

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.



THE LADDER CLIMBER ;

OR,

CAN I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED ?

I WAS reading, not so very long ago, a tract published by the S. P. C. K., called, "*Assurance of Salvation ; or, Can I know that I am saved ?*"

It was in the city of Peterboro' that I chanced to come across it first. I found it lying on the table in one of the cottages, and on enquiry learned it had been left by the district visitor in her weekly rounds.

The title of the tract arrested my attention, and led me to take it up to read. I thought to find in its twenty pages much to show that the assurance of salvation was what every regenerate soul believing in Christ was entitled to enjoy, and that the feeblest of His sheep might know that he was surely saved, if he did but rest upon the faithful word of a faithful God.

So far from these expectations being fulfilled, the tract, to my surprise, was nothing but a lame attempt to prove, that few, if any, could ever

know that they were saved till their dying day, and that it was no uncommon thing not to know it then. "Christian assurance," said the author, was "the assurance not of absolute certainty, but of hope," and amounted to "a high degree of probability," nothing more!

The illustration used to make the matter plain was, indeed, singularly clear. Would you care to hear it, good reader? Listen then.

"The Lord has placed a ladder, as it were, between heaven and earth, and behold He stands above it, holding open the Book of Life. Does anyone ask, 'Is my name written there?' The Lord says, 'Come and see.' And they who through grace obey the call shall by degrees see their names written there! The rungs of the ladder are faith and holy obedience, and patient continuance in well doing. The higher men mount that ladder the clearer does their vision become, till their hope expands into full assurance, and their full assurance into certainty."

This ladder, with its one end resting on the earth, and the other over against the gate of heaven, takes a man all the years of his life to climb. I shout to a climber half-way up and ask, "Can you see yet whether your name is in the Book of Life?" He answers, "No; I am too far off the top." "Are you sure that you will find it written there when you reach the higher rounds of your ladder?" He once more answers,

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“No; the assurance I have is not of absolute certainty, only of hope.”

The ladder climber, if in downright earnest, must be often thrown into awful mental agony, for uncertainty always casts its victims there if the thing in question be of solemn moment. If a matter be of but little worth we are not much concerned whether it come to pass or not; but should it be a thing of life or death, then uncertainty will wear, and tear, and grind you down, placing you under torture hard indeed to bear. With what anxiety does a prisoner wait the verdict of the jury that shall place the gallows right in front of him, or sweep it out of sight for ever. But here are alternatives more solemn still—heaven or hell, the burning lake or the golden streets, the joys and fellowship of the redeemed, or the company of the damned in outer darkness. Any uncertainty here must, in the very nature of things, be terrible indeed. And this is what the writer of this tract would shut us up to all our lives!

Is such religious teaching founded on Christian knowledge, or does it not rather display the lack of it? Let us see.

First of all, What about the believer's sins? Can he know for certain that they are forgiven?

Looking back on his past life he mourns that his sins have been so many. He needs no one to tell him that, should he not sin more, he has

already sinned enough to subject him to the judgment of God. Not only so, but if for one act of disobedience our first parents were expelled from the earthly paradise, how can he who has been guilty of many such acts ever expect to be welcomed to the paradise of God? He knows that he cannot be unless those sins are first dealt with, in a way that guards God's holiness and fully satisfies His justice. Now the cross is that way. There the Saviour once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. (1 Peter iii. 18.) Moreover, this same Jesus is risen again, and His resurrection is the blessed proof that those sins, for which He suffered, have been put away for ever. Is not the believer to know this? How shall he have present peace with God if he does not know it? Now if those sins have been put away, cast, so to speak, into the depths of the sea, are they to be brought up again? Assuredly not. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember *no more*." (Hebrews x. 17.)

If you say, "All that is true as far as our past sins are concerned, but what about our future sins?" Dear friend, we ought not to talk about future sins as if we were obliged to commit them. The believer is under no obligation to sin again, though in point of fact we all offend in many things. But the sins of all who have been saved these last eighteen centuries were future, every one of them, when Christ died to blot out the

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remembrance of those sins for ever. Cast your eye on the calendar, notice the day of the month, and then pause and ask yourself whether the Saviour suffered for your sins up to the present hour only. If so, then, unless you are taken to heaven to-day, you never will go there, for what shall atone for, blot out, put away the sins of the morrow? Nothing but the precious blood of Christ can atone for sins, and it is certain He will never die again. But, blessed be God, the one sacrifice for sins which Christ has offered has set at rest for evermore the whole question of our sins and guilt from cradle to coffin. Sin shall never be imputed to the believer, for it has already been imputed to the believer's Substitute, who has Himself borne the penalty of it. Can a debt once paid be presented for payment the second time? Can an offence once purged according to law be brought up again for settlement? Never! And if the blessed Lord has done all this for His own, are they not to know it, and, knowing it, to be assured that they shall never come into judgment? Undoubtedly they are.

Again. Is not the believer spoken of as already justified? Nothing can be plainer on this point than Acts xiii. 39, "By Him all that believe *are justified* from all things." What can you say to those words? If you reply, "Yes, but what is true of a person to-day may not be true of him to-morrow. Our being justified now

is no guarantee that we shall reach heaven at last." To that objection I will only answer that in Romans viii. 30 it is said that those whom God called He justified, and whom He justified, them He also *glorified*. Mark well those successive steps — called, justified, glorified. With that passage before us are we not entitled to say that as surely as we are among the justified on earth, so surely shall we be among the glorified in heaven? He, who has called and justified us here, will not fail to glorify us there. Each link in this chain has been forged by His own hand—a chain that no power shall ever break.

Do we then make little of faith and holy obedience, and patient continuance in well-doing? Do we say that it matters nothing whether we possess these precious elements of Christian life or not? Far from that. Indeed where these are wanting what grounds have we for regarding that person as anything more than one wholly unregenerate, dead in trespasses and sins? None that I know of. But our contention is, that what the writer of this tract places at the very end of the days of our pilgrimage the Holy Scriptures place at the beginning. What he avers is reserved for the dying hours of men who have lived saintly lives, and for no others, the word of God affirms to be the present privilege of the youngest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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The knowledge of our personal salvation is drawn from the Scriptures, and not from our own experience, though experience may confirm what the Scriptures declare. In those holy writings God speaks to us, and it behoves us to listen and to receive His words with meekness and fear. If we have started on our pilgrim way with our faces set towards the heavenly Canaan; if we fear the dangers of the way and the mighty foes we have to face, He comforts our hearts by telling us that Jesus is able to save to the uttermost—completely, to the very end—all who come unto God by Him. (Hebrews vii. 25.) If the timid sheep dread the prowling wolves, He strengthens their hearts by letting them know that His sheep shall *never* perish, nor shall any pluck them from His hand. (John x. 28.) If the hosts of evil set themselves in dread array against us, He inspires our souls with confidence and courage by assuring us that we are kept—as a city by her soldiers—by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (1 Peter i. 5.) No fear therefore as to what the end shall be.

We have no wish to weaken the “ifs” of Scripture, but rather that they should remain in undiminished force, only let them be used in a lawful way. Suppose I were walking with my child along a road which I knew to be full of pits, and the night was dark, and I said, “Dear child, if you keep firm hold of my hand you will

not fall into any of the pits, otherwise you may." By those words I produce a moral effect upon that child, and make him watchful, and rightly so. If the child were timid and fearful I might further say, "Don't be afraid. I have firm hold of your hand; I know the road well, and you may be quite sure that I will not let you go." Do those words disagree? or can one be set over against the other? Now were anyone to say to that child, "Ah, you may yet fall into one of those pits and be killed. You cannot be quite sure you will get safely through till the last pit has been passed," the child might answer, "Yes, I know I must be careful, but father is with me. He knows every bit of the road, and he will keep me safely, of that I am *quite* sure." Who would blame the child's confidence, or say it was misplaced? Cannot the Christian say as much, and more?

"FAR too well thy Saviour loves thee
 To allow thy life to be .
 One long calm unbroken sunbeam,
 One unruffled, stormless sea.

He would have thee fondly nestling
 Closer to His gentle breast;
 He would have that world seem brighter
 Where alone is perfect rest."

THE WHITE MAN'S BOOK OF HEAVEN.

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

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

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

"I came to you over the trail of many moons.

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You were the friend of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came with one eye partly opened for more light for my people who sit in darkness. I go back with BOTH EYES CLOSED.

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

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them, and no white man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words."

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

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

Perhaps you are young, and for various reasons may not be able to carry the gospel in *person* to the "regions beyond"; but if you love Christ, and are walking with Him, many ways of helping on His interests in the gospel will suggest themselves. You may have the privilege of ministering of your substance to those who have gone forth

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"taking nothing of the Gentiles" for Christ's name sake. (3 John 7, Hebrews xiii. 16.) Again, much may be done by earnest, believing prayer. Many a shower of blessing has the Lord given in answer to the effectual fervent prayer of His hidden ones. One of the chief characteristics of Epaphras, Paul's dear fellow-servant and Christ's faithful minister, was, that he *laboured fervently* in prayers to God. (Col. i. 7, iv. 12 ; James v. 16.) The great question is, Are you, am I, according to the measure we have received, serving Christ as we have opportunity and ability ? Surely to spread the name and fame of Jesus should be the desire of every Christian. Our life will soon run out. The golden moments gliding noiselessly by can never be recalled. The fields are white unto harvest, but the labourers are few ; and if it was so when the Master was here, how much more is it so now ?

Hearken to the Saviour's last loving words, "Surely I come quickly." Dear young fellow-believer, are you eagerly looking forward to that event ? Then remember His word to you, while you watch and wait for Him, is, "*Occupy till I come.*" What does it mean ? Perhaps it means that you should win those unconverted companions of yours for Christ. Nothing tells so powerfully on the unsaved as the quiet testimony of a consistent life. It may be those pleasure-seeking individuals who live near you are inwardly groaning under the burden of sin.

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If you only had their confidence, what a tale of misery they could pour into your ear. Make it your earnest, prayerful endeavour to gain them for Christ. God would have all men to be saved, and the Bible-reading, psalm-singing, sacrament-taking, church-going professor, who has not received Christ, needs salvation as much as the poor degraded heathen who never heard of a Saviour.

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

If you are faithful to Christ in the sphere where God has placed you, rest assured, dear young Christian, you *will preach* with life and lip, not because it is your duty to do so, but because you cannot help it. If your heart is wholly set upon Christ's interests, be sure that, in His own time and way, He will conduct you to that corner of the field where you will be of most service to Him.

May' each of us be found, beloved, in His company; so shall our hearts be enlarged to take in His present thoughts in connection with "His own," as well as His purposes of grace towards those who are still in nature's darkness.

G. F. E.

PEACE AND COMMUNION.

IT is to be feared that many of the Lord's people are much hindered in their souls, and therefore in their proper testimony in, and to, the world, through not distinguishing between peace with God, as spoken of in Rom. v. 1, and communion with God as expressed in 1 John i. 3, where the apostle writes, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." These are entirely distinct, and flow from different causes altogether, except that all blessing comes to us through the atoning work of Christ, and from the sovereign love of God. But the enjoyment of these two immense blessings results from a different cause.

Peace with God must necessarily come first. While the conscience is tormented with a sense of guilt, and while fitness for God's presence is not fully known, how could there be communion with God?

The first thing then to be assured of is that *peace has been made*. This could only be secured by that which can clear every stain of sin from the eye of God for ever. Who could do this but Jesus? Nothing could effect it but "the blood of His cross." He died for our sins—for the perfect putting away of them from God's sight

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for ever. Having glorified Him about them, and borne all the judgment for every believer, He has risen *without them*. The value of what He has done is *reckoned* to all who believe. God *reckons* all such righteous. He has no charge, no imputation of sins to lay against them; hence the one who is troubled, burdened with the sense of guilt, and fears the righteous judgment of God on account of sins, learns in the atoning sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ how perfectly all the judgment has been borne, and the sins put away from God's sight, for He who was delivered for our offences has been "raised again for our justification." Thus God can righteously set every believer in Jesus free from every charge, not reckoning *one* of their sins to them; for He who bore the judgment of them on the cross is risen without them, and His blood cleanses from *all sin—from every sin*.

Now all this assures the believer of the love of God. "Herein," we are now led to exclaim, "is love, *not* that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Knowing now that no question of guilt can ever again be raised, that we are righteously cleared from all judgment, and knowing too the love of God, who gave His only Son to accomplish all this, and the love of Jesus in dying and suffering for our sins, and making atonement by His own precious blood, we have peace with God, and the

love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to all who thus believe the testimony of God as to the work and person of Jesus.

It is only when this is all true and real to the soul that communion *with* God can be entered upon and enjoyed. Two things must necessarily be apprehended before true communion can be enjoyed. Firstly, access or nearness to God ; every thing that caused distance, distrust, or fear must be gone from the conscience and heart. Secondly, we must know God in the relationship of Father—be able to say, in the conscious knowledge of its blessed reality, “Abba, Father.” This can only be true of those who have the Holy Spirit ; for it is by the power of the Spirit *in* us that we have access to the Father, and enjoy communion with Him and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, as we read in 1 John i., “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Also in Ephesians ii., “Through Him” (Jesus) “we both” (*both* Jew and Gentile who have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ) “have access by *one Spirit* unto the Father.”

Now if the Spirit be grieved, communion must necessarily be at once interrupted. Our minds and hearts *cannot* be entering into the sweetness of divine joys in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, while they are set on earthly, selfish, or sinful things. If we partake of the old wine our *taste*

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for the new is destroyed for a time. All that is of the world is not of the Father, hence "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This is a solemn and weighty scripture which we should lay to heart and ponder over. We may well challenge ourselves, in the presence of it, as to what our hearts are possessed of and set upon; nay more, whether there is *any* room allowed there for the world.

It will be clear from what has been set forth that 'communion with God' is quite distinct from 'peace with God.' The former may be disturbed at any moment, or may *never be really reached* and enjoyed by the soul at all. Peace with Him has been made by the blood of the cross, secured through the perfect atoning work of Jesus, which nothing can set aside, and hence it can *never be disturbed*. Our acceptance can never be altered, our place in divine favour can never be forfeited, our relationships with God and His blessed Son can never be broken; but the enjoyment and the present fruits connected with these may *not* be realised.

God has called us to "the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. i.) He desires this for us, and has opened up the way for it. All our true happiness and joy as believers is connected with it, and cannot be realised without it. How important then to seek it above everything!

S. M. A.

THE CREDULITY OF UNBELIEF.

THE infidel is much more credulous than he declares the Christian to be. Let me seek to prove this at least on one score.

There is never an effect without a cause, an axiom requiring no proof. Let us examine briefly the effects of the Bible.

The countries where Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Brahminism, &c. hold sway, are either sunk in a primitive conservatism, possessing but little inherent power to advance; or else their tribal wars prevent any solid advantages of good government being secured, and this is to a great extent the result of their religion.

Age would have secured for them the place of leaders in the onward march of civilization, but their religion has kept them in the childhood state of national life. Whereas the countries which are nominally Christian, and have received the Bible, are in the front rank of the nations of the world.

Again, mark those countries which have thrown off the yoke of religion, how they have suffered in every respect, and will yet suffer more severely. Things that God has ordained—such as family and marriage ties—are loosened, whilst unholy

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combinations and money-grasping syndicates are on the rapid increase. Artificiality seems stamped on all.

Take again the influence of the Bible on individuals. Drunkards are transformed, their homes brightened; thieves become benefactors; blasphemers are turned into preachers; misers are made generous; wrecks on the moral sea of humanity, well-nigh flung by its waves on the shores of eternity, are reclaimed, and live to benefit that which they blighted. You may indulge in a cynical smile, and say the picture is too highly coloured. But all this, and more, has been done by the transforming story of the cross, and no one can deny it.

I am not speaking of Christendom, but Christianity; not of mere professors, but real possessors; not of shams, but of the true; not of counterfeits, but of the genuine. It is the sickly, mawkish, sentimental profession, manufactured wholesale by Satan to discount the work of God, which has shocked numbers, and made infidels by the hundreds.

But now, after having very rapidly looked at the effect of the Bible, let us see what Christians and infidels think of the Book which is the cause of all this.

The Bible—the cause of this effect—the Christian says, is given by God as His revelation. In it man's ruin and utter hopelessness is plainly

and emphatically proclaimed, whether by illustration as in history, or by doctrine. This is unpleasant for man to receive. The love of God is told in the gift of His Son, and free grace is the righteous effect of the cross of Jesus. The Christian says the Book, written by its numerous authors of various ages, ranks, learning, and temperaments, is inspired wholly by God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration." Besides all this the Holy Spirit of God is sent into the world to carry the truth of this revelation to the hearts of men. Thus is explained the wondrous qualities and power of the Book, which produces such grand results.

Bigotry and superstition, were never produced by it. Shallow minds may think them the product of such a tree, but they are the fruits of the evil heart of men who know little of the spiritual influence and power of the Book, though professing to do so.

The Christian can adore God for such a revelation.

The Bible is a fable, so says the infidel, no God has inspired it, and no Holy Spirit carries its precious truths home to the hearts of men.

Strange circumstances—the acting of primitive and mediæval superstition and ignorance—account for much. The instilling of its falsehoods into the breasts of tender children by their dearest friend on earth, their mother, accounts for more. Such

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is the sophistical argument of the infidel. Yet, at the time the Book came into existence, though not in its entirety and multiplicity of copies, nations were lying bound in the thralldom of paganism of the growth of centuries. A despised few were the first exponents of the Scriptures. It went dead against popular likes and beliefs.

Unlike Mohammedanism, it put no sword into the hand of its followers, nor tempted them with a sensual paradise; unlike Buddhism, it taught no gradual evolution into perfection, but met the moral teacher of a nation with the revolutionary words, "Ye must be born again."

Now, reader, may we not conclude the infidel believes more than the Christian? The Christian declares a grand effect is produced by a great cause. The infidel cannot deny to a large extent the effect, yet denies any strength or credulity in the cause. What a miracle of miracles is the Bible from the infidel's standpoint! Yet his credulity only brings upon his head the withering rebuke of the psalmist—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." He may not deny the very existence of God, but he denies all that which makes God God.

The Christian's belief leads him to the knowledge of a God of love and a God of light, of an all-sufficient Sacrifice for sin, to happiness and hope which maketh not ashamed—a hope beyond the grave.

Infidelity is a cold, cold winding-sheet.

Man may talk, and vaunt himself, and speculate, but he cannot stay the iron march of Time, nor avert the hand of Death. In the midst of his speculations he is hurried through the narrow portals of the grave to the great white throne and the Judge of all the earth, to an eternity of speechless woe. You may dispute the judgment to come, but you cannot deny the existence of death, and that last strange struggle between the spirit and the body in the hour of dissolution.

Oh, friend, we love thy soul, and would beg of thee whilst thou art still in the land of hope, to study the word of God! Learn there thy guilt and danger. Learn there the love of the blessed God. Learn there the all-sufficiency of the atoning work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. Learn there "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved.*" (Romans x. 9.)

And if in simple faith thou dost accept Christ as thy Saviour, and on the authority of God's Word learn that thou art saved, thy sins forgiven, thy future assured, thou wilt be able, like the blind man in John ix., to defeat all the brow-beating sophistry of infidel friends. The blind man was no match in argument or learning for

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the Pharisees and leaders of the synagogue, but one thing they could not shake him from. “*One thing* I KNOW, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” The infidel cannot follow the believer into the region of experience. St. Augustine has given us very sound advice in charging us not to let that which we do not know shake us in that which we do know. The word of God commends the assurance of faith. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye *have* eternal life.” (1 John v. 13.)

That you and I may have the sheet-anchor of the Word of God to enable us to ride over the waves of doubt and unbelief is my earnest prayer.

A. J. P.

ETERNITY.

READER, thy time on earth is short. Each closing year, each setting sun, each tick of yonder clock is shortening thy days on earth, and swiftly, silently, but surely carrying thee on—on to ETERNITY and to God.

The year, the day, the hour, the moment will soon arrive that will close thy life on earth, and begin thy song in heaven or thy wail in hell. No future hour shall come to bring thee back to earth again, thou art there for ever—for ETERNITY.

To-day thy feet stand on time's sinking sand;

To-morrow the footprints remain, but thou art gone—Where ? Into ETERNITY.

To-day thy hands are busy at work, thine eyes are beholding, thy mind is thinking, thou art planning for the future ; To-morrow all is still—the folded arm, the closed eye remain, but thou art gone—gone to ETERNITY.

Others were once busy as thou art, healthy as thou art, thoughtless as thou art ; they are gone—gone to ETERNITY.

The merry voice, the painted clown, the talented singer, whose presence made the theatre, the pantomime, and the concert an attraction for thee, are gone ; they are removed far from the region of fiction to that of reality—the reality of ETERNITY.

The shrewd merchant whose voice was so familiar to thee on the crowded exchange is silent ; he buys and sells no more—he has entered ETERNITY.

Reader, thine own turn to enter ETERNITY will shortly come. Ask thyself honestly, “ Am I prepared for ETERNITY ? ” Give thy conscience time to answer. Listen ! It speaks to thee to-day ; drown not its voice lest it speak to thee no more. Let the heaven and the hell of the future stand before thee in all their realities ; one of these must be thine eternal dwelling-place, and To-day is the time to make thy choice. To-morrow may be too late—*one day behind time*. Which art thou living for ? Which art thou travelling to ?

ETERNITY.

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To go unrenewed from the haunts of pleasure, of sin and vice to the presence of God and the Lamb—Impossible! From the crowd of the condemned to the crown of glory—No, never!

Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

Reader, has this ever happened unto you? Have you been born again for an Eternal Heaven? If so, well; but if not, the horrors of an Eternal Hell are awaiting you, and to-day you are nearer its unquenchable flame than you have ever been before.

Halt! Why will you meet God with an unsaved soul? He wills it not. To-day He pleads—"Turn ye, turn ye, . . . why will ye die?" (Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.) To-day He points you to yon cross with the Son of God uplifted, groaning, bleeding, dying, and all for sinners. Yes, reader, for the *guilty* the crown of thorns encircled His brow; for the *lost* the soldier's spear brought the blood from His side; for the *helpless* and *undone* He cried in triumph, "It is finished"; and for you there is salvation free to-day. SELECTED.

"SOUL, from thy casement look and thou shalt see
How He persists to knock and wait for thee!
And, O! how often to that Voice of sorrow,
'To-morrow we will open,' I replied,
And when to-morrow came I answered still, 'To-morrow.'"

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MOST MISERABLE.—We received your letter in due course, and deeply feel for you in all the anguish of spirit through which you are passing. And now what shall we say to you, seeing we have taken up our pen to write? May the same God, who hears your cry, and knows your sorrows, give us fitting words!

Do not doubt for a moment that God has wrought in your soul by His Spirit, and that He is now teaching you in the school of experience some great truths that must be learned before perfect peace can be enjoyed—truths hitherto but feebly apprehended, if indeed they have been known by you at all.

It seems certain from your letter that you have never understood that "*God is love*," for you speak of loving the Lord Jesus while you shrink from God as a Being stern and great. If we mistake not you think God is against you, or at least that He is not so entirely on your side as the Saviour is. But that is a profound mistake. In the cross of Christ, in the death of shame and agony accomplished there, the heart of God is for evermore revealed in the greatness of that love that cannot be measured. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." From His eternal dwelling-place in the far heavens God looked down upon the sons of men in the misery and hard bondage to which they had sold themselves by sin. He looked upon them with pity, with compassion, with love that would not rest until a way had been opened for their redemption, and the gift to them

of eternal life. But the carrying out of all this involved the incarnation of the Son of God, and His drinking the bitter cup of death upon the cross, alone and in the overwhelming darkness that must necessarily result from being God-forsaken. Would God's love endure so great a strain? It would. He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Did such a surrender, think you, cost God nothing? Did He remain an unmoved spectator, looking coldly on as the Lord Jesus, the Son of His love, was bruised and smitten for our sins, and to effect our deliverance? Impossible. Do you, with all this in view, find it hard to trust such a God as that? Does not His perfect love cast out fear? Ah, if you knew His love, if you believed it *now*, you would lay your head upon His bosom and there you would rest.

You tell me that you wonder why God must punish sin, why it is so hateful to Him. You do not see why it should be, or why Jesus had to die for our salvation. If this be so, it is clear you do not understand that "*God is light.*" Happy for us that He is. If in God there were any darkness at all, any tolerance of evil, where could we find safe anchorage amid the storms and tempests of the soul? The perfect holiness of God and His inflexible justice are essential to our safety. Even in this poor world, were there no punishment for evil-doers, no arm swift to uphold the majesty of the law, how soon would violence, anarchy, and bloodshed ride triumphant everywhere! It is then for the common good that evil should be put down. Now if this principle prevails where man's authority holds sway, are you going to exclude it from the more extended sphere of God's government? You

cannot do so, hence the need of atonement and the impossibility of our being saved without it.

Oh, what glories gather round the cross of Him who once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust! There infinite love towards the sinner displays itself, and there too shines full-orbed the justice of God, which never, never bends. But if atonement has been wrought, as it surely has, and all the claims of justice have been fully met, then is the justice of God on the believer's side. It becomes one of the imperishable bulwarks that guard and keep secure the host of God's elect, even as of old the flaming sword, which turned every way, kept the way of the tree of life.

I do not wonder at your finding out the plague of your own evil nature. It is not to be cured by effort any more than the demoniac was to be kept bound with chains and in fetters. To yourself you seem to be daily growing worse. Actually it is not so, for you are but discovering how bad you ever were. But is there no relief in knowing that all you are as a sinner born of Adam has been judged and ended before God? The old hateful "I" has been crucified with Christ, and now there is a new "I" according to Galatians ii. 20. This and your other difficulties you will find dealt with in a little book called "*Victory over Sin*," which may be had at the office of this magazine.

A. H.—It is a very serious thing for any Christian to forsake the table of the Lord. When this is done deliberately, and the individual concerned remains deaf to the entreaties and admonitions of his brethren, the assembly, after long patience, might be obliged to close the door of fellowship against him till it is satisfied of his repentance. To withdraw oneself from the Lord's table because we do not agree with the discipline of the assembly towards one in their midst is a solemn step to take, and can only be justified on the ground that the assembly by its act had forfeited all right to be regarded as an assembly of God at all.

THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION.

IT is very precious to watch the actings of the Spirit, through the Word, in awakening the dead soul to life—always the same, yet always different; always leading to the same blessed Saviour, yet in such an infinite variety of ways.

A lady one night, to whom I was speaking, said to me, “Do you remember speaking to me when you first came to D——, twenty-seven years ago?” I told her I remembered it very well.

“And do you remember how I rejected the teaching?”

“Yes,” I said, “I remember that too.”

“Well,” said she, “I’ve had no peace in my mind ever since, and now, oh, if I could only feel that I could say I was saved, and my sins were forgiven.” Then we had a few minutes’ talk with the open Bible in our hands, and speedily the Spirit of God, who had been striving with her all those years, finished the work by bringing her to see that it was not *she*, or indeed *anyone*, who had to say her sins were forgiven, but it was for her simply to hearken to, or to read, the proclamation of forgiveness issued from the throne—“Be it

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known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man [Christ Jesus] is preached [*i.e.* proclaimed] unto you the forgiveness of sins.” “Now,” said I, “that’s a fact whether you like to accept it or no. The royal proclamation has gone forth the wide world over, and the King’s ambassadors are solemnly responsible for sounding it out. Read it!” She did, and said, “Then I gladly accept it,” and oh, such a light shone out of her eyes! But there needed a little further teaching still. “You know, Mr. B——, I don’t feel that great joy that some talk about. Ought I not, before I believe that it’s all for me?” I took a piece of paper something like an envelope out of my pocket and said, “Suppose the clerk at the post-office handed you a letter with your name and address on it, of the accuracy of which there could be no question, what would that entitle you to do?”

“To open it,” she said.

“Very good, but you opened it without knowing either the contents or the writer.”

“Yes,” she said.

“Well now, inside you read those words, ‘Be it known unto you,’ &c., and the royal signature told you whence it came.”

“Yes, I see that,” said she.

“Now suppose after a while the thought suggests itself to your mind, ‘I may have been mistaken in thinking it was for me, perhaps I had

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no right to take it after all.' Now where would you look to make sure about your right?"

"Why at the address on the outside of the envelope."

"*Not at the inside?*"

"No."

"But that address is '*The lost, ruined, hell-deserving sinner.*'"

"Yes."

"That address is yours unmistakably?"

"Yes."

"Then remember that, and *that only*, is your claim to the right of opening the letter, and taking the good of its contents."

"Oh," said she; "I see the difference now, I'm so glad."

And she was glad too, blessed be His name, and is doing all she can to bring others into the same happy knowledge. That is one case, but then with others it is so different. But "the word of the truth of the gospel" with the enlightening and quickening power of the Holy Ghost can reach the most difficult, thanks be to the Lord, and *without* this all *our* doings intellectually, or any way else, are worthless.

A. B.

"Faith is not what we see or feel,
It is a simple trust
In what the God of love has said
Of Jesus as the Just."

ECCLESIASTES AND CANTICLES.

IN the book of Ecclesiastes we get the man Solomon, the wisest of monarchs, seeking out that good under the sun with which man may satisfy himself. He goes to prove his heart with mirth, and folly, and wisdom; with learning, philosophy, natural history, music, wine, wealth, and the special delights of kings. His wisdom too *remains with him*. God allows him, as it were, to try what is to be found on earth. And what does it all come to? Just this: "*All is vanity and vexation of spirit.*" "*Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*"

In the Song of Solomon we get another thing—the soul satisfied with *one* object only, desirous to grasp it more largely, and to enter into it more fully. That object is CHRIST, the object of the soul's affections. If we have but one object, we shall be satisfied with His goodness and loving-kindness, and we shall seek only to know its fulness. If it be said, "Well, I want to *experience* that the world cannot satisfy," I answer that Solomon had more experience than you ever can have. He fully tried it, and all is vanity and vexation of spirit. But, as in Canticles, when the soul is satisfied with *one* object, and that object is Christ, all is peace and satisfaction. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

SELECTED.

GOD DECLARED.

ANCIENT Athens was famed for science and superstition, for telling and hearing new things, and for having many altars. Speculation and idolatry engrossed the mind of that historic city, but such pursuits are at best unsatisfactory. Science may be falsely so-called, and must fail to reach finality, whilst the gods, worshipped on those various altars, have long been labelled "myths."

Supposition and mythology are the sorry outcome of the mental activity of that seat of learning. In connection, however, with their superstition, and with the many altars devoted thereto, was one altar bearing a remarkable inscription. It was dedicated to the worship of "*the unknown God.*"

How came this? Who could have suggested the possibility that there was, outside the range of their wide mythology and many deities, one God who claimed worship, but of whose character they were ignorant? Was this the working of conscience, or what?

That such a God existed was perfectly true; but how to worship Him, what He claimed, what He gave, what He did, what He was, all this was a matter quite beyond Athenian lore and knowledge. He was to them the *unknown God*.

But, after all, are we, in this far advanced age, when the wheel of science has revolved so often, and the busy little brain invented so much;

when knowledge has increased, civilization spread, Christianity unfolded its mighty truths, are we really further on than superstitious Athens of old?

Then God was "*unknown*," *now* God is "*unknowable*." This is no advance; it is positive retrogression. *Then* He was not known, *now* He cannot be known. So say, at least, many of our modern scientists. But such present-day ignorance is wholly unpardonable. The Athenian altar was an admission of ignorance indeed, but not a refusal of truth. Our altar is, alas! both the one and the other. Paul coming to Athens, and observing the altar thus embossed, said that he *declared* to them this unknown God! His preaching had the revelation of that God for its glorious subject. The God who was confessedly unknown to the scientific men of Athens, had made Himself known to Paul. Wondrous grace!

Now Paul was a Christian. We all remember how he was converted from a state of fearful opposition to one of unbounded adherence to Christ; from being the chief of sinners to being "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," and in such a conversion lay the knowledge of God. Christianity reveals God; it makes Him known to faith. Creation cannot, circumstances cannot, law cannot; but the Son of God, become man, dying under the judgment of sin, and now alive in glory, has made fully known all the truth of God. Thank God for Christianity! Woe to those who refuse it! Paul declared the, to them, unknown

God. Some mocked and some believed ; effects differed, but God was declared and made known. That altar might now have been destroyed ; but, alas ! it still remained in Athens. The mass of the people preferred darkness to light, and ignorance to knowledge, and Satan to God. And that altar remains to this day, only with the inscription enlarged by one solemn word. Now we read, in dread and glaring characters, "TO THE UNKNOWN AND UNKNOWABLE GOD !"

Yet how true ! God is unknowable to *science*. Can man "by searching find out God ?" Certainly not. "The world by wisdom knew not God." How could it ?

No, but the righteousness of God [His great salvation] is revealed from faith to faith. (Rom. i. 17.) And thus God is known. "I know Whom I have believed," said Paul. And, notice, the worst of judgment is about to fall on them who know not God. (See 2 Thess. i. 8.)

My reader, you are responsible to know God, nor can you excuse yourself for ignorance. You move about in the full blaze of Christianity, and are held responsible for its precious and welcome light. Walk while you have it, lest darkness come upon you ; and, mark, "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) Oh, happy knowledge ! Unlike science, its every fact is certain, its every breath is sweet. It is heart-knowledge, it is life eternal. May it all be yours through the grace of a revealed Saviour-God.

J. W. S.

EATING THE LAMB ROAST WITH FIRE.

THE lamb, whose blood was sprinkled on the dwellings of Israel on the passover night to keep out the Judge, was afterwards eaten by the people. It had been slain instead of their first-born. By eating it they identified themselves with the victim whose sprinkled blood delivered them from the judgment that fell upon the Egyptians.

Moreover, God was careful to tell them *how* it was to be eaten. Twice He commanded them to eat it *roast with fire*. They were not to eat of it raw, nor sodden at all with water.

This occurred more than 3000 years ago. Has it any application to men to-day? Unquestionably.

In the first chapter of John's gospel, the Baptist sees Jesus walking, and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In chapter xix. the soldiers come to the cross of Jesus to break His legs, but find that He is dead already, "that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken." Now this is a quotation from Exodus xii. 46, where God said of the paschal lamb, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof." The Spirit of God in John refers this

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to Jesus, thus identifying in a most striking way the slain lamb of Exodus with the crucified Christ of the gospels.

The apostle Paul, in the fifth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, writes, "Christ our passover is *sacrificed for us*."

These and other scriptures show that the events of Exodus xii. had a typical meaning. God by them was teaching truths that are of vital importance to-day.

Now in John vi. we read the passover was nigh, and Jesus, who had been proclaimed in the beginning of this gospel as the Lamb of God, fed the multitude miraculously. He tells them, in reply to their words touching the manna their fathers had eaten, that His Father had given them the true bread from heaven. "For," saith He, "the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

"Lord," they say, "evermore give us this bread."

Exactly, bread that would impart the life of which Jesus spake was to be desired; but the question was, Were they prepared to receive it as God gave it?

Hence Jesus says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is *My flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world."

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This tests them, they forthwith strive among themselves, saying, "*How* can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

The same thing stumbles the rationalists of to-day. They would willingly have eternal life, but when God offers it through the death of Jesus, and their appropriation of that death, they ask, How can this be?

Jesus answers their reasonings by a statement of terrible import, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.*"

Listen, men and women of the nineteenth century! The voice of the Son of man reaches you from the wonderful past, declaring that the sole way to life is through His death, and that they only have life who eat His flesh and drink His blood.

Sight strange and terrible! a world of sinners rushing down to DEATH, at whose portal lurks eternal judgment. Lo! ONE stands in the way who, with look of love and word of power, proclaims eternal life as the gift of God, founded on His death, and as the portion of all who come to Him. A few heed, turn, come, and are saved; the rest pass on, and go down to their doom, lost, without God, without life, and without a ray of hope for eternity!

"But," proceeds the patient Saviour, "whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath

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eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

"Oh!" says the ritualist, "that is the Lord's Supper." Nay, that cannot be; if it were, then all who partake of it would, by doing so, be saved, and they who do not, must be lost.

No, in John vi. we find brought out the great fact of Christ's death, its atoning, life-giving character; the need of it; and, further, that without it none can have life. The Lord's Supper is the symbol of this death, but there is an immense difference between a fact and its symbol, a substance and its shadow. Thousands to-day are observing the symbol who have never eaten Christ's flesh and drunk His blood; that is to say, they have never come to the Saviour as lost sinners, and by faith appropriated that death as having taken place for them. Jesus says, "He that cometh to ME shall never hunger; and he that believeth on ME shall never thirst." There must be the coming to *Him*, the believing on *Him*, before there is salvation.

But how is Christ's flesh to be eaten? Exactly as the paschal lamb was eaten — ROAST WITH FIRE.

But what does this signify?

In the first place, fire in scripture is a symbol of judgment, and we doubt not the lamb roast with fire of Exodus xii. is a figure of Christ under the judgment of God. Christ on the cross, the

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true Victim, bearing the wrath of God against sin.

To know Christ in this position and character, to believe, to feed on Him thus, is to possess Him as a Saviour. To ignore Him in this character, and to attempt to know Him in any other, is to eat the lamb raw or sodden with water—a thing which God has prohibited.

The holy *life* of Jesus could not save a sinner, it could only condemn him. Its absolute freedom from sin, its perfect purity, did but reveal the defects of the life of Adam's seed.

The death of Christ as a martyr at the hands of the world could not save man. It proves his guilt and seals his doom, for here was One who spent His life in glorifying God, and in doing good; *and behold He is hated*, and put to death, not by a heathen nation only, but by a people who boasted that they knew God and had God's law.

But Christ, suffering at God's hand in the room of the sinner, becomes the Saviour of all who believe on Him. Hence Scripture presents Him as the Lamb roast with fire—the perfect Man though infinitely more than man—who in love to us endured God's wrath against sin, died, and in resurrection broke the bands of death, ascended and passed through the heavens to the very throne of God, where He sits—the all-sufficient, victorious Saviour.

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But in what estimation is this momentous truth held to-day?

Well, consult the teachings and writings of the manufacturers and supporters of "the New Theology." These professional students of the Bible speak sweetly enough of Jesus. They say most beautiful things concerning His life and hold Him up as a model for man. They applaud His courage in dying rather than surrender His opinions, and laud Him to the skies for laying down His life as a martyr for the truth He came to teach. But they utterly refuse to acknowledge anything beyond this in His death.

