESS AND SYMPATHY OF JESUS.

A BIBLE STUDY.

A *S Christians* it is impossible for us to give too much attention to the character of our blessed Lord. To *us* He says, "Learn of Me," "Follow Me," and this we cannot expect to do without careful, continuous, and prayerful study of the inspired records of His life.

Love is certainly a great and grand trait in His character, and the tenderness and gentleness in which that love is so constantly exhibited must strike each student of gospel history very forcibly. Beyond a doubt it is proved to us that true manliness is perfectly compatible with true tenderness. He who gazed with righteous indignation upon the callous and hypocritical Pharisees (Mark iii. 5), and denounced with faithful boldness the sins and errors of Jerusalem's teachers (Matt. xxiii.), was the same Jesus who lovingly caressed the little ones (Mark ix. 36, x. 16), who was "moved with compassion," even to tears, over poor sin-stained humanity (Mark i. 41; Luke xix. 41, &c.), and who at all times regarded with tenderest love and pity the sick, the sorrowing, and the erring.

Yes, truly, in Jesus, and in Jesus alone, we behold the softer qualities blending into the sweetest and most perfect harmony with those of a sterner and harder nature, forming indeed a character of matchless beauty and even balance. As we gaze we are constrained to exclaim, "My Beloved is . . . the chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea, He is altogether lovely." (Cant. v. 10, 16.)

In calling to mind a few incidents in which the tenderness and sympathy of our Lord are especially conspicuous, we shall see how fully were the prophetic words fulfilled, "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." (Isaiah xl. 11, compare with verse 10.) "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." (Isaiah xlii. 3.) "He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted . . . to comfort all that mourn." (Isaiah lxi. 1, 2.)

The emotions and feelings of Jesus are sometimes noted by the inspired penmen, and these frequently reveal this aspect of His character.

The earnest, honest face of the young ruler touches His innermost soul, and "Jesus beholding him loved him." A poor leper kneeling before Him, two blind men crying after Him, a demoniac, terror-stricken, worshipping Him, a widow following her only son to the grave,

or even a multitude of people surrounding Him, calls forth His compassion and blessing; whilst over the physically afflicted, and the spiritually dead, He sighs; at the grave of a friend, He weeps tears of sympathy and affection, and over a guilty, doomed city, tears of sorrow and regret. (Mark x. 21, i. 41; Matt. xx. 34; Mark v. 2-6, 19; Luke vii. 13; Mark vi. 34, vii. 34, viii. 12; John xi. 35; Luke xix. 41.)

Further, this characteristic is brought to view in the actions and words of Jesus.

See that poor creature from whom everyone shrinks, who is obliged to raise the warning note, "Unclean, unclean," lest unaware men come near him and defile themselves. He sees Jesus, and falls before Him, praying for a return of health and vigour. Does Jesus do as the disciples might have done, step quickly backward, and speak the word of healing from a distance? Nay, He "put forth His hand, and *touched* him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean." (Mark i. 41.)

Or look again, and see that distressed father pleading on behalf of his dying child. Promptly the Saviour responds, but on the way an interruption takes place, and ere the house is reached news is brought to the sorely-tried father that his daughter is dead. Quickly following the terrible intelligence came the tender Saviour's comforting assurance, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole;" and in a short space of time

how abundantly were those words verified. Taking the child's hand in His own, He endearingly said to her, "My child, [or little one] I say unto thee, arise." Immediately she arose, and lest her need might be forgotten in the reaction which must have ensued in that household, He "commanded that something should be given her to eat." (Mark v. 41, 43.)

Another case rises before us. A man born blind has just received sight from the hands of the great Physician. The enemies of Jesus, unable to deny the miracle, and seeing the dawning of faith in the man's heart, revile him, and ultimately cast him out of the synagogue. But Jesus is cognizant of it all. He knows full well that the man is an earnest searcher after truth, and is already bravely battling with those who would keep him from it; hence He goes Himself to seek the seeker, to open the eyes of his soul, that he might not only behold in his Restorer Jesus of Nazareth, but also Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

Listen also to His words as He is musing over the terrible condition of guilty Jerusalem. They reveal, it is true, the bitterest grief and disappointment; but they also reveal the noblest and intensest love. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

One other scene must be mentioned—the tenderest of all. Our Lord is dying. Mental and bodily anguish rack His frame. A little while and all will be over. Not far away there stands a little group of loved ones, His mother—His widowed mother—amongst them. Whither will she go when He has gone? What will she do? Who then will be her stay and support? Such questions as these rise in His breast as He rests His dying eyes on the familiar and much-loved form. Addressing her, He said, in gentlest accents, “Woman, behold thy son;” and to the loved disciple, upon whom she was perhaps then leaning, “Behold thy mother.” The question was settled. “From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

Many other instances might be quoted, but they will suggest themselves to the reader’s mind. Before passing on it may be well briefly to notice two occasions on which the words and actions of Jesus do not display this characteristic so clearly. His apparently harsh words to the Syrophenician woman (Matt. xv. 23–26), and the strange delay ere He visited the stricken family at Bethany (John xi. 6), may cause surprise at first sight, but the reason is not far to seek. Do we not see that He is but hiding His tender love and gentle sympathy to give more room for faith to make it more manifest, and to give a larger blessing?

Turn now to another class of circumstances

by observing the tender way in which Christ dealt with His erring and mistaken ones.

John the Baptist, like his great predecessor, has his time of depression and doubt. How long it lasted we do not know; but he certainly took the nearest way to deliverance when he sent to Jesus, saying, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"

Our Lord responded at once, but in such a way as to help John to answer the question himself. "Go," He said, "and show John again those things which ye do hear and see." No harsh word of rebuke is uttered, or bitter word of sarcasm. The mildest rebuke is conveyed in the words, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Then, lest John might have fallen in the estimation of those who witnessed the interview, our Lord, addressing the multitude, exclaimed, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? . . . A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. . . . Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

Another doubter, Thomas, or Didymus, declares he will not believe in the resurrection of his Lord without the assurance his own sight and touch can give him. Eight days pass, and then is granted to him the proof he required. Jesus appeared, and bade Thomas draw near and

examine for himself His wounded hands and side. He obeyed, and adoringly exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" "Thomas," gently responded the risen One, "because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

On one occasion the blunt, outspoken disciple Peter, pondering over the refusal the rich young ruler had made to part with his wealth and follow Christ, self-righteously remarked, "Behold, *we* have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" The answer he received assured him that a reward would be theirs. "But," the Saviour added, in a tone of rebuke, His words also conveying a needed warning, "many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." To illustrate this truth, and the more deeply to impress it upon their minds and hearts, the parable of the "Labourers in the Vineyard" was then given.

Later on Peter self-confidently assures the suffering Saviour that he is ready to die with Him. Though faithfully and lovingly warned, he remains self-confident, and but a few hours afterwards thrice denies his Lord and Master. A look of infinite tenderness recalls all to Peter's mind, and "he went out, and wept bitterly." What the following few days were to the subdued and broken-hearted man we can but imagine; and how refreshing to him were the words of thoughtful

love uttered through the angel to the women, "Go your way, tell His disciples and *Peter* that He goeth before you into Galilee." And abundantly more so must that interview have been when the risen Lord Himself gave Peter the opportunity of three times confessing that he loved Him, and of three times receiving from the Master's own lips the renewal of his previous call to service.

Yet another instance, and this time in connection with a less-known disciple. For three years or more the twelve have enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of close association with Jesus, and now that the end draws near, He gathers them around Him to listen to His closing words of hope and peace. (John xiv.) He has, however, not proceeded far before two interruptions take place, each betraying on the part of at least some of these highly-privileged ones great weakness of spiritual eyesight. The great Teacher is dealing with the remark made by Thomas (*vv.* 5-7) when we hear Philip pleading—"Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." We may well be surprised at his words: "Alas, alas! short-sighted one, are thine eyes still closed, so that thou canst not see in Him whom thou callest Lord the revelation and declaration of God the Father, the very Word of God which in the beginning was with God, and was God?" (John i. 18.) With more than human tenderness, indeed, was the reply made to thee, "Have I been

so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Oh, slow learner, we hope that from that hour thy darkness was dispelled, and that thou didst see Jesus as thou hadst never seen Him before!

How peculiarly comforting it is to notice, in the grand records we possess, which tell of the glorified Jesus, that this characteristic stands out as conspicuously as ever! Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, struck to the ground by the excessive glory of the vision, hears the voice of the Son of God saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

John in Patmos, a solitary exile, is honoured with a vision of his loved Lord. "And when I saw Him," he says, "I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death." Cheered and strengthened, he receives messages of loving commendation, warning, and rebuke, and beholds visions of future blessedness and sorrow, the record of which enriches the Church of God to-day. (See Rev. iii. 20; vii. 17; xxi. 6, 7, &c.) Do not such

passages as these clearly reveal the self-same Jesus who in human form "went about doing good," and ever proved Himself to be the friend and helper of mankind?

Are you realizing, dear reader, that it is "this same Jesus" whose advent we anticipate to-day? It is true that more than eighteen hundred years have passed since His departure; yet He is still the all-loving, ever gentle One, now, as then, "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," for He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "Surely I come quickly," are His last recorded words. May we from our hearts respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Meanwhile, as we await the fulfilment of this blessed hope, let us seek to grow more like Him day by day. May our aim be to exhibit His conduct at all times and under all circumstances, thus indeed manifesting His lovely and gracious life in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.)

It is more of this tender, sympathetic love that the Church of God needs to-day; and this need will only be supplied as her individual members seek earnestly and trustfully to cultivate it in their own hearts. We may have at times much to put up with in one another; and, alas! how often do we fail to act as our Lord would have us act. Our words and actions are too frequently harsh and cold, and even when prompted by love they are robbed of their sweetness by the manner

in which they are spoken or performed. In dealing with those whom we see to be in fault let us not shrink from being faithful; but let us be especially careful that our reproofs are gently and tenderly given. "Restore such," says Paul, "in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. vi. 1.) "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 31, 32.) "Put them in mind . . . to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men," wrote the same apostle to Titus. (iii. 1, 2.) And again to Timothy he says, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. See also Rom. xii. 10, 15; 2 Cor. x. 1; Col. iii. 12; Phil. ii. 1, 2; 1 Peter iii. 8, 9; 2 Peter i. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 7, &c.) It is hard work, particularly to some natures, to manifest this characteristic, but in Christ's strength we shall be able to do it. Doubt may indeed exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But faith hears the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and triumphantly responds, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Experience adds her testimony, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

M. L. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DILEMMA.—1 Cor. v. 13.—In this verse the assembly of God's people at Corinth were definitely directed to put away from among themselves the individual whose glaring sin remained unrepented of. Whoever was thus "put away" would be regarded as no longer of the assembly as a public body on earth. Although the assembly of God is no longer *one* outwardly, but is, alas! broken, divided, ruined, yet wherever two or three are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, those thus gathered are solemnly responsible to exercise all needful discipline for the glory of God and the spiritual good of the offender.

2 Timothy ii. 19 is another thing altogether. The former is collective responsibility, the latter is individual. He has to "purge himself" from vessels to dishonour. By this it is evident the apostle alludes to men who had themselves erred from the truth and were teaching doctrines subversive of Christianity, of whom were Hymenæus and Philetus. "A great house" is simply used as an illustration, and when anyone "purges himself from these" he does not go outside Christendom, nor indeed could he without renouncing the profession of the Christian faith altogether. By "Christendom" we mean that great mass of persons called Christian as distinct from the false faiths of the world at large, and that mass embraces true believers as well as those who are only Christians in

name. Finally, we believe that every saved person upon earth to-day is a member of the "One Body," united by the Holy Spirit to the Head in heaven. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Scattered among the various sects of Christendom the members may be and are, linked up, as we know them to be, with religious systems that practically deny the great truth that there is "One Body," and only one. Nevertheless to that "One Body" they belong, nor would we dream of denying the reality of their membership any more than we should of those who in this day of ruin, eschewing sectarianism, are gathered on the broad ground of the church of God, and who seek to keep the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv.)



Life Testimony.—"If ever there was a day when it was important for every professed follower of Christ to stand fast and to be true to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thorough-going, heavenly-minded, divinely-taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned and poor and despised, but, like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its perfume abroad, and both God and man take notice of it."



THE
SERVICE AND SERVANTS OF CHRIST.

“Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.”—1 KINGS xxii. 49.

WELL done, Jehoshaphat! At last he had learned to say “No.” He had trifled far too long in his unholy alliance with Ahab—an alliance for which he had already paid dearly; but now, as a burnt child dreads the fire, so he declines the request of Ahab’s son, that their servants should make common cause in a voyage to Ophir. “*Jehoshaphat would not.*”

That signified power, and bore the stamp of reality. Association with evident unfaithfulness is, of necessity, a spring of constant weakness and defeat; and Jehoshaphat had learned his lesson, for a time, at least. If he needed the gold of Ophir, he must undertake the enterprise single-handed; he cannot allow his ships to carry a motley and an inharmonious crew. The servants whom he sends must obey one master, and the gold they bring home must belong to one claimant, otherwise all is confusion.

Now, this may seem narrow, and to the natural mind it would appear foolish. If these ships were manned by Ahab’s servants, as well as

Jehoshaphat's, the crews would be doubled. With such strength the golden spoils would be largely increased, and the wealth of each kingdom immensely enhanced. Jehoshaphat no doubt felt the truth of this, but yet he "*would not.*" He had solid reasons for refusing the help of these men. He had learned the somewhat difficult lesson—difficult, at any rate, in practice—that "evil communications corrupt good manners;" and having already been corrupted, and his royal manners and spiritual bearing having already been sorely humbled, he now curtly and firmly declines the offer.

Oh, how fond man is of crowding all kinds of servants into the ships, no matter who or what they may be, so long only as they are "servants," as though the more in number the better; as though it were of no moment whether they served Ahab or Jehoshaphat, mammon or God; as though it were merely a question of work to be done, irrespective of consequences or results! But this will not do. Faith desires quantity—unbounded quantity—but it looks primarily for quality. The whole is made up of parts, and if the parts are rotten, so is the whole; if the parts are sound, so is the whole. Hence, spite of the cry of the day for grand results and mighty works, and crowded ships and rich, golden stores, let faith make her discriminating selection of the mode in which this gold is to be acquired.

If the day wishes amalgamation and the employment of any kind of material for the accomplishment of the word of God, let faith firmly refuse alliance with the world for that end. God's servants, and they alone, must man God's ships—those who, by His grace, are worthy of that distinction; those who, first His children by faith in Christ Jesus, and indwelt by His Spirit, are free, in the blessed knowledge of conscious salvation, and truly separate in heart and life from the ways, habits, and principles of the world, to take up the sacred and delicate work of the Lord, to man His ships, and fetch His gold from Ophir.

Jehoshaphat wanted his own men to man his own vessels; Christ wants His own servants to do His own work. He wishes not to have that work spoiled, tarnished, ruined by the defiling touch of the "men of the world"—men who may be educated, cultured, and "ordained," but still "men of the world;" nay, nor even by those who, though not such, are nevertheless marked by the world's ways, and who are accordingly, and in proportion to their worldly association, morally unfitted to accomplish that work.

The one pre-requisite for that which is *par excellence* the work of Christ is absolute disconnection from the world's religion, from all profession of Christianity that goes down with and can be accepted by the world. Get to know

what Christ's ship is, and you will readily apprehend the incongruity of having for assistants the servants of Ahab on board.

Neither can two walk together, nor sail together, nor work together, nor worship together, "except they be agreed;" and if you say that on such conditions there can be no fellowship at all, it but proves that you have never resolved at all cost to find the truth, and, having found it, to put it into practice.

Did the servants of Jehoshaphat presume to say that it was necessary for them to have those of Ahab with them? Never. Jehoshaphat's men were equal to Jehoshaphat's work; if their royal master deigned to send them, they were glad to go, and, whether few or many, popular or otherwise, they had the sense of being the king's servants. This sufficed.

The entire mission was peculiarly regal—king's servants manned the king's ships to fetch the king's gold, and a stranger might not intermeddle. A little devotedness of heart to our earth-rejected Jesus will make all this plain enough; but when the heart seeks to please the world that hated Him, and follow in its religious ways, and receive its honeyed plaudits, then such loyalty of life will be unsought and uncared for.

But His word is still divinely true—"If any man serve Me, *let him follow Me*; and . . . *him will My Father honour.*" (John xii. 26.)

THE DAYS BEFORE THE FLOOD.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

GENESIS vi. 5, 11, 12.

THESE verses disclose the state of the world before the flood. A terrible tale they tell of moral decay, of lawlessness, of unrestrained violence and corruption covering the face of the whole earth. Everywhere society was honey-combed with wickedness, and rotten to the very core. The actual condition of things may not have been always exposed to public view. Veneer and varnish are not modern inventions, and evil, then as now, may at times have draped itself in elegant array, and at times assumed a coarser garb. But “*God looked*” down, and “*God saw*,” and the scene is set before us as He beheld it. There may have been much material prosperity. The farming interests flourished under the fostering hand of Jabal; technical education was promoted, and “every artificer in brass and iron” found an instructor in Tubal-cain, while the softer science of music had its academy under the leadership of

Jubal, who was "father of all such as handle the harp and organ." Plenty, therefore, to please both eye and ear, but beneath the surface society was a seething, putrid mass meet for the judgment flood.

Is the world better to-day, and is it whirling on to a happier goal? Many there be that tell us so, and point in proof of what they say to what Christianity has wrought. Alas! their testimony cannot be received. A greater than they has told a different story. "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke xvii. 26, 27.) If we receive their witness we must reject His; if you accredit them you must be prepared to call Him a liar, or at least to convict Him of exaggeration and mistake.

No one doubts that the presence of thousands upon thousands of believers on the Son of God exercises a preserving influence over the world. "Ye are the salt of the earth," the Saviour said, and salt we know is a great preservative. Moreover, the Holy Ghost is here, and He restrains for a season the full development of evil, as 2 Thess. ii. 7 teaches. But the heaped-up testimony of Scripture forbids our thinking the world is growing better, or that it is marching to a less solemn end.

Let a tiger-cub be taken from its mother, brought into your house, and reared on the hearthrug as you would rear a kitten. As it grows up, playful and full of frolic, you can hardly believe but what its civilized surroundings have deprived it of its natural ferocity. One day, in playing with it, you chance to scratch your hand, and the tiger tastes the blood. Behold it now! See how its eyes flash fire! It crouches, it is about to spring, and you flee for very life, or, seizing a pistol, shoot it dead. Its ferocious nature had only been lying dormant, and you discovered by this trifling accident that the tiger was but a tiger still.

This notion of the world's getting better can only find favour with those who do not know that it is already condemned. Men are not on probation now; they were, but that period is long since over. Humanity is no longer on its trial to see what sort of stuff it is made of. It has had its trial, and the outcome has been declared in no doubtful terms. In natural things this testing process is well understood. A seedsman says to a farmer, "Try some of this seed." The farmer does so, but with the most disappointing result. "Try it again," says the seedsman, and the end is no better. "Try it once more under other conditions," urges the seedsman, and for the third time the seed is tried and found worthless. What is the issue of these repeated trials?

This, the seed is *condemned*. In like manner humanity has been tried under varying circumstances, and with the greatest possible patience. Tried for centuries without law, it proved itself lawless; tried for centuries under law, it proved itself a law-breaker; the messengers of God were persecuted and slain, and when the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, appeared, He was crowned in derision with a bramble crown, and finally crucified amid the jeers of a heartless mob. With the fixing up of that cross probation ended, and from that hour to this the world has been lying under condemnation. As to its *state*, it is condemned as worthless, so that nothing avails for any but a new creation (Gal. vi. 15); and as to its *deeds*, it is condemned as guilty of awful crimes culminating in the rejection of the Son of God. (John iii. 18.) Thus condemned, it only awaits the carrying out of the sentence which, however long deferred, can never be set aside.

How little do men care to think of this. How little do they care to know that God "has set a day, in which He is going to judge the habitable earth in righteousness by the Man whom He has appointed, giving the proof of it to all in having raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) Speak to them of peace and safety, of to-morrow being as to-day, and much more abundant, and though you be but a lying prophet, they will

catch your words, and send them spinning round the globe. But whether men will hear or mock, they must be told of a day that fast approacheth, "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness," a day when "the earth shall quake . . . ; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." (Joel ii.) In that day shall men's hearts fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. (Luke xxi. 26.) "They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth." (Isaiah ii. 19.) Then shall the Lord Jesus be revealed "from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God, and those who do not obey the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall pay the penalty of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His might." (2 Thess. i. 8, 9.) Oh that men would heed this, and turn to the Lord with all their hearts, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning! He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.

For there is an ark of safety now, an all-sufficient shelter from the coming storm, of which Noah's ark was at best but a beauteous figure. He and his found salvation from the overwhelm-

ing flood within those boards of gopher wood. When the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, the ark floated safely on the bosom of the mighty waters, and all within were safe. Christ is the *only* Ark, and He is all-sufficient. In that sanctuary a multitude that no man can number have found a shelter, and there is room for thousands more. But make haste. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark," is the urgent message. Enter, oh, enter now, lest the door be shut, and your hope of salvation be extinguished for ever.

Unsaved reader, we are deeply concerned about you. We fear lest you are one who will call upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon you, and hide you from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. (Rev. vi. 16.) Why trifle so? Why take it so leisurely, as if you were in the first grey dawn of the morning, and had the whole day before you, and naught to fear? Were you on one of the great prairies of the wide West, and someone galloped towards you shouting that the prairie was on fire, if there were a chance of escape how quickly you would mount your horse, and digging your spurs into its flanks, would urge it forward to its utmost speed. You are threatened with an infinitely graver danger now, and will you not flee from it?

The Judge is at the door. If He whet His glittering sword, and His hand take hold on judgment, He will render vengeance to His enemies, and will reward them that hate Him. (Deut. xxxii. 41.) Oh, "kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Psalm ii. 12.)

And when Noah and his family entered the ark "*the Lord shut him in.*" (Gen. vii. 16.) Telling fact! Like the pillar of cloud that stood between the children of Israel and their pursuers, it had its bright side and its black. To those *without* it announced in solemn accents the sealing of their doom. To those *within* it spake of safety that no power could ever touch. Fiercely the storm might rage, fiercely the winds might blow, but neither wind nor storm could harm in that safe retreat. So with the believer now. The risen Saviour is his Deliverer from coming wrath. (1 Thess. i. 10.) Sheltered in Christ, the true and only Ark, he is for ever safe.

"Safe in Christ, the weakest child
 Stands in all God's favour;
 All in Christ are reconciled
 Through that only Saviour.

"Safe in Christ! safe in Christ!
 He's their glory ever;
 None can pluck them from His hand,
 They shall perish never."