And yet they hear the angel's message to Mary, "*Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.*"

They follow Him in His last journey to Jerusalem, and hear Him say, "*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" They contemplate Him at the last supper as He passes the cup to His disciples, saying, "*This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" They go with Him to Golgotha, and watch while the supernatural darkness gathers at noonday round His cross, and they listen to that solemn wail, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"

They join the disciples in the upper room when the risen Saviour appears and proclaims peace,

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as He shows them His nail-pierced hands and feet. They stand among the listening Jews while Paul, as the mouth-piece of the witnessing Spirit, testifies, "*Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,*" and then turn coolly round, and with unblushing audacity declare to the church, and to the world that they "fail to find the doctrine of atonement taught in the Scriptures" !

Take care, ye traffickers in divine things; ye self-constituted teachers of mankind, take care! The Christ *you* preach can never help you, nor your hearers. The Lamb *you* announce is not roast with fire, but raw or sodden with water, and God has said, "Ye shall *not* eat of it thus, but *roast with fire.*"

Reader, you have this to face. Either Christ's death was for the salvation of lost sinners, or it was not. If it was, then you must be saved by that death, or you will never be saved at all. If it was not, *then you have to become your own saviour*; that is to say, you have yourself to make a complete satisfaction to God for every sin you have been guilty of.

As a responsible creature of God you have to fully meet His righteous claims in respect of every evil act committed, and every good act left undone.

It will not avail you to take shelter under those Scriptures that teach God's mercy. There

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are as many, or more, that assert His unchanging holiness and righteousness, and threaten His judgment of the sinner. For instance, "God will render to every man according to his deeds . . . unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." (Rom. ii. 6-9.)

When an Israelite sinned in a past dispensation, did he come to God and plead His mercy? Nay, he regarded His instructions in the matter; he brought a sacrifice, offered it, and went away forgiven.

What sacrifice will *you* bring? What amends will *you* make to God for a misspent life—for years spent in doing your own will, instead of your Creator's—for the continual failure to love your *neighbour* as yourself, and your *God* with all your heart, and soul, and strength, and mind?

What, I ask, will you do to save your soul from His judgment, whose righteousness is pledged to punish every man that doeth evil, and *When* will you do it? Your life is vanishing. Your summons to His presence is near at hand. Will you not do wisely in beginning *at once* your terrible task?

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins,

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the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Lovely gospel! Sweet revelation of the grace of God! Yes, this is God's great remedy for ruined man. His own Son went to the place of judgment, and there in the exercise of that blessed competency which was His, as Son of God and sinless Son of man, to make propitiation for sins, He offered Himself without spot to God.

The cross, then, is the place where the Saviour suffered to obtain eternal salvation for us. The means by which a sinner becomes possessed of it, is by coming to Him, believing in Him, and resting his soul upon His atoning work; this is eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood; this is partaking of the Lamb roast with fire.

W. H. S.

"THE LORD IS MINDFUL OF HIS OWN."

"THE Lord is mindful of His own."
 I find this true from day to day
 In ways unthought of and unknown,
 His blessings light upon my way.
 A thousand things His love attest,
 And what is not so clearly shown
 I leave—in this my heart can rest,
 "The Lord is mindful of His own."

"The Lord is mindful of His own,"
 Of me and mine, of them and theirs,
 And His Almighty arm is thrown
 Around His children and their cares.
 The hearts I fain would heal and rest,
 To Him in fuller light are known,
 And He will do for them His best—
 "The Lord is mindful of His own."

"The Lord is mindful of His own,"
 And though a lonely path be trod,
 That soul can never be alone
 Whose life is hid with Christ in God.
 There may be many darkened days,
 The shadows may have longer grown,
 But there is ever cause for praise,
 "The Lord is mindful of His own."

"The Lord is mindful of His own,"
 His forethought never can forget
 In earth's dark ground the seed is sown;
 Silence and waiting follow, yet
 The sun shall shine, the birds shall sing,
 The resurrection power be shown;
 Up into life the seed shall spring,
 "The Lord is mindful of His own."

Then, when His hand my lot prepares,
 And all my life His mercy schools,
 Since mother-like He knows and cares,
 And father-like He over-rules.
 Let all my heart in rest abide,
 Faithless no more to fears be prone,
 Knowing, whatever shall betide,
 "The Lord is mindful of His own."

SELECTED.

SOWING AND REAPING.

WE were walking towards a village, where we were having special gospel meetings and addresses to Christians. The people had been very slow to move, and few turned in to hear the Word.

My friend, who was with me, uttered a very simple parable, but one which contained truth of immense importance. He said, "The farmer will hire any tramp or odd man to reap, but he requires a skilled man to plough and sow."

I said, "I see; you want to encourage me to quietly plod on with the meetings, and not be discouraged by the smallness of the numbers."

Now I daresay there are many to whom this simple parable will be useful. So I pass it on.

We are living in dark and difficult days. The masses are indifferent, and that which gave the preacher a certain power over them in days gone by, is losing its hold upon them. Infidelity, once confined to the world, has crept into the churches, and once restricted to the pews is now permitted to preach from the pulpit.

Only to-day I read a notice on the outside of a church—the announcement of next Sunday evening's discourse—"The conversion of force." Once on a time the subject would have been, "The conversion of the sinner." But we are moving with the times. Such old-fashioned

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doctrines as the atonement, the verbal inspiration of the original scriptures, the eternity of punishment, are rapidly being relegated to the limbo of obscurity. And, alas! how little true Christians are separated and weaned from the world, and their hearts satisfied with Christ. And how little do we know of the power gendered by prayer and fasting.

All this tells to us very loudly that Christ is coming quickly, coming to call home His travel-stained and, shall we add? world-spotted Bride, but, thank God, she is to be presented to Himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

All this, and more, being true, how it behoves one personally to seek grace to keep a living faith in the Word of God in its entirety, to cultivate communion with Christ and corresponding separation in heart and ways from the world, religious or otherwise, to study to shew oneself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (See 2 Timothy ii. 15.)

Ploughing in itself may be hard work, and sowing tedious, but the shouts of the "harvest home" shall yet be heard. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." (James v. 7.)

Patience is one of the first marks of an apostle. instance, the Sunday-school teacher, who,

often wearied and discouraged, still plods on, possesses one of the apostolic marks of divine character. And oh, how sweet to know that *if* the seed falls by the wayside, *still* we are doing the Lord's will and have His approval in it all. What a cheer! And will the *apparently* useless work, if done to His glory, lose its reward? A thousand times *No*. The fact of results attending successful ministry *may* spur the preacher on. He *may* grow to live on the applause of his fellow Christians. Much of the reward may be lost, the bright gold be dimmed. Let us seek then *His* approval alone and be content with it. One of the truest marks that a Christian is really hourly expecting the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven is, that he works for his absent Lord. He redeems the time. The golden opportunities are few and the days are short. And so earnestly and patiently he goes about His Lord's business, and finds out that though—

“The Master's work *may* make weary feet,
Yet it leaves the spirit glad.”

Satan is very busy. Everywhere we find signs of his successful activity. Thank God the Holy Ghost is busy. May we then seek to be free from the restless spirit of the age, and knowing deep communion with our Master go forth from His presence, but with His company, to work in such a way that we may have His approval, and however small may be our measure, produce solid, lasting results, which shall be to His praise. A. J. P.

“LET US NOT SLEEP AS DO OTHERS.”

A WORD TO SERVANTS OF GOD.

AN acquaintance once came to Demosthenes with a complaint that he had been beaten and abused. He, however, told the incident to the great orator in such a dreamy way that, instead of Demosthenes expressing sympathy, as was expected, he said, “Beaten thee? Hath anybody beaten thee? I do not believe it.” “No? Why not believe it?” said the man, aroused and indignant, and growing almost vehement in gesture and passion, showing by his action and words the truth of his story as he repeated, “See, he did this to me, see these marks. Do you not call this a beating?” “Ah! now I believe that he hath beaten thee,” said Demosthenes, “for thou speakest as if thou felt the truth of what thou sayest.” So runs the simple story, but it points a great moral.

Beloved servant of God, how do we speak our Master’s message? Do we feel what we say, and live in the power of what we preach?

“Let us not sleep, as do others” (1 Thess. v. 6) is a word, I believe, for the present time and season. Who can recall the history of Samson and not hear its solemn warning against parleying with the world? Delilah—signifying a consumer—whose name and nature agree, by deceit finds out

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the secret of Samson's strength, causes him to sleep upon her knees (Judges xvi. 19), and soon all that is of God is consumed, and he awakes to find his testimony and usefulness gone. Samson *slept* when he should have been WITNESSING.

Look at Jonah. Instead of being ready and willing to be used by God in awakening that great city Nineveh to a sense of its wickedness, and to the fact of impending judgment, he, at the first call, acts in self-will, and eventually we find him in the sides of the ship fast asleep. (Jonah i. 6.) Thus Jonah *slept* when he should have been WORKING.

Behold that bright scene on yonder mount of transfiguration. Peter, James, and John have seen there the power and glory of Christ, the theme and joy of heaven. Yet we read, "Peter and they that were with him were heavy with *sleep*." (Luke ix. 32.) Asleep when they should have been WORSHIPPING.

Follow these same favoured disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane. Solemn indeed is the hour as the beloved Saviour turns to them and says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me." (Matt. xxvi. 38.) He commanded them to *watch* and *pray*. Alas! they did neither, and from those lips of love is heard this tender reproof, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" The disciples *slept* when they should have been praying and WATCHING.

• "LET US NOT SLEEP AS DO OTHERS." 51

What shall we say more of the church that Christ loved and gave Himself for? Is she, in the freshness and ardour of first love, looking and longing for His return? Alas! no, hearts have grown weary with waiting, and eyes have grown heavy with sleep, and instead of dwelling on His ne'er-to-be-forgotten promise, "I will come again," "they all slumbered and slept." (Matt. xxv. 5.) How sad. The professing church *slept* instead of WAITING for the Bridegroom.

What are you doing, beloved brethren, ye who seek to serve such a blessed Master? There is no time for spiritual slumber. (Rom. xiii. 11, 12.) Souls are going at break-neck speed to hell. "The time is short," and Christ is coming. Then let us witness, work, worship, watch, and wait, as we have never done before, and sleep shall depart from our eyes, and slumber from our eyelids.

Be encouraged by David's word to Solomon in 1 Chron. xxii. 15, 16, "Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance. . . . *Arise* therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee." God has provided largely for our service. It is God who has called us to have fellowship with Him, in His purpose to have His house filled. (Luke xiv. 23.) Arise then, be on the alert, gird your loins afresh. Darkness and infidelity are rolling down our streets like a mighty flood. Arise, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

W. N.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

NO name like this name in history: it lives. Other names perish, this endures. It is the one name for time; it will be, and is, the one name for eternity.

When on earth, "some said of Him, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but He deceiveth the people." So now some believe, others do not; and thus public opinion flows on like a river, that opinion fixing the everlasting destiny of men; for it is either the acceptance or rejection of His name that decides their fate, whether for weal or woe.

There have been great names in history, men famous in war, in learning, in science, in engineering skill, in research, both as regards things of earth and of the heavens; but the Man of Nazareth, the Man of Calvary, the Man Christ Jesus, eclipses all. He stands the one Man alone of both earth and heaven. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

THE NAME OF JESUS.

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The name of Jesus is as fresh to-day as ever. It still thrills the hearts of thousands, aye tens of thousands, as it has in every age since it was first known on earth. It has sustained men and women in the darkest hours; it has given joy to the martyr in the midst of smoke and fire and torture and death; it has lit up the chamber of sadness when disease was working in its direst and darkest form; it has sustained the soul in the midst of perplexity and adversity; it has cheered and borne up the prisoner in the dungeon; it has defied all the power of Satan; it has routed the spirits of wickedness in the heavenlies; it has sustained the pilgrims in the wilderness without bread and without water; it has caused a light to shine when no moon or star appeared; and a song of victory and triumph has ascended to God, as the soul has risen on the might of that name and joyed with the ransomed host before the throne.

All hail to the name of Jesus! sweetest of all names, grandest of all names, greatest of all names, most glorious of all names, destined name of widest sway. To Him is given "a name above every name," and God has ordained "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things [infernals] under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER."

Unsaved soul, there is none other name under heaven given whereby we can be saved. There is salvation in that name, but in none other. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved." A. L.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TOTNES.—Your questions have already been very fully answered in our issue of last year, and we can only recall your attention to "Words to one in despair" in January; "Stumbling-blocks removed" in April; "What is it to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" in June; "Victory over sin" in July; and an answer to "Unhappy A." in September. Your misery proceeds from your incessant occupation with that loathsome, leprous thing called *self*, on which pride, aping humility, loves to feed. The pronoun "I" occurs in your letter no less than 33 times, to say nothing of "me" and "my." When you turn from self in bitter loathing, and look alone to Christ, you will find rest—not before.

ENQUIRER.—We do not know the gentleman who has been lecturing in your town, but, in alleging that there will be one great general judgment embracing both saint and sinner, and that no one can possibly know his sins forgiven till that day dawns, he shows his utter ignorance of the simplest truths of the Christian faith.

1. The believer in Jesus, the one who has fled for refuge to that sure Sanctuary, shall never come into judgment. On this point John v. 24 is most emphatic, nor does the simple-hearted believer require more, though very much more is said on the subject in the Holy Scriptures. How a person can be justified from his sins, and yet be judged for them at some future time is beyond explanation. The complete justification of the believer and his exemption from judgment go together. Your lecturer therefore was consistent in denying both, but it was the consistency of error—glaring and profound. If you would see the matter more fully dealt with, consult “A Letter to a Young Convert” in our issue of March last.

2. The difference between “dead in sins” and “dead with Christ” is that the former term describes the appalling condition of all by nature, while the latter sets forth what is true of the believer only. We *were* “dead in sins” when God, who is rich in mercy, quickened us by His divine power. As regards our old standing and condition, we have died with Christ, so Scripture teaches, and so faith says. For fuller light on this point see “Victory over Sin.”

3. Death is spoken of in Scripture in more senses than one. In its most solemn sense it means the soul's separation from God, the sole fountain of life, light, and blessing, and the passing under the dominion of sin and Satan. This came in by the fall, and ever since men have been born dead, morally speaking. There is also death of the body; this, too, is the fruit of sin. Now death in the first sense took place the moment Adam transgressed, and in the second, in due

course. Sin sowed, as the judgment of God, the seeds of mortality in a body where they were not before. But remember mortality has only to do with the body, and though death following sin has spread itself over every particle of man's moral being, it does not touch the existence of the spirit. A man dead in sins still lives, as we plainly see all around us, and so will he live when death of the body ensues. Eternal existence and eternal life are two vastly different things.

W. U. R., 2 Cor. v. 10.—We regard this as a general statement of a solemn fact, including both saved and unsaved. Other passages go more into detail, and show that it will not be at the same time nor in the same way that they shall stand there. Here it is simply the fact stated. We cannot see how it can possibly be limited to believers, as verse 11 speaks of "the terror of the Lord." Now assuredly the judgment-seat of Christ, solemn though it be, has no "terror" for those who know that the One who shall sit there, is the One who, in unutterable love, died to put their sins away, and to make them for ever His.

VILLAGE WORK.—If in the dark village in which you live you are able to read the scriptures in a cottage, and to show to any the precious things that our God would have made known to every creature, who shall forbid your doing so? Let those who dare forbid take upon themselves the responsibility, but we are not of their number. See to it, however, that you do not overstep those bounds which both nature and the Word of God would teach you to respect. God gives wisdom to the upright in heart.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR CHRIST?

“And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee.”

2 SAMUEL v. 24.

THERE is no need, dear reader, to speak to you about the salvation of your soul if you have, through grace, believed on the Son of God. In building, as you do, your eternal hopes alone on Christ, the one sure, imperishable Foundation—His name, His blood, your only plea—you are surely saved, blessed be God! And oh what a salvation it is, and at how great a cost has it been accomplished! We shall do well sometimes to look over the brink and steadily view the hell from which we have been saved, and then to look stedfastly up into heaven and see the home and the glory into which we are going. *Do you ever do that?* HEAVEN, HELL, CALVARY—what thoughts do these words awaken!

Seeing you have been thus blessed, let me ask, What are you doing for Christ? Are you making any effort to communicate to others the saving truths you have yourself received? Do you tenderly warn them of their danger, and entreat them to come within that shelter to which you

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yourself have fled? You may be naturally timid and reserved, and not able to do much, still I trust you do something. It seems incredible that any one professing to realize the desperate need of souls and the freeness and fulness of the salvation that is in Christ, should be able to hold his tongue, much less stand, and stare, and lounge about, with hands in pocket while his fellow-beings pass blindly on to death and damnation. What would you think of a life-boat crew that gave no heed to signals of distress, but looked unmoved at the sinking ship with its sailors and passengers going down beneath the flood? Such miscreants would scarce deserve to live. Now we believe that the unsaved are in greater danger still—that they are sailing on to a direr doom from which there is no possible deliverance when once the bar of death is crossed. Shall no warning words escape our lips, no earnest, passionate entreaty? Shall no danger signals flash, no long loud call be raised? God forbid!

I know it is not every one who is called to preach the gospel in the public highways, from the pulpits of buildings, commonly called, or rather miscalled churches, or from the platform of every Town Hall and Corn Exchange throughout the land. Some are. And many more have the needed gift if they did but stir it up. For surely it needs no authority from man to unseal the lips

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that long to speak of the love of Christ. But apart from service of that kind there are ten thousand ways in which God's glad tidings can be carried to the ear of others—ways that lie close to the hand of the poorest and most obscure Christian. How many have been saved through the reading of some simple tract or gospel book. What facilities too the post offers for transmitting these to every quarter of the globe at a mere nominal charge, and numbers too can bless God that ever some kind Christian friend invited them to attend some special gospel service, that little act resulting in the salvation of their souls.

The passage from which our head-text is culled (2 Sam. v. 17–28) offers some practical suggestions to those who desire to serve the Lord. First, there is *prayer for divine guidance and help*. "David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt Thou deliver them into my hand?" This is of prime importance. Without God the mightiest effort ends in smoke, but with God the heartfelt utterance of a child may be rich in its outcomings, and descend to successive generations to stimulate souls beyond number. Such was the case with the little captive maid who waited on Naaman's wife. (2 Kings v. 3.) Be much in prayer then. Do you contemplate some holy enterprise? Seek guidance from above, nor move until you get it. Are you wondering what

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tract you shall give to your next-door neighbour? Ask to be guided in your choice. Make every detail a subject of prayer. Time thus spent is well spent. Much precious seed never springs up, though sown with a careful hand. Its sterility may possibly be traced to a lack of heavenly moisture, which prayerful waiting upon God will surely yield.

Do not be a slave to routine. When the Philistines came up again against David, again did David enquire of the Lord, and then he was directed not to follow his first plan of campaign. "Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees." What succeeded yesterday may not be the thing for to-day. The word spoken with such power a week ago is not necessarily the message for every succeeding occasion. It is true we have no new gospel to preach, nor do we want one, but we need not always preach it in the same way. Why should not the notes of the silver trumpet be sometimes heard, and sometimes the shrill blast of the rough ram's horn? Get your instructions from headquarters. Fresh wisdom is needed for every fresh step.

Beware lest the thought of the work being the Lord's deter you from doing your utmost. The work is the Lord's, but that is no reason why you should sit idly down. "When thou hearest the

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sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees . . . then thou shalt *bestir thyself*." Too many overlook this. They are so afraid, dear souls, of "the energy of the flesh" that they rarely display any energy of any kind whatsoever. I suppose what is meant by "the energy of the flesh" is all that energy which has nothing of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of the love of Christ, nothing of that God-given yearning for souls, every grain of which is more precious than rubies. Such energy we certainly do not want. Still, energy, which is but another word for earnestness, is needed, and cannot be done without. "You may do without Latin and Greek, you may do without learning, you may do without ten thousand things, but you cannot *win souls* without earnestness." Such is the testimony of one competent to speak, and so we believe.

Now "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees" speaks of unseen, heavenly power, the unmistakable movement of the Spirit of God. It was at that very moment David was to bestir himself. So with us. We need an ear divinely trained, so as to catch the first sound of "a going." The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. When that sound is heard, then let us be up and doing. Are the breezes favourable? Then put out every stitch of canvas, and so speed the good ship on her way.

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Let me give you three examples of individuals who bestirred themselves.

RAHAB. (Joshua ii.)

She, as you know, believed that Jehovah had given Israel the land of Canaan, and that the city of Jericho was about to fall before the advancing host. The messengers of Joshua she had received in peace, and hid them in the hour of danger. When they departed she placed the scarlet line—the true token—in her window. Her own safety was thereby secured. But she thought not of herself alone. Her father, and mother, and brethren, and all her father's house, were dear unto her, and them also she must bring under the shelter of that scarlet line. The sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees she distinctly heard, and she must bestir herself. Judgment was at the gate, dark clouds were gathering across the sky, and there was no time to lose. I think I see that woman of faith and energy hastening to the home of her childhood, and pouring into the ear of her aged parents the story of impending judgment. But she had more than that to tell. There was salvation, sure and at their doors. She had received “a true token,” and had bound it in her window. Oh, would they not come under her roof, and thus escape the devouring sword? If there were any reluctance on their part we can conceive her

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pleading more earnestly and with many tears. And the dear old couple came, and her brethren and all her kindred—one after another they passed into Rahab's house. Imagine, if you can, her joy when all were safely there. What a reward for her toil! Like the men of Issachar, she had understanding of the times, and knew what she ought to do and did it. No theories about the sovereignty of God, the energy of the flesh, and the uselessness of our doing anything unless God begins—all of which things are true if fitly spoken—no such theories, I say, held her in their icy fetters. Two facts she plainly saw—judgment to come and a sure salvation, and these impelled her to action, even as they did Paul centuries afterward. (2 Cor. v. 9-14.) Has this no voice for us?

THE LEPERS AT THE GATE. (2 Kings vi. 24.)

The city of Samaria was in sore straits. Ben-hadad, king of Syria, besieged it, and within its gates gaunt famine held sway. Hunger, cruel and relentless, was goading to desperate deeds. Children nurtured at a mother's breast were slain by a mother's hand, and their lifeless bodies boiled down to satisfy inhuman cravings. And at the entering of the city were four leprous men. They knew that death was stalking through every street, and if they entered the city, or stayed where they were, they would surely die.

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So they resolved to fall unto the Syrians. In the dim twilight they stole away, and coming to the camp found no man there. They ate and drank and satisfied their own individual wants. Then pictures, dark and terrible, of doings in the city rose before their mental eye. They felt it was not well to sit and hold their peace. A day of glad tidings had dawned, and their eyes were the first to see its silver streaks. Let us go, said they, and tell the king's household, and they arose and went, and told the glad story of peace and plenty.

And what if their message was not at first believed? Did the unbelief make the joyful news less true? A true story was theirs, and when it came to be believed it carried joy to many an aching heart.

Lift up your eyes and behold the famishing multitudes on every side, perishing for lack of the living bread. Have we no good news to tell? Shall we view with indifference their appalling need, and stretch forth no hand to dispense the heavenly stores?

CORNELIUS. (Acts x.)

Praying in his house about the ninth hour of the day this pious Roman soldier saw a vision of God. An angel stood before him, and bade him send to Joppa and seek out Simon Peter, who was lodging in the tanner's house hard by the sea. This

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man, added the angel, "shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts xi. 14.) Cornelius hastened to obey. Trusted men were sent to Joppa to bring Simon Peter down. And while they went who can doubt that he wondered much what manner of words were these that should bring salvation to him and to his house. Then came "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees," and he began to bestir himself. Others should be gathered together, that they too might hear the saving words. With his own circle he first began. Can you not picture Cornelius going to the houses of his kinsmen and near friends, and telling them that words of wondrous import were winging their way from Joppa to Cæsarea? The coming message might not confer any earthly advantage, but it dealt with matters of infinitely greater moment, even pardon, peace, and life everlasting. Earnestly did he invite them to come and hear it for themselves. Moved by his entreaties they did not fail to come, and as they listened to Simon Peter's words concerning Jesus—that *whosoever* believeth on Him should receive remission of sins—the Holy Ghost fell upon all of them. Every individual present—and there were many—was visited with God's salvation; not one went away unsaved. A very blessed drawing-room meeting that!

Now mark, Cornelius was not himself the

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bearer of the gospel message. Other lips uttered the saving words, but it was his to bring the people together. Many of us who cannot preach, in the narrow meaning of the word, can perhaps bring others under the life-giving sound of the gospel. And do not overlook the fact that his personal friends were the first to be invited, people in his own station. It is easy to invite the very poor, and thank God the poor are often rich in faith, but we shrink too much from asking those who are not so poor.

Time would fail me to tell of others—of Matthew, the publican, who made a great feast, and called many of his own class together, that they might hear the gracious words of Jesus; of the woman of Samaria, who bade her townsmen to come and see One who had told her all things that ever she did. These admonish and encourage us to be up and doing. Each one seems to say, in his own dialect, “And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shall bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee.”

OH, CHRISTIAN, MAKE HASTE AND BESTIR THYSELF! Thy sun is going down, and the night is coming when no man can work.

THE CHRISTIAN VOYAGE.

OUR Lord often taught His disciples by means of figures. In dependence on Him to guide, we would also present a few thoughts in a figurative manner for the help of souls. In our sea-girt land we are all more or less familiar with a ship and its voyage. This we would employ to illustrate the voyage of a Christian to the glory above. Let us place it for clearness under four heads—the start, the voyage, the cargo, and the arrival.

1. The start. Who has not at some time or other been interested in the start of a fine ship, bound to distant lands? Many have assembled to look upon her as, loosing her moorings and spreading her sails to the breeze, her bows ploughing into the mighty billows, she sails bravely away, and gradually disappears from view.

And how beautiful to see a young soul, freshly brought to God, with a heart overflowing with the love of Christ, break away from all the old moorings, and, led by the power of the Holy Ghost, launch bravely forth upon the ocean of life, bound to that desired haven, the glory of God, where Jesus dwells, and where His loved ones shall enjoy eternal rest!

Our Lord said, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xv. 10.) Now this is the loosing, so to speak, of the ropes. Have you, dear reader, been brought to repentance towards God? Are the ropes loosed? Have you started? You may be the most moral of men, and as religious as you please; but without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you have not yet started upon the heavenly voyage, you are still bound hard and fast in one of the world's many docks. And if you do not begin the voyage soon it will be too late, for the Lord is at hand. The time to start is *now*.

2. The voyage. Many fine vessels start in first-rate order, make a splendid passage, and carry a rich cargo into port; whilst others meet with many misadventures by the way, and present a very sorry plight at the port of arrival. The dangers are great to which ships on voyage are exposed—storms, rocks, shoals, icebergs, fire, etc. etc., so that some never arrive at their destination.

Now, blessed be God, no true believer that ever started on the voyage from this world to the glory ever did, or ever will, fail to reach there. Divine grace and power bring all Christians to the desired haven. They may meet with many experiences—rough waves and stormy skies, intricate channels, dangerous rocks, enormous

icebergs, &c., but the vessel cannot sink. Our faithful Pilot never lost a vessel yet. (John x. 28, xvii. 12.) Satan withstands them, the waves of the world lift up their proud crests against them, doctrines of demons lie as dangerous and shifting shoals on all sides, and the chilling influences of infidelity and false religion oft almost paralyse the Christian on his way, but there is the deep channel of abounding grace, where he can ever safely sail till the eternal shore-lights are in view.

But whilst the eternal security of the believer is a blessed truth, and one verse of scripture suffices to prove it, such as "*they shall never perish*" (and we might multiply by scores), it is also true, solemnly true, that many souls professedly start upon the voyage, but never reach the harbour. The ocean highway of Christendom is filled with such vessels; but, alas! alas! thousands never see the shore. Many fine religious professors sail confidently forth, and, to the eyes of those who have never received light from God, they look as though they could weather all storms, and were as certain to reach the glory coast as others by their side—in fact they often make a far finer outward show. But, alas! they are unseaworthy barques, with worm-eaten and rotten timbers, sailing without pilot, or chart, or compass, whose solemn and certain end is everlasting destruction. The awful doom of Christless

professors is as sure as the glorious future of the believer in Christ. (2 Thess. i. 7-10.)

Reader, what is your profession worth? Are you a true Christian, born again, washed in the precious blood, sealed with the Holy Ghost, sailing steadily for glory? or is your religion a mere outward show, the fleshly working of your poor deceived heart, a hypocritical sham? You will do well indeed to weigh it seriously before God.

3. The cargo. Now most vessels carry a cargo, but its value of course differs very greatly; some sail in ballast. And again, to employ our figure, the Christian also has a cargo, whose value will be proved at the end of the journey. We fear many are far more careless about their spiritual cargo, if we may use the expression, than the men of this world about their perishing goods and wares. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." (Luke xvi. 8.) Our cargo will be *thoroughly* overhauled when we come into port, and it will prove to have been but a poor voyage indeed for one whose cargo is worthless.

The apostle Paul tells us what our cargo ought to be in view of that day. (1 Cor. iii. 10-13.) He speaks of the temple of God, and what we should build in it, it is true; *but we only borrow the figure in a general way*, in keeping with what is before us, and would remind our readers what a happy moment it will be for that one whose cargo is of

gold, silver, and precious stones, and what a sad loss (*vv.* 14, 15) it will be for him whose cargo is of wood, hay, or stubble. Every one's work shall be *made manifest*, for the day shall declare it. (1 Cor. iii. 13.)

Further, in 2 Peter i. we are exhorted to give all diligence, and to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, &c., &c. And in verse 10, "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to *put you always in remembrance* of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."

Let us then examine our cargo now, for it is our own fault if it is not valuable, and we cannot have an abundant entrance otherwise. We can judge of its worth by comparing our walk, and ways, and work with the blessed word of God. If they will stand that crucial test now, they will stand the proof in the coming day; but if we are characterised now by carelessness in doctrine, practice, association, &c., we may be fully assured they will not meet with the Lord's approval when we appear before Him. Christian, overhaul your cargo now.

4. The arrival. If the sailing of a vessel is of interest and joy to so many, how much more the arrival? Only those who have made a long and

rough voyage can fully realize the pleasure of again standing on *terra firma*, and of the welcome of those who love them. And what will it be when God's saints arrive on that heavenly shore? Blessed prospect! Hundreds of thousands have started, and crossed the waves of this poor world, and the voyage is over; thousands and thousands are still on the way, others daily starting for the glorious home of everlasting rest. "Kept [guarded] by the power of God . . . unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter i. 5.) What have we to fear? The Lord Himself has pledged His faithful word to bring us safely to the journey's end. Let us not only start with Him, but continue with Him till that blessed moment. The journey cannot be long, it may be far shorter than we think. Nothing is more uncertain than the duration of our voyage here.

By faith we fix our eyes on the Bright and Morning Star, the Pole Star, so to speak, for the Christian mariner, and shaping our course accordingly, with a watchful eye on the chart of God's word, we shall sail over the deep seas of abounding grace, steer clear of all the shoals, and soon, very soon—blessed, joyous moment—see the harbour lights.

And think of the welcome, dear tried saint, you who are cast down through the difficulties and sorrows of the way, you who are fearing and dreading lest the wind should wreck you, and the

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waves engulf you. The Lord Himself shall come and welcome us home. Daily we should be waiting for Him to land us in His own blessed and glorious presence, and to introduce us into the Father's house. This is what sustains and encourages amid the storms of life, keeping the heart at rest, and the spirit happy, knowing the preciousness of the trial of faith, and looking with joy for that bright and blessed moment when the Lord shall surely claim all His own, shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and shall for ever rest in His love.

As another has said, “What a joy, besides Christ, to see all the saints exactly what His heart would have them; what an immense joy—all to His glory, the eternal witness to the efficacy of His work.”

E. H. C.

“I AM AFRAID I WILL NOT
HOLD OUT.”

SUCH was the utterance of a man who showed some care about his soul. On several occasions he had felt that the Spirit of God had come to him, and pressed upon him the necessity of being saved; but he had procrastinated, not as one wilfully rejecting the gospel, but for fear that he would not hold out. In other words, that he would break down in his profession of Christianity and be ultimately lost.

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Satan has many ways of deceiving and holding souls in his power, and this is one of them.

It seems very plausible, and has the appearance of humility, but in fact it is but another phase of unbelief, and another of Satan's ways of insulting the blessed Saviour. It is as much as saying that, though the blessed Lord is able to save you, He is not able to keep and preserve you, and to bring you safely home to glory.

"I am afraid *I* will not hold out." You will observe that it is all "*I*" here. The Saviour has no place. The blessed Son of God is displaced by the wretched personal pronoun "*I*."

Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I [or no longer I], but Christ liveth in me." (Galatians ii. 20.) Here "*I*" is set aside, and Christ is everything, and thus he could add, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Of course if it depended upon ourselves we should fall under Satan's power immediately, become ensnared by the world, and be led astray by the desires of the flesh; but, thank God, it is the privilege of the believer to count on One outside of himself altogether to keep him to the end.

The blessed Shepherd of the sheep, who laid down His life for His beloved flock, is not going to allow the wolf to catch them out of His hand. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall

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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. 28-30.)

In the first parable of Luke xv. the Shepherd is seen going after the lost sheep until He finds it. "And when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing. And when He cometh home, He calleth together His friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost." This presents the divine side of things, and we must look at that side if we would get a true idea of our salvation and preservation. The Shepherd sought and found, and then placed the sheep upon His strong shoulders, and took it home rejoicing. Here you get the Shepherd's love and power. The sheep was sought in love, and then, by the Shepherd's strength, was carried home.

And who is the Shepherd of the sheep but Jesus the Son of God? Did He not seek us? Did He not even die for us? Did He not save us? And now will He allow the wolf to catch us out of His hand, and fail to bring us safely home? Will His mighty shoulders and mighty love fail us in our passage through this world? A thousand times No. Satan knows that right well, only he insinuates the falsehood into the heart and mind of the unestablished, often taking

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scriptures, which apply to mere professors who become apostate, to accomplish his ends.

Jesus is spoken of as Mediator, High Priest, and Advocate, and it is in the understanding of these three offices that the Saviour fills, that we shall be delivered from the thought that we are to keep ourselves saved after we have been converted. The keeping power is with God, as we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept [guarded] by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter i. 3-5.) Here we find that One, who is more than a match for Satan, is guarding us by His power until we have got clean through the wilderness journey, and find ourselves in actual possession of that glorious inheritance reserved for us in heaven.

It was on the cross that Jesus was our Mediator (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6); it was there He stood in the awful breach, and gave Himself up as a ransom for all. Whosoever avails himself by faith of that infinitely precious sacrifice is brought to God. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) In all the value of His death,

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and in all the fragrance of His person, are we brought to God. We are accepted in the Beloved. Thrice blessed reality!

Jesus is now the risen and exalted One at God's right hand, victorious over sin, death, and Satan. He is there too, thank God, as the High Priest of His people. He bears their names upon His breast before God. He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Satan may, and does, accuse them, but we can rest assured that his accusations will not prevail against the ceaseless intercessions of our great High Priest. “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost [that is, right on to the end] that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. vii. 25.) The love that led Him to the cross still occupies itself on their behalf in His all-prevailing intercessions on high.

Are they tempted? “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Heb. ii. 18.) In the dark hour He is our Succourer.

“He knows what sorest trials mean,
For He has felt the same.”

Have we infirmities? “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as

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we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews iv. 14-16.)

Thus we have the priestly intercession of our great High Priest, His succouring power, the loving sympathy of His heart, and the ever accessible throne of grace.

Then, if we sin, which, alas! we do (and oh, what shame should be ours when we do!), we have an Advocate with the Father. Relationship remains unbroken, but, as we so often prove, the joy of salvation is lost, and communion with God is suspended, until the sin is judged and confessed to God, *and, if needs be, to man*. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man [Christians] sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.)

How precious then to consider our beloved Lord and Saviour in these various ways, as Mediator between God and men, as High Priest, and as Advocate of His people.

Then there is the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and His intercession for the saints. (Romans viii. 26.) Sealed and anointed by the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 13; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22), that blessed Spirit witnesses to them of the efficacious work of Christ on the cross (Heb. x. 12-15), and in them, by the Word, of that blessed relationship

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in which they stand with God the Father. (Rom. viii. 15–17.)

Thus it becomes a question whether God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost will hold out on behalf of the saints. We know that the love of God will never fail, nor the intercession of the Son be unavailing, nor the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, in and with the people of God. Blessed be God, no. All who have been truly born of God will be brought safely home to glory, amid the rejoicing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The schemes and purposes of Satan will be frustrated, and not one of the precious lambs and sheep of the flock will be missing in that day when we shall be presented before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

This is the salvation of God—a salvation worthy of Himself, and which will be to His everlasting praise.

True it is there are exhortations. We are told, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) It is important to notice that this is not working *for* the salvation of our souls, since we have received the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls (1 Peter i. 9); but it is working out our own salvation day by day from all that which impedes us in our journey home-

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ward, remembering too that it is not in our own strength, but that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. God by His blessed Spirit works in us, and thus we work out our own salvation.

If a man has a bad temper, or is tempted in other ways, he is not to fall under its power, but to work out his salvation from it. If the lust of money is strong within, he is to overcome it by the power and grace of God. It is God that worketh in us the willing and the doing of His good pleasure. God brings us into exercise of heart, makes us to feel our dependence upon Himself, leads us to cry to Him, humbles us when proud and with our wills unbroken, cheers us when fainting, succours us when tempted, yea, restores us when we have sinned, and thus He keeps us, and we are preserved, blessed be His name, right to the end. And when we step from the sands of the desert into His own blessed presence above we shall, as we think of all the past, exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" (Num. xxiii. 23.)

Thus God is our *Justifier*, our *Hiding-place* and *Preserver*, and our *Instructor*. (Psalm xxxii.)

"The Lord loveth judgment, *and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved for ever*: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off." (Psalm xxxvii. 28.)

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. O.—Every individual who is himself saved is under an eternal obligation to preach the gospel, and preach it he can, and will, if he have the heart. The meaning of the verb *to preach* is not to be whittled down to the delivery of an ordered discourse. It carries a very much wider meaning than that. We are told that those who were scattered abroad at the persecution that arose about Stephen went everywhere preaching the Word. (Acts viii. 4.) Is it to be supposed they went everywhere giving public addresses? By no means. But wherever they went they made the most of their opportunities—their hearts aglow with the love of Christ, inspired with the glad tidings they had themselves received, and, deeply realizing the need of the perishing multitudes on every hand, they could but make known the gospel, whether to the ones, the twos, or the twenties. Wherever they found a listening ear they told forth the glad tidings. “And the hand of the Lord was with them : and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” (Acts xi. 21.) So is it to-day. By every possible means the Christian should spread the blessed news concerning Christ. Would to God we were more alive as to this. Alas! thousands of us seem to have fallen into a deep sleep.

Preaching the gospel to crowds is another matter. For that purpose gift is needed. You ask, How may you know that you are called to preach it? If you can remain quiet, if you can go on week after week

without opening your mouth at the corner of some street, if God's Word is not in your heart like a burning fire shut up in your bones (Jeremiah xx. 9), then you may begin to fear that your mission does not lie in public preaching. He who is called to preach *must* preach, *he cannot help it*, and seals to his ministry he soon gets. May the Lord of the harvest give us many such!

G. P.—There is but one Church of the living God, and Christ in heaven is its glorious Head. To that one Church every saved soul now on earth belongs, irrespectively of sectarian names—names which should be our constant grief as they are our common shame. It is this one Church that Christ loves, and nourishes, and cherishes by means of the gifts which He bestows according to His sovereign pleasure. Now the gifts, such as evangelist, pastor, teacher, are for the blessing of the whole Church, and not for the benefit of any mere religious body. But we must remember that in Apostolic days the Church was manifestly one, now it is not so. Failure has come in, and sorrow upon sorrow has been cast upon the Church through sin and self-will. Therefore the individual Christian, who in this evil day would have his steps ordered by God's holy Word has to carefully thread his way. He will love all the dear members of Christ wherever he finds them, though unable to have fellowship with them in what he knows to be contrary to God, and he will "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Timothy ii. 22.)

The truth of the One Body abides, nothing can touch its integrity, and to understand and enjoy it is

a most precious thing. It delivers from sectarian narrowness, and gives true largeness of heart. It teaches us to regard with unfeigned affection all the members of that One Body, and also to stand aloof from every principle of independency, because antagonistic to it. Your other questions you will find answered in a tract entitled "The Church, the House, and the Body," to be had of the publisher of this magazine.

J. C.—Why do you seek to overthrow the plain statements of Holy Scripture by bringing forward the case of one whom you believed to have been converted, but who after a while fell away and died without confessing his sin? Are you absolutely certain he was a converted man? Were you able to read his heart, and see whether there was living faith in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? Have you never read in your Bible of the sow that was washed—washed mark you—going back to its wallowing in the mire? Though washed it remained still a sow, did it not? The washing had not changed it into a sheep. Now 1 John i. 9 speaks of those who confess their sins, not of those who don't. Why then should you? Does not the Saviour say, His sheep shall never perish? And are we not assured that nothing shall ever separate the believer from the love of God? Would you destroy all such passages, and make the Word of God of none effect by relating the experience of people you have known? Better far hold fast to God's word in face of everything, you will then be on the winning side.

ENQUIRER.—We should suppose that when a believer speaks of being in himself "only a poor sinner," he

by no means loses sight of the fact that he is, in common with every other believer, a saint, a child of God, an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. Assuredly in or of ourselves we are not all this; these immense privileges are the gift of divine grace alone. Now a person may be deeply conscious of these things, and richly enjoy them, and yet have such a sense of his own nothingness as to say that in himself he was "only a poor sinner." Be on your guard against an over-critical spirit, and beware lest the habit grow upon you of making a man an offender for a word.

A BABE IN CHRIST.—We must be careful not to trench upon the individual liberty of Christ's servant. To his own Master he stands or falls, and what one is free to do another might not be. We cannot lay down rules for the guidance of others; they are not our servants, nor have we any jurisdiction over them, save that they are always amenable to the discipline of the assembly, as others are. On the other hand, no servant of Christ should ride rough-shod over the consciences of his brethren, and he will do well to remember at times the words of that great servant who said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient."

T. T. (Acts xxii. 16).—The washing away of sins here has no reference to that cleansing which is only effected by the precious blood of Christ. But in being baptized, and calling upon the name he had so lately hated, Saul definitely quitted the ground to which his sins were attached, and in the most open way condemned his previous persecuting career. It is in this sense we understand the washing away of sins in the verse before us.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

WHAT a solemn thing it is to read the epistle of Jude, and to find what God's thoughts are about the present state of things in Christendom.

At the outset it is plain, from verse 3, that it was never according to the mind of God that the gospel (or 'common salvation') should be preached, and the church (or 'the faith'...once delivered to the saints) left out. On the contrary, we are told to contend earnestly for the faith in verse 3, and in verse 20 are exhorted to build ourselves up on our most holy faith. And "the faith" here plainly means Christianity—as a system of doctrine delivered to us by the apostles (compare Acts vi. 7 and xiv. 22), which not only tells how God is just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, but also teaches us that believers are children of God, members of Christ, a 'spiritual house, a holy priesthood'; in short, all that is so fully brought out in the epistles about our place in Christ, as saved people, and indwelt with the Holy Ghost, truths which lead the believer into separation from the world and into company with Christ in rejection, and consequently to the bearing of His reproach. Now while the common

salvation is often preached "the faith" is seldom mentioned.

One reason is, it is unpopular, and man thinks if he can only get to heaven when he dies what more does he want?

In fact heaven is a kind of poor-house to many, where they hope to go when they can live here no longer.

Then, to their lasting shame be it said, there are professed servants of Christ who have deliberately confined their ministry to the common salvation, and have refused to preach "the faith."

We have the mind of the Spirit about it all in verse 11.

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core."

First, as to the way of Cain. I see in Cain a man who rejected revelation, and who approached God in his own way. A religious man who brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

By faith (and faith always follows revelation) Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; that is, he brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.

And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect

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I shall now try to set down clearly the way of Cain.

Gen. iv. 1. Born outside Eden.

Gen. iv. 3. | Cain's offering.

Gen. iv. 5. | Cain angry.

Gen. iv. 7. | Cain rejecting the word of the Lord.

Gen. iv. 8. | Cain a murderer. (1 John iii. 12.)

Gen. iv. 9. | Cain justifying himself.

Gen. iv. 14. | Cain despairing of mercy.

Gen. iv. 16. | Cain hiding from God.

Cain's world, ending in judgment.

You will observe where he begins. He was born outside of Eden, he came of fallen parents, lying under the sentence of death. (Gen. iv. 1.) Next we have Cain's offering (verse 3), or his attempt to approach God without blood-shedding, and with the fruit of the ground which God had cursed. This is his first wrong step, and his second is in verse 5. His offering and himself rejected, Cain was very wroth; in the pride of his heart he was soon angry, and dealt foolishly. (Prov. xiv. 17.) This was shown in his third step (verse 7), when he rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom was in him? (See Jer. viii. 9.) And so he took the fourth step (verse 8), and murdered his brother. God in His grace, instead of being silent to him (2 Peter ii. 9), called him to account at once, which led to Cain's fifth step (verse 9). And what unutterable folly it was! He justified himself, and tried to conceal his sin; then, when God in His government exposes, and visits his

sin on him, he takes his sixth step (verse 14), and is in despair; but God shows him mercy. He gives him space to repent, and will allow no man to take his life from him. (v. 15.) Surely, if Cain had not rejected the word of the Lord, if there had been any wisdom in him, he would have read this favour aright, and even then come into blessing as a vessel of mercy; but no, he takes the seventh and final step in the way of Cain. (v. 16.) He went out from the presence of the Lord, and we know well when the convicted sinner leaves the presence of the Lord in the day of grace unforgiven, there is no hope for him in the coming day of judgment. All that is left for him—poor fugitive and vagabond, with the burden of unforgiven sin, hiding himself from God and in rebellion against His word—is Cain's world. There men call their lands and cities after their own name (see verse 17 and Psalm xlix. 11), and try to make themselves happy without God, with music, science, and commerce. Even God's mercy shown to Cain was turned into ridicule, by Lamech in verses 23, 24, even as scoffers in these last days say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter iii. 3, 4.) But all this shall end as Cain's world ended, "they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away." (Matt. xxiv. 39.)

Now, my reader, are you in the way of Cain? Remember the different steps.

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First, approaching God without blood, without owning you are a fallen, guilty sinner; and though morally and religiously upright, you come to God without Christ.

Second, pride and anger filling your heart when you find a poor sinner, who has done his worst, accepted and blessed through the blood of Jesus, whilst you, who have done your best, are rejected.

Third, the word of the Lord that shews you where you are wrong, refused, and rejected by you.

Fourth, you persecute and speak against those who trust only in the precious blood of Jesus.

Fifth, when your conscience accuses you, or when God speaks to you about your ways in a dream, or by His word, or through your neighbour, you justify yourself and deny what you have done.

Sixth, you come to despair of mercy. You say religion is a sham; you sought the blessing and could not get it.

Seventh, you throw the whole thing up, you go thoroughly into the world, you build again what once you destroyed, you say you make no profession, and you try your best to be happy without God, and perhaps you even scoff at His mercy and long-suffering to this poor guilty world. Take care, my reader. Beware of the way of Cain.

Now I come to Balaam, who taught error for reward.

The doctrine of Balaam, the error he taught,

we find in Rev. ii. 14, "Who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." To eat things sacrificed to idols is to have fellowship with devils (1 Cor. x. 20); and to commit fornication is to take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot. (1 Cor. vi. 15.) To follow such teaching is to commit trespass against the Lord. (Numbers xxxi. 16.) One is the filthiness of the spirit, the other of the flesh, from which we are to cleanse ourselves. (2 Cor. vii. 1.) And to do so we are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, but are to come out from among them, and be separate. (2 Cor. vi. 14-18.) There is the world-church too, the harlot Babylon, which says in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 7.) The Lord's people are told to come out of her. (Rev. xviii. 4.)

Now in Christendom there is but little attempt at separation from unbelievers, or from the religious world; on the contrary, many of its teachers say they are not to judge who are believers and who are unbelievers, and consequently to them the church and the world are the same thing. Hence scripture says, "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his

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iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet." (2 Peter ii. 15, 16.) In other words, God's way of holiness for His people is separation from evil, but God's way is unpopular.

The way of Balaam, the popular way, is amalgamation, believers and unbelievers, the church and the world yoked together, immorality winked at; no distinction made between the holy and profane (Ezekiel xxii. 26), or between the clean and the unclean, and hence no separation. Such is the teaching that goes on in Christendom, and which is denounced in Jude 11 and in other passages.

Finally, we must consider "the gainsaying of Core." Turning to Numbers xvi. we find Korah was a Levite, and was appointed with his brethren to do the service of the tabernacle. (See Numbers iii. 6-8.) In other words, while Aaron and his sons were priests, Korah and his sons were servants or ministers of the tabernacle. It is important to see we have the same distinction still. All the Lord's people now are priests (see 1 Peter ii. 1-9), but all are not called to minister or serve the church. When scripture speaks of ministry we read, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another;" and again, "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." (See 1 Peter iv. 10, 11.)

Now Korah was not satisfied with being the minister or servant of the tabernacle, he wanted the priesthood also, which God had given to Aaron and to his sons. (Numbers xvi. 9, 10.)

This was really rebellion against the Lord. (v. 11.) I believe we have the same thing in the present day. Many of the clergy or ministers, not content with ministry as each hath received the gift, and according to the ability that God giveth, have assumed to themselves the privileges of the priesthood, and claim a place of nearness to God, which they deny to the people, or rather to other believers. We have only to go into any ecclesiastical building for evidence of this, the communion rails being in themselves a denial of the rent veil and unhindered access to God in the holiest, for worshippers once purged.

Thus we have in Christendom, where men have ceased to contend for "the faith," many who have gone in the way of Cain, with its different steps; some only beginning, doing their best, attempting to find acceptance with God by their works, their almsgiving, or even by taking the sacrament and being baptized; some who are angry when a poor sinner is saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work alone, without any works of their own; some who refuse to listen or believe when God's way of salvation is declared to them; some who would (if they had the power) put the

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believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to death ; some who, when taxed with their hatred to the saints, deny it and justify themselves ; some who, while making a great profession, are bold, daring infidels, who have no hope in the mercy of God ; and some (once religious) who have deliberately given up all profession of any kind of religion, and gone boldly into the world trying to be happy without God.

Next we have the error of Balaam taught for reward, and amalgamation with unbelievers instead of separation preached by those who are not true servants of Christ. (Gal. i. 10.) How different from Paul in 1 Thess. ii. 1-6. Finally there are many who, claiming to have been called to the ministry and not content therewith, have arrogated to themselves exclusively the priesthood, to the serious loss of the Lord's people and dishonour of Christ and His work. It is the rebellion of Core over again. And as Korah set himself up against Aaron and perished, so have many of these ministers, who have seized on the priesthood, rebelled against Christ, and they will also perish.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

W. M.

“THE VISION OF THE ALMIGHTY.”

NUMBERS xxiv. 4 6.

IF we would have happy thoughts about the saints we must rise up to what the Church really is to God. We must get “the vision of the Almighty” (the knowledge of the beauty and comeliness of the Church in all Christ’s perfectness) in order to have our souls soft and tender and humble about what passes around. If we do not see this, we shall not be able to maintain the sense of Christ’s love. And further, unless by the power of the Spirit we get away from circumstances, so as to see the Church, and the saints individually, as Christ sees them, instead of seeking to nourish and cherish them as Christ does, we shall be disappointed. This often makes us angry; it should not, but it does. We shall either lower our standard, and be content with conformity to the world in the saints, or become discontented and judicial, angry and bitter against them, the flesh being disappointed and vexed.

Faith assumes the acceptance of the saints in Christ, while it seeks in the exercise of godly and gracious discipline that they should be

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maintained and bloom in the fragrance of Christ's grace. “As the valleys are they spread forth, . . . as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters!” What a most blessed picture! And could we be happy in seeing them stunted, dishonouring the Lord? No; for the glory of Christ is concerned. He gets, so to speak, His character from us. Paul says to the saints at Corinth, not “ye ought to be,” but, “*ye are . . . the epistle of Christ, . . . written . . . with the Spirit of the living God.*” So I must grieve when I find in them that which is contrary to their beauty in Christ. They are as “trees of lign aloes,” and as “cedar trees.” It is not merely that God has not seen iniquity in them—He has seen beauty. Oh! beloved, our souls need to see the Church, and the saints individually, thus in God's vision, with our eyes open, otherwise we shall not get into the power and sweetness of God's thoughts. We do not want “the vision of the Almighty” in order to see that a saint is a saint; neither do we want “open eyes” to discover inconsistencies in the walk of our brethren. We do want to rise up, and have our eyes open to see, as God sees, this beauty and glory of the Church.

And remember this was said in the very presence of Balak. It is blessed we should have the certainty of these things in the midst of Satan's power. What does David say? “Thou preparest

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a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The enemies can only look on and see how blest I am, while I feast on what God has provided. "Thou anointest my head with oil : my cup runneth over." Not only have I got mercy and peace, but I have understood its fulness—an over-running cup. He can both dwell upon the proved faithfulness of God, and count upon it for the future also, as he goes on to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," and finishes with "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" We have the strength of God's love to think of for present comfort, and where there is a right view of the beauty and comeliness of the Church, and yet of her failure, there will be great humbleness and tenderness of spirit towards the Lord, and towards one another. The Lord grant we may not sit down content in wretched coldness of heart, with evil in ourselves or in our brethren. The waters of God are at the root of the plant, however miserable the pruning. How precious is this! May we rise up in the sense of the beauty we have in God's mind, to delight ourselves in Him who is our comeliness, to glory in Him who is God's delight, and our joy and glory.

J. N. D.

EBED-MELECH THE ETHIOPIAN.

IN 2 Chronicles xxxvi., verses 11 to 16 inclusive, a deeply solemn description is given of the condition of God's earthly people in the days of Zedekiah, the last reigning king of Judah.

Violence, wickedness, and gross idolatry held unchecked sway. King, princes, nobles, priests, and people had all forsaken the God of their fathers, and had trampled His commandments under foot. His oft-repeated warnings had been disregarded, and His messages slighted. The long-suffering mercy and forbearance of Jehovah with His sinful and idolatrous people had well-nigh run its course. Jeremiah had boldly declared God's mind to the king and people of Jerusalem, and thereby aroused the bitter enmity of the princes, who demanded that the prophet should be slain for his faithful and fearless testimony. Zedekiah, although leaning in his heart towards Jeremiah, was too weak and irresolute a monarch to take a decided stand against his wicked princes. His cringing and cowardly response to their cruel demands only proved how utterly unfitted he was to wield the sceptre over God's chosen people. "Behold, he is in your hand: *for the king is not he that can do any thing against*

you " (Jer. xxxviii. 5)—words ill-befitting one who sat on David's throne. What a contrast to the lofty language and corresponding surroundings of God's king of an earlier day. (1 Kings viii. 54-66.)

On this dark background it is our privilege to place a bright little picture, rendered all the more striking and significant because of its very contrast. (Jer. xxxviii. 7-13.) Ebed-melech was an Ethiopian slave of king Zedekiah, who had evidently been instructed by Jeremiah in the ways of the Lord. He had observed the growing hostility of the princes towards the Lord's faithful servant, and had marked their increasing influence over the vacillating king.

And now that they had gained his consent, that Jeremiah should be delivered up to their will, what was to be done? Ebed-melech knew the prophet had little mercy to expect from the princes. Should he venture into the king's presence and intercede for Jeremiah? Would it not be presumption to do so when Zedekiah himself had virtually signed the prophet's death-warrant? Might not the king's anger be aroused against him, and Ebed-melech be made to pay the penalty of his rashness with his life? for the life of a slave was at best of little account with an Eastern monarch.

Reason might have suggested such thoughts, but Ebed-melech stood on a higher platform. He

was a man of faith. Already he had given his heart to the Lord, and here a fitting opportunity presented itself for him to give proof of his reality. What if the king and princes, and all Jerusalem and Judah combined, arrayed themselves against God's prophet? Jehovah was above all, and He who had wrought so marvellously in the past for His people would never fail the poor stranger who had taken shelter under His wings. (1 Kings viii. 41-43.) Armed with this precious, well-grounded faith, he goes in to the king and pleads for the prophet's release. His request being granted, he immediately hastens to the pit where Jeremiah was immured. Carefully and tenderly he performs his loving service: the cast clouts and rotten rags from the king's house under the treasury telling of a thoughtfulness suggested only by heartfelt affection for the persecuted prophet.

Is there not a word to us in all this, beloved Christian reader? Events of immense importance have taken place since Jeremiah's day. God's earthly people, after having been fully proved and tested, have been for the time being set aside, and are scattered abroad among the nations; and now God is calling out from the world, regardless of tribe or nationality, a company of people who shall be co-heirs and companions with Christ in the ages to come. For nineteen centuries this wonderful work has

been going on. When the number of this elect company shall be complete, the Lord will descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ will be raised, and the living saints changed, and *together* caught up to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Meanwhile God's interests are all vested in Christ, and in those whom He has given, and *is giving*, Him out of the world. Is this the circle of *your* interests, dear fellow-believer?

The cross of Christ has fully demonstrated the utter inability of man to produce any fruit for God; nay more, it has proved conclusively that the natural heart is at *enmity against God*. (Rom. v. 10; viii. 7.) Consequently God's dealings with man under probation are at an end. And has man's condition improved, now that God has come out as a *Giver*? Let His own word answer. In 2 Tim. iii. the "perilous times" of the "last days" are described, in which men are found practising almost every form of evil, under the specious garb of religious profession; and in chap. iv. we read that "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*." Beloved fellow-Christian, we are in the midst, if not even at the very close, of the

“perilous times” spoken of in this important scripture. Look around and see if the prophetic message to Timothy is not receiving its fulfilment to-day. If this be so, is it not high time for us to awake? The elements of the world and the principles of Christianity can *never be assimilated*, however much Satan, with his huge *counterfeit scheme*, may endeavour to persuade men so. Remember the Lord’s word to His disciples, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matt. vi. 24.) Ebed-melech was not only a “hearer of the word,” but a “doer of the work.” (Jas. i. 22–25.) He identified himself with God’s faithful witness in a dark and evil day. Was God indifferent to it? Was the lowly service of an obscure Ethiopian slave to go unnoticed and unrewarded? Was it too small and insignificant a matter for the Lord of heaven and earth to take cognizance of? Nay. Had He not said, “Them that honour Me I will honour”? (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

And mark how His word is verified, even in one who could lay no claim to it by right of birth or nation; for God’s grace can never be bounded by human limits. “The word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, . . . Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for evil. . . . But I will deliver thee in that day . . . and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto

thee, because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxxix. 15-18.) Notice, the Lord does not make reference to what Ebed-melech had done, but He touches the spring and motive of his service—"because thou hast put thy trust in Me." Does not this lead our thoughts onward to that word spoken in a later day by the Master Himself, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, . . . he shall not lose his reward"? (Mark ix. 41.)

Do you think, beloved young Christian, that when you and I are manifested before the judgment-seat to be rewarded for aught which the force of His constraining love compelled us to do, that we shall regret any self-denial, or sacrifice, it may have cost us, or shall we mourn over any suffering we may have been called to endure through being identified with His interests on the earth? Surely not. If there could be regrets in that wonderful day of manifestation, would it not much rather be that our service to Him had been so poor and meagre?

Let it be an encouragement for us to know that, even in the darkest times, the Lord can, and does, raise up faithful witnesses to make known His mind and will, and also that He values the affection and devotedness of a heart, that in an evil and difficult day, can unhesitatingly confide in Him. If we are true to our calling, beloved, we shall know that Christ Himself *where He is*,

and His interests down here where *He is not*, are the things which should engage our hearts' affections and govern us in all our intercourse, not only with each other as members of the body of Christ, but with the dear unsaved multitudes around us. It ill becomes those whose "origin," "citizenship," and "destination" are "heavenly" (John iii. 7; xiv. 3; xvii. 24; Phil. iii. 20; 1 Thess. iv. 17) to be making a "home" and seeking their "rest" in a scene which could only give our Lord a manger, a cross, and a grave. We would lovingly ask the young believer to ponder these realities in the Lord's presence, and in doing so, follow the example of the noble Bereans of old, who *received the word* with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily*, whether these things were so. (Acts xvii. 10, 11.)

G. F. E.

None like Him.—"If you wear the livery of Christ, you will find Him so meek and lowly of heart that you will find rest unto your souls. He is the most magnanimous of captains. There never was His like among the choicest of princes. He is always to be found in the thickest part of the battle. When the wind blows cold He always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies ever on His shoulders. If He bids us carry a burden, He carries it also. If there is anything gracious, generous, kind, and tender—yea, lavish and superabundant in love—you always find it in Him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh that you would enter on it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of JESUS CHRIST."

INSPIRATION.

THE apostle Paul was in prison. His days were running fast to a close, and their termination he knew was to be martyrdom, under the most merciless of the Roman emperors—Nero.

Yet he was in no downcast, dispirited mood. Witness the Philippian epistle, which emanated from his cell, every line of it palpitating with joy. Such was his earnest desire to finish his course and win his crown, that he had no time to look back, and was eagerly embracing death, so that he might be more like his blessed Master, and attain the more quickly the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In the course of his long and arduous ministry he had tested the word of God in a most thorough way. He could speak with authority. And so he writes from that same prison, tenderly, affectionately, and encouragingly, to his dear son in the faith—Timothy.

The days were dark—the house of God upon earth was in weakness and disorder. Yet we detect no despairing note in his message to the one whom he looked to more than all beside to bear aloft the standard of truth.

And more. His words are the words of the

Spirit of God. And just as he could commend the Ephesian elders to God and to the word of His grace in the face of coming dangers, so now he can write to Timothy clearly and unwaveringly. "ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Now, dear young Christian, here is a rock firm and steadfast for our feet. On this we take our stand, and there we intend to remain by the help of God.

I know people flippantly say, "Oh, that was what *Paul* said!" No. GOD thus in a day of weakness and darkness encouraged Timothy by the hand of Paul, and in every dark and evil day He encourages all His servants.

And now let me show you, in the briefest way possible, how the books of the Bible are like the links of a chain—if *one* link be broken the *whole* chain is useless.

It is admitted that the books composing the Bible were written in various ages, differing in date by hundreds of years; that they were written by very different people, such as king, ploughman, doctor, fisherman, and scholar.

Let us open our Bibles and see how unconsciously the writer of the Pentateuch in the opening chapters of Genesis foreshadows the

events of the New Testament. Adam falls into a deep sleep, out of his side is taken a rib, and therefrom is builded a woman, and God Himself marries our first parents. Is not this a beautiful picture of Christ and the church? He falls into the deep sleep of death, and through His death is formed His Bride. Thousands of years afterwards the saints at Ephesus read in the epistle addressed to them by Paul how the husband should behave to his wife, and yet that was not the primary thought, but rather their earthly relationship was used as an illustration of Christ and His church—how *He* loved the church and gave Himself for it. Then we come upon the words used by Moses in Genesis ii. 24, and quoted by Paul in Ephesians v. 31, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Yet the higher critics, forsooth, will tell us that the Pentateuch is discredited, and that its early chapters are nothing more nor less than mythology. But if we discredit Genesis we discredit Ephesians also.

Again. In the account of the fall, where God pronounces judgment upon the serpent—really upon Satan—we read, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Whose but the omniscient eye of God could have travelled down the ages and

seen Christ—the Seed of the woman—dying for sin upon the cross, and Satan *apparently* bruising His head, but *actually* only bruising His heel? For Christ by dying entered into the domains of death and spoiled the power of Satan. By dying He gained *all* power. Now it is not apparent to the world, but we know that Christ will yet exercise universal power, and will bruise Satan's head, for He will consign him to his eternal doom in the lake of fire. Yet we are told Genesis is discredited.

Again. In the account of Cain and Abel's offerings we learn the great principle of atonement. Thus twice in the very earliest hours of the world's history is foreshadowed in no uncertain way this great truth, once, when God clothed our guilty first parents in coats of skin in place of their own fig-leaved aprons; and again when He accepts the sacrifice of Abel, the firstlings of his flock, rather than Cain's offering, the fruit of a cursed ground. The fig-leaved aprons and the luscious fruit are the very way man is still so fond of adopting—the way of good works. The coats of skin and the sacrifice of the firstling both spoke of Christ, THE LAMB OF GOD. Thousands of years afterwards the Hebrew Christians read, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Hebrews xi. 4.)

Yet we are told he never lived—that Genesis is discredited. Then we must give up Hebrews as well.

We could look at page after page in Genesis in the same way, but we forbear, only inviting our readers to follow up this interesting study.

A few more remarks. The Lord Jesus Christ again and again appealed to the Old Testament writings—to the Pentateuch, to the Psalms, to the prophets. Weaken any one of them, and you weaken the words of Christ Himself, and thoroughly discredit His deity.

No; the truths of Scripture are like the stones in an arch—one stone removed, the whole arch goes to pieces. Become doubtful of inspiration, you *must* become doubtful of all the cardinal doctrines of the Bible—the deity of Christ, the atonement of Christ, and eternity of punishment, the sovereignty of God, the responsibility of man. Take one leaf out of the sacred book and you destroy them all.

“The higher critics,” with all their pretension to learning, are not characterized by gathering around them spiritual congregations, nor by separation from the world, nor by jealous love for Christ and love for His truth. Nor are they characterized by missionary zeal at home or abroad, nor do they make much of the new birth, while their false charity will lead them to tolerate Buddhism and Eastern heathenism. Their practice

of belittling the word of God is villainous in the extreme. Much more would we respect them if they doffed their religious garbs and stood upon the infidel platform. They are men to be shunned and feared.

May the bold, flippant talk of these deceivers—perhaps themselves deceived—never impair your whole trust in the Scriptures—the living word of God. You may not be learned in the original languages, nor in the question of translations, nor in the science of the present day, which they say proves the falseness of the Bible, nor may you be able to understand the word of God in all its parts, but may you have a living, loving trust in that precious word. It has made you wise—like Timothy—unto salvation. You owe your all to it.

And after all what we have been going over only proves that “the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, *because they are spiritually discerned.*” (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

Seek then to enter spiritually by dependence and prayer into the meaning of the word of God. May it prove increasingly your joy, and stay, and delight. May it lead you into a closer communion and deeper knowledge of Christ, and throughly furnish you unto all good works. A. J. P.

THE RIGHT RESTING-PLACE.

IT is positively necessary to the enjoyment of settled peace that the heart should rest solely on the authority of Holy Scripture. Nothing else will stand. Inward evidences, spiritual experiences, comfortable frames, happy feelings, are all very good, very valuable, and very desirable; indeed we cannot prize them too highly in their right place. But most assuredly they are not the foundation of the Christian position. If we look to such things as the ground of our peace, we shall very soon become clouded, uncertain and miserable. The reader cannot be too simple in his apprehension of this point; he must rest like a little child upon the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Word. It is blessedly true that "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 10); and again, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.) All this is essential to Christianity; but it must in nowise be confounded with the witness of the Holy Ghost as given to us in Holy Scripture. The Spirit of God never leads anyone to build upon His work as the ground of peace, but only upon the finished work of Christ, and the unchangeable word of God; and we may be assured that the

more simply we rest on these, the more settled our peace will be, and the clearer our evidences, the brighter our frames, the happier our feelings, the richer our experiences. In short, the more we look away from self and all its belongings, and rest in Christ, on the clear authority of Scripture, the more spiritually minded we shall be; and the inspired apostle tells us that "to be spiritually minded (or the minding of the Spirit) is life and peace." (Rom. viii. 6.) The best evidence of a spiritual mind is child-like repose in Christ and in His word. The clearest proof of an unspiritual mind is self-occupation. It is a poor affair to be trafficking in our experiences, or our anything. It looks like piety, but it leads away from Christ, away from Scripture, away from God; and this is not piety, nor faith, nor Christianity.

We are intensely anxious that the reader should seize with great distinctness the importance of his committing his whole moral being to the divine authority of the word of God. It will never fail him. All else may go, but the word of our God shall stand for ever. Heart and flesh may fail; internal evidences may become clouded; frames, feelings, and experiences may all prove unsatisfactory; but the word of the Lord, the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the clear voice of Holy Scripture, must ever remain unshaken. "And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter i. 25.)

C. H. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. E. B.—1 Thess. iv. 14. This verse speaks rather of the appearing of the saints with Christ in manifested glory than of His coming to receive them unto Himself. God shall bring them with Him—that is, with the Lord Jesus—in that day of public display. Our happy lot is bound up with His. Where He is there we shall be, and share with Him in all that glory in which it is possible for creatures to have part. Then, to comfort the Thessalonians concerning those who had fallen asleep, and for the comfort and instruction of the saints in every generation since, the apostle proceeds to unfold in the following verses the way in which it shall be brought about. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout—with archangel's voice, and trump of God—and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord, and so be for ever with Him. And if for ever with Him, then it follows that in His glory we shall have our place.

TASMANIA.—Rev. viii. 12. The sun, moon, and stars mentioned here are merely symbols, and have reference no doubt to different exalted authorities—the sun signifying the higher, and the moon and stars the more subordinate, powers. On these a judgment of God falls, and their glory is shortened and eclipsed. The shortening of the days in Matthew xxiv. 22 is quite another thing, and evidently means that the time of great tribulation shall not be allowed to run on. God will bring it to an end for the sake of His elect—a gracious word which will doubtless comfort and sustain those with whom that tribulation shall have to do.

TO ONE IN GREAT DISTRESS.

(Being an answer to a correspondent.)

YOU ask whether we think that anybody could be saved if he, on looking back on his past life, had no real grief for the sins which the Lord died for? Your enquiry makes it quite plain that you are looking within for proofs of your conversion. I am not saying whether it is right or wrong to do so, but I simply note the fact. In your search for evidences of conversion you have failed to find, as you suppose, any real grief for sins committed, and conclude that your conversion could have been no conversion at all, though at the time you believed you were the Lord's. But supposing you had discovered what you believe to have been sincere grief, would you have come to an opposite conclusion? If so, then the matter stands thus: An individual allows his thoughts to travel over past years in the hope of recalling moments in which he felt real grief for his sins. Finding such, he concludes he is converted, saved; but failing to find what satisfies him he thinks he is not. Thus his assurance, or the want of it, is drawn from what he finds, or does not find, in his own heart. Is that how this great and important matter is set forth in the

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word of God? I trow not, for in all that I have said there is but very little of Christ, and we know that feelings and experiences, however desirable, are not the Saviour.

I remember well when the same question agitated my own mind. Like yourself, in my youth, I was the subject of religious impressions, and one of my great difficulties was the want of that very sorrow for sin the lack which you so sincerely deplore. A sinner I knew myself to be, but, alas! I felt not that solemn fact as I believed I ought. My heart was hard, and would not break, nor could I weep over my sins as some. How then was it possible that I could be really converted? Surely I was not, for no converted person could have a heart like mine, ice-bound, and so utterly destitute of feeling. Thus I argued with myself, and spent my days in wishing I were a thousand times more miserable. And if I had been, if my stony heart had been dissolved, and tears had flowed in torrents down my cheeks, I should indeed have been more content; but with what, and with whom? With *myself* and *my state*. Now instead of our being more satisfied with self, the divine intention is, that we should grow less satisfied with self until, loathing it altogether as a cold, wretched, heartless, unfeeling thing, we turn away from it, and find our rest alone in Christ and in His perfect grace.

If when sitting in judgment on our own case

we are led to fear that the heart is destitute of all those feelings and experiences which should accompany conversion, let such an appalling fact convince us the more of our desperate state, and lead us to go instantly to the Saviour. Certainly He has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." If you reply, "But my heart is so callous, and has no more feeling in it than a piece of stone. The things of God which others seem to enjoy do not affect me in the least, they pass by like the wind, and leave me as they found me—hard and insensible." Be it so, still I implore you to go and pour your tale of sorrow into that ever-open Ear. Tell Him exactly what you are, and be assured that He regards you with compassionate love, and feels for you the more because of your unhappy condition. "Come unto Me," says He, "and I will give you rest." Now let me urge you to go to Him who thus invites. Tell Him you come because He invites you. Weary you assuredly are, and heavy-laden too. Weary of yourself, of your hard heart, of your want of every gracious feeling, so that in your moral being you discern nothing that is good, but everything that is bad. Go thus to Him pleading His promise, "I will *in no wise* cast out."

It is a dreary piece of road along which you have been travelling. The sun has shined fiercely on you, there has been no shade, no shelter, and

no sparkling spring at which you could drink and allay your thirst. The mocking foe, too, has dogged your steps, and taunted you with being a hypocrite, and a thousand fearful things beside, so that you are ready to sink as one that has no more strength. But can you possibly think that the eye of Christ has not been on you all this while? Has not your misery been before Him like an open page? Indeed it has. And if you ask, "Why then has He not fled to my relief?" is it not that He had lingered till you had deeply learned how helpless and how bad you were? You feel now that you have nothing to commend you to Christ, not one trait on which you can look with pleasure. Ah! it is this very thing—this absence of all good—that makes the grace of God so wonderful. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us."

Astonished, you may ask, "But does God care for me, love me in my present condition?" Yes, it is so. But that very question shows that beneath it lies the thought, that if you were different you would not find it so hard to believe the love of God to you. Think me not unfeeling if I say that *self* is at the bottom of *that*, and I want you to turn away from self, for it has been your bane too long. Without one trace of moral

loveliness, from head to foot corrupt, no soundness there—a hideous, loathsome object incapable of being made better, no matter how many physicians we may try, such is the state of us all. It is just there, in that very condition, that grace meets us. It is to such that Jesus says, “Come unto Me.”

Think of the story of the prodigal child in Luke xv. It was when he was yet a great way off his father met him. You feel yourself a great way off—far away from love and rest and peace and joy, and from Him who is the source of all these. You are indeed a great way off, *but you are just where God can meet you*, and bestow on you all that is expressed by the kiss, the robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the music, and the dancing. Why should you not believe this?

Can anyone, can you, read that chapter and not see that God delights to bless the wandering, the lost, the dead? Picture the Shepherd's joy when He found His sheep; conceive the joy of the woman when her diligent search was rewarded by the missing coin; and imagine, if you can, the Father's joy when His long-lost son came back.

Such heavenly stories bring heaven very near to us, and show us the God of heaven—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—rejoicing over a repentant sinner. It is a great sight which we shall do well to turn aside and see.

A loving hand is stretched out to you, and a loving voice bids you welcome. It is the hand once nailed to the cross *for you*, and the voice that uttered of old that terrible cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" when the burden of your sins was being borne.

Come, lay your weary head upon His bosom. There you may rest, though no tongue can tell the deep, unutterable joy that shall be *His* when He has you there.

Then shall your struggles cease, your winter give place to summer, and the dark clouds that cover your sky be rolled away. Then shall your moanings end, and your tongue, long dumb, shall utter His praise. Be not faithless, but believing.

"Return!

O erring, yet beloved!

I wait to bind thy bleeding feet, for keen
And rankling are the thorns where thou hast been;
I wait to give thee pardon, love, and rest;
Is not My joy to see thee safe and blest?
Return! I wait to hear once more thy voice,
To welcome thee anew, and bid thy heart rejoice."

GRACE AND DISCIPLESHIP.

LUKE xiv. 15-35.

HOW many of the divine unfoldings that fell from the lips of the blessed Lord were the answer to apparently casual and insignificant remarks, or circumstances. The passage quoted above is a signal instance—verse 16 to end furnishing a full and divine reply to the utterance of “one of them that sat at meat with Him,” namely, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” Transferred into language that currently expresses the desire of many a heart, it reads simply thus, “I know there is a heaven; I should like to find myself there when I die;” and the Lord lays Himself out to state the terms of grace and discipleship, covering the interval between the time of His departure “out of this world” and His coming again, as well as the individual blessedness and responsibilities that are inseparably bound up with the revelation of absolute and sovereign grace.

In the first parable, under the figure of a supper made by a certain man,

GOD’S SUPPER

is announced. We understand by this the

infinite grace that is founded upon redemption—a finished work furnishes the righteous ground upon which the heart of God can meet and satisfy the deep spiritual needs of man; it is absolutely of His own providing. In the death of God's Lamb God's claims against man have been fully and eternally met; and now grace can tell, as grace delights to tell, of a satisfying provision on the ground of righteousness, and bid "many" to the feast of love in the presence of the God of love.