That witness is true; for it is but the echo of the Lord's own words when He said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." (John x. 27-30.)

May God grant unto you, unknown but dear reader, to be sheltered in Christ before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. An ark has been prepared, its door is open, and you are lovingly and fervently besought to enter. "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts xiii. 40, 41.)

"THE existence of flesh in us, though judged as sin, does not give a bad conscience, nor interrupt communion; but the moment it is allowed even in mind, it does both." J. N. D.

"HABITUAL faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling." J. N. D.

ARE WE WATCHING AND SERVING ?

LUKE xii.

IN meditating on our Lord's discourses in the gospels, we should remember that He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—that is, He could not then bring out the full truth because His death and resurrection had not been accomplished. He was straitened. This is why the coming of the Lord as our hope could not be so distinctly set forth as it afterward was in the epistles. There we find the distinction kept up between the coming of our Lord for us, and the revelation or appearing of our Lord when we come out of heaven and reign with Him. This could not be made known till the nation of Israel under the law had rejected their Messiah, and came under God's judicial dealings. Now that we have the instruction of the epistles, we can go back and trace, in the parable of the virgins and in the beginning of our Lord's farewell discourse, an allusion to His coming for us, when only those who are truly His will be caught up. In this chapter, after the Lord had spoken much about His coming, Peter said, "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward,

whom his lord shall make ruler over his household?" &c., for, knowing full well that He would be rejected, His coming for us was by Him anticipated. This shows also that the great thing our Lord looks for now is caring for His household during His absence. (*vv.* 41, 42.) But more about this further on.

This question of Peter's also reminds us of our Lord's so kindly allowing Himself to be interrupted by questions to which He graciously replied, and then resumed His discourse. In the end of John xiii. and xiv. our Lord was interrupted by Peter, Thomas, Philip, and Jude's asking questions, to each of which He at once replied. We see the same in this chapter. Our Lord began by addressing His "disciples" in the presence of a multitude of people; then, in the 13th verse, "one of the company" asked Him to speak to his brother about dividing the inheritance with him. The Lord's reply to this extended to the end of the 21st verse, when He again addressed His "disciples." It is sweet to trace these gracious ways of our adorable Lord!

His disciples were a "little flock." They were, indeed, when compared with the multitudes of the professed people of God, as it still is; but they were not to fear. They would have the kingdom, which now is in abeyance, but will be occupied by those whom the disciples here set forth as having received the Messiah with the hope of reigning

with Him. It will be their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. (v. 32.) It need scarcely be said that those who form the church, the body of Christ, hope for a heavenly inheritance, and to reign *with* Him as His heavenly people. The all-searching question now is as to our state of heart; for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Still, till He come, He would have us watching and serving.

From this touching discourse we learn that our Lord would have us to be *girded servants*. "Let your loins be girded about." Always ready to be sent here or there, as He may direct. In many large houses of business there are men ready to carry out on any emergency their master's commands. "Be ye therefore READY also." The loins being girded indicated they were prepared. The flowing garments folded up and tucked round the waist showed they were ready for hill or dale, or even a path of thorns and briars. A girded servant is one ready to go, and waiting to be told *when* and *where*. May we be truly girded servants. Such can say—

"While here to do His will be mine,
And His to fix my time of rest."

We should also be *shining servants*—"your lights burning." Instead of their lamps going out, they are well supplied with oil—trimmed, and burning brightly. This implies dependence, faith, communion with Christ, unsparing self-

judgment, and the Spirit ungrieved by our walk. John was spoken of by our Lord as "a burning and a shining light." Such should we be, as the apostle so pointedly instructs us: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." (Phil. ii. 15, 16.) We should then be *shining servants*. Our light should shine before men, and will do so if we are abiding in our Lord Jesus. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Eph. v. 8.)

As "men that wait for their lord," so should we be *waiting servants*. In some establishments the servants look for their master's return during the night. They do not know when, but they wait. They do not go elsewhere, but wait. They do not retire to rest, but simply wait, so that they may open the door as soon as they hear the knock. Our Lord Jesus would have us to be *waiting servants*; His coming our nearest future.

But our Lord would not only that we should be waiting, but watching for His coming. He looks for *watching servants*. As the night becomes far spent, and watch after watch passes, such know it cannot be long before the Master will come; and they listen with increasing watchfulness. Such are watching servants; and such

our Lord highly commends. He says, "Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Can any thing exceed this testimony of our Lord concerning the servants whom He finds *watching*? Do we lay it on our consciences as we ought? Is it because it suits His loving heart that we wait and watch? It surely cannot be long before we shall actually see His face, and be with Him for ever. Our Lord, therefore, added, "If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." How pleasing then to Him is the *watching servant*!

With regard to the various watches, we know that the first watch was from six to nine o'clock, the second from nine to twelve (midnight), the third from midnight to three in the morning, and the fourth watch from three to six in the morning. Now, it is certain that the first and second watch have both passed, for we read in the parable of the virgins that "at *midnight* there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matt. xxv. 6); and it is a fact that, about sixty years ago, this cry did go forth, and since then has extended almost over every part of the civilized world, in a way too that has not been known since the days of the apostles. In Paul's day, believers turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and *to wait for*

His Son from heaven ; but, according to our Lord's prophetic word, "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." So that, as regards the watches, we are now in the third watch, and that watch considerably advanced. We say we are in some part of the third watch because in the fourth watch our Lord will come to His ancient people (Israel) as their great Deliverer. There is a beautiful illustration of this in the fourteenth chapter of Matthew. Our Lord was in the mountain praying. His position there answers to His present place of ministry in heaven. At the fourth watch of the night His earthly people are in a great trouble and danger, and He meets them in their deep distress. Jesus reveals Himself as their Deliverer, so that when He came into the ship the wind ceased ; and they worshipped Him as Son of God (for the people of Israel will know Him by-and-by as "Son of God" and "King of Israel"). If then *we* are in the third watch of the night, and it is far advanced, and He is coming to bless Israel in the fourth watch, and it is clear that we shall be taken up to meet the Lord in the air before He delivers Israel—for then we shall come out of heaven with Him—it certainly can only be a very little while before He that shall come will come, and will not delay.

But at this present time our Lord also looks for *faithful and wise servants*, because He not

only has set us in a position to wait and watch, but He has also given us talents to use for Him, grace to minister to others, and thus made us *stewards*. Hence our Lord added, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." (*vv.* 42-44.) It is scarcely possible that language could convey more strikingly our Lord's approval of servants who care for His saints during His absence. It is *faithfulness* to Him to thus use for the benefit of His household the talents He has given us, and it is also the path of wisdom, because it lays up treasure in heaven. To give seasonable aid to those who form "His household" during His absence is what distinguishes true from false profession of His name.

Besides all this, we know from another scripture that the Holy Spirit would have us to be *longing servants*. Not only girded servants, shining, waiting, watching, faithful, and wise, but ardently desiring His coming. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." When the Lord presents Himself as "the Bright and Morning Star," saying, "Surely, I come quickly," what should be the effect on our souls but the hearty response,

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”? Few subjects are more solemn, and none more eminently sanctifying; for “he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” May we be so taken up with our precious Saviour where He is, that our constant cry may be, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

There is another very solemn word added by our Lord. It is about the *evil servant*. Orthodox enough perhaps in his views, and full of scripture truth, but *in heart* (oh, how appalling!) putting off the Lord’s coming. He said in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming;” and as a result he began to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken. With all his profession he loved not, because he had not tasted the love of Christ. His portion then, when judgment comes, will be with the unbelievers.

We may be sure that our Lord is not delaying. Every thing needful to be accomplished before He comes is going on in perfect harmony with all the attributes and counsels of God, while His long-suffering toward this evil world will be to His eternal praise and glory. His unchanging desire while on the Father’s throne is to have us with Him where He is, that we may behold His essential glory, and share with Himself the inheritance and the glory which the Father has given Him. (John xvii. 24.) What infinite love to us! Are we watching and serving? H. H. S.

SAUL, SAMUEL, AND DAVID.

1 SAMUEL xv.—xviii.

IN the former of these chapters Saul and Samuel are brought prominently before us in connections that are full of deep and divine instruction. The way of the flesh is seen in Saul—the way of the natural heart, essentially perverse and opposed to the will of God, even when man is clothed in a religious garb, and in outward communication with God.

We must bear in mind that in those days man was still on his trial, and God had not yet fully pronounced His judgment on him. In the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ the history of man in the flesh closed. God no longer seeks fruit from man as such, but addresses him as a lost sinner proved guilty, and therefore under condemnation; while He reveals Himself as a Saviour God and the righteous Justifier of all who believe in Jesus.

It is very important to remember this when studying God's ways in Old Testament times, whether with individuals or nations. Especially is this so in Saul's case, as we find him signally favoured and honoured by God. Nothing was lacking which was calculated to produce good fruit, and secure obedience from him, if such were possible from man in his natural state, apart from his being born of God. But the way of Saul was

perverse though religious; and in chapter xiv. we see it in full display, and Saul is at the end rejected.

Thus God was showing the unprofitableness of "the flesh" and the setting of it aside, in order that He might bring in what was of the Spirit, and suitable to Himself.

Hence in the next chapter David and Samuel are prominent. The former was to replace Saul as the man of God's choice. As such Samuel has now to do with him, and to turn from Saul, the rejected king.

There was much in Saul that *nature* in Samuel might mourn over; but as one who was the vessel of the Spirit of God at that time, Samuel must be, and was, rebuked for this. What is merely of nature must not be allowed to affect the servant of God in relation to His service. No honey was to be allowed in the meat-offering. This is an important principle; and many are the instances given in God's word of one and another, otherwise faithful and uncompromising in the face of evil, who broke down through being influenced by natural feeling and affection.

The pleadings of Saul in chapter xv. induced Samuel to turn again and worship with him after having testified solemnly to his rejection, and after Saul had made it manifest that worship was to him only a means of maintaining his reputation in the eyes of his people. Solemn exposure of the deceitfulness and hardness of the human heart

when "the flesh" is reigning there! Yet Samuel was prevailed on to go with him.

It is well to remark here that the way of "the flesh" in Saul is the same in a believer now, if "the flesh" be allowed to act. The perversity of Saul in our chapter, the excusings and the pleadings, are reproduced in us when the eye is not single, and the heart not right with God.

This is written for *our* admonition, and surely for our profit, if thereby we learn to distrust "the flesh" more absolutely, and to have our eye more singly on what is our Lord's will, our motives and our ways being brought into the light of His presence.

The way of Samuel also as a servant of God, and therefore responsible to act entirely for Him, is deeply instructive. He was in the main a faithful and blessed servant, witnessing against the varied forms of evil that had been allowed amongst the people of God. Yet we find him at times under the influence of *nature* in a way that deeply affected his judgment and actions, and deprived him of that true dignity which should ever have characterized him as a servant of God. Not only is he prevailed on to turn again with Saul after refusing to do so in verse 26, but he mourns for Saul after God had rejected him, and God has to speak to him about this. Then, in the next chapter, the fear of Saul hinders his unqualified and ready response to the word of God. Finally, when Jesse's eldest son passes before him,

he is deceived by the outward appearance of the man, and God has to correct the hasty conclusions of His servant, but in doing so declares for us a weighty principle, which we cannot too distinctly lay to heart. (See chap. xvi. 7.)

In chapter xvi. we turn to David. Samuel has to seek him out and anoint him as God's chosen one. But before this can be attained, both the fear of man (Saul), and the attractions of nature (as presented in Jesse's eldest son), have to be overcome. For the moment Samuel is affected by each of these, as we have already noticed, but his heart is right with God, and subject, and so God is very gracious with His servant, encouraging and teaching him according to his need.

How beautiful is this finding and anointing of David! How distinctly we are taught by it that the way of the Spirit of God is to turn us from man to Christ! And blessed it is for us when He is anointed in our hearts as Lord and Christ; when all hope from man and confidence in "the flesh" are given up, as illustrated by Samuel's being called to turn away entirely from Saul. Then indeed we are free to learn God's thoughts about Christ and His delight in Him.

The fear of man will forbid it, the natural judgment will reason against it, but these have to be judged, and Christ enthroned in our hearts.

Here we part company with Samuel—blessed servant of God as he was. We find his death just alluded to in chapter xxv.

David alone is prominent in chapter xvii. Samuel must learn, like John the Baptist (whose ministry is strikingly similar to and illustrated by that of Samuel), to say, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

As chosen and anointed of God, David now goes forth to

"Break the strong man's force."

Alone, and in human weakness, despised by his brethren, he destroys the enemy's power, and leads on to victory, turning the fear and trouble of his people into joy and praise.

All this tells us simply and beautifully of our great Deliverer, who was crucified in weakness, but through death destroyed him that had the power of death, and has made us more than conquerors.

This chapter is indeed easy of interpretation. Christ is before us in figure as the Captain of our salvation, glorifying God, destroying the enemy, and bringing us into peace and victory. It is thus He presents Himself to our consciences and hearts in the gospel, and seeks to win our affections by His work and words.

The next picture we get is of a heart thus won. (Chapter xviii.)

With all fear of the enemy gone and the victory won, Jonathan, who is the prominent one in the beginning of this chapter, is now free to express his admiration of and affection for the one who had shown himself to be his saviour.

It was no mere lip-service or outward show with him, though the hidden working of affection in his heart showed itself beautifully and touchingly in his actions. "He stripped himself." All that might tell of *his* greatness is now surrendered to another. He is here, in some little measure, in the spirit of Paul in Phil. iii.: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." But, unlike Paul, he does not appear to have desired "the fellowship of His sufferings." His heart is drawn to David as the one who had wrought such a mighty deliverance; and his affection manifested itself, as we have noticed, in seeking to honour David, though it made less of himself.

And here we may notice that Jonathan's affection was very precious to David. He valued it and cherished it. After Jonathan is dead he lets us know, in those memorable and touching words recorded in 2 Samuel i. 26, how dear it was to him.

Happy indeed is it for us if, while walking in the faith and liberty of what Jesus has done for us, with our *consciences* at peace, our *hearts* are finding their satisfaction and joy in Himself. This will lead to true self-surrender, and we shall be content to share His rejection here. We are to "go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," while in spirit we may rest upon His bosom, like "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

May we be led on to know more of this blessed-

ness; may we distrust and judge "the flesh" in all its subtle workings, and find rest to our souls in companionship with Him; learning from Him in whom every glory centres now, and from whom every glory will be displayed by-and-by, when we are glorified with Him.

S. M. A.

DIVINE LOVE.

LOVE to the members of the body of Christ must flow from love to the Head, and the test of love to Him is keeping His commandments, His words, His sayings. John xiv. 21, 23, 24.

True, the Lord's people are commanded by Him to love one another, but unbroken fellowship is not necessarily the measure of divine affection any more than an unclouded brow and smiling face are the only accompaniments of a father's love towards his child. *True* love to an erring child often demands stern discipline, for lack of which Eli brought sore affliction upon himself, his whole family, and the people of Israel.

But the sternest rebuke should be without "bitterness." "Let *all* bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with *all* malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. iv. 31, 32.

Nevertheless, it is but a spurious affection to the members of Christ that can tolerate amongst

them unholy thoughts of Himself and disobedience to His word. That word warns us solemnly that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and also exhorts us not to do evil that good may come.

The same word says "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil;" and, however great and sorrowful may be the declension and confusion around us, the admonition to Timothy still holds good to each one of us individually, "Keep THYSELF pure."

A. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ECCENTRIC.—The question you ask could not be adequately discussed within the narrow limits of our correspondence columns; but you will find it clearly and exhaustively dealt with in a book entitled "*Facts and Theories as to a Future State*," which may be ordered through the publishers of this magazine.

W. S.—The point you raise respecting Ananias and Sapphira is one on which we do not presume to offer an opinion. Scripture is rigidly silent on the subject, and its silence admonishes us to be silent likewise. We wish some preachers would remember this when tempted to speak of that unhappy pair.

A. L.—Scripture, as we read it, fully warrants our believing that we shall know and recognize those whom we have known on earth when we meet them above. If not, we are at a loss to understand how Paul could have spoken of the Thessalonians as his hope, his joy, his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. (1 Thess. ii. 19.)

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

YOU ask me in your last letter as to what I hold concerning the forgiveness of sins.

What I hold in the first place, and what Scripture sets forth most distinctly, is this—that it is of infinite importance to you to have all your sins forgiven; not to hope they will be forgiven, nor to be like the old sexton who had said, Sunday after Sunday for fifty years, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins,” and yet did not know that his sins were forgiven at all.

Next I am taught that that person is blessed (*happy*) whose sins are forgiven, and to whom *the Lord* will not reckon sin. (Psalm xxxii.; Rom. iv.)

Next I learn that the forgiveness of sins may be known, and the blessedness referred to enjoyed, and that this is the common portion of all God’s children; *i.e.*, of all who have believed with the heart unto righteousness. There are so many scriptures as to this that I only refer you to a few. (Acts x. 43, xiii. 38, 39, xxvi. 18; 1 John ii. 12; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14, ii. 13; see also Rev. i. 5.)

Thus, to know and enjoy divine and eternal (Heb. ix. 12) forgiveness is the privilege of the true believer, and *not* to be praying or hoping for it, which is the denial of all the scriptures referred to.

If a believer sin, his course is pointed out with equal clearness in 1 John i. 9; and though this verse applies specially to believers, and is written to the children of God, it is also helpful to one who does not yet know the forgiveness of sins, but desires to do so.

Forgiveness of sins comes through faith in the work of Christ, and not by prayers. It is because of, and in virtue of, *that* work, and not of our prayers or anything else we can bring, that we receive the forgiveness of sins. (Rom. iii. 26.)

God forgives in righteousness because He has been glorified about sin at the cross. Divine forgiveness does not mean that God passes over sin, or that it does not bring His judgment upon it; but the gospel presents to me One who made atonement, whose blood was shed on account of sin, and assures me that His blood cleanses from every sin. "Christ also hath once *suffered* for *sins*, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." And again, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Read also carefully the first part of 1 Cor. xv., where the resurrection of Christ is set before us as the divine warrant, so to speak, for knowing that the one who believes the gospel is no longer in his sins. "If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins," is equivalent to saying, "If Christ be raised, ye are not in your sins." "But now is Christ risen from the dead," &c., and then, "Christ

the firstfruits, afterward *they that are Christ's* at His coming." "His own," and only His own, will be raised *from among the dead*, or, if living, be changed in a moment at His coming into the air.

How important to know that we are in very truth "His own!" that all question of our sins, and of fitness for His Father's presence, is settled; so that instead of praying to be fitted, we can give "thanks unto the Father *who hath made us fit* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i.)

In solemn contrast with this, to die in our sins is to be lost eternally; to be raised in our sins at the great white throne, and judged there according to our works; to meet Christ as a Judge because He was not received as a Saviour, and the efficacy of His precious blood made our own by faith.

I will close now. Think over all this, and if there be anything else you wish to know, I will be glad to write further; but what is of deepest and first importance for you to know is, that *your* sins are all forgiven.

S. M. A.

II.

DEAR ———,—Since writing my previous letter to you respecting the forgiveness of sins, it has occurred to me that a difficulty may arise in your mind as to the sins which may be committed by a true believer in Christ; that is, by a child of

God ; for "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), and how it was that the Lord taught His disciples to say, "Forgive us our debts, *as* we forgive our debtors." (Matt. vi.)

I will take up this latter point first. If you will look at the chapter, you will see that the Lord explains why the prayer He taught them contained a petition like this ; and in so doing clearly shows that the prayer was only for those who were already in relationship to God as His children. But to be in that relationship there must be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as proved by the text I have already quoted from Gal. iii. ; and faith in Him means that I have come to God as a sinner needing forgiveness, and trusted in Christ (God's provision for the sinner) as a Saviour, and through His name have received the forgiveness of sins. (1 John ii. 12.)

Such persons, being children of God, are set here in this world to manifest the grace of their heavenly Father.

Instead of seeking to revenge a wrong, they are instructed to forgive, and even pray for, their enemies, and to overcome evil with good, &c., and thus show practically whose they are, and the forgiving grace of His heart.

If, however, they allow a different spirit to actuate them, and do *not* forgive, they will not, *as His children*, receive a *Father's* forgiveness for their own trespasses, but will be like a child in a

house who refuses to do what his father desires, or to please the father, and therefore cannot be happy nor enjoy his father's forgiveness and love until there is a better state of mind, and an obedient spirit.

I would here remark, that the prayer given by the Lord to the disciples was specially suited to them in the position they then occupied before the Holy Ghost had been given (John vii. 39), and therefore before the full truth, as to the forgiveness of sins, and the conscious relationship to God as Father by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, could be known. If you read carefully Luke xxiv. 46-49, and Romans viii. 15, 16, you will see how all these follow the atoning sufferings and death, and the resurrection of Jesus; for we must never forget that His work alone is the ground of all blessing—the love and grace of God's heart the source of it.

While pointing this out to you as indicating the suitability of the words of the prayer for the disciples at that time, while they yet occupied the place of a godly remnant of the Jews, and were followers of the rejected Messiah when He had not where to lay His head, yet the principles of it are most instructive for believers now; and, as taught by the Holy Ghost, and enjoying the full light of Christian truth, they can richly profit by its teaching. But this I cannot take up more fully now, though I may do so at a future time.

I now come to the question of a child of God committing sin, either in thought, word, or deed; and "the thought of foolishness is sin."

You will remember that in my last letter I referred you to 1 John i. 9, as instructing the believer in Christ what to do if he (or she) should sin.

The place that a child of God is brought into is—"the light;" and his portion there is to enjoy fellowship with the Father and His Son.

But if he sin, he cannot enjoy this fellowship, *nor be happy in the light* until it is forgiven, and to be forgiven it must be confessed or owned to God *as Father*; for you will bear in mind that the relationship is not altered. We have still to do with God as our Father, as it says in chapter ii., "If anyone sin we have an Advocate with the *Father*, Jesus Christ the righteous."

How wonderful is this provision of His grace for His own children! Thus they are enabled to go on in rest of conscience and enjoyment of a Father's love while He maintains the holiness which becomes His house for ever. "Jesus Christ the righteous," now a Man in the glory, prays for the failing child of God, who, as the result of this, comes to the Father, and confesses the actual thing done, owns it unreservedly to Him, and is assured by the written Word that all is forgiven; for "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous-

ness." In this assurance the heart can again express its desires and petitions to Him without any cloud or reserve. And this is true prayer; for prayer is the expression of confidence and dependence, and these can only exist where there is the assurance that all is forgiven, and put away from His sight.

I must not make this letter too long, but before closing would ask you to notice the force of the expression, "He is *faithful and just* [righteous] to forgive us our sins," &c. You will quite see that if it is a question of a person's faithfulness and righteousness to do a certain thing, that person would not be faithful and righteous if he failed to do it. Hence, whether it be a sinner coming before God for the forgiveness of all his sins, as believing in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, or whether it be one who has already known this blessedness, and can stand before God as His child, and say, "Abba, Father," but who, having sinned, confesses it to the Father, God's righteousness is pledged to forgive both, and His faithfulness to His own word and to Christ's work is involved in it.