But grace, conscious of the depths of need, and the height of its own purpose of blessing, is earnest and urgent, hence the invitations of grace go out in the form of

GOD'S SUMMONS.

"Come, for all things are now ready." This summons of grace has nothing legal about it. It is the witness, unsaved one, that God is in earnest about *you*, and would draw you out of the company upon which judgment rests, and give you a place before Himself in the full consciousness of His perfect, satisfying love.

But it is upon the treatment of this summons that everything depends. Let us therefore trace first of all the characters, as given by the Lord, of those who reject grace, then the solemn consequences that resulted; and afterward the character and blessedness of those who accept.

Notice that they are representative of a very respectable community, characterized by three things—comfortable circumstances, bright prospects, and independence of character—neither encumbered by wealth nor poverty; they were each in sufficiently good circumstances to purchase cattle, buy land, or support a wife.

No cloud shadowed the future. What they had known of prosperity it was fair to count on would continue for some time. Hope beat high, anticipations were bright. There was self-reliance, a sense of buoyant independence too that bade good to carry them through any passing pressures, and constituted characters to be esteemed by neighbour and friend.

But what place had God's Supper and God's summons in the heart of these? Alas! prosperity and respectability, the possession of home, and hope, and independence, furnished in themselves excuses for the neglect of both. With studied courtesy the invitations are declined, "I pray thee have me excused." It is a solemn, but true, reflection that the broad road is thronged by travellers to eternity who are marked by the above characteristics. Thousands there are, respectable and respected, who steadily, habitually, and it may be courteously, refuse the messages and invitations of grace. For such the sequel as presented in the parable before us is both deeply instructive and intensely solemn.

“So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things.” Note first that the accredited messenger gives an account of his service; secondly, that “the master of the house” vindicates the testimony with which he has himself entrusted the labourer. But how? Was it as much a matter of supreme indifference to him, as it was to the courteous refusers, that his supper and his summons were alike rejected? The language is plain and unmistakable. “Then the master of the house, *being angry*, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city,” etc. Thus the master’s anger and indignation were definitively expressed by his turning *from* those to whom grace had been presented, and by whom it had been rejected, and turning *to* another class and another company.

Is the lesson, hidden in this apparently insignificant act, of trifling importance? Is it of no moment that the voice of divine invitation and pleading should cease?—that he, who had been the subject of God’s gracious summons, should be now under the terrible ban of

GOD’S SILENCE?

the preacher’s voice it may be, again and again still sounding in the ear, too familiar with the tale of grace, long after the God of grace has retired into a judicial silence towards the soul, so that conscience now vibrates no longer to the

warnings and pleadings that once moved it! *Is it possible that there are those still living who have resisted grace until the last invitation has been refused, and for whom there remains nothing but the ominous silence of God towards them, during whatever remains of their earthly life?* We ask, but dare not answer, the question.

But this judicial withdrawal of the activities of God towards the habitual and hardened rejecter is not all. A final and irrevocable word, bearing directly upon this particular company is uttered, which we may well term

GOD'S SENTENCE.

It runs to this solemn effect: "*None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper;*" that is, everlasting exclusion from the feast of grace, and the "filled house." The issue determined now, not only by voluntary choice of the invited company—the germ itself of undying remorse—but by the judicial sentence of Him whose grace has been so systematically outraged, and whose costly provision has been despised; for the feast is founded upon the sacrifice of God's "beloved," and "only begotten Son."

But the purposes of infinite love "that my house may be filled" remain unaltered; and the servant is directed to other, and very different, scenes and companies. For in the streets and lanes of the city, in the highways and hedges, are

found those whose condition strikingly contrasts with those above described. Homeless, hopeless, helpless, their deep need and misery well known to each, there is neither ground for refusal, nor disposition to excuse. We cannot fail to find in these the spiritual picture of those to whom the blessed invitations of grace from a God of love are welcome; for by these, and these alone, the house is filled. Dear reader, we once more remind you that the fast-filling banqueting hall of grace will soon be *filled*. The last seat has not yet been appropriated. But can you say how long it may be before "the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye *begin* to *stand without*, and to knock at the door; . . . and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are"? (Luke xiii. 25.) If you would not be found "without," but "within," it can only be by accepting in true exercise of soul the condition of these outcasts as descriptive of your own condition before God. Homeless, for the Father's home is not yet yours; hopeless, for beyond this poor scene, which circumscribes your prospects, you have none; helpless, for "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." God's rich provision of grace meeting your spiritual condition, however desperate it may be, is found in the invitation of mercy still offered to you, "Come, for all things are now ready." For thee "yet there is room."

Once more, in telling contrast to His silence and His sentence, the progress and triumphs of grace, the full answer to the supper and the summons, are further to be read in the light of

GOD'S SATISFACTION :

for it is not only that the deep needs of man are met and fully satisfied, but the heart of God finds its own peculiar and divine delight in the accomplishing of His purpose, "that my house may be filled." It is not exactly the Father's joy of the next chapter which is founded on relationship, though doubtless leading directly to it, but the joy of God as He contemplates the fruit of His own love, through the gift of the Son, in the fast-filling house. How soon to be *filled* !

It is of importance at this point to note that, previous to this, Luke has recorded the new position of the disciples, as announced in the Lord's own words, in view of His rejection. No longer belonging to that which characterized Israel by means of registration of earthly genealogy, as in Ezra and Nehemiah, they were among those whose "names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20), *i.e.*, an entirely new citizenship. Not that they yet, either in spirit or testimony, enter into its deep meaning, but the Lord announces that which was now about to be made good, as the result of His rejection. Following on this (chap.

xii. 33), as citizens of another, and a heavenly scene, they were to look for their treasure *there*, "provide for yourselves . . . a treasure in the heavens," in contrast to expectation of a Messiah on the earth.

Maintaining this new and heavenly aspect of things, shortly to be made good, the supper of grace above considered introduces into "*the house*"; that is, there is a new company on earth answering to the new citizenship, and a new Object (Christ) in heaven.

Hence the importance of the Lord's instructions as to discipleship, which take their character from the new aspect in which the believer's whole relation to earth and heaven is viewed in Luke's gospel, subsequent to the announcement of chapter x. 20, and which forms a new point of departure in this gospel.

But, returning to our passage, the exercise and triumph of grace on God's part lead to answering responsibilities on the part of the objects of such grace. Hence, closely following upon being thus in sovereign grace brought to God (1 Peter iii. 18), and introduced into the house,—under the two illustrations of one "intending to build a tower" and another "going to war"—two distinct aspects of discipleship are brought before us. The first bears upon *the practical maintenance* of what ever measure of grace and truth each has received in the face of the subtle activity

of the world, which ever seeks to hinder faithful witness to heavenly grace and heavenly truth. Responsibility must doubtless be according to light, but it is the maintenance of the truth as to the position in which heavenly grace now sets the believer, viz., as "not of the world, even as I am not of the world," "As He is, so are we in this world," that mainly constitutes the necessity to "sit down and count the cost—whether he have sufficient to *finish*," i.e., to carry on the testimony to the end, for against this special witness the effort of the enemy is signally directed.

It is important to note that failure here results in the Christian becoming the object of the world's mockery and scorn. Across how many a spiritual history has not the world occasion to write, "*This man began to build, and was not able to finish*;" and how often have the vessels of grace and testimony, as Abraham, received cutting rebukes from the Abimelechs of this world. Resources not divinely apprehended, or being apprehended not made available, are sufficient to account for the sad spectacle of the world's temporary triumph.

Secondly, under the figure of "a king *going to make war* against another king," the *offensive or conflict* aspect of discipleship is treated of. The forces represented are apparently totally unequal according to human estimation. But faith in

this case is called to take Asa's ground in 2 Chron. xiv. 11, and count upon heavenly resources and strength.

Failure in this aspect of discipleship, we are taught, results not in the world's contempt, but in the humiliating spectacle of compromise with it, involving the world's patronage and approval, and that through the unfaithful solicitude of an unholy alliance *by the believer*; for we read, "While the other is *a great way off*, he *sendeth* an ambassage, and *desireth conditions of peace*."

How perfect the testimony in these two aspects of "the Man Christ Jesus." If mockery and apparent defeat were His portion, it was not because of failure or compromise, but because of His perfect testimony in the pathway and practice of a heavenly one on earth, and His uncompromising faithfulness towards the world whose whole forces were arrayed against Him.

But if responsibilities and possible failures in discipleship are set before us, so too we are instructed in that which will contribute to stablish us in faithful and persevering testimony, in both the aspects we have been considering; for the disciple is encouraged to "*count the cost*," and consult "*whether he be able to meet*" the enemy.

Firstly, the spring of all true discipleship can only be *grace*, divinely apprehended, as that which has drawn us, as it were, out of the streets and lanes, the highways and hedges, and set us in the

place of infinite and eternal favour, heart-satisfied with the excellence of the riches of grace, and "accepted in the Beloved." Motive and energy are in the spiritual enjoyment of that which grace has accomplished. Its source the love of God.

Secondly, an object sufficient to control and attract the heart onward perseveringly through the difficulties and opposition to be met with on the way. Hence a peculiar interest and importance in the little words "after Me" (v. 27), whether as cross bearer or crown wearer, rejected or glorified, *Himself* before the heart; after the pattern of the Magdalene's devotedness to the earth-disowned One on the one hand, or a Paul's to the glorified Man on the other.

Thirdly, that which corresponds to divine and spiritual apprehension of grace and the heart's true object, viz. salt (v. 34), which has elsewhere been described as "the inward preservative energy of practical holiness." Apart from any uses to which it may be put, salt possesses its own inherent qualities—let the qualities (savour) be lost and salt is useless. Hence the retaining of this special characteristic is of all importance, viz. guarding the avenues of heart and conscience from all that would tend towards the loss of *inward purity*. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this as an essential aid to discipleship. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" was said to Israel. "Let us *cleanse ourselves* from all filthiness

of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" is said to us. It is not sinlessness, but guarding the mind and heart by the sense of grace, and by the attractions of Christ as object, from the approach of what would necessarily weaken discipleship in its twofold testimony; and the continuous maintenance of "truth in the inward parts." Let us note especially verse 35, that salt having lost its savour is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, *i.e.* the "salt" character being lost results in the growth of nature and progress of corruption being unchecked.

Once more, the hidden springs of energy and devotedness having been brought to light, we have the secret and most successful source of danger to discipleship exposed. (*v.* 26.) It is immense grace that that which is most subtle in its influence, and the overcoming of which results in the weakening of every other assault of the enemy, should be clearly defined. It is this, that in the very closest and nearest relationships, the most successful influence in the direction of unfaithfulness may be hidden. From father or mother, wife, children, brethren, or sisters, the disciple may expect the most successful effort of the enemy to divert him, just because natural affections, or personal interests, are involved and interwoven. How many bright spiritual sunrises have been gradually and almost imperceptibly dimmed by the earth mists of worldliness, and

have set in cloud; the first clear and delighted consciousness of grace and a heavenly object having well-nigh faded, owing to the wearing constancy of worldly solicitations through the medium of the very closest and dearest ties!

But what shall be said of the influence of relationships and friendships directly brought to bear upon the undermining of the faith of the disciple by the gradual inculcation of such poisonous doctrines as the denial of eternal punishment, annihilationism, and the host of *human* opinions that now saturate the religious atmosphere, and pass current for scriptural doctrines? Let us listen to what fell from the Lord's own lips—"It is impossible but that offences [stumbling-blocks] will come: but *woe unto him*, through whom they come! It were *better for him* that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Luke xvii. 1, 2.)

To sum up the lessons of this portion of Scripture.

God's Supper and God's summons *refused*, lead to God's silence and God's sentence, *accepted* they lead to God and the sinner's satisfaction.

Discipleship, the outcome of grace, involves firstly *the maintenance* or defence practically of the truths of Christianity—*i.e.* the truths which characterize it; and, secondly, *conflict* with the

opposing forces of the world. Failure in the former testimony results in the world's mockery; in the latter in compromise with the world. The aids to true discipleship are: (1) A deep divine sense of *grace*; (2) Christ as an object before the soul; (3) Maintenance of "truth in the inward parts." Whilst the most subtle danger to which the disciple is subject may be found in natural relationships.

Having these solemn and blessed truths before the soul, the last words of this chapter constitute a fitting word for all. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

M. C. G.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IT is important for the youngest believer to ascertain from the Scriptures what the mind of the Lord is respecting the Lord's Supper, to be on the watch lest he view it with indifference as the manner of some is, or lest he receive as truth the traditions and teachings of men, by which its character and object have been more or less destroyed.

Sorrowful it is to see how even real Christians, misled by human thoughts and reasonings, can set aside this touching institution, or becloud its simplicity by connecting it with baseless theories. What a loss to their own souls must it be, and how grieving to the One they profess to love!

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In order to ascertain the will of our Lord as to it, our first care should be to read attentively what the Scriptures say of this symbol of Christ's death. Its institution by the Lord Himself we have clearly set before us, in the first three gospels, in almost identical terms. Where any difference does exist, it is only in harmony with the special character of each gospel. In each the Lord expressly presents it as *His* body and *His* blood. This was something entirely new. It was not clothing in a fresh garb an old Jewish rite as some contend. Nay. Rather there was an ending of all these for any who received Him as "the Lamb of God," and who would now find in His sacrifice and in His precious blood that rest of conscience which the legal system could never give. (Heb. x. 1, 2.)

In Luke xxii. the passover and the Lord's supper are carefully distinguished. It is the passover cup in verse 18, and in verse 20 it is the cup which the Lord speaks of as "the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." His request to those who were with Him was, "This do in remembrance of me." (v. 19.) They were those who had received Him, or believed on Him,* and now, being about to leave them, He

* Judas had gone out just previously; for the sop was handed to him during the passover supper, or before the Lord's supper was given. Luke refers to him after giving the account of the Lord's supper, because his object is to bring the two suppers together, and to shew the change from the one to the other before referring to the case of Judas.

institutes this supper in remembrance of Himself, as the One whose love would lead Him to give up His own life, as the blessed and perfect sacrifice for sins. In short He presents Himself to them as *going down into death in the perfectness of His love*. It is in death we remember Him, but it is *Himself* we remember, as having been there in the infinitude of His love to us.

Human reasonings have done much to nullify this blessed request of the Lord Jesus, or to deprive it of its true character and place.

I would only ask any reader who knows anything of the love of Christ, and who desires to be assured of the Lord's purpose and wish, to read and ponder this scripture together with 1 Cor. xi. 23 to end.

As to what it expresses the Lord tells us distinctly:—His body given and His blood shed—His death. The Holy Ghost emphasizes this very beautifully in 1 Cor. x. 16, letting us know that the communion, or fellowship, into which we are brought, is that of His death. This is the only true basis of Christian fellowship, namely, His death—that death to which we owe everything, and which has filled for us a cup of everlasting blessedness.

But some may enquire, "What is our title to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup?" Is it not plain that the Lord's supper is for every one who can say in faith, "His blood was shed for me,

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His body was given for me"? Is it not for all who know what it is to have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins? * Have we not the same interest in it that the disciples had?

But the fullest proof that the Lord's supper is intended for all true believers—members of the "one body," the body of Christ, who are walking in the truth—is furnished us in 1 Cor. xi.

Here the assembly of God at Corinth is addressed, and the apostle, by the Spirit, has to reprove them for their abuse of this precious feast.

Does he tell them to discontinue it altogether, as they were acting so badly? Would he not have done so had it only been a temporary institution, or one of little importance? But what he does is just to set it before them afresh in its simplicity and solemnity, both as having been given by the Lord Jesus on the night of His betrayal, and communicated by Him from the glory to the apostle Paul, as he writes, "I have received of the Lord," &c., not from Peter or the other apostles. Here too we are told the object of it, and when its observance is to end.

It is in remembrance of *Him*. It is shewing His death, and it is to continue "till He come,"

* We are not now considering the case of any who, though professedly the Lord's, may have to be excluded from the communion of those gathered to "shew the Lord's death" on account of bad doctrine, wrong conduct, or evil associations.

when we shall see Him face to face. (1 Thess. iv.) Till *then* is this precious privilege ours. *Then* indeed the remembrance of Him thus shall cease, for in glory we shall need nothing to remind us of His love—it shall never be forgotten again. But till then shall we not remember Him at His table, and eat of His—the Lord's—Supper? Shall we not respond to His own request and shew *His* death, apart from all the superstitions and additions of men, and from all the sectarian associations with which it is too often connected?

The objection that there are no directions as to how it is to be carried out needs but little reply. God's word and God's Spirit still remain with the church, that is, with His people here. Moreover the Lord is still in the midst of those truly gathered to His name, and if truly gathered His authority and guidance by the Spirit are known to those who are in communion with Him, and thus subject to *Him*. For the rest we are taught *in the Word* that on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread. We find the Corinthians doing this, and the apostle by the Spirit marks the observance of it as that which was the will of the Lord for believers. No leader, or official person, is thought of in connection with it. The Lord Himself by the Spirit was the Leader. It says, "*The disciples came together to break bread.*" (Acts xx. 7.)

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It is unworthy of one who professes to love the Lord Jesus Christ to neglect this important privilege on so poor and baseless a plea, or to excuse himself by saying there is no command for it.

The Lord's supper is a privilege rather than a command. Surely I should not require a command to avail myself of a privilege, and the Lord would have His people view it in that light. The moment I look for commands as to such things I am on legal ground, and a Christian is "not under law, but under grace."

A Christian is brought into liberty, but it is liberty to do God's will, and not to choose for, or please, himself. We are to be subject to Christ, who is the Head of His body, the assembly. There *is* one body, and we learn from 1 Cor. x. that the one loaf on the Lord's table sets forth this oneness.

I might add that John vi. does not refer to the Lord's supper, but the Lord's supper sets forth that of which John vi. speaks. At the Lord's supper, where the heart is right and in communion, there is that feeding on Christ spiritually to which that chapter alludes. But John vi. in no way takes from the force and importance of the Lord's supper, nor lessens its value or preciousness.

For instance—to borrow the illustration given by another—I may have a portrait of my mother, but should I say, "I can think of my mother

without this," and then throw it aside as a piece of cardboard? No. Its value to me is that it presents my mother to me. I value it as such. I say, "It is my mother." I think of *her*, not of the cardboard, and I value the likeness because it is my mother I have there.

The Lord grant that we may value His love and His word more and more, not indeed to be occupied about ordinances, but with Him, yet valuing that which He has given to bring Himself before the heart and mind. He knew full well our tendency to forget, and to grow cold, when He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." May the language of our hearts be—

"Oh, let Thy love constrain
Our souls to cleave to Thee,
And ever in our hearts remain
That word, '*Remember Me!*'"

S. M. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. L.—Your question we do not quite understand. Put it into other words, and send it to us again, and we will endeavour to answer it to the best of our ability.

ONE IN HIM. — Write to our publisher for the August, 1891, number of *Simple Testimony*, where you will find an article on "The Unpardonable Sin," which we think will be of use. As to your second question, John viii. 44 may help you.

G. S. B.—In the passage of the Red Sea the children of Israel were delivered completely from the sphere of Pharaoh's power, and were in a very special

sense brought to God. There too the Egyptians were judged. Pharaoh's chariots and his host sank like lead in the mighty waters, and Jehovah's people were free. It is a figure of Christ's death and resurrection, not so much in that aspect which meets the demands of divine justice in respect of our sins, as in that which shews our complete deliverance from the hand of him who once held us captive. The requirements of divine righteousness in relation to sins find satisfaction in that which the Passover typifies, while the death and resurrection of Christ, as shewn in the Red Sea, open the door out of that region where once we had our place. And if the redeemed people were in the wilderness, and not in Canaan, they were nevertheless in the wilderness *with God*; therefore they could sing, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." With this agree Jehovah's words in Exodus xix. 4—"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."

Crossing the Jordan is another thing. The people then passed out of the wilderness, and entered into the land flowing with milk and honey. The setting up of twelve stones in the midst of Jordan and another twelve in Gilgal was a most significant act. To us it shadows forth our death with Christ and, we must add, our resurrection with Him. For with Him we have surely died (Col. ii. 20; iii. 3), and with Him we have been as surely raised. What untold blessing is connected with the soul's entering into these great truths under the gracious hand of the Holy Ghost! In the death of Christ we have died, and all our moral links with

our old estate have been for ever dissolved. And now a new life is ours and a new position, as quickened and raised with Him, from whence we may survey the vast range of heavenly truth, and go on to apprehend it in faith and in the power of the Spirit of God. May we do so through God's abundant grace! I only add, to guard against mistake, that the believer is viewed in some scriptures as out of Egypt and in the wilderness, in some as across Jordan—risen with Christ, and in others as seated in the heavenlies in Him. All are true, for they are but different aspects of that position in which divine grace has set the Christian.

G. T. S. F.—It seems scarcely possible to read the second half of Acts xxi. and not to see that the Apostle's act was hardly up to the height of his teaching in some of his epistles. But we cannot allow ourselves to pass strictures on one who had served Christ as Paul had. We are content to leave that task to others.

D. S.—When anyone, excluded from the Lord's Table on account of sin, is suffered, happily and without reserve, to resume his place there (assuming of course his repentance), he is restored to all the privileges of that position. But if he is deeply conscious of his failure, and the dishonour brought upon the Lord's name thereby, he will be slow to take any prominent place, and every spiritual feeling would lead him to keep silence and court the shade. How far this should last is a matter about which none can lay down a fixed rule. But the Lord's pleasure as to it will be made manifest to the spiritual mind as time goes on. The passages you quote, Ezekiel xliv. 10, 14 and Leviticus xvii. 24, are very solemn, and no doubt furnish guidance without applying them too absolutely.

HOW TO SPEND OUR SUMMER HOLIDAYS.

HAVE you ever thought, dear Christian friend, that this is possibly the last summer you may spend on earth? The Lord is coming quickly, and never was His return so near as now. Long ago the Apostle James wrote, "The coming of the Lord draweth NIGH." The midnight cry is past, and at any moment we may be caught away to be for ever with the Lord.

One of the marks that we are truly watching for Him, is that we earnestly serve Him. The future affects the present. And, as we wait for Him, each day dawns upon us laden with gracious possibilities of service. The moments are golden; the opportunities precious, never to be repeated, never to be recalled. Oh, let us seize them!

If only communion *with* Christ were known better, service *for* Christ would not only be rich in quality, but great in quantity. We should spend and be spent in the Master's service.

Who was *the* great open-air Preacher? The One whose days from early morning to dewy eve were filled with untiring service to God and man. Who was He who "went about ALL the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preach-

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ing the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people"; who said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few?" Jesus, blessed Saviour and Exemplar!

Witness, too, the service of Paul. Who but he could speak of such ceaseless wanderings, such "journeyings oft," such countless dangers, ending in a martyr's cross and crown?

Let us return to our starting-point. This may probably be our *last* summer on earth. Well, may we "walk . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. v. 15, 16.)

It seems to me the summer holiday presents a wonderful opportunity to be used for Christ. And in the very using of this opportunity the over-wrought brain may be relieved, and the run-down body invigorated.

What more charming than to have a satchel full of gospel books, and to visit many a quiet village with the silent messages of mercy! Either on foot, or bicycle, or by train, many a beautiful spot may be reached, where the gospel is scarcely known. There are many such places a very few miles from your own home, dear Christian friend.

Or abroad the opportunity is just as great; in lands paralyzed by blank infidelity and benumbing superstition—by indifference and credulity.

The sight of a Christian, spending days in fishing at a sea-side place, reminds one most

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forcibly of Him who graciously called Peter from such an occupation, and made him a fisher of men.

As another has said, "We have only to pass this way once," and if there can be such a thing as regret at the judgment-seat of Christ, it will be in the remembrance of thousands upon thousands of golden, gracious opportunities, lost beyond recall.

I have heard of some who when away for their holidays decline to go to a prayer-meeting, because *they have come for a rest*. Miserable, heartless subterfuge! Satan never takes a rest. And, blessed be God, His energies of grace know no rest. As for us, "There remaineth therefore a rest." (Heb. iv. 9.)

Whilst the body is the Lord's, and should be duly cared for, there are happy, healthful opportunities during our holidays of serving our Master. The need is great. "The fields...are white already to harvest." Millions of souls are drifting on to the bottomless pit. Jesus has died. The gospel is free.

In His name, and for His sake, let us, each and all, be up and doing. The day of service will soon be over. An eternity of rest will soon be ours. Then, as our hearts gladly and joyously look forward to the *future*, let us earnestly, diligently, and prayerfully use the *present*.

A. J. P.

NEW BIRTH AND REDEMPTION.

“Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible.”

1 PETER i. 23.

“Redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ.”

1 PETER i. 18, 19.

WHEN the Lord Jesus, in His solemn talk with Nicodemus, told him plainly that except a man be born again he could neither see nor enter the kingdom of God, He uttered a truth of general and particular application. It is this that invests the story with such profound importance. Is it, I ask, indeed a fact that unless we are born again—you and I, good reader—we shall never enter that kingdom, never share in its eternal joys? If so, how essential that we should know what is meant by being “born again,” and how anxiously should we demand of ourselves whether we have been thus new-born! Any mistake here would be fatal, involving consequences terrible to contemplate. For what serious mind could view without alarm the possibility of his being shut out, finally and for ever, from the kingdom of God? The thought of it is enough to make the stoutest heart exceedingly fear and quake.

“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,”

said the Lord in the course of this memorable conversation. "*Born of the Spirit*"—mark those words. The new birth, then, is a work of God the Holy Ghost. No hand less powerful than His can bring it about. Mere reformation of life and character may be effected by influences not beyond human control, but for a man to be born again there needs the putting forth of that power which of old garnished the heavens and moved upon the face of the dark deep. (Job xxvi. 13; Gen. i. 2.) It is most certainly a divine work.

Again, "that which is born of the Spirit *is spirit*," as distinguished from that which is born of the flesh. *There is no mingling of these diverse seeds.* As regards "the flesh," we know that it profits nothing, and its works are manifest. (John vi. 63; Gal. v. 19.) Nor does it mend matters should it show itself under fairer forms, as it sometimes does. (Phil. iii. 4-6.) Indeed it is the individual who, to his knowledge, has never injured anybody, who has always paid his way, whose conduct has been upright, and who has honestly striven to do his duty in that station of life in which it has pleased Almighty God to place him; it is that individual, I say, who has done, and does, all these things, and goes to church into the bargain, who needs to have it thundered in his ear, "Ye must be born again." Nicodemus was a man of that type. He kept the Sabbath, went regularly to his synagogue, neglected not the

temple worship, studied the sacred law and the writings of the prophets, prayed to God, taught others, fasted often, and gave tithes of all that he possessed. But, strange to say, it was those very things, so good and praiseworthy, that made his position so awfully perilous. Out of such ample material it was easy to make a bandage that should effectually blind the eyes. With such a record as he could show, it was only natural that he should suppose his chances of missing the kingdom of God had been reduced to the lowest possible point. For what more could he do than he had done? or what lacked he yet? To tell such a man, in all seriousness, that he must be born again, or be for ever lost, is to utter words hard to hear, either in the first century, or in the nineteenth. No wonder that in sheer amazement he exclaimed, "*How can these things be?*"

Alongside of this passage in John iii. I would place one from the first epistle of Peter i. 23. Let us see how both say the same thing.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

"Born . . . of corruptible seed."

It is a serious fact that nothing changes the character of that which is here described, though chameleon-like it may often change its hue. "Flesh" remains flesh, "corruptible seed" remains corruptible seed, however much its surroundings may vary, however many the processes through which it may be made to pass. Apply the knife

unsparingly to its coarser parts and these shall be repressed—the drunkard gives up his drink and the swearer his oaths. Cultivate with care its fairer traits and it shall shew itself in religious and philanthropic enterprises, and in deeds benevolent. But the root remains, its essential elements are unchanged, flesh is flesh still, and corruptible seed is still seed corruptible.

On the other hand,

“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

“Born again . . . of incorruptible seed.”

Here it is evident we have something altogether new, and in every way distinct from that which is born of the flesh. It is in no wise a bettering of aught that is found by nature within the human breast. It is no germ of good lying hid deep down in the hearts of all, on which the Holy Ghost works, and out of which He develops something meet for God. It is no chrysalis, which under His quickening influence yields its butterfly. To think so is to greatly err. The mighty act of which these verses speak is nothing less than the implanting within our moral being by the power of the Holy Ghost, *a wholly new principle of life*, of the nature of Him who begets it. Therefore is it called “spirit” and “incorruptible seed.”

And the simple but all-sufficient instrument which the Spirit employs is none other than the word of God. “Being born again,” not by

baptism let us remember, but "by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. . . . And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

It is possible that some reader may anxiously enquire how he can tell whether he has been born again. Ah, that question is not so hard to answer as some may think. Have you learned in any measure your unfitness for God's holy presence? Has the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," ever gone up from your heart? Is it your sincere desire to be right with God at all costs? Do you renounce all confidence in your own righteousness? If so there may be reason to believe that you have been born of the Spirit. But however many and good may be the evidences of the Spirit's work within, *on no account would I have you rest in these.*

For, indispensable as is this blessed work of the Spirit of God, it is not that on which we are taught to rely; it is not that which relieves the conscience from its burden of sin. The work of Another is needed: even His, who being God, became man that He might endure the cross with all its nameless agony. No action of the Holy Ghost in us can possibly set at rest the solemn question of sin, which the new-born soul feels more acutely than ever. If any are redeemed, it is not by being born again. It is by the precious blood of Christ that we are redeemed, not by the

quickenings of the Spirit, absolutely necessary though that be.

If you would have peace, fix your steadfast eye on Calvary, and search into, and explore, the great truths that gather around the cross of Christ. Tread softly here, and unloose the shoes from off thy feet, for thou standest on holy ground. Behold this amazing sight! The only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father is here forsaken of God, bruised, smitten, and put to grief. Think, but think reverently, of the anguish, the desolation of spirit that was His—the inward darkness that clothed Him as with a garment when He found that Face, in the smile of which He had ever walked, turned away. Think of Him, alone, in the midst of that dark sea of suffering, where the floods lifted up their waves, and deep called to deep, and the storms of God, unloosed, came down upon His meek and sinless head like cataracts from mountain sides! Alas, alas, alas, that He should suffer so! Do you ask, Why all this? It was to atone for your sins He suffered thus, to blot out the remembrance of them for ever, to hurl them into the depths of the sea, to break those strong fetters with which you are bound, to take the prey from the mighty, and to accomplish that redemption which could not be effected in any other way.

But, though Calvary be engraved on your memory for ever, you may linger, but must not

tarry even there. The cross and the grave are empty now, and the once suffering and obedient Saviour has been shewn the path of life. For God, whose love His lips had taught in imperishable words when here on earth (John iii. 16), and whose judgment of sin is seen in every line of the story of the cross, has raised Him from the dead and given Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

And the raising from the dead of the Lord Jesus not only speaks to us of sins having been put away—our sins, if through grace we believe—but it also tells of a new standing-ground on which the believer is set. Were the forgiveness of sins ours and nothing more, it would leave us where we were—forgiven, indeed, but still standing in our old Adam associations. Now if we, believers, are identified with Christ in His death, we are also identified with Him in His resurrection—“risen with Christ,” as Paul puts it in his epistles; so that even as Christ is beyond judgment and death, He having passed through both, so are we.

“The Lord is risen : with Him we also rose,
And in His grave see vanquished all our foes.
The Lord is risen : beyond the judgment land,
In Him, in resurrection-life, we stand.”

Following all this comes the exhortation to lay aside the evil things named in chapter ii. 1 which hinder our spiritual growth—things which prove that the flesh is still in us, however true it may

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be that our standing is no longer in it. As newborn babes, too, we are to desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. But to enter into this would carry us farther than our present paper permits.

Ere we close let me ask, What say you, dear reader, to these things? Have you been born again, and are you redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? Do you *know* that you are? Many in answer to such questions would reply that they *hope* so, who, if the truth were told, have no just grounds for hoping anything of the kind. If it is otherwise with you, as we trust it is, How is it that you cannot speak positively about it? The atoning work of Christ is a finished work. Nothing more remains to be done, and if your sins are not put away by that work they never can be, for He will never die again. No doubt, in yourself you find plenty of imperfection, but the blessedness of Christ's death and resurrection is for the imperfect, for those who have no goodness in themselves. May God give you to seek rest, not so much in the Spirit's work within, as in that work which is set before you in the Scriptures—perfect and complete—and which was accomplished when Jesus died and rose again. It is in virtue of that work that God is now revealed as just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus, and it is there that faith finds its sure resting-place.

WHO IS A PRIEST, AND WHAT IS A PRIEST?

IN the New Testament the Jewish priests are often spoken of, and their high and chief priests too. The priest of Jupiter is spoken of, who would have offered sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as gods. Melchisedec and his priesthood are spoken of. Christ Himself is spoken of as a priest in general, and as High Priest. All this is simple enough, and needs no particular comment for our present purpose.

But others also, men on earth, are spoken of as priests, and a priesthood. (1 Peter ii. 5, 9.) The first passage says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"; the latter, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." These words are addressed, beyond all controversy, to the whole of the Christians to whom Peter addresses his epistle, and whom he is instructing and encouraging in their trials. All Christians therefore are a holy and royal priesthood.

Again, in Rev. i. 5, 6 we find, "Unto Him that

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loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Here again all Christians are priests. This is in the introduction, before the prophetic part of the book. In chap. v. 9 we read, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, . . . and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." In chap. xx. 6 we read, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." These passages tell us that all Christians are priests to God.

Another passage, though the word is not used, alludes to it. "By Him [Jesus] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." (Heb. xiii. 15.) This calls on all Christians to exercise their priesthood, and shows how they are to do it. There is not in the New Testament one passage which speaks of, or supposes, the existence of a priesthood on earth save that of all Christians. No one on earth is ever called a priest save the Jewish priests, and once a heathen one, save when Christians in general as such are called so. A distinct class of priests on earth amongst Christians is totally unknown to the New Testament. Our great High Priest is gone to

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heaven. And all Christians are priests in a spiritual and heavenly way, for praises and intercessions under Him. The New Testament does not know, or own, a class of Christians on earth who are priests in a distinct office from other Christians. Such a thought is unscriptural and false in every way.

If it be asked then, Who are priests under the Christian revelation? I reply (because the Word of God replies), Christ is the great High Priest. All Christians are priests, and no other priesthood than this is owned among Christian men in the New Testament.

Next we may enquire, What is a priest? and, more exactly, What are the principles on which earthly priesthood, where it is established amongst men, is founded? A high priest from among men is thus described in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." Other priests had the same office when priesthood was established upon earth. Certain functions belonged to the high priest only, but gifts and sacrifices for sin were offered by all the priests. Hence when priests are officially established now, there is always either the formal institution of a sacrifice, as that of the mass, which is quite consistent; or the hankering after one, and the effort on the part of those called priests, to turn the

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Lord's supper into one, from the sense of inconsistency, and of what they ought to be about, if they really are priests.

But this whole system denies the force and efficacious truth of Christianity altogether. The Epistle to the Hebrews carefully assures us that there remains no more sacrifice for sin now that Christianity is established, founded on the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, whose value and efficacy are eternal. But let the reader turn his attention to what the system of an earthly priesthood supposes, what it means, and he will readily see that the idea of a priesthood on earth, acting for men in things pertaining to God, is a denial of the whole truth of Christianity. I do not say every one that believes there are consecrated priests desires to do so, but the system he maintains does so.

The establishment of a class of priests to offer gifts, or sacrifice, or prayers, is the public declaration that other worshippers cannot directly approach God with their gifts, and sacrifices, and prayers. They must stay at a distance, and the more favoured class approach for them. The character which God assumed in such an order of things was distance from men, shutting Himself up in a hidden sanctuary, where *none* could approach freely. There was in the Jewish system one veil, inside which the priests went to offer incense; then another, inside which even the

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priests could not go, and where God's glory was enthroned between the cherubim. Into this the high priest alone went, only once a year, with the blood of propitiation to put upon the mercy-seat, and even then enveloping himself in a cloud of incense lest he should die. Thus God was hidden within the veil. "The Holy Ghost," the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, "this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." Even to the altar, which was outside the two veils, the worshipper could not approach to offer his gifts or sacrifices. The priest received the gifts, or the victim's blood at his hand, and he offered them. All this system taught that men could not approach God. He dwelt in the thick darkness, and even those who were nearest to Him—His own priests—could not approach close to Him. They must remain without the veil.

Christianity is the opposite of all this, though beautiful figures of truths as to Christ are found in that ancient system. God has now revealed Himself. He does not dwell in the thick darkness. "The darkness is past," says the apostle John, "and the true light now shineth." And for a blessed and simple reason. The Word has been made flesh and come among us; perfect grace has been manifested to the chief of sinners. Instead of our not being able to approach God, God has approached us. "God was in Christ, reconciling

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the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared. The chief of sinners was welcome to the Lord Jesus. The leper, whose defiled state excluded him, and every one who touched him, from the camp of Israel, Jesus laid his hands on and touched him. Gracious goodness has visited us. God has shewn Himself "the friend of publicans and sinners." But this is far from being all; for though God visited the sinner thus in grace, the sinner could not approach Him in His holy habitation uncleaned. Hence the blessed Jesus not only lived, but died. And now mark the effect of His death.

The vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. That was the vail behind which God was previously hidden and unapproachable. But that which rent the vail (that is the death of Christ) has put away sin perfectly from everyone who believes in Him. He has borne their sins. His blood cleanses them from all sin. And not only have they found that God is perfect love, that He has commended His love to them, in that, while they were yet sinners, Christ died for them, but they have found, if they believe in the efficacy of that sacrifice, what has purged their sins; for it was "when He had by Himself purged our sins," and not till then, that He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hence the blood of

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Christ purges the conscience, makes it perfect, and God remembers our sins and iniquities no more. (Heb. ix. x.) Hence, also, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" because they are remitted, and "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

The Epistle to the Hebrews, from which I quote these statements, gives two striking reasons why there could be no repetition of the sacrifice, nor any more sacrifice for sins. First, without *shedding* of blood there is no remission ; therefore, Christ must have *suffered* often, if there were any besides that accomplished on the cross. Further, it is added, the Jewish priests *stood* offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which could never take away sins ; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever *sat down* ; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified. Such is the plain and blessed language of Scripture. God would show His goodness and grace towards us, but He could not bear sin, nor receive what was defiled and guilty into His presence, in His holy habitation ; and hence gave His Son to put it away, that we might draw nigh with full assurance of faith. But this work is accomplished once for all. We have therefore (it is the conclusion drawn in Hebrews x.) "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the

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veil, that is to say, His flesh." There no priest could enter (save the high priest once a year, as we have said) when there were priests. And now every Christian can enter with boldness, under the great High Priest, who is over the house of God. Believers are that house. We are those priests, as I have already shown. No priest can go further than entering into the holiest; and there I do not want him, for I can go boldly myself. If I get him to go for me, I am denying my own right and Christian character, and the efficacy of Christ's work. He who sets up a priesthood on earth between the believer and God, is denying the efficacy and truth of the work of Christ. He has died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. If I am brought *to God* I do not want a priest to go to Him for me. If the veil is rent, and I am told by God to enter into the holiest through that new and living way, I do not want another to go there because I cannot—another, who could not go there either, if I cannot.