That it is also His joy and delight I need hardly add. We have only to read the touching story given by the blessed Lord Himself in the end of Luke xv. to be assured of this; little, alas! as we enter into and understand it.

If you have not yet known anything of it, the

invitation of the Spirit of God and the word of God is, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him;" and having once tasted and seen His goodness, we find as we go on that it is a boundless ocean that shall satisfy us with fulness of joy eternally.

S. M. A.

SERVICE AND COMMUNION.

THE subject of service is one of great practical importance. There is an immense difference between salvation and service, nor can there be any acceptable *service* until the question of *salvation* is settled. These two things are often confounded, and the true nature of both is thus destroyed.

As those who are guilty, we find in the blood of Jesus that which washes away all our sins; and as those who are utterly lost, we find in the Lord Jesus Christ a complete and an all-sufficient Saviour. Our indifference in service can no more mar the perfection of His atoning work than our devotedness can add to it. Christ and His work—apprehended by faith—are the Alpha and Omega of salvation.

The legalist works that he may win or improve his title to God's favour. The believer serves, knowing from the first that his sins are put away, that he as a sinner has been crucified with

Christ, and that his place is "in Christ," in all the unbounded favour of the Father's heart. This is where salvation puts us. We cannot be saved and have anything less. When we gave ourselves up as utterly lost, and believed on the Son of God, we stood at once before God in all the value of His work, and in all the acceptableness of His person. *Saved* by another, and by a work altogether outside of ourselves.

This sets us free from legal bondage to serve the One who has saved us for very love of Him. The young Egyptian said to David, "Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company." (1 Sam. xxx. 15.) It is in this blessed deliverance and liberty that true service finds its beginning. Our hearts might well abide in the spirit of a perpetual hallelujah for the liberty of grace—grace which, while it delivers the conscience from the bondage of law, deeply affects the heart by the claims of love.

If I am set free, and stand in divine favour, to whom do I owe it? and what did it cost Him to secure these blessings for me? Let all the darkness and sorrow of Gethsemane and Calvary give the answer. And what was the mainspring of it all? LOVE. Love in the Father to send Him; love on His own part to come; love that many waters could not quench; love that floods

could not drown; love fathomless, everlasting, and inexpressible; and yet love that is deeply personal, so that faith ever says, "He loved *me*;" love which the Holy Ghost desires us to know, and yet love which passeth knowledge. It is *that love* which constrains to service, and which is its only divine spring.

This is a motive power which acts, or ought to act, equally on every saved soul. Service is often supposed to be a matter of gift, which is a great mistake. The presence or absence of gift may affect the character and form of service; but service itself is a matter of love, not of gift; it springs from the heart, not the brain.

Again, *all* are servants, because all are bought. The word which is translated "servant" more than a hundred times in the New Testament is really "slave." What makes a man my slave? Buying him. We are all bought with a price, and are therefore not our own; but remember it is a price *love* has paid. The bond-slave grinding at the mill, and Paul in his high apostolic labours, were alike "servants of the Lord Christ." The One who loved us unto death is now our Lord and Master, and we are *His*, to serve Him with a heart that finds delight in doing His will. How vastly different is this from legal drudgery that never rises above duty and necessity! We are not set to toil like galley-slaves at the oar of duty, bound by the iron chain of law; but that precious

Saviour in glory has laid us under the sweet compulsion of love, and His service is perfect freedom, because every heart that knows and enjoys His love, loves to serve Him.

Why do you have a cage for your bird? Because it loves the blue sky and the green fields better than it loves you. If you could bring that bird to love you better than it loved the fields and sky, you would not need a cage. Christians *in communion with Jesus* do not need a cage to keep them from flying away into the world; they have not to be put on the treadmill of duty to make them serve. They are happily separate from the world, and they are willing, joyful servants of the Lord Christ. The desire to serve, devotedness in service, and, above all, perseverance in service, all spring from this source: "THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US." Have we this constraint upon us?

Then the question arises, "How are we to serve? What are we to do?" The answer is, "Abide in communion with Jesus, and if you are prayerfully exercised about it, He will show you what to do, and how and when to do it." Love is the source of service, but communion directs service in a proper channel, for in communion with Him we learn His mind. Every act of true service, from the cup of cold water up to the alabaster box of precious ointment, has its spring in love, and its guiding principle in communion.

It is deplorable to think what a waste of energy there is in the Church of God through lack of communion, and the intelligence that springs from it. You get a striking illustration of loving but unintelligent service in the conduct of the women from Galilee, after the burial of the Lord. They had unspeakable affection for Him—they were last at the cross, and first at the grave; but they had not the intelligence that communion would have given. They were most devoted and diligent. They *prepared* spices and ointments, and came *very early* in the morning to the sepulchre. But their labour was in vain, their spices and ointments were useless. They, with all their love, had forgotten what even His enemies remembered, that He had said He would rise again. How much of our service is like theirs! We think it will be nice and right to do this or that; we take great pains and make much preparation, *but* is it intelligent service, and the fruit of communion? If not, our spices and ointments, be they ever so precious, and ever so well prepared, will be useless.

What a contrast in Mary of Bethany! In adoring silence at the blessed Master's feet, she had entered into His own thoughts. She had learnt the resurrection secret, and knew that after His death it would be too late to anoint Him, and in the power and intelligence of communion she anointed Him for His burial before His death.

The others—perhaps also the women of Galilee—complained of the waste. But where was the waste? *Their* ointments were wasted indeed, but Mary's is still giving out its fragrance wheresoever the gospel is preached.

May those words of our Lord Jesus Christ sink down into our ears and hearts: "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour. . . . 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." (John xii. 26; xv. 4.) Let us sit at Jesus' feet, and hear His word. Let it dwell in us richly. *Then* will our service be after the heavenly pattern, and we shall build gold, silver, precious stones, which will abide the fire, and be a joy and crown of rejoicing to us "in that day."

Just a closing word on the *spirit* of the true servant. Our hearts are prone to extremes, and when we are awakened from an indifference which does not think enough of the importance of service, we are in danger of thinking too much of *our importance* in service. Let us remember that *service* is a lowly thing. It assumes no place or dignity to itself, but bows in subjection to the will of another. Till He come, may we be found "SERVING THE LORD WITH ALL HUMILITY OF MIND."

C. A. C.

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

LEVITICUS XIV. sets before us in striking type the means which God has provided for the bringing of a soul from the place of distance, where all were on account of sin, into His own presence, so as to be quite at home there. Many who no longer fear going to hell are not *at home* in the presence of God, and we wish to show them what will make them so.

This work is divided into two parts. First, that which was done before the leper came into the camp; second, what was done after he was in. The former gave title and fitness to enter; the latter made him at home there.

The first part of this work consists of two things, one of which is connected with *righteousness*, and the other with *holiness*; for God is both righteous and holy. If we are to be with Him it must be in a manner consistent with both these attributes.

First then we have two birds taken, one of which was killed, and the other, after having been dipped in the blood of the dead bird, was let loose into the open field. The two birds represent Jesus Christ in death and in resurrection. He, "through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) On the cross

He took our sins upon Him. There He was made sin for us; and there He suffered the judgment of God due to sin. There it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief; and there He said to God, "Thy wrath lieth hard upon Me, and Thou hast afflicted Me with all Thy waves." Herein God's righteousness in relation to sin was displayed and vindicated.

God's claims having been satisfied by the death of the Lamb which He Himself had provided, He was now free to act in grace toward the sinner. The question of God's righteousness was the first and great thing to be settled before any blessing could come to man. Christ, by the shedding of His blood, has satisfied all God's righteous claims, so that there is nothing now to hinder God receiving the sinner who approaches Him through faith in that blood. (Rom. iii. 25.) The resurrection of Christ is the proof of the value of His blood. God "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant." This, then, is the first great fact set forth in the type. God's righteous claims in relation to sin have been satisfied by the death of Christ.

The second fact is, that the value of this blood is applied to the believer. By it he is judicially cleansed from all sin, and justified from all things, so that he is righteous in the eyes of God. The man who was to be cleansed was sprinkled with the *blood* of the dead bird; and not only so, but

after this he washed his clothes and bathed himself in *water*, and he was clean. He was then fit, and allowed to come into the camp where God was. The water is a symbol of death. When Christ died, out of His pierced side came forth *blood* and *water*. Man is not only a sinner by his acts, but sinful in his nature—conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity; therefore nothing that deals with his sins only can alter the man himself, and make him clean, and so fit for God's presence. Death must take place. As a child of Adam, he must die that he may live before God in Christ. This is what is true of the believer. He has part in the death of Christ, for "our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6), and now he lives to God in Him in an entirely new life. This is illustrated in the case of Naaman the leper. He had to wash in Jordan seven times to be clean. The leper went into Jordan, but the leper did not come out of Jordan. When Naaman came out of Jordan his flesh was like the flesh of a little child—he was a *new* man. In figure it was a new creation; and nothing less than this avails to make a man fit for God. The old nature is not washed or made clean, but set aside by the judgment of God in the cross, and a new nature—the life of Christ—imparted to the believer; and thus he lives to God, and is made fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. He is clean every whit.

After this washing the leper was to come into the camp—a proof that he was fit for the presence of God, and entitled to enjoy his blessings under *the eye of God*. So every believer is in *all* the value of the *blood* and *water* which came forth from the pierced side of Christ. He is in all the justifying and cleansing efficacy of the death of Christ, however little may be his intelligence and faith as to this truth. He is justified from all things, and is clean every whit. This is what was set forth by the first part of the work which was done for the cleansing of the leper.

What more, it might be asked, could he require? Nothing as regards his fitness and title to enter; but though inside the camp, *he was outside his tent*. He was not yet at home there. He had to tarry abroad for seven days. Then began the second part of the work of cleansing; namely, what took place *inside* the camp. In order to be really at home in the presence of God, it is not only necessary that we should be in all the value of the death of Christ under the eye of God, but also that there should be an *intelligent appreciation* of the work of Christ *in our own conscience*. We should realize, or make our own by faith, the varied aspects of the death of Christ, typified by the means used for the leper inside the camp. This is what we learn by the second part of the work after the leper was brought into the camp.

On the seventh day there was a second washing. He was to shave off all his hair, wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water. The soul thus realizes for himself by faith what was true of him already by the death of Christ. He sees that his former history as a child of Adam—a sinful man—is closed in the cross, and that there the old things have passed away. He says in faith, “I am crucified with Christ.” He reckons that he has died indeed unto sin by the death of Christ. Not that sin is dead, but that he is dead to sin—has done with that condition which was characterized by sin. “He that is dead is justified from sin.” Not that he has lost the sense of the flesh being in him, for, as a fact, it is still there, but he now knows that he is not *in the flesh* before God. But then no one ever reaches this point without an experimental knowledge of what he is in the flesh, such as we see depicted at the end of Romans vii. ; so that the soul under the dealing of God cries out, “O wretched man that I am!” He is made to feel the reality of what sin is in the presence of God, in view of His holiness, and his own powerlessness under it. It is then the Spirit of God turns his eye to Jesus Christ, and shows him how by the cross he is clear of the whole thing—all has been washed away in the death of Christ by the judgment of God. There the former things, for his faith as well as for the eye of God, have for ever passed away—our old man has been crucified with Christ.