The essence of Christianity is to reveal God, and to bring us to God, to give us holy, happy liberty, as children in His presence, into which we can enter, as cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. The essence of a distinct human priesthood is to say we cannot, but must get others to go into God's presence to offer our gifts and sacrifices for us. It is a denial of the whole

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efficacy of Christianity, and the place in which all Christians are set; who, if Christianity be true, are all God's priests on the earth, to offer up spiritual sacrifices—the fruit of their lips, giving praise to His name.

But I add more: It is false and useless. The vail *is* rent, God is manifested in His holiness, the light has gone forth, and you, my reader, must “walk in the light, as He [God] is in the light,” or you can have nothing to say to Him. You cannot have a hidden God, as in Judaism, for a priest to go to, who yet could not reach Him. The light shines, and you must walk in it *yourself*. There is no vail over the glory of God now; there may be over your heart; but in that case you are an unbeliever, and no priest can represent you before God. You have to stand before God, in the light, yourself. If you have come through the blood of Christ, the light will only show so much the more that you are perfectly clean through it. But you cannot even be clean and another go into God's presence for you. If you are clean, you are a priest, and have to draw nigh yourself.

The work of Christ is a perfect and divine work; but you cannot approach God by a proxy here below. You cannot have another person clean or holy for you on earth. If Christ has answered for you, all is well. Go boldly to the throne of grace yourself. If not, no one else can do it for you. *You must have to do directly with*

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God, now He has been revealed. No doubt that will be in condemnation, if you do not come to Him through Christ; but you must come yourself. The state of your own conscience is in question directly between you and God. If you do not come to God by Him, no human priest can interfere, nor do you want any.

I repeat, then, the establishment of a human priesthood, as a class distinct from all other Christians, is the denial of the truth and efficacy of Christianity.

All Christians are priests, according to the New Testament; their offerings are spiritual offerings of praise to God's name.

J. N. D.

 HOW TO KNOW MORE OF CHRIST.

THE believers, to whom the apostle Peter wrote, are told in the first chapter of his second epistle, that by adding together eight things, and abounding in them, they would "neither be barren nor unfruitful in the *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*."

The walk of those saints was to be characterized by these eight things; namely, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity. They were Jewish believers called to glory, and they had to give hearty diligence to add these various graces together in their lives, so as to practically know more of the

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Lord Jesus Christ. "Add to *your* faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." The apostle Peter felt its importance to be so vast, that he said by the Holy Ghost, "I will not be negligent to put you *always* in remembrance of these things . . . Yea, I think it meet, *as long as I am in this tabernacle*, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance . . . Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able *after my decease* to have these things *always* in remembrance." (2 Peter i.) We can see then that the answer to this divine addition sum is, "FRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

To make these eight important things a little more simple we would explain that, (1) all believers have this precious faith; (2) have to exercise courage in curbing all action of the old nature; (3) to get a true knowledge of God; (4) have to be moderate; (5) patient with others; (6) enjoy communion with and walk with God; (7) have the heart flowing out to those dear to God; and (8) to have divine love governing the heart.

Now, dear reader, even amongst men every right-minded person sees the importance of knowing as much as possible about his best friend. For instance, if a nobleman, who was an entire stranger to you, came a great distance,

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saved your life, paid your debts, set you up with a handsome fortune, and arranged for you to live with him and to share his best during the rest of your days on earth, would not your first business be to use every means at your disposal to *know* such a friend? Yes, surely!

Is any friend to be compared with the Lord Jesus Christ? Impossible! Think of His love to us, even when our hearts hated Him, in coming from such wonderful heights of glory down to the fearful depths of Calvary's wrath, judgment, and death that He might save us from a never-ending hell of untold misery, by putting all our sins away by His precious blood, and securing for us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Himself! Yes, think of a love that did all this that He might have us with, and like, Himself in the joy and sunshine of His own blessed presence, to share His best throughout endless duration.

“No love like His,
Matchless it is!”

God the Father said of Him, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight.” Then may all our hearts be drawn more and more after such a blessed Friend, who alone can fill and fully satisfy the mind and heart.

“Jesus, we wait for Thee,
With Thee to have our part;
What can full joy and blessing be
But being where Thou art?”

J. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ILLINOIS.—Matthew xvi. 18, 19. Observe that at this time the air was full of differing thoughts as to who Christ was. There were some who said He was “John the Baptist ; some, Elias ; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” The minds of men were at work, and speculations were rife. Then follows the pointed question, “But whom say ye that I am ?” which elicits the noble confession of Simon Peter, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This is the rock on which Christ would build His church. Peter (as his name signifies, for so it is said in John i. 42) was a stone which should find its place in due time in that church which Christ would build, and against which the gates of hell should not prevail. In connection with this you may look at 1 Peter ii. 5. To Peter, too, were committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But remember the Church and the kingdom are different ideas, and are by no means the same thing in every particular. For example, in the Church which Christ builds none but living stones have place, whereas in the kingdom of heaven there are many who are not saved at all ; for the kingdom of heaven is not heaven itself, but heaven’s kingdom on earth. It is a larger circle than the Church of which the Lord here speaks, though the Church be in it. In the parables of Matthew xiii. we find the similitudes of the kingdom, and if you will read verses 24–30 you will see the truth of what we have said as to evil men

being in the kingdom of heaven, though not in the Church which Christ builds, for it is not to be supposed that He would build with any but living stones. In this kingdom no doubt Simon Peter personally held a special place. To him were entrusted the keys, not of heaven, but of the kingdom of heaven, and it was his, therefore, to open the door (for such is the use of keys) for the Gentiles to enter, as we learn from Acts x. 34-48, and chapter xv. 7. The binding and loosing has reference to earth, not to heaven or to eternity, for in things that relate to these God alone can act. The case of Ananias and Sapphira is an example of this. On them Peter bound their sin, and heaven set its solemn seal to it, for their life was taken from the earth. Further than this no man could go, not even the chiefest of the apostles. The act of justifying, by which we are cleared from every charge, and placed where no condemnation can ever overtake us, is God's alone. Read Romans viii. 33, 34 ; iii. 26, together with Acts xiii. 38, 39. These passages are clear and decisive.

ANON.—We have no doubt that if a Christian man humbly and prayerfully reads his Bible, with earnest desire to be taught of God, he will be preserved from cardinal error, or delivered from it if it be already imbibed. But preservation from error is one thing, and our being led into all truth is quite another. We ourselves know many dear believers who, as far as we are aware, have not imbibed any cardinal error, but their knowledge of divine truth is exceedingly small. Their intelligence scarcely goes beyond the forgiveness of sins, and some of the great leading truths of Christianity have never yet dawned upon them. Many

things contribute to this of which we cannot now speak. In addition, our minds are often biased by the forms of religious thought under which we have been brought up—more biased perhaps than we are conscious of. Still the Saviour's words hold good, that "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." When it is the resolve of the heart to follow divine truth at all costs, light shall not be withheld if humbly, prayerfully, and diligently sought.

2. We very gladly believe that there are numbers of Christians (by which we mean saved persons) in most of the religious denominations, who are sound in the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, such as the deity, incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—the efficacy of His atonement, and so on. But though sound as to these we fear they know but little of what Scripture teaches as to the Church which is His body, the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, what He is here for, what the basis of Christian ministry, and under whose direction the various gifts of Christ to the Church should be exercised, what their sphere and how far this sphere extends, what is the proper hope of the Church, what God's purposes concerning Israel and the Gentile nations, etc., all of which subjects are most fully and blessedly dealt with in the sacred Scriptures. Preservation from cardinal error may go on hand-in-hand with dense darkness as to these great themes.

3. If the growing knowledge of God's mind as to such things leads anyone to see, as it surely will, how far Christendom has departed from the ways of truth, and if the individual thus enlightened feels his

responsibility to purge himself from all that which is contrary to God's revealed mind—revealed, we mean, in the Scriptures—then, if he would have a conscience void of offence, he does purge himself according to 2 Timothy ii. 19-21. And is it to be wondered at that the Christian who, through God's grace, is thus clear should seek to exercise the hearts of other Christians, that they too should be led into the same path of obedience and blessing?

4. We must first know what "the religious conclusions" of the Society of Friends are, to which you allude, before we can say whether we could accept them in all good conscience. Their setting aside of the Lord's supper, as being intended only for primitive times, goes flat against 1 Corinthians xi. 26, where the words "till He come" plainly shew that this precious institution remains till the Lord's return. Moreover, we should never dream of referring a man to "his own inward light" for guidance in reading the Word of God. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," was the prayer of one in old days, and might well be ours. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is not given to every man. It is the believer only who is sealed with the Spirit. (Ephesians i. 13.)

5. It is no "central doctrine" of ours that a man ought to feel quite certain he is safe; *i.e.*, saved, secure. In no part of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, do we read of people *feeling* safe. The word "*feeling*" is but rarely found in the Scripture, as any concordance will shew, and *never* in these connections. There are very many passages that entitle the believer *to know* that he is saved, and if he

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knows it he will feel happy in consequence. But in that case his knowledge is founded on Scripture, not on his feelings, for these change but that never does. He believes God and is at rest. As to Hebrews vi. 1-6, the bearing of this passage is treated of in the little book called "*Fallen from Grace*," to be had of our own publisher. No explanation of apparently hard texts, however, will give certainty to the soul, though it may relieve from embarrassment. We need to understand the redemption work of Christ as that which puts away, once and for ever, all the sins of the believer, so that no charge can ever be laid against him. He needs to understand, too, how that he has died with Christ and is risen with Him; so that in His death and resurrection he has passed clean off the old Adam standing ground, and has been brought on to the standing ground of the risen Christ. Those who enter, by faith and under the good hand of God's Spirit, into these great facts will then see, to their lasting comfort, that the salvation of God is indeed "Eternal Salvation."

6. It is quite possible that two Christians may fail to understand one another in discussing a certain truth and yet both be right. Truth has more sides than one. I may see, at present, but one side and argue for *that*, another may see but one side and argue for *that*, but his side and my side are not the same. We shall both be wiser if he sees my side as well as his own, and I see his. If that happy result be accomplished we shall then readily own that the truth we have discussed is a larger thing than either he or I had thought. There lies the secret of much disagreement among many conscientious Christian men.

TRACT DISTRIBUTING.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”—MARK xvi. 15.

IN seeking to spread the gospel by means of gospel tract and booklet, I take it, we shall be acting most blessedly in the spirit of our text.

Are we not solemnly responsible to publish the good news by every lawful means that lie within our power? I ask myself, as well as the reader, do we really believe that souls around are drawing near the gates of an eternal hell? And do we believe it is the wish of God's love that the glad tidings should be preached “*to every creature*”?

Should it not be true of us, as it was of the great apostle Paul, that “knowing . . . the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”? The apostle felt, too, what a solemn thing it was for himself personally to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, though he should stand there clad in the perfect righteousness of God, with no dread of judgment, but humbled to the very dust and bowed in deepest worship, as he saw, in heaven's light, the boundless, unwearying grace of his Master with such a servant.

And as his soul—lighted up more and more by the sense of all this—came under its solemn,

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chastening influence, his heart in fellowship with God's yearned over the world, so full of blind and careless sinners who but for the intervention of God's grace, would stand before the Judge in all their awful guilt, with no advocate to plead their cause, and no sheltering blood to screen them from eternal judgment; and Paul's life of ceaseless, devoted service in evangelizing was the result.

Oh, the need is great on every side! The fields are "white already to harvest"—we are on the very eve of Christ's return—infidelity is rampant in the strongholds of Christendom and a spurious gospel is preached from thousands of pulpits in the very land in which we live.

If this and more be sadly, solemnly true, is it not a timely question to put, *What* are we doing for Christ?

Many are not gifted to occupy the preacher's platform. Some are too aged, their day of prominent service is past, others are too young, our sisters in Christ are precluded from public preaching, yet is this blessed, quiet, simple service of tract distribution open to all. Or again, we may not have time to stay and speak to the crowds in the street, or the loiterer at the corner, but we can all put the silent messages of salvation in the hands of a few as we pass along.

Ah! how many, alas! are innocent of the crime of carrying the printed gospel in their pockets, and

if perchance they are stirred into procuring a hundred tracts or booklets, *they last them for years*. Generous souls! Let them think of the Dead Sea, which receives but never gives, around whose shores hangs the silence of the grave, while corruption and decay float on the face of its waters!

Again, some who once were poor in this world's goods were then rich in faith, and it was wonderful how many silver pieces they could spare to procure and spread the gospel tidings by means of the printed page. But they prospered in the world—the good seed of the Word became choked; their outward appearance improved, as the world would say; whilst their heart for Christ grew colder and colder. It was no longer a fitting thing that they should do what they did in other days. To give the gospel tract was beneath their dignity. “Tracts are so despised nowadays, their distribution is going out of date, and our line is not the gospel,” was often their cold, heartless, shallow excuse.

And if their conscience perchance reproved them, they would silence the faithful monitor by procuring a few hundred tracts, and giving them to a poorer brother to distribute.

Thank God for every one who enables his poor brother, who lacks not the heart but the means, to distribute by the thousand the silent messages of salvation. But that in nowise absolves him

from his own responsibility in the matter. Why his very respectable appearance enables him to give to the well-to-do people, who would perhaps refuse them at the hands of one more humbly clad.

Nothing is more beautiful than to see grace triumphing in those high in this world. Pride is an accursed thing; it is the snare of the devil! Among those possessing wealth, noble lineage, great abilities, and other high natural gifts Satan too often finds an easy prey. He uses with such the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life with awful success. Let us see to it that we seek to be in spirit like our gracious Master, and never be above giving our very best to His blessed service.

Again. What is more blessed than to see those who, by their spiritual judgment, lead the saints of God—whose years, spent in the service of Christ, rightly entitle them to influence and respect—seeking to spread the gospel in their walks and journeyings abroad by means of the printed page? What more calculated to affect for good, those who come within their influence?

Oh, I would like to see none neglecting this blessed branch of service, be it teacher or evangelist, old or young, rich or poor, brother or sister.

Nothing gives the needed courage, and self-forgetfulness, but devotedness of heart to Christ. Study the life of Jesus; think of His dying love;

think that we are left down here to fulfil His will, to gratify His heart.

It is not a little instructive to notice *where* our text is found. In the Gospel of Mark Jesus is presented to us as the great Servant.

With adoring hearts we follow His ceaseless, untiring service through those wonderful sixteen chapters into which—may we say?—the evangelist has crowded his account of the marvellous amount of the Lord's ministry, culminating in that service of all services—the cross of Calvary.

Oh, it would do us all good—lazy servants as we are—to read every day of our lives the first chapter of Mark. *Our* blessed Master—*God's* devoted servant—appears to have had scarcely time to eat His meals or snatch a few moments of leisure. From early morn, preaching, visiting, healing, seem to succeed each other till the reader marvels at the toils of His day.

And when He would commune with God in prayer we touchingly read, “And in the morning, *rising up a great while before day*, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

Ah! if we prayed more like Him we should work more like Him.

And I am quite sure, with such an example shining before us, that quality of service goes with quantity. In this Paul was like his blessed

Master. Constant and ceaseless were his labours. Nor can we fail to note, as we read the story of his missionary labours in the sacred page, that the deep spring of it all was love to Christ. The love of Christ constrained him.

May the writer and the reader be stirred up to closer communion with Christ, and richer, fuller service to Him.

If this little appeal, sent forth in fear and trembling, has been read by any who are not in the habit of spreading the written gospel, let them not merely admit the truth of what we say, but let them lose no time, according to their means, in procuring some good, plain gospel tracts or booklets, and with exercise of mind and prayer seek to distribute them, and thus in *their* measure "*preach the gospel to every creature.*"

Alas ! when we talk of our means only allowing us to do so much, we should more often correctly say it is our lack of heart for Christ that makes us satisfied with the little we do.

The world spends freely in the service of the devil. Witness the flourishing condition of the public-houses, the theatres, the concert halls, and a thousand and one other things. In bad times and in a small place many public-houses are well supported and patronized, whilst, alas ! in a great city with its teeming thousands, where numbers of Christians live, a tract depôt may languish and be ready to die.

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May we all lay the Saviour's word to heart:
*“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel
 to every creature.”*

Soon we shall hear His shout and go to be with Him. The shadows are lengthening; our brief day of service will ere long be over, and then we shall rest in His own presence for ever. Meanwhile let us be up and doing. A. J. P.

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SO you have been going to church all these years, and making diligent use of “the means of grace,” and praying to God to help you to be good, and yet you cannot say whether you are saved or not. You are inclined to think that this uncertainty arises from your want of steadfastness. Experience has shown you that your religious impressions of Sunday will not stand the wear and tear of business life; they soon get rubbed off. Obligated to associate daily with those who do not try to be good, and who possibly have never prayed that they might be so, you find yourself, before you are aware, drawn into the whirlpool of worldly thoughts and talk. How disappointing this is! how mortifying! and all the more so because it has happened so often. Your good resolutions have not lasted long. Sometimes, I suspect, you are

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tempted to try no more, and are ready to believe that you will never be able to live a Christian life—at least, not until you are in different circumstances, with fewer things to lead you astray. Should you ever be so placed, you might try again with better hope of success.

I wonder whether it ever seems strange to you that your prayers to be made good never get any satisfactory answer. Why is that? Are they not earnest enough? Is sincerity lacking? Do you pray with all your heart? Or is it that God will not answer because you are so unsteadfast? If I might hazard a guess, the reason does not lie in any of those things.

or when the Lord was here on earth, a mother, much distressed, cried unto Him with great earnestness, and it is said that "*He answered her not a word.*" She had a daughter grievously vexed with a devil, on whose behalf she besought His mercy; but He made as though He heard her not. It was against His practice to deal thus with needy suppliants. Why, then, did He do so in this instance? Of old He had said, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Was He less gracious now? Certainly not. Why, then, did He not answer? May I venture to say for the same reason that He has not answered you.

Have you your Bible at hand? If so, it

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will be well to read the story for yourself as it is told in Matthew xv. 21-28. You will see that she eventually got a full answer, but the cause of her not receiving it at once was not any lack of earnestness or sincerity on her part, much less any want of grace on the Lord's. What was it then? Let me try to explain what I believe to be the key to this seeming enigma.

Observe she was “*a woman of Canaan,*” and she addressed the Lord as “Son of David.” But what title had a woman of the Canaanitish race to anything the “*Son of David*” had to give? What link could there be between the descendants of him of whom God had said, “Cursed be Canaan,” and whose land, when their iniquity was full, was given to the Israelites — what possible link, I ask, could there be between them and the Son of David? None. Now the Lord desired that she should feel this, and therefore He answered her not. But the Lord's silence did not silence her. She cried aloud the more, and when the disciples besought Him to send her away, He spoke to her and said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” To that house she did not belong; in that flock she assuredly had no place. Yet it was to those, and those only, *the Son of David* was sent. On that ground, therefore, the door was closed against her. There were other names and titles, however, belonging to the

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same blessed Person which covered a wider circle than that of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; and there was other ground on which, if she would only take it, the blessing might be had. Was she willing? This the end will show. To her further appeal the Lord answered, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." No child of the kingdom was she. Why, then, should she have the children's bread? "Truth, Lord," she confesses, "it is even so; I am no child, and cannot claim the bread of the children. I am but a Gentile dog, unclean and vile, yet the crumbs from the master's table are not denied to the dogs. Is there no crumb for me?" He could not say there was none, nor would He. She had taken her right place at last; and though as *Son of David* He could give her nothing, seeing she was not of Israel's house, yet as Lord He was Lord over all. In connection with that name "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." (Rom. x. 12.) Her faith, though tried, had triumphed. "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Will you suffer me to say that I fear you have never taken the same ground with God as this "woman of Canaan" took at last? I am afraid

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you do not see that as far as forgiveness and salvation are concerned you can lay no more claim to these than if you were the most depraved creature on the face of the earth. Your going to church so regularly, your diligent use of “the means of grace,” your prayers to God to make you good, may go along with the utmost blindness to your already lost condition in the sight of Him with whom we have to do. In that case they are but “dead works” which can never bring rest to your conscience.

Suppose, in answer to your prayers, God were to help you to be good. Your mind grows less fickle, you are able to fix your thoughts on religious subjects, the old temptations are successfully withstood, and in every way you think there is improvement. But does this bettering of your state, which only for argument’s sake I am supposing, answer to God for the sins of the past? Does it diminish your debt one single penny? It certainly does not. And this you would understand well enough were it a matter of every-day business. For if a lady ran up a heavy bill at a tradesman’s shop, and called one day to say that she would endeavour in future to pay cash for every yard of calico she ordered and for every bonnet she might buy, and hoped her doing so would be accepted as payment of the bill she already owed, I think you know what would be said to her. In like manner, nothing that you can do

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in the way of works, nothing that you can say in the way of prayers, can alter the fact that you are now, at this very moment, a lost sinner, shut up to the mercy of God for salvation as much as if you had been verily guilty of every wickedness that a creature could commit. And be assured that if mercy is not shewn you, then you must inevitably perish in your sins.

It goes much against human nature to take this ground with God. If we have any imaginary righteousness of our own we naturally cling to it, much as a drowning man will catch at a straw. I can understand your reluctance to look upon the years you have spent in going to church, the efforts you have made to be good, and the prayers you have said, as being altogether wide of the mark, and without one atom of worth in them, as far as your soul's salvation is in question. Such, however, is the truth, whether you believe it or not. Would that you saw this. Your endeavour to establish your own righteousness would then cease for ever. You would know that it were easier to sweep back the waves of the ocean with a broom, than to save your own soul by any such means.

Think, I beseech you, of the plight you are in. There is but a step between you and death. You are held back from eternity only by the brittle thread of human life, which a gust of wind may break at any hour.

Yet there is forgiveness, yea, there is eternal

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salvation for you, and it may be yours this very day if you are but willing to take your true place before God—the place of one utterly lost and undone. For indeed it is the joy of God to save, as the parables of Luke xv. so sweetly tell us. Do you, then, own yourself to be such, knowing in yourself that it is true? If so, and you further ask, What more? I reply, in the words of the apostle to the jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 31.)

I entreat you to commit yourself to Him without reserve. He invites your confidence, and He indeed is worthy of it. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.) And He has further said, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” (John vi. 37.) The One who thus speaks is no stranger, though you may not know Him as your Saviour yet. Did He not come down from heaven for our sakes? What is the meaning of those scars on His hands, and side, and feet? Do they not tell a tale of love so true, so deep, so measureless? Who upon earth would be willing to suffer for you what Jesus suffered when upon the cross? Can you not trust *Him*? All the redeemed own Him as their only Saviour. Will you not own Him as yours?

Whenever a sinner pleads the precious blood of Christ the eye of God rests, not on that sinner's sins, but on the blood that puts them all away.

“When I see the blood, I will pass over.” Gracious, assuring words! Yes, that blood effects what we could not accomplish by ages of toil and prayers without end.

And not only does “the precious blood” shelter and cleanse, but the saved and cleansed one is “accepted in the Beloved”—he has part in all the eternal favour of God in which “the Beloved” stands.

One of your mistakes has been in trying to live as a Christian before you are one; no wonder you could not succeed. To use a homely phrase, you have been putting the cart before the horse.

But when you are saved, and you know it, then you may with confidence seek strength to be for God in your daily path. You shall find that your prayers will be answered, and if you humbly seek it He will give you His help, and lead you into the fuller knowledge of Himself, and of His Son Jesus Christ, and of those heavenly things which are the sure portion of all who possess Christ.

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.

YOU are always preaching that the vilest sinner is welcome to come to Christ; but what of those that do not feel so very vile? a lady once asked a preacher of the gospel.

This is an important question, in regard to a class of people difficult to reach.

Such people never did anything very bad.

They never felt anything very evil in their hearts.

They know not the God revealed in Scripture.

They are not infidels.

They know a "Being" who is to be heard of in sermons.

The God who saves or judges sinners they do not know.

There are many accomplished young ladies, for example, who are kind and dutiful, who have their neat prayer-books, and are seen regularly in their seats in church every Sunday, who visit the poor, etc., but who nevertheless are not saved. People do not like to say to such, "You are on the broad road that leadeth to destruction." It would be thought improper.

But if they would suffer me to speak to them I should like to ask, Are you ready to meet God?

Where will you spend Eternity?

If you were taken now from your dear friends and home, and stood before God, what would you say to Him?

Do you indeed know that in God's sight you are on the same platform as the vilest profligate, and in just the same condemnation before God as a man who has committed murder, though you have committed no excess?

This is a strange thought, but is it true.

Will you take your Bible and turn to Romans

iii. 22, 23? There we read, "For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Yes, *all* have sinned.

This is what God has said!

Again, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James ii. 10.)

Therefore all are guilty before God in that all have sinned.

There are but two classes of sinners, the justified and the condemned; and there are only two eternal homes, heaven and hell.

When Israel was sheltered in the house of bondage from the destroying angel's hand, it came to pass that at midnight Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon. These first-born might have been beautiful and accomplished, or they might have been vile and ignorant, but there was no difference. It is with God that you and I have to do.

God has provided a sacrifice for you.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Only those who believe themselves condemned can claim a Saviour.

And now the righteousness of God "is by faith

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of Jesus Christ unto all"; but it is only "upon all them that believe: for there is no difference, for all have sinned." "All" in Rom. iii. 9 are said to be "under sin." So in verse 22, all believing ones are under "righteousness."

Nor shall any of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life be cast into the lake of fire. They shall never see the second death, for in that book there is no difference. M. E. D.

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IN the second epistle of Peter we are taught to look for a new heaven and a new earth, according to the promise of God. (2 Peter iii. 13.) John, in the visions of the isle of Patmos, *saw them*. (Rev. xxi. 1.) The Lord shews to His servants through him what *must shortly come to pass*. His coming and reign will precede that glorious and eternal scene. His saints shall participate in both. At the close of His kingdom the present heaven and earth will pass away. (2 Peter iii. 10.) They flee from before the face of Him who sitteth on the great white throne, and are destroyed by fire. (Rev. xx. 11; 2 Peter iii. 10.) But God will fashion a new order of things altogether, a *new* heaven and a *new* earth. There, as has often been remarked, shall righteousness not merely *reign*, as during the period of the kingdom of Christ, but *dwell*. (2 Peter iii. 13.)

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The whole sphere will be characterized by it, and everything opposed will have vanished for ever. There will be no return to innocence, as at the first, but the establishment of righteousness, that which is wholly suited to God, based on the sure foundation of the redemption, wrought by His Son Christ Jesus, whereby His glory, trampled upon here below by Satan and by man, is eternally secured.

The first peculiar feature of the new globe, to which our attention is called in Rev. xxi. 1, is, "*There was no more sea.*" The earth was wholly covered with a mighty waste of waters when first described in Gen. i. 2 (although in all probability that was not its original condition when fresh from the Creator's hand). It was not until the third day of the scene which introduced Time that *dry land* appeared, and the globe by divine power assumed its present form. And what a striking figure of the sad, restless history of man from the fall onwards is found in these same waters, which to this day cover some three-fourths of the globe's surface. May we not then rejoice, as we read that short sentence, "*there was no more sea,*" in its conveying to us the thought that all that has characterized the history of this present world will have passed away with it, and that in the new earth all will be fixed, stable, eternal, with no disturbing element whatever?

The next verse brings before us a revelation in which every Christian has the deepest interest,

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“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Many scriptures might be cited which would show distinctly, as we believe, that the holy city which the prophet saw is none other than the church of the living God; verses 9, 10 are conclusive. Five things characterize it—holiness, newness, divine origin, heavenly source, and bridal adornment. The *holy* city, a figure of the church, is composed of saints, who are created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. iv. 24.)

All will be of Christ—all holiness, every trace of sin gone for ever. Further, it is the *new* Jerusalem. It is not so called until the old things have wholly passed away. Even in the millennial description this word is not yet introduced (v. 10), but the city is viewed as the *holy* Jerusalem. All will be wholly new in the eternal state, the church being displayed in all the glory of the new creation. She comes too from God; she is the church of God. He originated and planned her calling and glory in His *in*crutable and eternal counsel ere even the first heaven and the first earth were created. And heaven is her source. She comes out of it. The church is essentially heavenly, she belongs not to this present scene. Her sphere is heaven. She will be *displayed* in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom. In the eternal state, when

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there will be no longer the terrible breach of sin as now, keeping the world at a distance from God, she will also *come down* from God out of heaven, and her glory will be manifested in relation with the new earth. She will come forth prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. All the glory and beauty of the day of her espousals remains upon her, and no spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing can be traced in her. All will be perfect and eternal, for all is of God.

Next, John hears a great voice out of heaven, a voice suited to so great and wondrous an occasion, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (v. 3.) Again, we may call our reader's attention to five blessed statements. First, "The tabernacle of God is with men." The figure is changed, the church being here viewed as His holy dwelling-place. The Holy Ghost dwells now in the assembly (Eph. ii. 22), and this will be God's dwelling-place for ever. And it is "*with men*." The men here spoken of are clearly distinguished from the tabernacle itself. The question naturally arises, Who are they? We are not told. They are men, doubtless, in a condition fitted for the new earth on which they will dwell. No such distinction is mentioned as Jew or Gentile, but simply *men*. The church, God's tabernacle,

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will be *with them*. Secondly, God will “dwell with them.” Marvellous blessing! Thirdly, all without exception, “shall be His people,” for all is righteousness there. Fourthly, “God Himself shall be with them.” He not only *dwells* with them, but they will ever enjoy the wondrous privilege of having *God Himself with them*. And lastly it adds, He is “their God.” Who can fathom the fulness of divine blessing contained in that short and wondrous statement? And who can conceive the bliss of that scene, where God is all in all, and where every saint of God, whether over, or on the earth, shall have eternal part?

The following verse gives the blest assurance of the complete exemption for men in that eternal scene from all that burdens the human race in its present fallen condition: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (v. 4.)

Now here we get a five-fold promise. In that day there shall be no tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain. How blessed a contrast to the present! All around us to-day we meet with pain, suffering, death, and sorrow. The world is one vast hospital and graveyard. None are exempt from bodily pain. None but the objects of grace at our Lord’s coming can escape the tomb.

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Children weep from earliest infancy. Death knocks daily at the door of kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor. Sorrow more or less fills every heart. Crying is world-wide. Oh, how deeply blessed to think of a day when God shall wipe away all tears from men's eyes! of a scene where there are no death-beds, funerals, and graves! where joy takes the place of sorrow, instead of crying there shall be rejoicing in every heart, and men shall have a body free from infirmity, disease, and pain! And why? "*For the former things are passed away.*" Not only the present heaven and earth pass away, but the whole state of things connected therewith through Satan's power, the fall, and the entrance of sin. "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter iii. 10.)

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful." (v. 5.) Time being ended, and the present heaven and earth being dissolved, God will fashion all anew. Everything in that eternal scene will be the fruit of the exercise of divine power, exercised in righteousness, and beyond the reach of Satanic power, and sin. As we have already remarked, all is fixed, stable, and eternal; all is of God. And all this wondrous unfolding of His purpose is written indelibly in His own eternal words. These words are true and faithful, so that

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we can rely upon them implicitly—the words of Him who cannot lie.

“And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (*vv.* 6–8.)

“It is done” (or, perhaps, “They are fulfilled”). And He who saith it is the eternal One. Nothing was before Him; nothing comes after Him. “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” And then follow two promises and a threat in view of that eternal day. First, one of the most precious of scriptures for the thirsty sinner. God will give him to drink freely from the very fountain-head itself. Secondly, a most encouraging promise to the believer. “He that overcometh,” that is, who gets the victory in the midst of the power of evil, “shall inherit all [or these] things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” And, lastly, a most awful threat of judgment upon all classes of the ungodly. They “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” This is the second death; eternal separation from God, unutterable misery.

E. H. C.

“THE GARMENT OF PRAISE FOR THE SPIRIT OF HEAVINESS.”

ISAIAH lxi. 3.

THE spirit of heaviness is one with which most of the saints of God are familiar. Thus Job could say, “I will leave off my heaviness” (chap. ix. 27); the Psalmist, “My soul melteth for heaviness” (Ps. cxix. 28); Ezra, “I arose up from my heaviness” (chap. ix. 5); and Paul, in thinking of his kinsmen according to the flesh, “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart” (Rom. ix. 2); and it is recorded of Epaphroditus that he “was full of heaviness” (Phil. ii. 26); whilst Peter, viewing the Christians at large, said, “Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” (1 Peter i. 6.) The causes of heaviness may be, and are, varied; yet they are connected with the path we tread to-day. There is a “*need be*” for heaviness. It acts upon the spirit as ballast upon the ship. It is the result of, and closely allied to, the sorrow that must press upon us by the way.

Still though, in this sense, necessary and profitable, it does not imply dejection of heart nor despondency of spirit. Heaviness is, after all, but a weight, a burden, a load, a something very

real and sensible, yet one that is far from intolerable—to him, at least, who has learned a little of the present sustaining grace of our blessed High Priest.

Hence Paul could say, "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." (2 Cor. vi. 10.) And it may be helpful to note the wording of this passage; it is not "rejoicing but alway sorrowful," as though the sorrow outweighed the joy, but just the opposite. The smile of joy plays on the tear-bedimmed face; as in an April shower, the sun shines while the rain is falling!

Thus "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Ah! that means a peculiar kind of vision.

What eye can look upon things unseen? To do so is constant triumph.

That Old Testament hero, whose conflicts and victories fill the soul with wonder, "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." (Heb. xi. 27.) He possessed that peculiar kind of vision. It is the eye of faith, an eye which always looks beyond and above! Always!

That is a cheering word in Romans xv. 13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Yes, the God of hope! Lovely title! God is never defeated, never (I speak reverently) under a cloud of despair, never perplexed as we may be.

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And we, His people, should abound in hope. There is plenty of cause for humiliation and self-judgment, but none for hopelessness.

The Church may be, alas! in a state of inextricable confusion, and, so far as man is concerned, in utter ruin, still ours is the "God of hope." His purpose will stand. Sin is rife, infidelity rampant, and the world rushing on heedless to the awful brink. Still we may "abound in hope." We may wear our garment of praise instead of betraying a spirit of heaviness. We need not appear unto men to fast.

The Spirit says, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). We may well, with such a promise, lift up our heads.

And if the spirit of heaviness should produce sobriety and brokenness, may it never be allowed to engender unbelief, or despair. When we have in reality to do with God, we cannot but be sober; but if He is the "God of hope," we cannot but be confident. Confidence has "great recompence of reward." It is one of the grand essentials in the Epistle to the Hebrews. They were earnestly exhorted to "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Chap. iii. 6.)

Confidence and hope are twin graces, and greatly adorn the soul.

Hope rejoices! It is never *down*; and the

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hope of Scripture rests on a solid and sure foundation.

Hence it is not even a garment of *prayer*, but one of *praise*, that is appointed for the spirit of heaviness. Prayer is very important; but our causes for it are far outnumbered by those for praise. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." (Ps. l. 23.)

J. W. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. B. (Matthew xviii. 20.)—We believe the promised presence of Christ in the midst of those gathered to His name to be a different thing from the presence of the Holy Spirit, and it awakens a different train of thought, and greatly stirs up the spiritual affections of the believer. No one, I presume, supposes that the Lord Jesus is present in body. In spirit however He is there, and faith knows Him to be in the midst according to His own Word. This is a most blessed reality, as those who have proved it know, and we should be on our guard lest anything be allowed to weaken the sense of it in our soul. The Holy Spirit is also present no doubt, but this is not the same thing as the Lord being in the midst in spirit.

SWINDON.—We see not the slightest objection to a Christian sister asking a question in a private meeting for the study of the Word of God. Our experience extends over many years, and we can sincerely say that we have not known one instance of a sister having over-stepped the bounds either of Scripture or of Christian propriety in so doing.

A. D. S. G. R. A. (1 Peter iv. 3.)—"The will of the Gentiles" expressed itself in the following after those things named in the latter part of the same verse. If any of those to whom the epistle was addressed had in their past unconverted days been the willing slaves to these sins surely they were to be so no longer. They were to live now to the will of God, and so have we. And whenever our will comes into collision with God's will, our will must yield. Now God's will is good, acceptable and perfect, and we are to discern it, and do it in the strength which His Spirit supplies. The difference between 1 Peter iv. 15 and Philippians ii. 4 is very simple. In the former passage the individual meddles in matters that are no concern of his, intruding himself where he has no business, and having no spiritual end in view, whereas, in the latter it is the actings of unselfish love. We think not simply of our own things—our thoughts move in a wider circle. We consider others. We seek their good, and do all we can to promote it. This is most blessed work indeed. As to the other passages we should need further light upon them ourselves before we could undertake to say what was the mind of the Spirit in them.

S. P. R. (1 Cor. xi.)—In the first part of this chapter it is the relative place of the man and the woman that is dealt with, and the reasons given why one should pray with covered, and the other with uncovered head. The married women are under subjection to their husbands, and we presume the covering that is commonly, and as we believe properly, worn by them is an expression of that, and not merely an adornment, put on or not, according to taste.

THE CLERGYMAN AND THE YOUNG CONVERT.

A YOUNG man was one day driving his master's horse and cart along a country road, when he was overtaken by a clergyman, the curate of an adjoining parish. Introducing himself to the young cartman by asking a few commonplace questions, he went on to speak of more important matters, and, amongst others, inquired if he were a Churchman.

Receiving a reply in the negative, he entered upon an elaborate exposition of the doctrines, creeds and beliefs of the Established Church, endeavouring to point out to his companion the vast superiority of her services over every other form of religious worship.

He spoke of its beautifully arranged ritual, with its morning and evening prayers and thanksgivings; the litany, with its varied supplications and responses for priest and people; the collects, gospels, epistles, and psalms, selected and carefully arranged for Lord's-days, and for the many feasts and fasts enjoined by the church; its baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, and burial services; its well-trained choir, to chant and sing the psalms, hymns and doxologies,

accompanied by the awe-inspiring strains of the organ.

The young man listened quietly to the clergyman's remarks. He had been converted only a short time previously, and his heart was full of his new-found treasure. But he was young and inexperienced, and, although always glad to have a talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, he knew very little about theological definitions; nor could he understand exactly why there should be any diversity of opinion in the ranks of those who called themselves Christians, seeing there was only one "guide-book" for them all.

The clergyman next questioned the young cartman as to what particular sect or denomination he belonged.

"Well, sir," said he rather timidly, for he felt a little abashed in the presence of so learned a gentleman, "I don't know whether it matters so much *what* we belong to. The great question, it seems to me, is this, *Do we belong to Christ?* I am thankful to say *I do*. Through grace I *am saved*."

"Hush, young man!" said the clergyman in a tone of surprise and alarm, "you must not talk in that presumptuous strain. Why, I am an ordained clergyman of the Church, and *I* could not take upon myself to say such a thing. It is highly improper for a mere youth like you to express yourself in that emphatic way. *No one*

can know in this life positively whether he is saved or not, therefore you ought never to let such an utterance escape your lips."

"But I must beg to differ on that point, sir," said the lad, waxing bolder as he saw the foundations of his faith assailed. "My Bible teaches that the *true believer* in the Lord Jesus Christ is *entitled to know* that *his sins are forgiven*, that he will *never come into judgment*, and that, having *believed in Jesus*, he *has everlasting life*. (John v. 24.) I will tell you where I find some of the scriptures which prove it. In 1 Timothy i. 15 I read, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of *all acceptance*, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all sin*.' (1 John i. 7.) 'Through this Man is preached unto you the *forgiveness of sins*.' (Acts xiii. 38.) 'Being *justified freely* by His grace, through the *redemption that is in Christ Jesus*.' (Rom. iii. 24.) 'Therefore being justified *by faith*, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Rom. v. 1.) 'There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are *in Christ Jesus*.' (Rom. viii. 1.) 'These things have I written unto you that *believe* on the name of the Son of God; that *ye may know* that *ye have eternal life*' (1 John v. 13)."

By this time they had reached a point in the road where there was a drinking-trough for cattle, at which the young cartman stopped, and un-

loosing the bridle-rein from his horse's neck, he led it to the fountain.

Noticing that the clergyman still waited, he ventured to continue his defence.

"You see this drinking-fountain, sir. It supplies many a thirsty animal with fresh, pure water. There are many roads leading to it, and they that drink come from various parts and different directions, but they *all meet at the fountain*, one common object draws them there. So with the gospel, Christ is the *Fountain*. Whatever name people may choose to call themselves by, if they want *salvation* they must come to Him. *He alone* can quench the thirst of their souls. None ever came to Him who did not get their need fully met, and surely it is not presumption for the one, who has thus drunk of the streams of grace, that flow from the heart of God, to testify to others of that which he has enjoyed himself, and so I say again that everything depends on how we stand in relation to Christ."

The clergyman indignantly refused to accept the young cartman's plain, matter-of-fact way of putting things, and telling him the views he had imbibed were heretical and dangerous he walked off.

This particular clergyman's gospel, you see, consisted of a round of religious observances, rendered attractive perhaps by music and a showy ritual; but however zealous and persevering you might be

in the discharge of them you could only have at best a *vague, indefinite hope that it might please God in the great judgment-day to take your good deeds, prayers, and church-going into consideration, and in His great mercy pardon all your sins.* Under such conditions it would indeed be the most daring presumption for any one to speak about his sins being forgiven, or of being saved, for this cold, barren, lifeless theology shuts out the cheering rays of the "gospel of God concerning His Son" (Romans i. 1-3), and leaves the poor trembling soul, who would fain catch some of its beams, in the mists and clouds of dark uncertainty.

The young cartman had learned in the experience of his soul that dogmas and doctrines, however sound, are of little value unless you know the One around whom they cluster. As a guilty sinner he had taken his place at the Saviour's feet, and had heard the peace-giving words from His lips, "*Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace.*" (Luke vii. 48-50.) He had read in the Scriptures the record of God's love to guilty man, and how God could be just, and yet the Justifier of *every poor sinner who believes in Jesus*, and in the simplicity of faith he had *appropriated* the blessings of the gospel to himself, so his conscience was set at rest, and his heart made glad. Now, dear reader, there is nothing mysterious in all this.

God is sovereign, and can dispense His blessings when, and where, He will, and it has pleased Him in the infinitude of His grace to issue a *world-wide proclamation* to the effect that the atoning work of Christ on the cross has so fully satisfied and glorified Him as to the *whole question of sin*, that it is now *His joy*—oh, sinner, think of this!—to welcome with *open arms* any poor sin-sick soul who has learned his need of Him. (John iii. 16; Luke xv.)

Think not, friend, you will be able to climb up to heaven by any other way. (Acts iv. 12.) Though you were the most exemplary person in the whole district where you live, though you were the most amiable, moral, and religious being under the canopy of heaven, you must be saved in GOD'S WAY, or be LOST FOR EVER. (Mark xvi. 16.)

One of the best men who ever lived, of whom God could speak as being "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil;" none like him in the earth, had to exclaim, when he found himself face to face with a holy God, "Behold, I am vile. . . . I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now *mine eye seeth Thee*. Wherefore I *abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job i. 8; xl. 3; xlii. 5, 6.) Are *you* better than Job? Listen. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." (Isaiah i. 6.) This is what God says of man's condition.

Now if this is true of *you*—and dare you question it?—will you present your prayers, your law-keeping, your sacrament-taking, your religious observances to God as a peace-offering, or as a motive why He should accept you? Surely you would not thus insult the grace that is beseeching you even now to be *reconciled to God*. (2 Cor. v. 20; Isaiah i. 18.)

In Matthew xxv. we read of two companies; one *shut in*, the other *shut out*. Perhaps they all had the same appearance outwardly. It may be the five foolish virgins were well versed in doctrine and most sound in theology; but *the Bridegroom did not know them*. They had the external form of religion, but they had *not* got Christ. Is this *your* case? Have *you* the oil in your vessel? The oil-less lamp is mere *profession*, of which there is plenty abroad to-day; but the oil is the Holy Ghost, who is given to indwell *every true believer* in the Lord Jesus Christ. The dark night of judgment is fast approaching, and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. What is *your* position in view of these two events? If you are unsaved, the Lord's return will seal your everlasting doom; you will be left behind to share the judgment that will surely overtake this ungodly, unbelieving world. But God in long-suffering mercy lingers. Grace still reigns, and salvation may be yours *this moment*, dear unsaved reader, if you will only stoop low enough to receive it.

G. F. E.

SALVATION, IS IT ETERNAL?

A KIND correspondent, who tells us he has received much help from this magazine, writes in all brotherly frankness to let us know that some of the articles that appear give him much anxiety, because, as he believes, they are opposed to the teaching of the word of God. Those of which he complains are entitled "*For ever saved*;" "*Past and future sins*;" "*The eternal security of those who believe*;" and if any of our readers care to look at them again they will be found in the numbers for May, September, and November, of 1893.

What has raised the ire of our dear friend is the persistent way in which the writers of the said papers seek to show that nothing short of *eternal* salvation is what the gospel announces to all who believe. He, on the contrary, thinks a "true believer" may fall into "a state of unbelief and be eventually lost." Now if this were merely a matter of human opinion it would be idle to discuss it further, for human opinion has but little weight, and possesses no authority whatever. The thoughts of uninspired men, however eminent in the theological world, may be either right or wrong. They are only right as they

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agree with Holy Scripture, and even then they are no foundation for our faith. The Scriptures alone are the imperishable rock on which we may safely build, the one unerring tribunal to which every question must be carried, and to whose decisions all must ultimately bow.

The assured salvation of the believer, from the first moment that he became one, is so interwoven with other divine truths that to weaken this is to enfeeble all. The Saviour's atoning work, His promises, His power to keep the feet of His saints, the purposes of God and His ultimate triumph, are forthwith called in question if one sinner who is now the subject of His saving grace may yet be found in hell. Was it only for some of our sins, and not for the whole of them, that the Saviour endured those stripes which bring us healing? Is it indeed possible that as we look believingly upon Christ on the cross and on the throne, the Evil One may approach and hiss in our ear, "Take care, I'll have you yet," and in saying so be uttering words that may one day come true? If any assert this I turn from that stranger-voice and hearken to Him who says, "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 pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck out of my Father's

hand. I and my Father are one." (John x. 27-30.) Precious words, brimming with life and peace! And again, "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." (John vi. 39, 40.) Is He not able to perform this, and to keep to the very end all those whom the Father has given Him, whose sins He bore, and whose names are engraven on the palms of His hands? We believe that He is able, and we are sure that in the day of the great home-gathering it will be His to say, "Of them which Thou gavest me have I lost none;" "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Ah! were it a fact that "a true believer" might yet be lost, then it is possible that those exultant words may never be uttered before the throne. Imagine, if you can, these being spoken there, "Of them which Thou gavest me have I lost *some*." "Behold I and *some* of the children which God hath given me." What a confession that would be both of His defeat and of Satan's triumph. Believer, do you ever expect that hour to dawn? Shall the laurels be taken from the Saviour's brow to grace his who is the enemy of God and of His

Christ? Never! If that could be, then let heaven prepare to lay aside her garments of praise, and to clothe herself with lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

Our correspondent tells us that "he feels his responsibility as a believer is quite as great as it was before he accepted Christ as his Saviour." No doubt it is, and a great deal greater. He evidently thinks that the doctrine of eternal salvation weakens our responsibility to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." It never does. Indeed the passage from which we quote those words (Titus ii. 11-14) shews that the grace of God which brings us this salvation teaches us to live in that very way. Besides, if our responsibilities always flow from the place and relationships in which we stand, then it follows that if these be eternal so are those. Always a child, always responsible to behave as a child; always a sheep, always responsible to heed the Shepherd's voice and to follow Him. Here is a principle as simple as it is true, and one which applies both to things human and to things divine.

But yet another word. I said that our responsibilities after conversion are as great, and greater, than before. It is so, only they are of another order. In those old dark days, ere the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ shone in our

hearts, our responsibilities were those of a child of Adam, affected, no doubt, by the privileges in the midst of which the providence of God had placed us. For surely the children of Adam, born in a Christian land, are more responsible than other children of the same Adam born in the dark places of heathenism. But for "the true believer" his Adam standing has ended in the death of Christ, and with it all his responsibilities as one who was once "in the flesh." (Romans vii. 5, viii. 9.) In the body of course we are, but not "in the flesh," if so be the Spirit of God dwell in us. We have a new standing before God, even that of one who is "in Christ Jesus." We are brought into new and divinely-formed relationships which carry with them corresponding responsibilities. But it is evident that the standing and relationships must be ours before ever the responsibilities begin, and that these responsibilities last as long as ever the relationships last. Hence if these be *eternal*, then are we under an *eternal* obligation to walk suitably to them. Is there any weakening of responsibility in all this?

This change of standing and entrance into new relationships, on which we have but briefly touched, is a most important truth, and one which, we might almost make bold to say, our correspondent has yet to learn.

If my standing before God as a child of Adam

has ended in the death of Christ, can it ever be revived? If I am a child of God, as having been born of Him, can that relationship ever be destroyed? If God has sealed "the true believer" with His Spirit, and given that Spirit as the earnest of the glorious inheritance, is not the earnest a pledge on God's part of His intention to fulfil that to which He has set His hand? If "the true believer" is a sheep of Christ, is he not one given to Him by His Father? And if so, does He not say of all such that they shall never perish, and that He will raise them up at the last day? What answers can be given to these questions? And can the Scriptures ever be broken?

Sometimes our minds are confused through not seeing that in some passages of Scripture the believer is viewed as "in Christ Jesus," and in others as belonging to the pilgrim band, whose faces are towards Canaan, which they hope to reach in due time. I say "hope to reach" not as implying grounds for doubt. Hope is connected with the future, for we certainly do not hope for that we already see. Now when the believer is viewed as in Christ, everything is perfect and eternal. To the grace and power of God he owes that glorious position. "*Of Him* are ye in Christ Jesus." Our being there is wholly of God, and Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that he

who glories must needs glory in the Lord. (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.) To this nothing can be added. "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. ii. 10), and, according to Hebrews x. 14, "perfected for ever." But when we are seen as pilgrims here, journeying to the rest that remains, we are encouraged to hold fast, and to beware lest the difficulties of the road lead us into unbelief.

Now it is with the latter position that the priesthood of Christ is connected, and the "ifs" of Scripture have their place. However great the difficulties and mighty the foes we have to face, we may remember, for our encouragement, that our great High Priest is able to save unto the uttermost—to the very end of our journey—all who come unto God by Him, "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews vii. 25.) Let those words be noticed. Our salvation along the way is the result of His intercession; not of His death, though all be founded on that. He who did die for our sins, and by His death put them all away, is always living to intercede for us. Let us then approach with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help. (Hebrews iv. 16.)

Therefore is our hope both sure and firm. Watchful we have to be, and we must use all diligence to enter into that rest that remaineth for the people of God. There are indeed a

thousand reasons why we should distrust ourselves, but not one for distrusting Him. Nor does this confidence engender carelessness. The sailors on board a ship caught in a gale may have the most perfect confidence in their captain, and be quite sure that his knowledge and skill will carry them safely through. But would that confidence make them indifferent to the carrying out of his orders? Certainly not. Now Christ is our Captain. Therefore the good ship in which we sail shall safely outride every storm. Only let us follow His directions, never departing from them, and never doubting but that He will bring us safe to port at last.

“A mind at perfect peace with God,
Oh, what a word is this !
A sinner reconciled through blood :
This, this indeed is peace.

“By nature and by practice far,
So very far, from God ;
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him,
By faith in Jesus' blood.

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

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

ARE YOU SAVED? CAN YOU KNOW IT?

THERE are those who boldly tell us that no one is saved till their last hour on earth is gone. They avow that were they asked, "Are you saved?" they would answer, "No, I am not; no more, let me tell you, are you saved, and nothing can be more dangerous, more perilous, than to think you are." In their support they quote certain passages that speak of salvation as future, and argue that if it be future it cannot be present, and if we are to be saved we cannot be saved now. But this reasoning shews a total lack of power to distinguish between things that differ. The believer *is* saved—is *being* saved—and *shall* be saved. Salvation in these three senses is unfolded in the Scriptures, and what wisdom is there, we should like to know, in pitting one against the other, or in taking our stand on one and daringly denying the other two?

Is the believer then already saved? Yes, in the sense that all his sins are forgiven (1 John ii. 12), that he is justified from all things (Acts xiii. 39), that no one can lay anything to his charge (Romans viii. 33), that he is reconciled to God (Romans v. 10), that he is accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians i. 6), that he has peace with

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God (Romans v. 1), that his sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more (Hebrews x. 17), that he is already God's child (1 John iii. 2), that he has everlasting life, and shall never come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life (John v. 24), and is sealed too with the Holy Spirit unto eternal glory. (Ephesians iv. 30.) He is so truly one with Christ that it is said, "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17); "As is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Corinthians xv. 48); and "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." (Hebrews ii. 11.) Loved too as Jesus is loved (John xvii. 23), and loved by Christ as His Father loves Him. (John xv. 9.) All these things, and many more, which, had we space, could be written down, are now at this moment true of the believer, and in the sense of these passages he is saved. Moreover, God distinctly declares he *is* saved, as you may see for yourself by referring to Ephesians ii. 5, 8, 2 Timothy i. 9.

The believer is *being* saved, in that he is journeying on to the rest that remains for the people of God. Glory is in view, but it is needless to say that he has not reached it yet. Satan, the world, and the flesh oppose his heavenward march by fierce onslaughts and subtle wiles. To encounter these he needs be clad in the whole armour of God. He is strengthened by knowing that he is kept by the power of God, through

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faith unto final victory (1 Peter i. 5), that his Saviour lives at the right hand of God, and that if he has been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more shall he be saved by His life. (Romans v. 10.) He knows that the death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of Christ avail for him. His heart is comforted in being told that whom God calls He justifies, and whom He justifies He also glorifies. (Romans viii. 30.) But the dangers are real, and his foes no phantoms. Therefore he watches and prays, and heeds the warnings against wavering and backsliding. He knows there are those who wear the uniform of the Lord's host who belong not to the warrior band. Their carcasses fall in the wilderness—they go back to their sins as the dog returns to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. (2 Peter ii. 22.) By God's grace he resolves that he will not be one of these. In himself he knows he has no strength, but the Holy Spirit dwells within him, and in Christ, who loves him with a love which passes knowledge, he has One through whom he is more than conqueror. Each day repeats its own story of strength supplied, of grace given, of the shield of the great Captain of Salvation thrown over him when the devil was bent on desperate deeds. (2 Corinthians xii. 9.) Thus the believer is being saved out of daily difficulties, snares, and temptations, every hour adding a fresh line to the joyous song of his salvation.

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The believer *will be* saved when the Saviour comes again. Men—unconverted men—after their hardness and impenitent heart, are treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. (Romans ii. 5.) But “being now justified by His blood, we *shall be saved* from wrath through Him.” (Romans v. 9.) The Son of God, even Jesus, is the believer’s Deliverer from coming wrath. (1 Thess. i. 10.) Boldness in the day of judgment, not fear and terror, is his happy state. The One who has saved him, who is saving him, will yet save him. He is the true Ark, and He will assuredly shelter from the coming storm all who have taken refuge in Him.

Cannot you see, reader, the difference between these three aspects of salvation? Is not the believer entitled to say *he is saved*, entitled to rejoice that *he is being saved*, and to triumph in the fact that *he will be saved* from wrath through Christ? He is always confident. (2 Cor. v. 6.) But whether it be past, present, or future salvation, every shred of its glory must be laid at the Saviour’s feet. We shall cast our crowns before the throne, saying, “Thou art worthy.” Yes, blessed be His name, He is!

FROM BONDAGE TO LIBERTY.

WHAT is found written in the Old Testament was "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) God as truly speaks in the Old, as in the New Testament. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 21.) "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. i. 1, 2.)

How great the mercy of our God thus to address us, first by the prophets, and then by His blessed Son !

In Exodus we get the history of Israel's bondage and deliverance. In that history we read, in type, the story of the soul's bondage to sin and Satan, its deliverance by God, and its being brought to God. These brickmakers, forced to make bricks without straw, urged to their hard task by the lash of the Egyptian taskmasters, and groaning under the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, are but types of the sinner awakened to a sense of his fallen, sinful state and of his bondage to Satan. The "rigour" of Satan's hand is felt, and the soul knows that it is in an "evil case," as did the prodigal when he sat by the swine trough, and

reflected upon his sad state, the fruit of his own sin and folly.

Nor could these captive Israelites save themselves from Pharaoh's hand. What folly then to suppose that the sinner can save himself from the bondage of sin and Satan, or from the eternal consequences of his sins! In both instances they are without strength, and every effort to save themselves could but end in miserable failure. God was the only resource of the Israelites then, and God is the only resource of the sinner now.

Blessed be His name, He was not an unaffected witness of Israel's misery, as the following touching words bear witness, "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." (Ex. iii. 7, 8.) Here, God declares that He had espoused their cause, had seen their misery, knew their sorrows, and had come down to deliver. God was to be their Deliverer.

Then, in chapter vi. 1-8, when He reveals Himself as Jehovah, He speaks more emphatically as to what He will do for them. "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the

Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an heritage: I am the Lord."

Here we have Jehovah's seven "I wills," and at the beginning, and the end, He declares Himself to be Jehovah. Against such a Deliverer who was Pharaoh, or what was Egypt, or the Red Sea? They served but to show His power in the deliverance of His people, and in the overthrow of their adversaries!

All this speaks of God in Christ come down to accomplish the everlasting deliverance of His people, from a greater bondage than that of the Israelites. "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.) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Marvellous grace! Great Deliverer! Glorious salvation!

But they were to be a blood-redeemed people. The blood was to shelter them from Jehovah's judgment which was about to fall on the land of Egypt, and was also to be the ground of their peace and deliverance. "Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; *and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*" (Exodus xii. 21-23.) "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: AND WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD I WILL PASS OVER YOU." (Exodus xii. 13.)

The blood of the lamb met the eye of God, and averted the stroke of judgment; the word of Jehovah assured them that they were absolutely safe, and that they need not fear. Where the blood had been sprinkled *in obedience to God* they were as safe as God could make them; where the blood had not been sprinkled; *that is, where unbelief reigned*, judgment was as sure as that God ruled the universe.

The paschal lamb typified the Lamb of God

slain on Calvary, and its blood the "*precious blood of Christ*." No blood is called precious until we come to the blood of Christ, then God by the Holy Spirit says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, . . . but with *the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter i. 18-21.)

Beloved reader, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ, the 'Lamb of God, slain on Calvary for sinners? Can you say from your heart, "Thank God, He died for me"? Are you sheltered, cleansed, and redeemed to God by His precious blood? Faith, simple faith, receives that blessed One as Saviour, and appropriates His precious blood in all its saving and everlasting virtue. If you have not done so I beseech you not to remain another hour in the cold region of unbelief, where all are exposed to eternal judgment, but take your place as a sinner before God, and plead only, and trust in the blood of Jesus, and God will say to you, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over.*"

In Exodus xiii. 2 we read, "Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast: it is mine."

It is so with all the blood-sheltered and blood-redeemed people of God now. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

(1 Cor. vi. 11.) They are set apart to God in all the merits of the blood of Jesus; they are sanctified. God says of them, "*Thou art mine.*" The Holy Ghost says, "*Ye are not your own.*" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) The blessed Lord says, "*The men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.*" (John xvii. 6.)

But the Israelites were still in Egypt, and Pharaoh as yet unconquered, though he had felt the heavy hand of divine judgment. God said, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea." (Exodus xiv.) This was to be the place of Israel's extremity, of God's opportunity; of Pharaoh's total overthrow, and of Israel's complete deliverance from him and his land. God only could meet the emergency, and He did so most gloriously, blessed be His name.

Pharaoh and his army press hard upon Israel, assured of an easy victory. The people cry to God, and they are told to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. . . . The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Moses is directed of God to stretch forth his rod over the sea and divide it. A highway is made for the redeemed of the Lord to pass over, and they are told to "*Go forward.*"

All was clear before them; they had but to step out into that path that led to the other side of the Red Sea. *It was Jehovah's salvation for*

them. They do so, and reach the other side ; and when there the same rod is stretched out over the sea, “and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared ; and the Egyptians fled against it ; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.” (Ex. xiv. 26, 27.)

This is typical of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which the question of our sins was settled, Satan overthrown, and the links that connected us with the world broken for ever. By faith we see the salvation of God and are set free. Moreover, having died with Him, and risen with Him, it is our blessed privilege to walk as those who live by the life of the risen Victor. “I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. ii. 20 ; vi. 14, 15.)

What a moment that was for Israel when they stood on the other side of the Red Sea, Pharaoh and his hosts overthrown, and they themselves delivered ! From captives they become victors ; from slaves they become freemen. Instead of anguish of spirit, it is the timbrel and the song of victory. With one heart and one voice they sing, “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation . . . Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed : Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.” (Ex. xv. 1-18.)

Out of a full heart they ascribe all the praise to Jehovah who had become their salvation.

It is the same in the history of the soul whom God saves. In a state of bondage it discovers that God has come down to deliver, that the precious blood of Christ shelters from judgment, and is the ground of its every blessing. Having part by faith in His death and resurrection, and being alive unto God "*in Him*," it has passed out of the scene of death and judgment, there being "now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans viii. 1.)

Apprehending this in the faith of our souls, we are delivered, and consciously brought to God, to walk with Him in the joy of God's great salvation. With our faces steadfastly fixed heavenward, and rejoicing in the blessed fact that nothing shall separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans viii. 38, 39); we can sing—

"The Lord is risen : the Red Sea's judgment flood
Is passed in Him who bought us with His blood.
The Lord is risen : we stand beyond the doom
Of all our sins, through Jesus' empty tomb.

"The Lord is risen : with Him we also rose,
And in His grave see vanquished all our foes.
The Lord is risen : beyond the judgment land,
In Him, in resurrection life we stand.

"The Lord is risen : the Lord is gone before,
We long to see Him and to sin no more.
The Lord is risen : our triumph shout shall be—
'Thou hast prevailed ! Thy people, Lord, are free !'"

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

K. A. (Mark iv. 24).—We are to take heed *what* we hear, as elsewhere we are told to take heed *how* we hear. That which we have received from the Lord is not to be buried in our own bosom. Let it be measured out to others, for the truth which has been blessed to us may be blessed to them. The more we give out the more there will be to give, and the one who hears, the more shall he hear. There is no limit on the Lord's side. This is how we understand Mark iv. 24.

G. P.—The Lord Jesus is indeed the only Mediator between God and men, and there is no other. (1 Timothy ii. 5.) All the blessings a gracious God has to give come to us through Him. How else should they come?

ii. There is certainly a place at the Lord's-table for every Christian who is not disqualified by evil doctrine, evil practices, or evil associations. Where either of these is made light of there is but little care for the honour of the Lord's name.

J. W. — See "*Salvation, is it eternal?*" in our present issue.

T. P. (1 Peter v. 8).—Satan may be likened to a roaring lion when he excites to open persecution of God's people, and we have no reason to believe that he has laid aside that character, though for the time he may assume the form of "an angel of light," and work rather by wiles than by threats. He can take either character, or both when it suits his purpose, but his wiles are more to be dreaded than his roar.

LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!

WE live in a day when much is made of light, as it is called. No branch of knowledge, scarcely a pursuit of life, but has felt its influence. The craze for light, no longer confined to the circles of learning, is permeating every class of society. It has become one of the fashionable demands of our time. Poor Goethe's gasp, "Light! more light!" is being taken up as the watchword of progress all along the line; and with this insatiable thirst for light has come a corresponding readiness to accept as the genuine article much that is wholly unworthy of credit.

Science, we are told, is daily, hourly, bringing fresh "light" to bear on what men are pleased to call "our traditional beliefs;" and it is plainly stated by some that many of these will have to be relinquished as being no longer tenable.

Now we are not afraid of the light, but the question is, Can that which is popularly spoken of as light be properly so called? We are not demanding more than the "scientific method" permits when we ask for its credentials. Is it from above, or from beneath? Does it proceed from Him who is "the Father of lights," or is it an emanation from the prince of darkness? Do its rays issue from a

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divine source, or are they rather the *lurid glare* of that place where no *true light* is? These are important questions.

If God has in these last days let a flood of light into this distracted scene through the richer unfolding of His word, the entrance of which gives light, it is equally certain there never has been a day when the power of the prince of darkness was more manifest, nor the communication between the arch-deceiver and his dupes more closely established. At times it would almost seem as if the barrier between the visible and the invisible had been broken down, and the thin veil of the material rent in twain from top to bottom. Men traffic with demons almost as freely as with one another. Nor is this done in secret as formerly; on the contrary, its achievement is loudly vaunted from press and platform, and it is even proclaimed in some quarters as a "new gospel."

Again we ask, Is it *really light* that we are confronted with? Clearly this is the point. Little and unimportant to others as my poor bark of life may be, it contains *my all*. And if I am called upon to alter its course, is it unreasonable of me to demand solid reasons why I should make the alteration? So once more we come to the question, With what credentials does this "*fresh light*" introduce itself to our notice?

We would propose a simple test. What is its relation to Him who said, "*I am the Light of the*

world”? By this it must, for us at least, stand or fall. Is the attitude of its propounders that of the bent knee and the humble tone before Him who is *The Light*, or is it that of proud rivalry and ill-concealed opposition?

Turning our head for the moment we catch the blessed life-giving words of Jesus, “*I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*” We are listening to Him who spake as never man spake, who knew the craze for light, and more, knows the darkness which man, unknown to himself, is in. Coming in wondrous grace, He by the display of Himself threw light on everything. And if indeed He exposed the darkness of man, and the folly of his so-called light, yet He did so only that He might lead the poor groper after light up to the heart of God, from Whom straying, the whole race had plunged into the ditch of darkness.

Did we need other light than this it is not to be found. But we do not; for he that followeth the true Guide shall never stumble.

And if science bid me leave Him, bid me quit the side once pierced *for me*, I answer, “Go, *your light* is darkness, and he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”

Oh, poor “man of science”—poor slave of darkness, furnished and freighted with *this world's* wisdom, which knew not God nor recognised Him come in flesh; you know not whither you

go! The light that is in thee is darkness. You may *talk* of light, of progress in the light, and tell how you have at length succeeded in dispelling the gloom which so many centuries of "superstition and faith" had wrapped around your head. You may say that the world has grown older, has left its nursery stage, and with it the "childish beliefs" that were of use during its more tender years. Now that we are blossoming into manhood these are to be laid aside—even the old-fashioned beliefs which our fathers, faithful unto death, bled and died to preserve! Alas! for your poor world. Its judgment approaches by strides. Cloud after cloud gathers on its horizon. By wisdom it knew not God, nor by its aid does it yet discern Him. Its light is darkness, its advance a mistake, its progress a delusion! But above it all, and shining clearly and distinctly for the eye turned to see it, is *The Light of the world*. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii. 12.) Happy those who, content to be accounted fools by men, find ever-increasing delight in seeking grace to follow the footsteps of Him who has now entered into the scene of *perfect light*, footsteps which, marking, as they do, the path of the just, lead steadily and surely to the *perfect day*.

Yes, the true light now shines. But where? In the face of Jesus Christ, telling of God, His

hatred of sin, His love to the sinner, and the provision this love led Him to make on the lost one's behalf. Light about God, light about man, light about sin, self, life, and death. In the fierce light that beats upon *one side* of The Cross I read the judgment of this world, the penalty of sin, the doom of the impenitent. On the other side I learn *God's heart* of love, told out to the full; for in the gift of His Son He gave indeed the richest treasure of the storehouse of heaven for the vilest wretch on this sin-stained earth. (John iii. 16.)

In the "place of a skull" the wisdom of this world proved the height of its folly. "For *had they known it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.) But they did not. Misreading the whole story by trusting to their own light, leaders and led fell headlong into the ditch.

Oh, reader, if experience, as some tell us, is to be our guide, let us learn the lesson of history, and see to it that we follow not *that light*, found, like the will-o'-the-wisp, hovering only over the dank, noisome bogs of a fallen and depraved nature. Let us rather open heart and mind that the light that shines in the face of Jesus may shine in, giving light, and life, and liberty.

Our poor barks are beset with shoals enough and to spare—what with fleshly lusts and Satan's snares—without our adding to our difficulties by giving heed to a wrecker's light!

F. E. H.

THE UNFAILING RESOURCE.

IN John xi. we have a rare spiritual treat. In this chapter we see what the *Lord Jesus* was to the family at Bethany, and in chapter xii. we see what the *family of Bethany* was to Him. The entire passage is full of the most precious instruction.

In chapter xi. we have three great subjects presented to us—namely, first, our Lord's own path with the Father; secondly, His profound sympathy with His people; and, thirdly, His grace in associating us *with* Himself in His works, so far as that is possible.

“Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” So we see the sisters in their time of trouble turned to their divine Friend, and they were right. Jesus was a *sure* resource for them as He is for all His tried ones, wherever,

however, or whosoever they are. "Call upon *Me* in the day of trouble: *I* will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify *Me*." We make a most serious mistake when, in any time of need or pressure, we turn to the creature for help or sympathy. We are sure to be disappointed. Creature streams are dry; creature props give way. Our God will make us prove the vanity of all creature confidences, human hopes, and earthly expectations. On the other hand He will prove to us in the most touching and forcible manner the truth and blessedness of His own word—"They shall not be ashamed that wait for *Me*." No, never! *He*, blessed be His holy name, *never* fails a trusting heart! He gives "*Himself*," and with "*Himself*" He gives freely all the *best gifts* for time and for eternity.

"He *loves*, He *cares*, He *knows*,
 Nothing this truth can dim;
 He gives the *very best* to those
 Who leave the choice to Him."

Yes, He delights to take occasion from our wants, woes, and weaknesses to express and illustrate His tender care and loving-kindness in a thousand ways. *But He will first teach us the utter barrenness of all human resources.* "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see

when good cometh ; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." Yes, thus it must ever be. Disappointment, barrenness, and desolation are the sure and certain results of trusting in man. But, on the other hand—and mark the contrast, dear friends—"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope *the Lord* is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jeremiah xvii. 5-8.)

Such is the unvarying teaching of Holy Scripture on both sides of this great practical question. It is a fatal mistake to look even to the very best of men, to betake ourselves, directly or indirectly, to poor human cisterns. But the true secret of all blessedness, strength, and comfort is to look to Jesus, to betake ourselves at once to Him, whose delight is ever to help the needy, to strengthen the feeble, and to lift up those that are cast down. Hence, then, the sisters of Bethany in their hour of sorrow and pressure turned to Jesus. He only was able to help.

But He did not *at once* respond to their call, much as He loved them. He fully entered into their sorrow, and measured it perfectly ; there

was no lack of sympathy, yet He paused. It might have seemed as though the "Master" had forgotten them. Perhaps the loving Lord was changed towards them. We all know how our poor hearts torture themselves like this in times of sorrow. But there is a divine remedy for such sad thoughts—*unshaken confidence in the eternal stability of the love of Christ*. Oh, come what may, let nothing shake our confidence in His love! Let the furnace be ever so hot, the waters ever so deep, the shadows ever so dark, the pressure ever so great, let us hold fast, without wavering, our confidence in the perfect love and sympathy of the One who has proved His love by going down into the dark valley of the shadow of death to save *our* souls from everlasting burnings.

I think it is a grand thing to vindicate God! to stand, even if we can do nothing more, as a monument of His unfailing faithfulness to all who put their trust in Him. The love of God is a wise and very faithful love, hence the need of waiting much on God. He will make everything plain for us. He will bring light out of darkness, life out of death, victory out of seeming defeat. He will cause the deepest and darkest distress to bring forth the richest harvest of blessing, and will make all things work together for good, and we shall yet praise Him for His abiding love. These thoughts may help us better to understand our

Lord's manner towards the sisters of Bethany on hearing of their trouble.

The glory of God had to be considered—"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Jesus knew that this was to be an occasion for the display of the divine glory, and not for the display of personal affection, though that was very deep and real. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Should we not learn a lesson from this, and not allow personal affection, or personal fear, to have the smallest weight with us, when we have something to say or do "for the glory of God"?

Do let us remember this, it will help us marvellously. The desire for the glory of God gives us faith in God. Faith can wait God's time knowing that His time is best, and staggers not though He seems to tarry. It enables us to vindicate God amid the most intense pressure, and to confess His divine love and wisdom. In all Jesus has done for us, in all that He is doing, in all that He will do, the glory of God is fully maintained.

And so Jesus took in the entire trouble at Bethany, though when He had heard that Lazarus was sick, "He abode two days still, in the same place where He was." Things were allowed to take their course, though He felt for them, as only a *perfect human heart* could feel. He only waited

“God’s due time” to come to their aid, and light up the darkness of death and the grave with the bright beams of resurrection glory.

When Jesus arrived Lazarus was dead and buried. Looked at from nature’s standpoint, it would seem as if all hope was gone! *Lazarus was dead!* All was over! And yet the Lord had said “This sickness is not unto death!” What could He mean? He meant, “That God might be glorified.” He was with those friends in the deep waters, as He is with us in our hours of sorrow and bereavement, and when His end is reached He delivers us out of them, to *our* joy and *His* everlasting praise. For there *are* the deep waters of affliction. There *are* trials, sorrows, tribulations, and difficulties, and our God means that we should feel them, but His hand is in them for our real good and His glory.

The consciousness of Christ’s sympathy, and the intelligence of God’s object in all our afflictions, will make us rejoice in them. “He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly *therefore* will I rather *glory* in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

Jesus did not explain His reasons for not having hindered the death of Lazarus, although He had opened the eyes of the blind. Blessed “Master,” and “Servant,” it was not His business

to *explain* or to *apologize*! He had to work on in the current of the divine counsels, and for the promotion of the divine glory! He had to do His Father's will, not explain Himself to those who could not possibly understand the explanation! Let us learn a valuable lesson from this. Some of us lose a deal of time in argument, apology, and explanation in cases where such things are not in the least understood. Better far pursue, in holy calmness of spirit, in singleness of eye, and decision of purpose, the path of duty.

Now we will pass on for a few moments to the tomb of Lazarus, and there see with what lowly grace our Master and Lord sought to associate His servants with Himself in His work, in so far as that was possible. "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone." This they could do, and He most graciously calls upon them to do it. But here, too, He is made to feel sad, by the dark unbelief of the human heart. "Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.*" And what of that? Had Lazarus been dead forty days could the humiliating process of decay, even if completed, stand for a moment in the way of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life? Impossible! Bring *Him* in, and all is clear and simple; leave *Him* out, and all is dark and impossible.

Let but the voice of the Son of God be heard,

and death and corruption must vanish like the darkness of the night before the beams of the rising sun. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is truly magnificent! What are death and the grave before such *power* as *His*?

Our Lord's reply to Martha is, to me, one of the finest utterances that ever fell on human ear. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" It presents to me the very marrow, the essential principle, of the divine life. It is the eye of faith alone that can see the glory of God. Unbelief sees only difficulties, darkness, and death, as poor worried Martha saw them. Faith looks above and beyond all these to the throne of God. It

looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are unseen. It endures, as seeing Him who is invisible. It leans on His arm, makes use of His strength, walks in the light of His countenance, and sees His glory above and beyond the darkest scenes of human life.

Return with me for a moment to the tomb of Lazarus, and see how the divine glory displays itself. "Then they took away the stone where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." This was a glorious scene, displaying the Lord Jesus as Son of God with *power*, by resurrection of the dead; and a grandly *gracious* scene, in which the Son of God condescends to use man in rolling away the stone and removing the graveclothes. How good of Him to use us in any little way. May it be our joy to be ever on the alert, to be ever ready. May His grace in using us produce in us a holy readiness to be used, that God in all things may be glorified.