Now we reach the *eighth* day. This is the beginning of a new week for the believer. It speaks of a new history in a new life. It is the resurrection-day, the beginning of a new creation. It is a great point in the history of a soul when he intelligently, and by faith, reaches resurrection ground, and sees that he has an entirely new standing in Christ. Christ, when He was raised from the dead, was the beginning of the creation of God. The believer, who is in Christ, is of this new creation, where all things are new, and all things are of God. He understands what it is to have put off the old man, and to have put on the *new*, where Christ is all and in all. Instead of for ever groaning over the old things, he now rejoices in the new—he glories in the Lord; this is what marks a soul who knows the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free.

But we have something yet to learn as to the death of Christ. On the eighth day he was to take a trespass-offering, a sin-offering, and a burnt-offering, with its meat-offering, and the priest presented him and them before the Lord. In type it is the believer presented to God as identified with the precious efficacy of the work of Christ; he has the same standing before God, and is in the same acceptance as Christ Himself. Then the trespass-offering was killed, and the priest took some of the blood and put it on the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot of the man who was to

be cleansed. The trespass-offering represents that aspect of the death of Christ which has met the actual sins that our conscience may charge us with. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." But what we learn here is, that the blood which atones for our sins, and delivers from the judgment of them, also consecrates us to God. We are redeemed from all iniquity, but we are redeemed *to God*; we are bought with a price, therefore we are to glorify God in our bodies, which are His. The *ear* is for God. (See Isaiah l. 4, 5.) "Morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." The *hand* is for God, to serve Him as Jesus did, who could say, "I do always those things that please Him." The *feet* are for God, to walk in obedience to His will, and not in the way of our own choosing; following Him whose feet were ever swift to run in the way of God's commandments, and who was obedient unto death. Not seeing this, even Christians sometimes talk about consecrating themselves to God, and call it a higher Christian life. But we *are* consecrated to God absolutely by the blood of Christ, and therefore cannot speak of consecrating ourselves. Nor is it *higher* Christian life; anything else cannot be called Christian life. We can, however, seek to acknowledge that we are consecrated to God, and to maintain it practically, but for this

we need power. That is what we get next in the type. The oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, was put upon the blood, and points to the fact that the believer is consecrated to God in the power of the Holy Spirit. "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath *anointed us*, is God." (2 Corinthians i. 21.) "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. viii. 9.) Our bodies have been taken possession of by the Spirit of God, and we are called to walk in the Spirit. "If we live by the Spirit, let us walk also by the Spirit." It is impossible to maintain this consecration to God by our own will or efforts. If we yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, He works in us both to will and to do of God's good pleasure, and we bring forth fruit to God.

After this the sin-offering and the burnt-offering with its meat-offering were offered. The soul is in liberty, knowing that every question of sin has been settled to the satisfaction of God by the death of Christ—he cannot come into condemnation. And more than this, God has been perfectly glorified by the work of Christ, and consequently the believer is accepted in all the sweet savour of Christ's work, and is in the same standing and relationship to God as Christ Himself. The soul that has reached this point, is not only at peace with God, but perfectly at home in His presence.

THE TOOL-CHEST.

IT is a true enough saying, that there is a use for everything, could we only know it; and what is true of things inanimate is even more so of those in whom is the breath of life. Yet how many have given up with a sigh of despair, and the sad complaint, "I am of no use in the world." Of course, this is a great mistake for anyone to make, but most of all for the Christian, who is only sent into the world that he may be of use—to be, to do, or to suffer, whichever is the will of God.

Take a carpenter's tool-chest to illustrate this. Here we find a collection of tools differing widely as to their nature and employment, yet all designed for use in one handicraft—carpentry.

In the Church we see every variety of temperament and great diversity of gifts, but all suited to a common end—edification. (Eph. iv. 12.)

A paring chisel might despise the mortise chisel because of its uncouth proportions, while contemplating its own keenness and elegance, yet each is adapted to its own work, and neither could do that of the other. The master's judgment decides which is suitable, and used by him the desired result is effected. If the plane endeavoured to cut large notches like the axe it would spoil the work; and could the tenon-saw imitate the yieldingness of the rip-saw, its usefulness would

be destroyed. "But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (2 Corinthians x. 12.)

Not only are we placed by divine wisdom in circumstances where we can best further our Lord's interests, but also in the most suitable sphere for using the qualities which He has given us.

The use of callipers and gauges in carpentry is exceptional, being to measure or mark out the work of other tools, but to do this effectually they must first be set in accordance with the common standard—the foot-rule.

It is only as we ourselves are one mind with the Lord that we can rightly estimate the value of another's work.

The temper of tools—which will illustrate natural temperament in the Christian—is a matter of some importance. The comparative softness of the screw-driver would be out of place in the chisels, while the flexibility of the saws specially suits them for the work for which they are intended. The unflinching determination of Luther fitted him for a work which would have overwhelmed the more gentle Melancthon. The wayside preacher must needs change his manner in the chamber of sickness.

There is one process needed by all alike—that of re-sharpening, which is more frequently necessary the oftener the tool is used. So the Christian never finds communion so needful as when most used in the Master's service.

In conclusion we may briefly consider that Perfect Servant in whom all fitting qualities were found in like proportion. (Exodus xxx. 34.) He could speak a word in season to the weary, touched with the feeling of their infirmities, or with unsparing indignation denounce the hypocrisy of Pharisees and false professors. With gracious words He healed the broken-hearted, and preached deliverance to captives, or with the touch of His finger opened the eyes of those whom the god of this world had blinded.

Following the footsteps of his master, we find the apostle Paul as "all things to all men," that he might by all means save some, or, again, "withstanding to the face" a fellow-apostle who had compromised the truth of God.

While we should never lose our individuality, which is a gift of God, we may desire that *adaptability* which will fit us for use in many spheres of Christian work. S. E. M^C. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

PENDLEBURY.—We received in due course the *Parish Magazine*, and have read with care the article to which you invite our reply. You will have observed that the writer, in his allusion to Matthew xiii. 24–30, has fallen into the glaring error of confounding the kingdom of heaven with the Church; and having made this

false start, he proceeds to argue, that inasmuch as the servants were not permitted to gather up the tares, therefore the presence of evil men is to be tolerated in the Church, and any attempt to keep clear of them is denounced as mistaken zeal.

Unfortunately for the writer in your *Parish Magazine*, his interpretation of the parable differs from that of the Lord Himself in verses 37-43. What is "the field" according to your expositor? It is the Church. What does the Lord declare it to be? "The field is *the world*." Are then the Church and the world the same? No one with a glimmer of divine light would suppose they were. Moreover, the Lord tells us that "the tares are the children of the *wicked one*," sown among the wheat by "*the devil*." Are then, we ask in amazement, "the children of the wicked one," sown among the wheat by "the devil," to be regarded as members of "the Church, which is His body"? Your *Parish Magazine* would lead us to suppose they were, and anyone who declined such a monstrous interpretation of our Lord's words, and acted accordingly, is said to be animated with mistaken zeal, and to have fallen into "dangerous and deadly errors."

How does the argument of your *Parish Magazine* harmonize with what we find in 1 Cor. v.? Was the evildoer to be tolerated in the Corinthian assembly, under the plea that tares and wheat were to grow together until the harvest? Was the apostle Paul animated with "mistaken zeal," when he censured the saints at Corinth for their laxity in this matter, and solemnly called upon them to act in these words: "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person"? (1 Cor. v. 13.) And, remark, it was

not the leaders in the Corinthian assembly that were admonished to do this, but the assembly itself. It is a thousand pities your *Parish Magazine* expositor was not at Paul's right hand to warn him against so "mistaken a view of the Church," and to show him that instead of such a sinner being "put away" he should be sheltered, for the Church was designed by its divine Founder to be "a school and training-home" for men like him. He might also have pointed out to Paul the impropriety of his writing to Timothy about Hymenæus and Philetus. (2 Tim. ii. 15-22.) He might have reasoned with him thus: "What has Timothy or anyone else to do with purging himself from these men whom you call vessels to dishonour? Are not the tares and wheat to grow together till the harvest? Why then should Timothy in 'mistaken zeal' withdraw himself from them?" We can easily imagine with what withering words the apostle would have silenced the objector, and counselled him not to teach others till he had learned to distinguish between things that differ.

Nothing is clearer in Scripture than this—that the unsaved masses, much less "the children of the wicked one," sown among the wheat by "the devil," form no part of "the Church, which is His body." The reception of eternal life, with forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is inseparable from its membership. To the unsaved, wandering on the dark mountains of sin, we have to carry the gospel, telling of One who came into the world to save sinners, and of God, just, and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.) Wherever that gospel is believed, the blessings of the gospel are possessed, and

that individual, whoever he be, *is* a member of the "One Body"—the one only Church, of which Christ in glory is the only Head, and which embraces every believer under the wide heavens.

We gather from his remaining observations that your parish expositor would hardly acknowledge that every believer—the very youngest of them—is a saint now. Yet if anyone will read the epistles of the New Testament he will find it the common title of all believers. Nor, we presume, would he care to confess the truth of the following words: "For by one offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Nor of these: "Giving thanks unto the Father, who *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) Nor of these: "I give unto them *eternal life*; and they shall *never perish*." (John x. 28.) Nor of these: "Who *hath* saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) Nor of these: "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) The truths affirmed in these passages are in his eyes "dangerous and deadly errors." We prefer to believe God rather than man. If He tells us that the one offering of Christ upon the cross perfects the believer for ever—clears his conscience from sins as far as imputation goes—we believe Him. If He declares the believer to have been made meet for the heavenly inheritance, we believe Him. If He assures us that

He has given unto us eternal life, and that we shall never perish, we believe Him. If He makes known the fact that we are saved not according to our works, we believe Him; and if we are further told that He has given unto us His Holy Spirit, we believe Him. We trust by divine help to cling to these truths, to rejoice in them, to thank God for making them known, even if all the parish expositors in the kingdom should brand them as "dangerous and deadly errors."

Only one point more need be noticed. We are told by the same authority, "It is not always easy to see at once what commands and practices in Scripture are designed to be of temporary and what of perpetual obligation." Indeed! Are we then at liberty to play with Scripture thus? Would the writer in your *Parish Magazine* kindly tell us what Christian commands and practices may now be regarded as unsuited to the day in which we live? How convenient it would be were he to issue a copy of the New Testament Scriptures with all such passages printed in red ink! No, dear friend, we must hold fast to every part of God's Word, dispense with none, and learn from Him how to divide it rightly. In doing so we shall find unspeakable blessing. When Paul took leave of the elders of Ephesus, and warned them of grievous wolves who should enter in, not sparing the flock, and of men rising up among themselves, speaking perverse things, he commended them to God, and to the word of His grace. (Acts xx. 32.) These remain to us to-day—God, unchanging and sufficient for every emergency; and His Word, by the light of which we may wend our way in peace amid the deepening darkness of the night till the morning break.

JESUS WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

JOHN xiii.

IS this act of the Lord's only to be regarded as a piece of lowly service? Is the lesson it is designed to teach simply this—that we should be willing to fill the lowest place and to do the lowliest things for the comfort and well-being of His people? Would the Lord show us that if He condescended to wash the feet of His disciples we ought to think nothing beneath us, but be ready to render ungrudging service to His saints even if the doing of it brought us no honour? That such lessons lie upon the very surface of this passage no one will deny; but is there not something deeper? and do not the words of the Lord to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," imply this? We think so. The act was significant, and though Peter did not seize its import then, the day should come when its meaning would be clearly seen.