ADAPTED.

THE MAN WITH THE INKHORN.

READ EZEKIEL viii. ix.

IN these chapters the Holy Ghost discloses the terrible condition to which things had sunk in Ezekiel's day. Nor is it difficult to discern many of the darker features of these appalling scenes, in much that is going on around us at the present moment. Sin indeed abounds, evil men are waxing worse and worse, and the love of many is growing cold.

Verses 5 and 6 of chapter ix. show that the judgment of God was about to fall on the people because of the sins and abominations mentioned in verse 9. "Go . . . through the city, and smite," was the solemn charge given to the men with the "slaughter weapon" in their hands. But before they begin their work of judgment the God of Israel calls to "the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side," and says, "Go through the midst of the city . . . and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

I think I see him as he leaves the temple, the slayers following after with the sword of judgment. Mark the earnestness written on his face.

Precious life he has before him, and if he does not put the mark on the weeping ones the slayers will put the sword. His piercing eyes look first this way, then that, to see if there be one anywhere who weeps and sighs because of sins. He suffers nothing to hinder him in his important mission, but with burning love to those to whom he is sent he runs on his errand of mercy, if by any means he may save some.

Now we just want to say a word to our fellow-Christians. God is about to visit this world in judgment. The sword of divine justice is suspended as by a thread. At any moment it may fall, and woe to him on whom it falls. And there are, round and about us, those who feel the burden of their sins, and long for deliverance. Now, dear believer, let me appeal to you on behalf of the Lord Jesus and the perishing ones. Have *you* any desire to hold the privileged place of the man clothed with linen in our chapter? Do I hear you say, "I have not a gift"? Ah! but the great gift for soul-winning is to have burning love for souls. Without this the greatest gift is vain. Moreover, it was not to a company he went, but one by one he sought out souls, and this work is open to all.

It is no time for idling, or living to ourselves. We want love, real love to Christ and those around us, and then we shall go out in diligent search. Saved from judgment ourselves, there is a great ten-

dency in us all to settle down and be satisfied with this. Our friends, relatives, neighbours, children are perishing, and have we spoke to them of Christ? have we told them of the Saviour's love? What about those in the workshop and office? Oh, how many opportunities present themselves to us—a sick bedside, a hospital ward, a bereaved heart, by the country road, in the open air! Here are open doors to speak of Christ.

Who can tell the charming effect of speaking of the Saviour's love? What joy to our own hearts, and to those to whom we speak. Many a bright jewel will deck the crown of those who go out and seek souls one by one. We are not all preachers, but we can all do as this man did, search out souls one by one, and seek to bring them to Christ.

There is another very important way of helping on the Lord's work. In verse 8 the prophet falls on his face and prays. In this all can have part. If it be true that the most useless Christian is an idle Christian, then, dear believer, let us get our hearts bathed in the ocean fulness of His love, it will displace selfishness, worldliness, and love of ease, and we also shall go out like the man with the inkhorn in search of others. You might as well have attempted to stop a locomotive, as to stop that man. He saw one here and another there, weeping and sighing, and he had to put the mark on them lest they

should be slain. Inspired by divine love, he went from the sanctuary seeking souls for God. Alas ! alas ! too successfully has Satan wrought in getting us to move in another direction. A nice easy chair on Sunday afternoon, when teachers are wanted in the Sunday-school or help needed in the open air ! Our seats vacant at the prayer-meeting, and we ourselves too much engrossed with business to have time to think of those around us who are perishing ! Let us get down on our knees and cry to God about our coldness of heart. This is the only time we can do anything for the Lord, and our day will soon be over. How great will be the loss by-and-by, when we see other devoted hearts receiving their rewards and we getting none. The Lord in His goodness stir us up for His glory.

If these lines fall into the hands of any who feel themselves settling down and seeking ease and comfort here instead of serving the Lord, I would beseech them to cry to God to set their heart free from self and the world, and make them willing to spend and be spent for His glory. He is worthy of our all.

May the Lord give each of us, in view of the coronation-day, to seize every opportunity of telling out His love to weary hearts, and to covet earnestly that the words of the beloved apostle, "For to me to live is Christ," may be really true of us till we see His own blessed face. J. H. L.

GOD'S WAY OF HOLINESS.

THE books of Moses contain various well-known figures of the blessing God purposed in eternity for man, and in Exodus vi. 6–8 there are three things which He announces it is His determination to accomplish for Israel.

1. He will deliver Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians. (*v. 6.*)

2. He will take them to Him for a people. (*v. 7.*)

3. He will bring them into the land which He swore to Abraham to give them.

He does not here show how a God of holiness, as He afterwards declares Himself to be, could, consistently with His own character, carry out these gracious purposes, seeing that the people were in no wise better than the Egyptians. But chapter xii. supplies this in figure—the lamb slain, “a propitiation for sins.” The precise teaching of this figure of the death of the Son of God surely goes no further than to shew the means whereby *judgment* for *sins* is arrested—that it falls upon the gracious, blessed Substitute instead of upon the guilty. Still I propose, for my present purpose, to regard it as expressive of the death of Christ in its every

aspect. And this, I think, we may well do in view of what is given us in chapter xiii. 17: "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them *not* through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near." Thus there was no *judicial* obstacle to their entering the land of promise *at once*.

That which answers to this in Christ is, that the youngest believer in His blessed name is *at this moment* perfectly fitted for the presence of God. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 12, 14.)

We may regard Canaan in two ways, either as the place of promised rest, as in Hebrews iv. 9, or as the "heavenly places" of Ephesians ii. 6; either as that which will be fully enjoyed at the end when the Lord returns, or as that which may be enjoyed *now* in the power of faith. These two aspects lie connected with two entirely different lines of truth.

But we arrived at this—it was in the power of the death of the lamb that a holy God undertook, in all the freeness of divine and unfailing grace, to carry out His threefold purpose respecting this people. Now in His death, the Son of God by whom all things *were* made and *are* upheld, has borne the full judgment of a holy God against sin.

All our evil *acts* atoned for by his death, and the *evil principle* within, from whence those acts have sprung, *judged* in Him.

Thus God is free to carry out His sovereign will in associating us now with Him who has been raised from the dead, and in finally conforming us to His image. Every soul that rests upon that atoning death can therefore rejoice in seeing God unloose the bands of death, and take Him, who "became dead," from the grave, and give Him glory at His own right hand. Blessed be His name! "God . . . who raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory." (1 Peter i. 18-21.) *He* has in grace been in *our* place, that we in righteousness might be identified with Him in *His*. (2 Cor. v. 21.)

The shed and sprinkled blood in Egypt was what entitled Jehovah to carry out His purposes, and bring Israel *at once* into the land without the passage through the wilderness, if such had been His pleasure.

The death of the Son of God for sin and sins is what entitles God to transport each soul that trusts that death, immediately from earth into His own blessed presence. The thief went thus from his cross to paradise, and every believer has that same abiding fitness.

But it may be asked, "If so, why does He not take us up at once to all that endless bliss? If there is no training after we are saved by which

we are increasingly fitted for heaven, why are we left here to taste, and to pass through, it may be, years of suffering? What is the object of this?"

It is an immense relief to a tried heart to see intelligently what *God's* object with it is. The life of a saint is otherwise a tangled skein—confusion without any apparent object as the result. Our God gives His reason in Hebrews xii. 10, "That we might be partakers of His holiness." And in what follows I desire to set this plainly in form. I therefore ask your careful attention to another subject.

The observant reader of Scripture will have noticed in the epistle to the Romans that the first part up to chapter iii. 1–19 is occupied mainly with what *man* has *done*—both the Jew and the Gentile. Then in a few verses (20–26) is shown how God provided for those *guilty acts*. "A propitiation through faith in His blood," &c. And in chapter v. His way of grace towards those who are "ungodly," and "sinners," and "without strength," and "enemies" is still spoken of down to the end of verse 11. Then in the following verse to the close of chapter vii. a new subject is dealt with, not actual *offences*, but an *element* or *principle* having *positive power*—not a *person*, but a *power* that acts with such energy and might that one could almost think of it *as* a being, and withal so bold as to carry one who is under it to risk *certain* exposure and deepest shame. Ah!

I know that many real children of God have *consciously* experienced the power of this thing "SIN" in but a *very feeble way*. Yet it *exists* in every real Christian, and *rules* all the *world*.

The reader will see that "sin" in verse 12 of chapter v. has no "s" at the end. It is mentioned thirty-seven times in Romans, and must never be confounded with SINS. God laid our "sins" on Jesus. He "bare our *sins* in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) "In whom we have . . . the forgiveness of sins." When, however, God speaks of dealing with the thing, SIN, He does not speak of *forgiveness*, but of *judgment* of it. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for SIN, condemned [or judged] sin in the flesh." (viii. 3; see also chap. vi. 6.)

Now in Genesis iii. 6 God has given us historically how this thing SIN came into man. Hence He says, in Romans v. 12, "By one man SIN entered into the world"; and in verse 21 that strange expression occurs, "SIN hath *reigned*." How little conscious sense there is in Christians of having been the *slave* of this power; that, though before salvation they lived comparatively blameless lives, they were all the while "reigned" over by this strange, subtle, and mighty foe. If you ask, What are its characteristics? I reply, PRIDE, INDEPENDENCE OF GOD, and LOVE OF EVIL. You say, Then why were not *all* those things found always actively in me before I was saved?

Because man acquired another new thing when he sinned—conscience—the knowledge of good and evil; and God, in His wonderful mercy, has acted upon you, through this, by the surroundings in the midst of which you have been brought up and spent your life. By the power of conscience, or by some other means, He has mercifully kept you from doing what others indulge in. There is no room for boasting. See Genesis xx. 6, “*I withheld thee from sinning against Me.*”

We have seen above how God has dealt with SIN in judgment. “That the body of sin (the thing in its totality) might be destroyed” (or annulled). (Rom. vi. 6.) “God condemned SIN.” (Rom. viii. 3.) “Ye are circumcised . . . in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision [or death] of Christ.” (Col. ii. 11.) Thus all that God had to do as to judgment respecting this thing, SIN in us, He *has* done in the death of Christ; for we must see that all evil *must* receive its due from God. Hence we have the privilege of looking at SIN in us as no longer “I,” but as a hateful foe that *God* has *judged*. (Rom. vii. 17–20.)

But something more is needed than this. Though we have a *new* life (Christ in us) that hates the *old* thing, we need the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven at Pentecost, that *He* may be the power in us which shall effectually resist the might of this old foe.

A divine Person, the eternal Son, *alone* could put away our sins. Another divine Person has come down, who *alone* is able to repress SIN in us.

Now this is the new wonder, inaugurated by the coming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Children of him who originally was created free of SIN, we, in Adam's fall, came under its *absolute dominion*. Delivered from its power through the judgment of it in Christ on the cross, we are now set up in the *same scene* of ruin, where SIN still rules everywhere, and with SIN still *within*—to live here to the glory of God, and to be kept from yielding to this indwelling foe by the superior power of the Holy Spirit. What a divine wonder! Slaves turned into masters by divine power. The creature once—alas! *willingly*—the slave of this power, now set above it in the power of a divine Person dwelling in us. “The law of the SPIRIT of LIFE in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans viii. 2.)

What wondrous ways and resources does our God reveal. First, He shows man upon the earth *without* SIN, but liable to fall. Next, this creature departed from dependence, and thus fallen under a foreign power—SIN. Then His blessed Son came here as man, with neither SIN nor the possibility of it, and yet a real man, carried on, in His perfect dependence and obedience, by divine power—anointed with the Holy Ghost,

&c. And next, through grace, expressed in the death of God's Son, we see sins put away and SIN judged; and we, thus dead to SIN, set up here to be, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as *free* from it as we before had been *enslaved* by it. This is one of God's great present objects with His beloved children, and presently the entire purpose will be accomplished. "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son."

But, beloved, have *you* learned this practical deliverance from SIN? Have you (not as a doctrine merely) tasted the bitterness in your soul of the power of this thing? Let me say, if you have not known the *bondage* you have not known the *deliverance*.

Would that the dear children of God knew by *experience* (not by practice) more of this terrible thing, that they might also *experimentally* know more of the delivering power of the Holy Spirit. The word says, "If we live *by* the Spirit, let us also walk *by* the Spirit." (New Translation.) (Gal. v. 25.) Beloved reader, do you know, as a thing you have as distinctly learned as you learned the forgiveness of sins, what it is to "*walk by the Spirit*"?

E. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. G. S.—Young in years though you are, you cannot be wrong in seeking to serve the One who has called you in your early days to a knowledge of Himself. No one can point out to you exactly what form your service should take, but if you are near the Lord and ready to serve, you will find many opportunities, and He will work in you first to will and then to do according to His good pleasure. (Philippians ii. 13.) The willing and the working are both alike from Him—first the inward purpose and then the outward action. Samuel the prophet was but a child when he “ministered unto the Lord,” and the deeply-instructive story of Naaman had its origin in the simple utterance of a little captive maid. Let these examples encourage you, and be careful in your serving to shew by your life that you do indeed serve the Lord Christ. May the “God of all encouragement” lead you on and make you a blessing to many.

J. C. K., New York.—We cannot for a moment think that prayer for daily preservation and for the supply of temporal wants indicates a lack of faith on the part of the one who thus prays. Prayer is the expression of dependence, and in this manner we confess that all the mercies that bestrew our pilgrim path come from God’s gracious hand alone. The knowledge of this is very precious to the heart of the Christian. It is quite true that God does not need to

be reminded of our needs, but the same thing holds true as to everything you may pray about, and so if your thought were carried to its legitimate length it would exclude prayer altogether. What an appalling loss that would be! Be assured that in all these things it is our wisdom to follow the Word of God in a simple, childlike, unreasoning spirit. That Word encourages us to be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let our requests be known unto God. It assures us that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without *our Father*. Now the Lord would have us know that we are of more value than many sparrows. Speaking for ourselves, we regard it as a most precious privilege to be permitted to go to God about everything, be it small or great, knowing that His ear is open and His love more than can be measured. Oh the blessedness of unburdening one's heart before Him, making known one's every need and having the heart kept by His own peace which passeth all understanding. We trust, dear friend, that you know something of this.

Have you ever noticed the marginal reading of Isaiah lxii. 6? "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest." Here are words of astonishing graciousness. The duty of a remembrancer in kings' courts was to remind the King of things not to be forgotten. Now God in His great grace permits the matter to be put in that very human way. He loves to be reminded, though He forgets nothing. What an incentive to prayer this should be!

THREE GREAT THINGS ;

OR,

COMMUNION, WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper ; and Martha served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair : and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”—JOHN xii. 1-3.

WE have illustrated here, in the most striking and forcible manner, the three grand features which ought to characterize every Christian ; namely, calm, intelligent *communion*, as seen in Lazarus seated at the table ; holy *worship*, as seen in Mary at the feet of her Lord ; and loving *service* as seen in Martha, in her preparations about the house. All three go to make the Christian character, all three should be exhibited in every Christian assembly. It is a great mistake to set any one of these features in opposition to the others, inasmuch as each in its proper place is lovely, and each should find its proper place in all.

Thus it was at Bethany. Lazarus was at the table, Mary at the Master's feet, Martha about the house. All was in beautiful order, because Christ was the Object of each. Lazarus would

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have been quite out of place preparing the supper, and if Martha had sat at the table there would have been no supper prepared.

But both were in their right places, and we may be sure that both would rejoice in the odour of Mary's ointment, as she poured it on the feet of their ever-loving and beloved Lord and Friend. I am sure all this is conveyed to us in that one sentence "There *they* made Him a supper." It was not one more than another—all had part. Christ was the Centre, and each moved around Him. So should it ever be with us, and would be if only *self* were set aside, and each heart simply occupied with Christ Himself. It is sad that we are so occupied with ourselves, *our* little doings, *our* little sayings and thinkings. We attach importance to work, not in proportion to its bearing upon the glory of Christ, but to its bearing upon our own reputation. Oh that we might be more self-forgetting! If Christ were our one object—as He surely will be throughout eternity, and ought to be now—we should not care the least who did the work, or rendered the service, if only *His* name might be glorified. If Christ reigns in the heart we shall rejoice to see *His* name magnified, *His* cause prospering, *His* people blessed, *His* gospel spread abroad.

But we return to the little family at Bethany. Should we not, each of us, seek to realize and exemplify the three distinct phases of the Christian

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life, as shown in Lazarus, Mary and Martha? We notice in John xii. the divine and heavenly side of the subject. In Luke x. we have the human side. Here there is a little collision. When Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him and said, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Here we find that Martha's self-occupation marred her service, and drew forth words of reproof from the lips of her loving, yet faithful, Lord—words which would never have fallen upon her ear had she not interfered with her sister Mary. Her service had its value and its place; but, blessed be His name, He will not allow anyone to interfere with another. Each had her own place. Jesus loved Martha and her sister, but if Martha will complain of her sister she must learn that there is something more to be thought of than preparing a supper. Had Martha gone quietly on her way, serving the Master, she would not have had a rebuff, but she was evidently in a wrong spirit. She was not in *communion* with the mind of Christ; had she been so she never could have used such words to her Lord as

"*Dost Thou not care?*" Surely He does care about us, and all our ways. The smallest service done to Him is precious to His loving heart, and will never be forgotten; but we must not interfere with one another's service, or intrude on His domain. Our blessed Lord will not suffer it. Whatever He gives us to do, let it be done simply to Him. We may all enjoy intimate communion, we may all worship, we may all serve, we may all be acceptable. But the best *preparation* for action is sitting at the Master's feet to hear His word. Had Martha understood this she would not have complained of her sister; but as she raised the question, and gave occasion for any comparison, she had to learn that a hearing ear, and a worshipping heart are more precious than busy hands. Our hands may be busy while the ear is heavy, and the heart far away; but if the heart is right, the ear, hands and feet will be right also. Martha's heart was right in the main, but there was an element that needed correction. "*Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.*" This was all wrong. Service was not confined to cooking, and Martha had to learn that. A hundred might be found to serve a supper for one that would break an alabaster box.

What is any act of service worth, without the true and deep devotion of the heart? Nothing! If we make service our object, our service will

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become a snare and a hindrance. If Christ be our object, we shall be sure to do the right thing without thinking about ourselves, or our work. Thus it was with Mary in John xii. She was occupied with Jesus. She did not interfere with anyone else, she was absorbed with Christ and His position at the moment. The true instincts of love guided her, and what she did was done with all her heart, and Jesus appreciated her act.

How glorious was Mary's reward! Listen to these words: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Dear Mary of Bethany, no costly stone marks thy resting-place! *This* thy memorial stone—"She hath done what she could" from the Saviour's own lips. *He* had come to give *His* best, *His* all, and already the cross loomed in the near future. He was about to do a work which He alone could accomplish. *His* sacrifice so great and divine, and *hers* so small and womanly, were alike in this, that they were the utmost offering a loving heart could make. Both acts so alike in one respect, in another how different. Mary gave her best to One who valued and appreciated the gift; Christ suffered and died for those who despised and hated Him. Truly His love has no equal.

When Christ spoke of His death to His disciples they put away the unwelcome thought,

and Peter sought to dissuade Him from so dark a path, but Mary seemed instinctively to feel that her Lord would not be long with her. *Love* is keensighted, and she felt that if she wished to gladden Him with any token of affection she must do it *quickly*. When He calmly said that her anointing was for His burial, perhaps she was the least surprised of the company. She had entered deeply into the spirit of His life, and was rewarded with His word of loving approval. Others afterward brought their sweet spices, only to find the grave empty and *their opportunity gone*. How true is it that those who live much in the presence of Christ, and listen to His voice, learn when, and how, to serve Him acceptably, and though often misunderstood and censured by others, they hear His gracious whisper of encouragement and delight. It was no little thing to shed a ray of sunshine into the gloom that was fast gathering round Him, to serve Him with *loving* hands before He was taken by *violent* ones to suffering and death, to give Him glimpses into a heart loyal to its core, before He was forsaken of all, and left to meet the last enemy alone. It was thus that Mary was honoured to anoint our Saviour for His burial. Little wonder that the fragrance filled the house, and that it floats down the ages, side by side with the mighty sacrifice of Calvary, to show forth the high value that Christ sets on the love that pours its best at His feet.

ADAPTED.

“NEW.”

SOMETHING new, wholly and essentially new!

Turn to Heb. viii. 13. “In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old,” so we read in our grand Old Version. Yet the Greek is even more striking. There it is simply—“In that He saith ‘*NEW*!’” for there is no word in the original for “covenant.”

It is one of those bold, brief ejaculations of Scripture that call attention by their very abruptness.

And the Greek word for “New” here is not that which signifies repaired, or even renovated, as it may be possible to renew an article that has run out of repair, but it signifies what is absolutely and radically new, something which had not existed before. It is the same word as we find in Col. iii. 10, the “new man.”

Now this attaches great importance to the character of the “*New Covenant*.” It is one of a distinctly different kind and order from the old. An amalgamation or infusion of the two is not allowed. They are essentially distinct. The old may have furnished types and shadows of the new, but in nature they stand apart. The old was legal,

and dealt with man on the ground of responsibility ; the new is of grace, and takes up the cause of man as he is—guilty, and without strength. It is therefore a better covenant, and is established on better promises. As to its *letter*, it is to be made with Israel and Judah after those days—that is, with the nation when Christianity as such, and the Church, have run the course of their testimony here ; but as to the *spirit* of it Paul could write—“Hath made us able ministers of the new covenant” (2 Cor. iii.), “not of the letter, but of the spirit.” And, seeing that the blood of Christ is called “the blood of the new covenant” we (Christians) have thereby the remission of our sins. Hence we read, in Heb. x., “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” That is, although the new covenant is not *de facto* made with Christians, yet the old covenant—as a covenant or compact—has passed away, and we stand before God on the ground of the new—that is, on the ground of grace.

Then is the law abrogated ? Certainly not ! If so, when ? The passing away of the old covenant was not a doing away with the law, but of the means of blessing on that basis. The old covenant was, “This do, and thou shalt live” ; but the cross of Christ demonstrated to all, that blessing could not be obtained on the principle of works—nay, it proved man utterly guilty, and therefore the old covenant was faulty and ineffectual. Good in itself, the material on which it wrought was

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thoroughly bad, so that it was "weak through the flesh."

That covenant then has passed away, though the law—the Ten Commandments—being a principle of perfect morality, retains its force for ever.

But God is dealing with man now, not on the ground of the old and legal covenant, but on the ground of *grace*, a precious principle that meets poor guilty and needy man, whether sinner or saint, just where and as he is; and whilst allowing room for all governmental and corrective measures, proves itself the one and perfect way of his salvation and blessing, from the lowest point of spiritual need to the highest height of heavenly favour. Well may we thank God that His Spirit could pen such a sentence—"In that He saith '*NEW*.'"

J. W. S.

ON CALVARY WE'VE ADORING STOOD.

ON Calvary we've adoring stood,
 And gazed on that wondrous cross,
 Where the holy, spotless Lamb of God
 Was slain in His love for us;
 How our hearts have stirred at that solemn cry,
 While the sun was enwrapt in night,
 "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!*"
 Most blessed, most awful sight!

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Our sins were laid on His sacred head—
 The curse by our Lord was borne ;
 For us a victim our Saviour bled,
 And endured that death of scorn ;
 Himself He gave our poor hearts to win
 (Was ever, Lord, love like Thine !)
 From the paths of folly, and shame, and sin,
 And fill them with joys divine.

We've watched by the tomb where our Saviour lay
 When He entered the gloomy grave ;
 And by death the power of death might slay,
 And His lambs from the lion save.
 Oh, glorious time when the Victor rose !
 He liveth, no more to die !
 He hath bruised the head of our mighty foes—
 For us was His victory !

The gates of heaven are opened wide,
 At His name all the angels bow ;
 The Son of man who was crucified
 Is the King of glory now :
 We love to look up and behold Him there,
 The Lamb for His chosen slain ;
 And soon shall the saints all His glory share,
 With their Head and their Lord shall reign.

And now we draw near to the throne of grace,
 For His blood and the Priest are there ;
 And we joyfully seek God's holy face
 With our censer of praise and prayer—
 The burning mount and the mystic veil,
 With our terrors and guilt, are gone ;
 Our conscience has peace that can never fail,
 'Tis the Lamb on high on the throne.

BRIGHTER ON BEFORE.

WHEN H.M.S. *Victoria* was struck, we are told, she went down almost immediately in deep water. Thus one of the finest vessels England ever boasted of was lost to view.

When the news reached America, persons flocked by thousands to see a gigantic model of the lost ship; and whilst viewing the model many, no doubt, imagined they were looking at the vessel itself.

When the Church of God was launched at Pentecost she was graced with everything desirable. Her works were acceptable to God, and her deportment commended her to the consciences of those around. Her members "were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 4), and with the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, they abounded in love one toward another. As a whole, they neither feared the world's frown, nor sought its favour, and instead of conforming to the world, they were separated from it in heart, and could therefore testify to the evil thereof.

When united prayer was offered, the place wherein they were assembled was shaken; and when the word of God was preached, the power of the Lord was present, and great blessing was the result. Although there were a "multitude"

of believers, they "were of *one* heart and of *one* soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts iv. 32.)

The church, as seen at the beginning, has long since been lost to view, and the state of things which then existed will never be witnessed again.

Are we then to suppose that faithfulness to God, devotedness to Christ, and separation from this evil world are altogether things of the past? Indeed they are not, and to affirm such to be the case be would a denial of the word of God, which has so carefully distinguished between the few that had not defiled their garments, and the many that had done so. Who could be more highly approved of than those to whom the Lord says, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name"? (Rev. iii. 4-8.) And these features will be found in some as long as the Church is on earth. Now it calls for more courage to be faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness, than when the hearts and efforts of the people of God are united in one. But the overcomer is sure to get his reward; and the Lord's portion in them that continue faithful to Him will be greater in proportion than at the beginning.

At the same time the fact remains, as regards the Church as a whole, that not only has she failed in her responsibility as a witness for Christ on

earth, and towards men, but she has also degraded herself as the bride of Christ and dishonoured her Lord (like Sarah of old in the house of Abimelech) by disowning His claims, and denying her heavenly calling. Instead of keeping her character as His "undefiled one" below, devoted to "her Beloved" One on high, she has conformed to the world that cast Him out and crucified Him.

The assembly of God, it may still be said, is composed of a "multitude" of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it could no longer be said they are "of *one* heart and of *one* soul." For the hearts of many are divided and their opinions are diverse; and instead of having "all things common," they choose to differ with each other, and have but little in common.

There is but one object after all in which the heart of every true Christian can be centred, and that object is Christ. All that are His are saved with a "common salvation." There is but one path also marked out for them that are His. It is the same path as the Lord Himself trod when He was on earth, and each believer is responsible to trace His footprints and to walk in them. We shall see by referring to Ps. i. 1 that it is a path of separation from evil, and by walking therein, we both prove our obedience to God, and show to those around that we are indeed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

If the Church of God has lost her former

beauty and has become a wreck in appearance, never to shine so brightly on earth again, there is no need for saints to be alarmed or discouraged. Let them betake themselves to the Word of God, and learn what His purpose is in regard to His assembly. Let them listen to what He says therein, as follows: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love," and let them also look onward by faith to the fulfilment of His will in respect to its members who have been predestinated "to be conformed to the image of His Son." The church, which is the body and bride of Christ, He will present "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. i. 4; Rom. viii. 29; and Eph. v. 27.)

To know the history of the Church on earth with all its failure is calculated to fill us with shame. But when we come to see what her destiny in glory is we can take courage, and, while ceasing to think of what she *is* at her worst state, as represented in the second epistle of Timothy, and of what she *was* even at her very best, we can remember what she is in Christ (perfect in comeliness), and look forward to what she will be at His appearing.

"We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."
(1 John iii. 2.)

H. H.

“MUCH FRUIT.”

THERE is something very interesting in the request made by certain Greeks in John xii. 21, when they came to Philip and said (I believe in all good faith) “Sir, we would see Jesus.”

It was not made by Pharisees, nor chief priests, who had, indeed, abundant opportunity for both seeing and hearing Him at the very feast which furnishes the occasion.

No, it was the desire of Greeks (Gentiles) who had come to worship there.

Drawn by religious motives and by the fact that the gods which, as Gentiles, they worshipped, were but “dumb idols,” and dissatisfied, we may assuredly assume, by the hollowness of their Grecian mythology, they now expressed their desire to see Him whose name and fame had been published throughout the land, and in whom, perhaps, they expected to find a something that would meet their own vacant and needy souls.

It is in itself no small testimony to the glory of His person who was thus in their midst. Rejected by Israel, He was sought for by the despised Gentile — refused by the one, He is enquired for by the other. The last is first.

We do not read, however, that their desire was granted. The Lord, on hearing about it from the lips of Philip and Andrew, said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." His thoughts turn at once to the hidden significance of what the gratification of such a desire on the part of the Gentiles should be. It signified His death. Rejected as Israel's Messiah, He would take the wider place of Son of man—a term which, as in Ps. viii., embraces a much larger range than the "Anointed" of Psalm ii.; but then, in order to fill that larger range, He must first die!

Hence "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (v. 24.) And the "much fruit" now under gracious contemplation necessitated His death.

There could be no blessing for man, whether Gentile or Jew, apart from this blessed corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying. He would otherwise have remained alone. Now this is all very touching. Had He "remained alone" His place and title as Creator and Lord would have still been His own—He would still have claimed angelic adoration and universal homage; but redemption, with its magnificent train of glory to Himself and of salvation to countless myriads of fallen and guilty men, who should thankfully own their indebtedness to His atoning

blood, would have been unknown. There would have been no Redeemer, no Saviour—only a Creator and Judge!

Had He remained alone, then so should we. He in glory, and we in hell! He in His own proper and pristine bliss, and we in the hopeless doom our sins had merited; for God and sin are essentially separate. But, blessed be His name, He fell into the ground and died. It was His own voluntary act, and thereby supplied the basis of blessing. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." But His blood was shed.

The importance of this passage in John xii. cannot be overstated, and the question raised by these poor Gentiles gave occasion for the opening out of this deep and wondrous truth. It was the hour when the Son of man should be glorified, not, observe, the enthroning of the Messiah (another and distinct truth), but the glorification of the Son of man, as the consequence of His death as the corn of wheat. What a happy truth for us Gentiles who had no claim on Him as Messiah, nor a single promise given us on our behalf! Now we may know Him as the dead and risen Son of man, our Lord Jesus, through whom all, both Jews and Gentiles, are welcome to all the fruits of His death on Calvary.

J. W. S.

“MY SERVANT CALEB.”

NUMBERS xiv. 24.

THE Wilderness Book, as Numbers has been called, furnishes us in Caleb with an example of one who was essentially a wilderness man, for it was in this character that he was commended of God. Of his history little is recorded, save the account contained in the 14th chapter of Numbers, and again in a few verses in the 14th and 15th of Joshua. Two words, however, throw a most decided and all-important light upon his previous history. In chap. xiv. 24 it is recorded that he “followed” Jehovah “fully,” in striking contrast with those in the previous verse, who were said to have “provoked” the Lord. The Spirit of God thus indicates for us the two distinct ways in which the wilderness may be passed through. Every bit of contrariety, murmuring, or discontent, not to mention worse, partakes of the character of “provoking” God; while in Caleb is set before us the habitual conduct and course that is approved of God. Five times, at least, this blessed servant of God is said to have “wholly” or “fully” followed the Lord.

This wilderness man, consequently, appears before us, against the dark background of the

rebellion and unbelief of Israel, in refreshing relief. It is grace indeed that furnishes us with one example at least of how to traverse the wilderness, so as to meet the approval of our God, with whom we traverse it, in contrast to the mass against whose example we are warned in 1 Cor. x. 1-11.

We are accustomed to think of Caleb as one, who, on the occasion of a crisis in Israel's history, suddenly appears on the scene, in faithful testimony to the power of Jehovah on behalf of His people, on the one hand, and in faithful remonstrance with Israel, as to their unbelief, on the other. But, it is of the last importance to bear in mind that Caleb is no exception to the divine principle, that energy and activity for God in a crisis can only be the fruit and consequence of habitual, persevering, and personal faithfulness previously. There is no such thing in a spiritual history, as carelessness and unfaithfulness in practical ways, being transformed by a sudden fit of faithfulness into capacity to stand for God in an emergency. Jehovah's oft-repeated testimony to Caleb as one who "wholly followed," furnishes us with the key to his standing for God when the crisis came.

A short review of Jehovah's leadings, whereby Caleb profited, in that he "followed the Lord fully," may be both helpful and instructive.

From Joshua xiv. 7 it is clear that Caleb was

thirty-eight years subject to the bondage and cruel oppression of Pharaoh, only two years of Israel's journeyings having passed when he went up to Kadesh-barnea, at which time he was forty years old. He was consequently one whose history commenced in the land of Egypt, in the full personal consciousness of Israel's deep distress, as captives and slaves, under the tyranny of Pharaoh.

In this condition the word of the Lord reached him through Moses, the servant of the Lord, and was doubtless received in all the simplicity and confidence of one who *fully followed*. As the fruit of this whole-hearted reception of divine communications, Caleb found himself in possession of the *purpose* of Jehovah, as stated in Exodus iii. 7, 8, and a corresponding *prospect*. These two inseparable things formed a spring of unfailing and unfading delight to the heart of Caleb.

Caleb too was one of those who passed through that “night to be much observed” when judgment swept through the land of Egypt, from the visitation of which Israel themselves were only saved by being sheltered beneath the blood of the Paschal Lamb.

In that energy of faith for which Caleb is commended, doubtless that night was passed in perfect certainty as to the security furnished by the blood of the lamb of Jehovah's appointing. Whatever uncertainty, or anxiety, on account of lack of faith might disturb other hearts, we may

rest assured that no shadow of doubt crossed the mind of this faithful follower of Jehovah. In absolute and unclouded *peace* he passed that eventful night, and we may conclude he carried with him from that moment the consciousness of what it was to be thus brought in peace under the protection of Jehovah, and that he trod the weary desert sands for forty years in the power of it.

But scarcely had this newly-found spring of enjoyment been tasted before a further experience, as important and blessed as that which had been so recently acquired, was added, in the overwhelming destruction of Pharaoh's army, with which he presumptuously ventured to pursue the people of God.

If the “night” had brought the knowledge of peace, “the morning” established once and for ever in Caleb's wondering heart the *power* of Jehovah. “Glorious in power” was He, and this furnished the theme for the triumph song of Exodus xv. Thus another and never-to-be-forgotten lesson as to the infinite resources of Israel's God was acquired by faithful Caleb.

But the wilderness, into which Israel was now fairly launched, was only to furnish a fresh field for the further display of Jehovah's resources on behalf of His people. The arid desert, “that great and terrible wilderness,” contained in itself no sustenance for one individual of the 600,000 men “able to go to war,” besides women and

children, and the "mixed multitude." Caleb was now to learn that Jehovah was able to sustain, by adequate *provision*, the host that was dependent upon Him, so that not one should lack food or drink. How Caleb's heart would open in full and faithful reception of the grace thus displayed, and unhesitatingly count upon its continuance, to meet the needs of the people. The wilderness sustaining measure resulted in "nothing over" but "no lack." The manna and the rock that sent forth its living and perennial stream of life-sustaining waters would furnish him with the peculiar delight of a faithful and grateful heart.

Nor can we suppose for a moment that Caleb allied himself at any time with those who murmured so frequently, and who, from depreciating "this manna" at the commencement of their journey (Num. xi. 6) are discovered at the close loathing "this light bread." (Num. xxi. 5.) Sad but true result of returning in heart to Egypt, *i.e.* the world, after having been, by redemption, delivered from it.

After two years of travelling in the wilderness, the confines of "the good land" are reached, and Caleb is selected with Joshua and others, one from each tribe, to view the inheritance into which Jehovah had promised to bring them. Surely, in itself the sending of the spies betrayed a lack of faith, though sanctioned by God, in His grace towards them, for the report was practically to

verify His word. They return, and in the first instance all unite in testifying to the fruitfulness of the land, bearing with them a sample of the rich abundance they had seen. But whatever the fruit might be, the foes and the fortifications measured against the unarmed condition of the nation, and viewed in unbelief by the ten, presented insurmountable obstacles to the conquest of the country.

But Caleb, trained in the conviction of Jehovah's resources, meets the crisis in all the dignity of unhesitating confidence in Him, and "stilled the people." Blessed service and blessed servant, ready for the emergency. Decided in his judgment, and prompt in his testimony to the power that was for them, if only there was faith to avail themselves of it, he said, "Let us go up at once . . . for we are well able to overcome it." But it was impossible to reverse the habitual spirit of distrust and unbelief that hitherto characterized Israel.

Once more Caleb with Joshua appeals to the people: "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us." But faithfulness and remonstrance are only met by the nation's revolt, "and all the congregation bade stone them with stones," and shortly after God's sentence against the responsible adults (chap. xiv. 28-34) fell upon them.

And Caleb—while Israel lost everything

through unbelief—what had he gained? For surely this faithful follower was not destined to 38 years of unavailing regret and bitter disappointment, unrelieved by any special sustainment to carry him through those weary years. May it not be said that Caleb's faith-journey, in contrast to what can only be called the carnal excursion of the ten, furnished him with *a portion he had never known before*. Had he not traversed in faith, a scene upon which every interest of his being was concentrated henceforth, lightening the dreary desert wanderings, sustaining his heart, controlling his conduct? Though in the wilderness in fact, in spirit he lived where the purposes of Jehovah were centred—Jehovah's land, the true home of his heart. Whatever of prospect he before enjoyed, that faith-journey had supplied him with a new, blessed, and sustaining portion.

Thus, whatever of interest may gather around Caleb's earlier history, that interest deepens, and we might almost say centres, in his wilderness life from this eventful period, as read in the light of the new and deep apprehension which henceforth constituted his delight and support.

Here the instructive wilderness history of Caleb may be said to close. But it is deeply interesting to notice that, when he duly enters upon the possession of his inheritance in the land, this man of faithfulness in the wilderness comes out as the

man of power in conflict in the new scene. There he answers again to the mind of Jehovah, where the seven-fold power of evil was arrayed against Israel (Joshua xiv. 12, and xv. 13,14), in that he "drove out thence the three sons of Anak" (ch. xiii. 28) from his inheritance. He provoked others also to the same conflict, and further, being in possession of "the upper springs and the nether springs," he became a channel of blessing to others in bestowing them.