Many writers have observed the difference between *washed* and *wash* in verse 10. The former denotes the bathing of the entire person; the latter, the washing of hands or feet or both, as the case may be. The revisers give the passage thus: "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Dean Alford translates it, "He that hath been bathed hath no need save to wash his feet, but is clean

every whit;" and Mr. J. N. Darby writes it down in this way, "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean." The Lord's words then signify that there is a washing that needs not to be repeated as well as a washing that does, but both one and the other are with *water*, not blood. Let the reader notice that.

Here, for the sake of clearness, let me speak of another washing not mentioned in our chapter, and which, like the one washing all over, is never repeated. I allude to the *blood*. The cleansing power of "the precious blood of Christ" is borne witness to in Rev. i. 5, "Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood;" and in 1 John i. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin;" and in Heb. x. 14, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and in a multitude of passages besides. Of course there is no material blood applied to the believer now as there was to the leper in the day of his cleansing. (Lev. xiv. 7.) But the Holy Spirit testifies in the Scriptures to the justifying, cleansing power of that blood, and the soul that receives His testimony and has faith in the blood is justified, and thus cleansed from his sins—they shall never be imputed to him, for whom God justifies, He glorifies. (Rom. viii. 30.) There is no repetition of this. The soul is not justified many times over, as if the blood of Jesus in its application to the believer were of no greater worth than the blood sprinkled

on Jewish altars. Its efficacy is abiding. By it, the sins question, for him who believes, is settled for ever. It is not possible to re-open it without disputing the value of the blood shed for their remission. The knowledge of this purges the conscience. (Heb. ix. 14.) Instead of my sins being under the eye of God, the blood is there which has put them all away, and as thus purged I have "no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 2.)

But this washing by blood is not the subject of John xiii., though inseparable from it. All is founded on the blood, but we have to distinguish between things that differ. What then is meant by that water-washing which makes the washed one "wholly clean," or "clean every whit"? It is the washing of regeneration, or the new birth. This is not effected by blood, but by water, the water signifying the word of God by which a soul is born again. "Now ye are clean through *the word* which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by *the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) The blood puts away our sins, but leaves the evil nature from whence they sprang untouched. The new birth gives a new nature. It does not wash away the old, but entitles me, when viewed from the standing-point of Rom. vi. 11, to reckon myself dead to it, and imparts another in which I live to God through the Holy Spirit given unto us.

And now we come to the feet-washing. Peter

could not endure the idea of the Lord stooping to wash his feet. "Never!" said Peter. He, judging naturally, thought it unworthy of any to suffer the Lord to serve in so lowly a way. "If I wash thee not," replied the Lord, "thou hast no part with Me." Was Peter willing to take that position? Was he content to say that he had no part with Jesus? Very far from that. Then he must submit to this gracious ministry, and learn the deep meaning of it hereafter. So with us. If we have part with Him—and is it not our highest joy to know that we have?—then the Lord must wash our feet. *He* cannot be regardless of the defilement we contract in our daily path, if *we* are insensible to it. Every thing unsuited to Him is unsuited to those who have part with Him. The allowance of anything that defiles suspends communion, for He could not have fellowship with unholiness. He must wash it away, so that in restored communion we may know in an ever deepening measure the blessedness connected with our having part with Him.

But how is this accomplished? First, by throwing the light of His word on the evil, and causing the conscience to take cognizance of it. Secondly, by leading us to the confession of the thing to God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) When the heart is upright in its confession, and accompanied, as in that case it ever will be, with

a loathing of ourselves and of the thing confessed, we shall be cleansed, and He will give us victory over it. But do not let us confound this washing of the feet with the being "washed all over," nor with the washing away of our sins by the blood. The blood is the basis of all, as we have said; but there is no re-application of that, nor is the soul born of God a second time.

A striking figure of all this will be found in Numbers xix. The ashes of the red heifer, whose blood was sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle of the congregation, and whose body was burned without the camp, were gathered up and mingled with water. If a man became defiled by contact with the dead, he was regarded as unclean, and he had to have recourse, not to the blood, but to the *water of purification*. (v. 9.) The red heifer whose blood was shed and sprinkled, and whose body was burned without the camp, speaks of Christ, on whom fell the fire of divine judgment against sin. The water mingled with the ashes of the heifer, when sprinkled on the man, speaks of the word of God brought to bear on the conscience of the defiled believer in the power of the Holy Ghost, so that he is led to confess his sin, and to judge it in the light of all it cost Jesus to put it away. Thus is he cleansed, and communion restored—the precious result of Christ's advocacy on high.

And if our Lord and Master washes our feet, we are told by Him that we ought to wash one

another's feet. Blessed service of love in which we are privileged to have part. If you, dear Christian reader, saw aught in me contrary to Christ, anything which you know Jesus could have no communion with, would you not seek to cleanse me from it, and thus wash my feet? You would come to me in the spirit of your Master, and point out to me the evil, and seek to exercise my conscience about it, that I might judge it before God, and abandon it. It is thus that we may serve one another according to the word of our Lord.

Love, deep and unchanging, is the spring of this service on the part of our Lord Jesus. Why did He wash His disciples' feet? Because He loved them, and for the same reason He cannot be indifferent to ours. Nothing can chill or change His love. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them *unto the end.*" (John xiii. 1.) Did the approaching denial on the part of Peter, mingled as it was with oaths and curses, sever him from the Lord's love? Nay; for before he fell Jesus had prayed for him that his faith might not fail, and afterwards could cast upon him such a look as caused him to shed bitter tears of repentance and grief. He is the same to-day. In unwearying love He would cleanse us from every defilement, that as those who have part with Him in all that it is possible for Him to share with others, we might walk in fellowship with the Father and with Himself, the Son, till we see His face in a fairer and holier clime.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH.

THERE is no end of confusion abroad, from one side of Christendom to the other, as to what the Church is. We are surrounded on all hands with human thoughts and human definitions. We hear of the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church, the Protestant Church, the State Church, High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, the Baptist Church, Mr. So-and-so's Church, and we might repeat many other terms. In the midst of such a Babel how good it is to turn to the pure source of truth—the word of God—to learn what He has revealed, and to get His thoughts instead of our own.

In Scripture we have two very clear definitions of the Church :

1. "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory . . . gave Him [Christ glorified] to be *the Head* over all things *to the Church, which is His body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 17, 22, 23.)

2. "These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the *house of God*, which is *the Church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.)

From these two passages it is evident that

the Church is presented in two distinct ways in the word of God—as *Christ's body*, and as *God's house*. And to get clear about this all-important truth, we must close our ears to the jargon of Christendom, and hold fast to *what God saith*.

Now, in the Old Testament there is not a single word about the Church itself, for the simple reason that it was not yet revealed. There were saints from Adam to Abraham, and from Abraham to Christ—saints who looked and waited in faith for a heavenly country, but who had no idea whatever about *the Church* (or assembly) of God. They were individual saints who believed God's promises. There was also an assembly, God's earthly people Israel, as it is called in Acts vii. 38, "the Church [or assembly] in the wilderness." But this was neither the Church of God, nor part of it, as brought out in the New Testament. They were blessed with many earthly privileges, but the greater part were disobedient and gainsaying.

The first mention of the Church is from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ *on the earth* in Matt. xvi. 18, after the confession of Peter that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. "Upon this rock [*i.e.* (need we say), Himself, not Peter] *I will build My Church*," &c. He spake of it as *a future thing*, and in the aspect of *a house* or *building*. We do not speak of building a body on a rock.

The first inkling we have of the Church as the body of Christ is *from the glory* at the conversion of Saul of Tarsus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?*" thus showing that saints on earth at that time were identified with Him. Saul (afterwards Paul) was the chosen vessel to bring out the truth that Christians are one with Christ, and with each other, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." (Eph. iii. 6, v. 30.)

It is precious to remark that the first time Christ speaks of His Church as a building, He calls it "*My Church;*" and the first time that we get a hint of it as His body, He says "*Me.*"

The Church was first formed at Pentecost. A hundred and twenty believers were baptized with the Holy Ghost, according to Christ's promise, and henceforth were members of His body, and of one another, according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost, through Paul, in Eph. v. 30; Col. i. 18, ii. 19, iii. 15; Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12-27; and living stones united together in one building, a spiritual house, according to Eph. ii. 19-22, and 1 Peter ii. 4-8. But at first all were believers from amongst the Jews. Later on Gentiles were added (Acts x.); and in 1 Cor. xii. 13, 14 we read, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one

member, but many." Every soul now sealed with the Holy Ghost is thereby brought into this blessed unity. And all such are also living stones.

Christ exalted at the right hand of God is *the Head* of the Church; the only Head. Every other is a usurpation of His portion and rights. The Church on earth is *His body*, comprising all who receive the Holy Ghost from Pentecost until He return in the air for His own. (1 Thess. iv. 15-18.) We receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life through faith, but we are united to Him and to one another by the Holy Ghost. The apostle Paul is the only one who speaks of "*the body*," and that only in four epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Corinthians, and Romans.

The same persons, *i.e.*, all Christians, form *the building*: "In whom *all the building* fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." This comprises all saved ones from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord. But in the following verse we learn that all the saints on earth, at any given moment during the absence of Christ at the right hand of God, are His dwelling-place. "In whom ye also are builded together for *an habitation of God* through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.)

The union of Christ and the Church, the Head and the body, is also viewed in Scripture as the mystery (or secret) that was hid in God, and not made known in the ages and generations which

are past, but now made manifest to His saints. (Eph. iii. 4, 5, 9-11; Col. i. 26; Rom. xvi. 25-27.)

And again the Church is presented as the bride of the Lamb (Eph. v. 25; Rev. xxii. 17), soon to be claimed by Him, and taken by divine power to heavenly glory, there to be presented to Himself glorious, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, to become the Lamb's wife. (Eph. v. 27; Rev. xix. 7-9.)

And to clearly apprehend the ways of God in relation to His Church whilst here below, we must pay careful attention to the fact that, *as His house* on earth, the Church is presented under different figures. To mix them all together, as many have done, is to confuse our own souls and the souls of others, and to rob ourselves of much precious truth. And if we are not clear in our spiritual apprehension of these scriptures, how can we behave ourselves aright in the house of God?

And we would here remark in passing, that thousands speak of *the Church* and *the kingdom* as though they were one and the same thing. The writer once heard a preacher loudly asserting it in a public square to a large congregation, who in an after conversation was thoroughly confused when asked if he did not know the difference between *the Church of England* and *the kingdom of England*? The same individuals are in both, but who would confuse the two? The same persons are in *the Church of God* (presented as

the house) and in *the kingdom of heaven*. But to fail to distinguish between them in the study of God's word, and also to remark the difference between *God's work and man's work* in relation to the same, is to fall into endless confusion.

The gross error of popery is built upon the false premiss that Christ gave the keys of the Church to Peter instead of the keys of the kingdom (Matt. xvi. 19); and then, through attributing to *all that men have introduced into God's house*, what rightly appertains *only to those who form the body of Christ*.

The Church as the house of God is presented in at least three ways; viz.:

As a spiritual house of living stones. (1 Peter ii. 5.)

As a house with vessels in it. (1 Tim. iii. 15, 2 Tim. ii. 20.)

As a holy temple where men are workmen. (1 Cor. iii. 8–18.)

As *a spiritual building* we have already seen that it is composed of all Christians. We read, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up [being built up] a spiritual house," &c. (1 Peter ii. 4, 5.) Here all is the fruit of the work of God's grace, and all is perfect; the building on earth at any given moment being His habitation in the Spirit. Stones are being added daily, and

it "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii. 21.) As soon as the last comes, through grace, to the disallowed One, according to the counsels of God the Father (1 Peter i. 2, 3, ii. 4), and the building is complete, it will be translated by divine power to the glory, and later on displayed as the holy Jerusalem in the heavenly glory of the kingdom (Rev. xxi. 9-11), and in eternity as the tabernacle of God with men. (Rev. xxi. 2, 3.)

As *the house of God*, in 1 Tim. iii. 15, it is presented in connection with the responsibility of man upon the earth. And throughout Scripture we find that man mars everything of God that he is allowed to touch. So also is it with the Church. Man has introduced all kinds of confusion. The result is that, in 2 Timothy, the Holy Ghost, foreknowing what would happen, likens it to "*a great house.*" "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work," &c. (2 Tim. ii. 19-21.)

The house of God has become *like a great house* through man's failure, and instead of everything

in it being suited to the holy presence of Him who dwells there, we find a mixed state of things; vessels to honour and dishonour. And then follows instruction to the Lord's people to purge themselves from the vessels to dishonour, that they may become vessels to honour, &c. This is the deeply important principle of separation from evil in God's house. We cannot go outside of it, but we are responsible to keep ourselves from evil within it, and to walk with those who do the same. God will shortly judge all that man has introduced that is not of Himself.

The writer well remembers as a boy going over the private apartments of Windsor Castle, and visiting, amongst other rooms, the gold and silver pantries, and the kitchen. Here all was in order. The gold and silver vessels were in a place by themselves, and the wooden platters and earthen bowls in the royal scullery by themselves. Had they been all mixed together, it would have shown the neglect of the servants, and that they had failed in their responsibility. Whoever would have thought of presenting both together before Her Majesty the Queen? Yet over all Christendom we see how men have forgotten what is due to God, the vessels being all mixed together that should have been kept separate. And how can any be to *honour*, unless they *are* separate, and clean? "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour." (2 Tim. ii. 21.)

Many admit that the state of things is bad, and argue that they must therefore stay where they are, mixed up with the evil, to try and improve matters, and to help others. But the word of God is simple and explicit. It does not say, "If a man purge *others*," but "if a man purge *himself*." We must be right ourselves, and in a right path, if we would be a vessel unto honour, meet for the Master's use.

Then as *the holy temple of God*, as presented in 1 Cor. iii. 8-18, our responsibility is also in view, but in yet another aspect. It is a question here of the believer's labour, building, and work (*vv.* 8, 10, 13), and is a deeply important passage. Says the apostle, "For *we* are *labourers together* with God: *ye* are God's husbandry, *ye* are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another *buildeth* thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon," &c. First, remark that we are viewed as *God's building*, &c. And again as *the temple of God*. (*v.* 16.) Then also Paul speaks of himself as a wise master-builder, saying, "*I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.*" It is a question of responsibility here. "Let *every man* take heed how he *buildeth*." (*v.* 10.) "*Every man* shall receive his own reward according to *his own labour*." (*v.* 8.) "*Every man's work* shall be made manifest." (*v.* 13.) "The fire shall try *every man's work* of what sort it is." (*v.* 13.) We

lack space to give in this paper, a detailed exposition of the whole passage, and our object is that the young in the truth may better apprehend the different aspects in which the Church is presented. It is clear from the above that the important point is, that every man's work should be according to God.

The workmen are divided into three classes. The first is a Christian with good work; the second a Christian with bad work; the third a mere professor, who defiles God's holy temple. Alas! how many have forgotten the apostolic injunction, "*Let no man deceive himself.*" (v. 18.)

It is very easy in the present state of Christendom to imbibe false doctrines, which always produce false practices. Let every reader of these lines first be assured that he is a true child of God, part of God's building, called to serve Him, and then let him take heed how he builds. Let him see to it that his doctrine is sound, his testimony true, his work good, and his walk consistent. Nothing but what is according to the word of God will stand in that day when all shall be tested by fire. But how blessed for those whose work shall stand, and meet with the approval of the Lord!

May He lead all our hearts more and more into a clearer spiritual apprehension of the truth revealed in His word, connected with His Church, that each believer may answer to His call, and glorify Him on earth until He come. E. H. C.

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ.

IN 1 Chronicles iv. the Spirit of God makes the following comment on the man whose name stands at the head of this paper. "Jabez was more honourable than his brethren."

We see from the same scripture that his mother begat him in sorrow, and therefore called his name "Jabez," which signifies "sorrowful." He also distinguished himself as a man of prayer.

The prayer of Jabez was answered, it appears, as soon as it was offered. This reminds us that our gracious God and Father is ever ready to fill the empty, outstretched hand of faith with blessing, whenever His people have recourse to Him in prayer. He inspires us with confidence by means of "exceeding great and precious promises," and "giveth liberally, and upbraideth not."

If you turn to Exodus xxxiv., you will find one of these promises made to God's earthly people Israel. "I will cast out the nations before thee, *and enlarge thy borders,*" &c. (v. 24.) Jabez evidently had regard to this promise. He *believed* it, and therefore *valued* it. He presents his prayer, pleads the promise, while holding out the hand of faith to receive the blessing, saying, "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, *and enlarge my coast,* and that Thine hand might be with me, and

that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested." (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10.)

Dispensations truly change, and God's ways and dealings with His people vary therein, according to His good pleasure; but the principles on which His house is governed, and the blessing of His people secured, *ever* remain the same. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." Therefore it is most interesting to notice that the request of Jabez—"keep me from evil"—forms part of the Saviour's prayer for His disciples in John xvii. 15. Speaking to the Father, He says, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest *keep them from the evil.*" Jabez had, no doubt, been taught by the Spirit of God to couple his request for *blessing* with the desire for practical *holiness*, so that he might not only receive blessing *from* God, but also enjoy it in communion *with* God. His bright example might well induce us to say—

"Oh, kindle within us a HOLY desire,
Like that which was found in Thy people of old."

At the same time we must bear in mind that Jabez was one of God's *earthly* people, whose blessings were earthly, and whose inheritance was the land of Canaan, whereas the Christian calling is heavenly. It is the Christian who is addressed by the apostle in the Epistle to the

Ephesians, in the following strain: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." (Chap. i. 3.) What can equal the blessedness of the believer as thus blessed of God?

And not only are the Christian's blessings *spiritual*, and his possessions *heavenly*, but his portion is *complete*; for he is brought into the wealthiest of places, and associated with the worthiest of persons; *i.e.*, with Christ. We should be found delighting in the thought, that not only has God blessed us infinitely beyond what His earthly people ever knew, but in such a manner, and to such an extent, as to make us feel that we cannot pray, like Jabez, "Enlarge my coast." But well may we pray that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened, so that we may see more clearly, and appreciate more fully what the grace of God has made us the happy possessors of, as being thus blessed in company with Christ. Therefore the prayer of Jabez, viewed in connection with Ephesians i., is a *contrast* as well as an encouragement. But though our blessings are so rich and vast, our enjoyment is very limited, owing often to lack of interest and spiritual intelligence. Therefore we need claim a place in the apostle's prayer for the saints, whose blessings he had already announced, when he asked of God, not that He "would enlarge their coasts,"

but that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened; that they might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. i. 18.)

Dear Christian reader, have we not had the eyes of our hearts arrested by these heavenly realities? Are we not blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ? Can we not, through grace, look up and say—

“There is mine inheritance,
My kingly palace home”?

And yet at the same time are we not humbled before God to find how little hold they have of our hearts, and how little we are influenced here on earth by what we are in Christ and what we have in heaven? God would have us to be familiar with those heavenly scenes, and more intimately acquainted with Him who is, and ever will be, the object of attraction there, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be meet for us to be reminded of what took place in the case of Abram as soon as he was relieved of the company of Lot. The Lord said to him, “Lift up NOW thine eyes, and look from the place where thou ART, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth

of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Gen. xiii, 14-17.) It would appear that Lot was a hindrance to Abram, and with Abram's release from the company of his worldly-minded companion came the full revelation from God of what his portion was in the land of Canaan. Abram was able both to view his possessions, and "walk up and down" the land, enjoying, in measure, his portion in communion with God.

May our hearts be set on having possession, even now by faith, of those things which God has purposed from all eternity should be ours. He has revealed them to us in His word, so as to induce us to desire and enjoy them. Let us then, if needs be, and His holiness demands it, be willing, like Abram, to part company with everything which would hinder in us the answer to Paul's prayer, or prayers, in the Epistle to the Ephesians. (Chaps. i., iii.)

H. H.

THE RENT VAIL.

THE vail, when made and set up according to Jehovah's direction, was placed between the holy and most holy places of the tabernacle, inside of which vail none could enter but the high priest, and that only once a year, and then not without blood and incense, "that he die not."

In Exodus xxvi. 31 we read, "Thou shalt make

a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made;" and in chap. xxxvi. 35 we find it was made according to these directions. We know that the veil thus made was put up in the tabernacle, and that after this another veil was set up in the temple of Solomon, and that there was also one in the temple which was in existence during our Lord's sojourn on earth. Concerning the veil we read, in Hebrews ix., "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present;" and in the next chapter we read of "the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Thus clearly the veil is expounded to us by the Holy Spirit as typical of the flesh of Christ; and, in strict keeping with this teaching, in considering the formation of the veil as recorded in Exodus, we find the entire absence of gold, which would be expressive of what is divine; and yet the veil was made of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen—materials which set forth as heavenly One, the Word who became flesh, and dwelt among us, the royal One, the spotless and righteous One, which Jesus most truly was. So perfect is all Scripture as to this truth ministered to those who are partakers of the heavenly calling, that, fifteen hundred years after the veil was made and set up according to Jehovah's

direction, we are told, when Jesus said, "It is finished," and died upon the cross, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Later on an inspired apostle, when commenting on the rent veil, speaks of it as "a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;" so that, in virtue of the sacrifice offered once for all, and therefore the rending of the veil, God can now come out to the sinner with the glad tidings of an accomplished redemption in righteousness and grace, and all who believe can enter with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Early in the Bible the veil is spoken of as made and set up, and we afterwards find that it remained up as a barrier between the sinner and God for fifteen hundred years; but on the death of Christ, the one sacrifice for sin, we are informed that the veil was rent from the top to the bottom. In Heb. x. we are taught this is the "new and living way" of approach to God, the question of our sins and guilt having been once and for ever settled in righteousness by His grace in the death of the cross. God can come out with the glad tidings of forgiveness to every one that believeth on Jesus, and those who believe can enter with boldness into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. *Then*, when the believer has entered in, he intelligently realizes the blessedness of communion

with the Father and the Son, and of offering up spiritual sacrifices as a purged worshipper, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. *Then*, too, he can run the race of his pilgrimage, looking off unto Jesus, who has gone before as our forerunner, and is now seated on the right hand of the throne of God. *Then* he finds his place on earth in association with a rejected Christ, and knows what it is to go forth "*unto Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach." All is founded on the rending of the vail, because it gives us God's estimate of the infinite value and eternal efficacy of the blood of His Son. Hence the rejoicing of the saved in heaven in the closing book of Scripture: "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

If then the way of approach to God was righteously closed, because of man's sin and guilt, for fifteen centuries, and all that time man proved himself to be utterly unable to approach God by law and ordinances, it has since stood wide open for more than eighteen hundred years, through God's longsuffering and patience. But with all this goodness and mercy, who enters in and rejoices in the blessedness of being near to God? How much longer will God's longsuffering bear with guilty men?

H. H. S.