While Caleb's previous experiences may be traced without any comment, as representing in type the counterpart of the normal progress of spiritual experience in the Christian, a word may be desirable as to the last phase of his wilderness history.

The *purposes* of God may have unfolded a wonderful *prospect for us, consequent upon peace* through the blood being known. The *power* of God, as realised in the destruction of Satan's power in redemption, may have furnished a song of thanksgiving, and the sustainment of His gracious *provision* for the way be well known, without the believer having as yet really entered upon the peculiar *portion*, which "faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him [Christ] from the dead" furnishes. What has befallen Him, whose portion is our portion, ere possession in actuality becomes ours, may not yet have become a sustaining reality to the heart. This is set before us doctrinally in

Colossians iii. 1-4, and practically in Phil. iii. 8-14, where, traversing the wilderness, the heart is controlled and sustained by a portion, not yet a possession, in heaven. The heart's affections, by means of a heavenly Object, are there seen to be linked with the scene above and beyond, which only becomes livingly ours "through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. ii. 12.) A faith-journey indeed is this, and contrasts absolutely with the mere carnal excursion of an intellectual mind, traversing without faith the heavenly places, and, it may be, with much precision and accuracy holding the truth, while personally uncontrolled and unsustained by it.

One little clause, the last of Num. xiv. 24, may be noticed for our encouragement. Speaking of the blessing ensured to Caleb on account of his faithfulness, the word is, "and his seed shall possess it"; doubtless applicable in the first instance to Caleb's *actual descendants*, but also ensuring the favour and blessing of our God, wherever there is found one whose heart, like Caleb's, is set upon wholly following, and thus becoming a *spiritual descendant* of this faithful servant. But let it be distinctly remembered, that wilderness testings result in one of two things, either in provoking our God, on the one hand, or in following Him, on the other (as set before us in Num. xiv. 13, 14); and that discouragement from

a responsible source, as to going forward, can only result in its effect upon God's people in their practically saying, "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" (Ch. xiv. 3.)

It may be said, in conclusion, that while Joshua represents the Spirit of Christ as leading into *heavenly places*, and conflict there, Caleb may be further viewed as a type of the Spirit of Christ, carrying the believer normally and uninterruptedly according to the mind of God, through the *wilder-ness*: thus furnishing us in grace with a divine model as to *how* to pass through it (*i.e.* the world after redemption for us) suitably to His mind and desires.

M. C. G.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H. (Matthew xiii. 45, 46).—We believe the "one pearl of great price," mentioned in this short but lovely parable, is none other than that church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, according to Ephesians v. 25. It is a mistake to suppose that Christ is the pearl, and that the seeking merchantman is the sinner. The unconverted sinner is very far indeed from seeking goodly pearls, and if Christ be the pearl what has the sinner got, even when he has sold his all and converted it into current coin? Is he possessed of a sum large enough to buy so choice a gem? We think not. Moreover, the Saviour is not like a jewel shewn in a shop for sale. He is God's unspeakable *gift*, far beyond the power of men to buy, yet offered without money and without price to any who care to have Him.

S. S. (Revelation iv. 10).—The scene presented in this chapter is a heavenly one. The apostle John saw “A door opened in heaven,” and heard a voice saying “Come up hither.” The history of the church on earth, pictured in the addresses to the seven churches in chapters ii. iii. had closed, and now a heavenly scene appears to view. The four and twenty elders represent the glorified saints in their priestly and kingly character. They are seen sitting on “thrones” around the supreme and central throne, and they are thus seen *before* the opening of the vials and the sounding of the trumpets of impending judgments. It is a pre-millennial scene, and it is prior to the marriage of the Lamb mentioned in chapter xix.

E. G. D.—It is a most precious fact that the Master whom we serve forgets nothing, but will remember the least thing done to Him. Be it so insignificant as the giving of a cup of cold water to another, if love to Christ be the motive, it shall in nowise lose its reward. What the reward shall be must be left to His sovereign pleasure. Nothing shall we value so much as His commendation—that will be more than any gift, or any place of distinction which He may assign to one and another in His glorious kingdom. That there will be differences it is evident. To sit on His right hand and on His left in His kingdom shall be given to them for whom it is prepared, as the Lord Himself tells us in Matthew xx. 23. Every one cannot sit there. So in the parable of Luke xix. 12–27 the same differences are found. If we think of the saints as children in the family of God these distinctions have no place. In the home circle all are children alike, but as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ each shall have his appointed place in His kingdom.

LIKE THE BEREANS.

WHEN the apostle Paul went to Berea and preached the gospel unto them they did not receive what he said simply because he said it. It is true "they received the word with all readiness of mind," but we are also told that they "searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." (Acts xvii. 11.)

In this the Bereans are a fine example to us. Walking in their steps we too shall test all we hear and read by the holy scriptures. No doubt in doing so they humbly sought divine light, and so should we, for the help of the Holy Spirit is needed to the right understanding of the word of God.

Many a time in these pages we have sought to shew that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved, and that he should know it for himself. We fear there are numbers who do not. Nor need we wonder at it, for there are many voices heard to-day declaring that no one on earth is saved, and the most any can do is to hope they will be saved when they come to die. Thus a present and an eternal salvation is denied, and people are taught that no such thing can be known and enjoyed this side of the grave.

We are fully aware that the holy scriptures
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speak of salvation in different ways, all of which, however, beautifully agree. In some passages it is treated as an accomplished fact, always and eternally true. We quote in proof of this 2 Timothy i. 9, "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." So also Ephesians ii. 4, "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love where-with He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace *ye are saved*)"; and again in verse 8 of the same chapter, "For 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." Do not these passages, dear reader, speak of salvation as an accomplished fact? Assuredly they do.

If other passages treat of salvation as a continuous thing, not yet completed and always going on, it is not the salvation of the soul that is referred to. Thus in Hebrews vii. 23-25, "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Now you will see that the saving in this passage

is connected with the priesthood and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. The salvation of the soul has been effected by the Saviour's dying for us. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians xv. 3.) He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. (Romans iv. 25.) We are not saved in this sense by His priesthood and intercession, but by His dying and rising again. When the children of Israel were on the desert side of the Red Sea they were clean out of Egypt. Their deliverance from that land of bondage was not a continuous thing, it was accomplished once for all. Then, as a saved people, the priesthood of Aaron was established for their benefit. So with us. We are saved and brought to God, but inasmuch as we have to pass through this great and terrible wilderness, this land of pits, and of drought, and of the shadow of death, we need the constant ministry of our great High Priest, who from heaven succours and saves out of every difficulty. He watches over us with sleepless eye, and no matter how long the road or how many the dangers, He is able to save us out of them all till we reach the heavenly country, where none of these things shall be.

Then there are passages that speak of salvation as future because they have in view not so much the saving of the soul as the salvation of the body from sin, corruption, and the grave. This

salvation will be ours at the coming of the Lord. Hence in Romans xiii. 11 we read, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." So in chapter v. 9, "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." This is clearly yet to come. But suppose I confine my thoughts to these passages, and closing my eyes to the others, proceed to deny salvation as an already accomplished fact, should I not be altogether wrong? Beyond all doubt I should. Now that is the very thing so many religious teachers are doing, to the great damage of those who listen to them and who do not search the scriptures for themselves.

But let us drop for the moment the word "*saved*," and look at the subject from other points of view. Is it not said in Hebrews x. 17, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"? Has God indeed spoken thus? If so we are certain that His word shall never be broken. And this divine assurance is founded on the fact stated in verse 12 of the same chapter, namely, that the Lord Jesus had offered once sacrifice for sins, and having offered it, He had for ever sat down on the right hand of God. It was at Calvary that He offered "one sacrifice for sins." There our sins were laid upon Him, there He endured those stripes by which we are healed, there He was wounded, bruised, smitten, and forsaken of God, and all on account of sin. That

blessed work was finished there, and He who did it all and suffered all has *sat down*—for there is nothing more to be done—at the right hand of God. Has God nothing to say as a result of that “one sacrifice for sins” having been offered? Indeed He has. What is it that he says? Listen! “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” If God thus speaks shall we not believe Him?

Again, What is the meaning of the third parable of Luke xv.? What are we to learn from the father’s kiss, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the killing of the fatted calf, the bringing of the long-lost son into the father’s house with great rejoicing? Do we not see in this exquisitely touching picture the repentant sinner’s reconciliation to God, for that is the meaning of the kiss—his being clothed with the garments of salvation, for that is the meaning of the robe—his being for evermore in the favour and love of God, for that is the meaning of the ring—of his walking in paths of holiness, for that is the meaning of the shoes—and of his being called into the fellowship of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ, for that is the meaning of the fatted calf and of the words “Let us eat and be merry.” The father’s house was henceforth the home of the younger son, even as the presence of Him who permits us to say “Abba, Father” is our home even now. Shall we bring the idea of *wrath* into this lovely

scene? It would utterly spoil it! Shall we call upon the son to say, "From Thy wrath and everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver us"? It would mar the harmony and fill the father's heart with sorrow that his love should be so little understood and believed.

Descending for an instant to a somewhat lower rung of the ladder, what do we find in Acts xiii. 38, 39? "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, 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." We call your careful attention to the words "*are justified*." A simpler word than "*are*" is not to be found in our mother tongue, and the two words thus joined together declare a present and an abiding fact. The believer therefore is justified, and he knows it on the authority of Holy Scripture. What matters it if a thousand religious instructors affirm that none can know it if God says otherwise? An "*It is written*" comes with infinitely more authority than the words and opinions of fallible men.

The knowledge of these things, which so many would deny us till our dying day, and scarcely consent to our having it even then, lies at the very threshold of Christian truth. If we do not see this, it is because we so little apprehend the gracious thoughts of that God from whose love all our blessings flow. We are like the brethren of

Joseph, who for seventeen long years had been living on his bounty and receiving daily proofs of his kindness, and yet when their father Jacob died they reasoned together and said, "Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil we did unto him." (Genesis l. 15.) How greatly did they wrong their brother in thinking and saying this! Their fears made it manifest that they knew but little of Joseph's heart, though they had been fed all those years by Joseph's hand.

Let us not continue to wrong our God and Father's love by yielding to unworthy doubts and fears. Let us not grieve and wound His heart. He desires to have us consciously near Himself *now*, so that we may joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans v. 11.) In order to this He tells us that He has forgiven us all trespasses (Colossians ii. 13), and justified us from all things (Acts xiii. 39), that He securely keeps us in the hollow of His hand (John x. 29), and that nothing shall ever separate us from His love. (Romans viii. 39.) Moreover He assures us that we are His children (1 John iii. 2), heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (Romans viii. 17), and that, as certainly as we are numbered with His called and justified ones now, we shall be numbered with His glorified ones ere long. (Romans viii. 30.) Reader, be like the Bereans, and search the scriptures daily, whether these things be so.

SEVEN STAGES OF SOUL HISTORY.

IT may well be asked whether the language of Romans vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am!" can possibly be the utterance of one who has once known what it is to have rested in the sunshine of forgiveness of sins by a God of infinite love; and if so, how reconcile the present with the former condition?

We are apt to forget that on conversion, and on the discovery of grace in God through the death of Christ for us to meet our condition of deserved judgment, *the history of the soul with God individually begins*, even as the Passover night in Egypt marked "the beginning of months," "the first month of the year" to Israel of old. Further, in that history there are *stages, experiences, and exercises*. Some of these are directly in the line of God's intentions, as Israel's from Egypt to Kadesh-barnea, where they were intended by God to enter the land of Canaan within two years from their leaving Egypt, all *needed* exercises finished. Others, alas! like all that followed for thirty-eight years of Israel's wanderings are the fruit of unbelief and self-will, but effecting by a longer and more painful process that which God would have His redeemed to acquire experimentally, viz., self-knowledge—a distinct thing from the knowledge

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of sins, and dealt with in a totally different way, as will be seen further on.

The starting-point then, in the journey of the soul with God, is when consciously beneath the shelter of the blood of Christ there is a full, deep sense of the grace of God in thus providing a shelter from His own deserved judgment. Then the sunshine of His favour in the forgiveness of sins is delightedly enjoyed. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.)

Following upon this, in the usual history of a soul that has been brought to God, comes a period of exercise, arising from the fact that a cloud has sensibly arisen. Nor can this be traced to any inability on the believer's part to realise that the forgiveness of God meets the frequent but unwelcome failures of which he becomes conscious. Rather does it proceed from the realisation of some hidden spring within from which evil seems continuously to flow, the subtle, penetrating character of which is, that not only are deeds done that are mourned over, but the very being seems impregnated with its poison.

The second stage on the way is consequently that of being disappointed by the discovery of a permanent spring of evil, which remains unaffected by the knowledge of forgiveness of sins.

Consciously in the place of responsibility before

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God, self-occupation now turns the thoughts of the soul towards the absolute necessity of controlling, or even in some cases of completely getting rid of, this active spring of evil within. Earnest and persevering endeavours are conscientiously made to obtain the victory over self and flesh by obedience to the law, or by the fulfilment of the requirements of God, in some form or another.

But repeated efforts to bring into permanent subjection the discovered evil within, only result in the humiliating acknowledgment that all is unavailing. Then the soul finds in its deep disappointment fitting expression for its experience in the language of Romans, vii. 14, 15, "I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

Here, however, the first clear light is thrown by the word of God upon what has hitherto been the confused experience of a state that could neither be remedied, nor, as to its elements, be even disentangled. Taking up the believer just at this particular stage of experience, the apostle divinely argues, "If I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good," that is, if *I consent* to the restraining law of God as good, while *I do* that which is contrary to it, an irreconcilable antagonism between *two distinct natures* is involved. The apostle can consequently let fall, at

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this stage, this bit of relieving light as a divine deduction from the confessed state, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but SIN that dwelleth in me."

While there is relief furnished at this point, in the distinction between the *I* of the now proper identity before God, viz., the new nature, and *sin* which continues to dwell in the believer, there is by no means a full settlement of the perplexing condition of soul, but the truth of the two natures has been experimentally brought to light.

From being disappointed, the believer has now reached a point at which he is thoroughly disheartened by the further exercise he is plunged into. Becoming now conscious, first, that "in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," the attempt to reach the standard of divine requirement is perceived to be hopeless, for how is it possible to succeed, since "in me . . . dwelleth *no good thing*"? Deeper, much deeper, and more searching discovery than that of being "guilty before God," as in Romans iii. 19. Secondly, "how to perform that which is good I find not," *i.e.*, utter absence of all strength wherewith to be inwardly more suited to the known, but unattainable, requirements of God.

Thus the consciousness of "no good" within, and of no strength "to perform that which is good," carries the soul one stage further on in its eventful history. Disappointed and disheartened

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already, it is now deeply distressed ; for though it can truly say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," which proves that at any rate life is there, its language at this stage is, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and *bringing me into captivity* to the law of sin which is in my members." The climax of misery and distress is now reached, "O wretched man that I am."

Self-effort has thus thoroughly exhausted itself in hopeless failure. But a new and important step is gained, for now a deliverer other than self is sought, "Who shall deliver me?" For the first time the nature within is recognised in its full, incorrigible, corrupt, and loathsome character, viz., as "this body of death." The effect produced by this last conviction, which has been reluctantly reached, is to lead the believer to turn away disgusted from that which has now come out to self-consciousness in its true character, viz., as "this body of death." Practically the truth has come home, that it is no longer even a fitting object to be occupied with in any way. Deliverance, if to be obtained at all, must be looked for elsewhere, and through another, no longer through self. Spiritual sight now opens upon the true and only Deliverer, and the believer, with a thankful heart, exclaims, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." A fresh stage of experience is now entered upon, in which the new and necessarily

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invariable position of the believer is discovered to be "in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1, 2.) Further, that the ground of this is found in the fact that God has, in Christ's death, "condemned sin in the flesh" (v. 3), that is, its nature and being have been exhaustively dealt with in judgment, in that death. This, let it be carefully remarked, is distinct from the bearing of sins, which brought in the knowledge of forgiveness. Sin, the nature, is now known to be condemned in Christ's person. "He was made sin" (2 Cor. v. 21) as well as "bare our sins." (1 Peter ii. 24.)

This new apprehension of not being "in the flesh," but "in Christ Jesus," results in the knowledge of being delivered. Though the flesh remains in the believer, he is not in it *as to estimate or representation before God*. Victory, not through personal effort and conflict, but through the medium of deliverance from sin, wrought out by death, and that in another, viz., Jesus Christ, is clearly seen to be the divine intention. The slave who succeeds in crossing the frontier stands a free man, not by armed intervention on his own part, but by change of position, so the believer crossing the frontier of Christ's death, in the faith of sin having been condemned there, finds himself free from sin, and become servant to God, having his "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Chap. vi. 22.)

The practical daily effect of this is, that he

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“reckons himself to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ” (chap. vi. 11); and this will be seen to be very different, as before alluded to, from either personal victory over sin by legal effort, or getting rid of the evil nature root and branch.

But if flesh in the believer, as estimated by God, and now experimentally learnt, is worthless and corrupt, it is far from the intention of God that one thus delivered should be constantly occupied with it. Let us hear what the apostle says by the Spirit of God. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free from the law of sin and death*”; *i.e.*, the abiding control of the one liberates from the abiding control of the other, in any and every way. But, if possible, more emphatically in chapter vii. 6, “*When we were in the flesh*”; thus treating that condition as a thing of the past, done with, and no longer retarding spiritual progress by unavailing occupation with it, but as that which, itself a source of misery, and corrupt and incorrigible, has been permanently dismissed from holding any recognised place in the soul’s relations to God.

It is exceedingly important to notice that law, sin, and flesh are so inseparably interwoven that that which affects one affects the others. Hence the relation of Christ’s death to law is treated of, as well as to sin and flesh. Thus, in the illustration given in Romans vii. 1–3, death is looked at as

that which frees the wife from the law of her husband, and having come in by Christ frees the believer from the first husband, *i.e.*, law, "that he may be to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead"—not to law—"that he may bring forth fruit unto God." Death, in the *application* of the illustration, is that of the believer, through Christ, and not of course the death of the law which (v. 12) is "holy and just and good."

This sets the individual believer free from the tendency to go back in mind to a connection with the law, as a means of fruitbearing; for he has "become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (v. 4), "is delivered from the law, being dead to that in which he was held." (Marg. v. 6.) Thus, by Christ's death, Christian position is expressed in the terms "dead to sin," and "dead to law," and "not in the flesh," but "in Christ Jesus."

There remains with the believer the permanent abiding consciousness of the presence of two natures, whose activities are perfectly distinguishable from the new standpoint of deliverance (chap. vii. 25), "With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin"—not that evil is sanctioned, but detected and traced up to its true source, to be dealt with according to Romans vi. 11.

The word of God thus throws its clear and distinct light upon the painful and distressing

exercises through which, in a greater or less degree, deliverance is reached, the seven stages of which may be said to be : *

1. *Delighted* : "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God," &c. (Rom. v. 1.)
2. *Disappointed* : "That which I do I allow not ; for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I." (viii. 15.)
3. *Disheartened* : "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." (v. 18.)
4. *Distressed* : "I see another law in my members . . . bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am !" (vv. 23, 24.)
5. *Disgusted* with "this body of death." (v. 24.)
6. *Delivered*, being "in Christ" (viii. 1), no longer "in the flesh."

The incorrigible corrupt nature is finally

7. *Dismissed* from thought and occupation. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (viii. 2.) Paul's language becomes intelligently the believer's, "*When we were in the flesh.*" (vii. 5.)

* These stages stand as the writer has placed them. For ourselves, we think it possible that in many cases some of these experiences may be known *before* peace with God is enjoyed. EN.

Thus the first disturbing question takes the form of "Where are *my sins*?" to which Romans iii. 25 furnishes the full answer, viz., met by the blood of Christ on the mercy seat, Himself both victim and mercy seat.

The second—Where am *I* as to acceptance? to which Romans vii. and viii. doctrinally and experimentally answer, not "in the flesh" but "in Christ," "not under law but under grace."

The first question involves the blessed truth embodied in the sin-offering of Leviticus iv. 26, 31, "It shall be forgiven him"; the second, that set forth in the burnt offering (Lev. i. 4), "It shall be accepted for him." These two things constitute the first elements of Christian position, and, when divinely learnt, they set the soul free to pursue the deep mysteries that lie beyond, and to search into the many marvellous truths which, like stars in the midnight sky, stud the vast expanse of the Christian faith, as revealed in God's word.

M. C. G.

FRAGMENT.

"My inclination and turn leads me chiefly to insist on those things in which all who are taught of God agree. And my endeavour is to persuade them to love one another, to bear with one another, to avoid disputes, and if they must strive, to let their strife and emulation be, who shall most express the life of the Son of God in their temper and conduct."

THE WORD OF GOD AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM.

THE word of God and Roman Catholicism will always be in conflict. They are diametrically opposed, as light is to darkness, and truth to error. And in conflict they will remain, until the judgment pronounced by the Word is executed upon that which denies the character of God and of His Christ. (Rev. xvii. and xviii.)

But just as with the rising of the sun darkness is dispersed, so in proportion as the word of God is read, and that of which it speaks—Christ and His redemption work—is preached, will the darkness and error of Roman Catholicism be rebuked by the testimony of the truth. It was by the word of God that the Reformation stood, and prevailed over all the voices of Rome!

By her thousands upon thousands cruelly martyred by fire and sword, and deaths too terrible to mention, “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,” Europe bears witness to Rome’s antagonism to this word and its testimony.

England remembers a Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer, and hundreds more, who suffered at the stake for their confession of faith in the sole

authority of God's word, and in the one only sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary.

Let not the watchword of the faithful Latimer, uttered as the faggots were lighted at his comrade's feet, be forgotten: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out." It is over the blood of God's martyred saints that we have the Bible in our homes and hands to-day—the precious word of life. Let England then remember this and make much of her great treasure. In it we hear the voice of Jesus the Son of God, and God's testimony to His finished work upon the cross. What says that voice? "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 [or judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." Precious voice, once silent in death, now speaking from heaven! Well might it be said of Him, "Never man spake like this man." (John vii. 46.) In Old Testament days God spake by the prophets; now He speaks by His Son. (Heb. i. 1.)

It is the Son's word and the Son's work we have in the New Testament. His word assures of everlasting life; His work—atoning work—secures everlasting forgiveness.

Prophets and angels—for the law was given by

the disposition of angels (Acts vii. 53)—have given place to the Son, and by His word God is bidding sinners of every clime, tongue, and nation to come to *Him*, to look to *Him*, to hear *Him*, to believe in *Him*, and be everlastingly saved.

Once He trod this earth in lowly grace, receiving all who came to Him. He alone could say to the sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke vii. 48, 50.) Now He sits at God's right hand in triumphant grace, ready, ah, how ready! to save the vilest sinner who looks to Him in simple faith! Have you, dear reader, heard His word, have you believed in His finished work?

Beware of hearing any other word, or trusting any other work. You have a Bible in your possession. Through this precious book, God addresses you. In it you may read the truth of man's ruin and guilt; but alongside of that dark history you have the record of God's love and grace—He speaks to you Himself. Why should you not hear and believe Him? "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

The love of God and the work of Christ. What a theme! Could God's love be greater, or Christ's work more perfect? Never. Surely it were no salvation to be told that we must add our doings to what has been perfectly done. The

Bible speaks of "*a Saviour God*," who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii. 4-6.) There is no other mediator, nor is any other required, as though the ransom price had not been paid for all.

Of the abiding stability of His sacrifice, Hebrews x. 12-14 declares, "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God . . . For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Who is this man? Hebrews i. 2 tells us, it was He "by whom God made the worlds"—His eternal Son. Chapter ii. says He "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." He became man that in grace He might die for men. Chapter ix. declares that "through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God," and through the shedding of His blood obtained eternal redemption, which assures all who trust Him of eternal inheritance. (See verses 11, 12, 14, 15.)

Thus everything that belongs to Christ and is received from Christ is eternal. *Eternal* life; *eternal* redemption; *eternal* forgiveness; *eternal* inheritance; *eternal* glory. Why then should we not hear and believe Him?

If we turn to the Acts, where we have the record of the preaching of the apostles, we find the subject of their testimony is, "This man," "The man Christ Jesus." The apostle Peter in Acts x. 43 declares, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." The apostle Paul in Acts xiii. 38, 39 proclaims, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man [Christ Jesus] 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."

Why then should not the word of God prevail over hearts and consciences, speaking as it does of present forgiveness and justification from all things, through this Man, for all who believe? Shall we believe God, or shall we not? Shall we imperil our souls by the words or works of mortal men, or be assured of eternal forgiveness and justification by the sure word of a Saviour God?

England has yet to say whether she will have the truth of the gospel, or the darkness of Roman Catholicism, Rationalism, and infidelity. The days are evil. Truth languishes, but the candle lit by the witnesses at the stake still burns. In the blessed light of the truth by which they lived and died we would say, "Let God be true but every man a liar."

* * *

FAILURE, RESTORATION, AND COMMUNION.

STANDING on the platform of a railway station sometime ago, a friend and I watched the operations of a breakdown gang, who were at work with their "jacks," seeking to replace an engine which had left the metals.

"How like a christian who has left the path of dependence," we remarked, "and failure has taken place. He is as helpless and powerless to recover himself as that engine is."

While watching these operations a christian porter came up to us, and asked what it reminded us of. This gave us an opportunity of conversing together on that which forms the heading of this paper, namely, *failure, restoration, and communion*.

When failure has come in, the point of departure, as is often said, must ever be the point of restoration. The soul must go back to the point of failure before a thorough work of restoration can take place, and this work ever begins with God. Look at that engine as it is lying there across the metals. How helpless it is to right itself! But is there not power within? Yes, surely, steam is up; but until it is restored to the metals, all the power is unavailing. Were it to be brought into use it would only involve it in

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greater danger still. The power for the time being must be kept in abeyance, or further mischief will result.

Like the steam engine, many a christian, once strong in the Lord, and a mighty witness against evil, now lies athwart the rails—out of communion. Many a “Samson” has been shorn of his strength, and lies to-day bound by the enemy, with eyes out—all spiritual perception gone—the sport of the devil and the taunt of the world. Thus he stands a warning to us, that we may put no confidence in the flesh.

FAILURE.

How often the soul has to mourn over failure! Instead of watchfulness there has been unwatchfulness, and instead of keeping God’s condemnation on the flesh it has been allowed to act. Perhaps it has been so with you, dear reader. You have sorrowfully to own that the joy you once possessed has gone, together with the delight you used to find in the Lord and in His things, and in the company of His people. Full well you know the cause. But the Lord’s ever watchful eye has noted your every footstep, and all the time you were turning your back on Him, His heart of unchanging love was yearning over you. He is longing to have you back in sweet communion with Himself again, but He can have no fellowship with your sin, so go to Him, and in His presence judge yourself for your failure. Own all to Him, and

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learn afresh the unchangeableness of His love as He assures you of His full forgiveness.

RESTORATION.

Restoration, as we have said already, ever comes from *without* and never from *within*. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) On high He is now living for us, as once upon the cross He died for us. *There* His love displayed itself in dying for our sins, *now* His love is shewn in His gracious ministry for us on high. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25.) At Calvary His work for the putting away of sin was finished, and done "once for all." His blessed work, which He now carries on for us on high, will never be finished till His gathering shout calls all the redeemed to meet Him in the air, when they will be for ever "with the Lord."

Till that glorious morning dawns He will never give up His gracious office of "advocate with the Father." His work there is ever the beginning of real restoration, when failure has come in. How rich is the grace, which when we have sinned occupies itself with our failure, so that we might see the sin as it appears in God's sight, and thus be led to take His side against it, humbly confessing it to Him. Confession and forgiveness go together. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful

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and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) The precious blood, *which "cleanseth from all sin,"* is ever under the eye of God in all its everlasting value, and because of this, when the sin has been judged in His holy presence and repented of, He can faithfully and righteously forgive that sin, cleansing the believer from all unrighteousness. Never rest, dear fellow-believer, when there has been the allowance of anything displeasing to God, till it has been judged and confessed. It is thus that restoration is known.

COMMUNION.

"Truly," writes the apostle John, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." This then is the wonderful privilege which grace confers on the believer, even fellowship with the Father and the Son. Language fails to describe what that wondrous communion is, it must be enjoyed to be known. The believer learns, as he is enjoying it, what are the Father's thoughts about His beloved Son, and what are the thoughts of the Son about the Father. Oh, what a privilege! The Father made known in and through the Son, and all that the Son is revealed by the Father. Alas, dear fellow-believer, that we should ever allow anything to hinder our enjoyment of this immense privilege. The place the Son is in with the Father is ours now, but let

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us ask ourselves the question, *How much do we know of it, and enjoy it by faith?* May we be ever watchful, lest sin, either in thought, word, or deed, interrupt our communion, that thus our joy may be full.

E. E. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. S.—We are not aware of any passage of Scripture in which prayer or praise is directly addressed to the Holy Spirit. He helps our infirmities, makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered when we know not what to pray for as is fitting, and it is by His power alone that we worship. All this is most true. Still, as far as we know, the Spirit of God is not presented in Scripture as the One to whom our prayers and praises should be addressed; and surely we ought to observe this, and be instructed thereby. In saying so, do we mean to insinuate that the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Father and the Son? Indeed we do not. With jealous care would we guard the Deity of the Holy Spirit equally with the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He became flesh, and ever retains His manhood, is none the less over all, God blessed for ever. So we adoringly sing—

“Worship and praise we render Thee,
 Father of endless majesty;
 Thy true and only Son adore,
 One with Thyself in bliss and power;
 And God the Holy Ghost declare
 The saints’ eternal Comforter.”

S. B.—The gospel of the kingdom was preached by the Lord when He was here on earth, and by His disciples, who were sent particularly to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew x. 5, 6.) This special testimony was suspended by the rejection of the King, but will be resumed in a day to come by the godly remnant of Israel, of whom the earlier disciples were a sample. This explains the closing part of Matthew x. 23. It is to that day many of the psalms point, and of this remnant the King speaks as “my brethren” in Matthew xxv. 40.

C. H.—We hold it to be a most vital truth that a new life, divine life, is actually communicated to the believer. The old Adam life, morally speaking, has been judged and set aside in the death of Christ, and a new life imparted, and that too, it can now be said, in association with Christ raised from among the dead. We are speaking now of intrinsic life as distinguished from the life we live. But eternal life cannot be narrowed down to the life which is beyond doubt imparted to the believer. It involves that, but in many passages it means much more, as any one may see by turning to the places where the term occurs. We are at best but poor things, and very apt to fix our thoughts on one side of truth, to the overlooking of other sides quite as important. Our wisdom lies in seeking to see truth on all its sides. I thank God for any enlargement of your views of eternal life in harmony with His blessed Word, but we beseech you hold fast to this great fundamental fact that there is a real communication of divine life to the believer.

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But 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. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

JOHN iv. 21-24.

HERE our Lord indicates a great change in the style and character of worship. In short, He contrasts briefly, but pointedly, the gorgeousness of the Jewish ritual with the simplicity of Christian worship. Doubtless much more than this is in the scripture; indeed, the point we would seek to draw the attention of our readers to is but a minor thought in the passage, though it unfolds an important principle.

No doubt the sanctuary service was instituted by divine command, but it had to pass away and be superseded. It is well to ask ourselves, Do we know the reason why? If we do, I am sure we shall enter intelligently and heartily into true thoughts of Christian worship.

Now in inquiring the reason why the Jewish worship was so elaborate and gorgeous, we shall do well to have before us clearly the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of worship.

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Not that in the short space of this paper we shall be able to unfold all that is taught upon this great theme. That were a task beyond us at any rate. But we shall seek to press upon you the great and patent fact of the simplicity attending upon Christian worship.

We live in a day when Judaistic forms of worship are rife, not the spiritual and typical teaching of those forms, but the material and sensuous aspect of them. We live in a land where buildings, ornate, costly, and elaborate, are called "places of worship" and "houses of God," where the priest or minister is given a place of prominence above the congregation, where the singing is often judged to be worthy of God, not because of the *words* being the unfeigned expression of the heart, but on account of the beautiful rendering of the *tune* by a well-trained choir, accompanied by the tones of the organ. This, beloved reader, I say with all charity, is the result of the mind of man copying the worship of Judaism in a *material* way, without catching the *spiritual* import of it.

You have read through your New Testament. Dismiss from your mind all pre-conceived notions on the subject, and tell me, Do you find aught but what is simple and spiritual in the Christian worship that is taught there?

The few words of our Lord, quoted at the beginning of this paper, show most clearly that

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A GREAT CHANGE was about to take place, and it is a delightful task to point out in a simple way the reason why.

The Lord Jesus, as we know, placed a character upon the Old Testament writings on which every true believer should lay great stress. He said to the unbelieving Jews, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: *and they are they which testify of Me*" (John v. 39), and He made the hearts of the two sorrowing ones, as they travelled weary and dispirited on their way to Emmaus, burn within them, as "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning Himself.*" (Luke xxiv. 27.) We thus find the great and blessed theme of the Old Testament writings is CHRIST. Dry, and barren, and profitless will our reading of them be if we find *Him* not in them.

This leads us at once to the secret of the gorgeousness and elaborateness of the Jewish ritual.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, which brings out so clearly and blessedly *Whom* we worship, where we worship, and how we worship, is one series of contrasts between Jewish and Christian worship.

All the sacrifices that bled on Jewish altars failed to do that which *our* great Sacrifice has done for us. It is true the different character of them helps to shed light upon the completeness and many-sidedness of the work of Christ upon the cross, but the substance—the Person of

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Christ—is so rich and glorious that the shadows—the Jewish ritual—wonderful as they are, are too mean to set Him fully forth.

No sitting accommodation was provided for the priests, for the work was never DONE—the priests were *standing* daily, offering every day the same unavailing sacrifices.

Scripture triumphantly says, “But THIS MAN, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever *sat down* on the right hand of God.”

And, strange to say, from that day to this the unbelieving Jews, who still look forward to the Messiah, and who, from their standpoint, have the same reason to offer the Jewish sacrifices, have ceased to do so.

Dear Christian, rejoice with me that God makes everything of Christ, and do not becloud and belittle your thoughts of the substance by reviving the shadows.

Again, if His work is finished, and our consciences are purged; if He is seated at God’s right hand; if the shadows and types of a past dispensation, having thus served their purpose, have passed away, see further how much the Spirit of God makes of the greatness and glories of His person.

Indeed the greatness and glories of His person are unfolded in this precious epistle before the greatness of His work is set forth; for does it not require a great person to do so great a work,

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a divine person to do a work of *such* a divine character?

Now see how angels, blessed and holy beings as they are—and Moses, the apostle of the Jewish profession, and Aaron, its high priest, and Melchisedec, that strange, mysterious person, the royal priest—all pass in review before us, only to show that Christ is more than they all. So far they form blessed types of the Lord Jesus; but so far short do they necessarily fall, that they become contrasts to the glorious person of the Son of God.

Moses, though so great and blessed, was but a *servant* over the house of God. Christ is a *Son* over His *own* house.

Aaron needed to sacrifice for his own sins first, before he sacrificed for the people. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled. He united in His own glorious person both the Aaronic and Melchisedecian priesthood, and is called, not our High Priest, but our GREAT PRIEST. Blessed Saviour, Son of God!

He sits where no Aaron ever could sit—"On the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

It is as if the moon, and stars, and planets, which lit up the midnight sky of Judaism, pale and disappear before the glorious light of the sun of Christianity. We need now no "dim, religious light"; no appeal to the senses, be it to the eye,

314 THE SIMPLICITY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

or ear. The Spirit alone can give rise to true Christian worship in our hearts. "The natural man" cannot help us here. God and Christ—the Father and the Son—are the worthy objects of our worship.

And the Holy Ghost—the third person of the blessed Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son—has been sent into our hearts that we may apprehend such realities, and worship "in spirit and in truth."

The blessed Lord instituted His supper, not in a gorgeous temple, but in "a large upper room." The church (or assembly) in the imperial city of Rome met in the humble dwelling-house of Priscilla and Aquila. (Rom. xvi. 5.) The church was not a great edifice of stone or brick, but the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have been blessed, and blessed wonderfully. Let us not seek our own ease or pleasure, our own ideas of how we should worship, but let it be our ardent desire to worship "in spirit and in truth," and to make much of Christ.

Once the temple was where God set His name, and to it every faithful one had to repair. *Now* our rallying point is a Person. Our centre is Christ Himself.

May our hearts be led more and more into the blessedness of the service of worship, and into the simplicity of the Christian faith.

A. J. P.

“NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN.”

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

NEVER words of wisdom, falling
 From the lips of sage or king,
 Had the wondrous power of calling
 Weary hearts their load to bring ;
 Peace to find, for care oppressing,
 Comfort for the troubled breast,
 Like those lovely words of blessing—
 “Come . . . and I will give you rest.”

Never gifted singer, thrilling
 With sweet cadences of song,
 Had the mighty gift of filling
 Souls that had been thirsting long :
 Gentle words of love and pardon
 For the sinner's aching heart,
 Where a human touch would harden,
 Winning those that stood apart.

Never senator, appealing,
 More attentively was heard ;
 Judgment harsh nor bitter feeling .
 Lurked behind His faithful word.
 All that tender heart's deep yearning
 Overflowed in words of love,
 As He wept o'er Zion spurning
 God's sweet message from above.

Never amidst death and dying,
 In this world of woe and strife,
 Rang a note so hope-inspiring
 As the words of Christ, “the Life.”
 Breathing “Peace” across the waters
 Of man's ruin ; strong to save.
 Life, eternal life, He brought us ;
 Death He conquered, and the grave.

THE WAY OF ABEL.

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”—HEB. xi. 4.

IN a former number,* while considering the Epistle of Jude, I spoke of the way of Cain and its seven steps, which ended in Cain's world, and Cain a fugitive and vagabond in it, with the burden of unconfessed and unforgiven sin on his soul, trying to be happy without God. All ending, as we know it did end, in the waters of the flood which God brought in upon the world of the ungodly. (2 Peter ii. 5.)

I now wish to consider the way of Abel and its seven steps, as brought before us in this eleventh of Hebrews, ending as it does in separation from the world and testimony for Christ.

Like the way of Cain, it begins outside Eden; but instead of being steps downward it is all steps upward.

The first step is hearing, for, as Romans x. 17 tells us, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” So we know that Abel heard. The word came to him, whether by Adam or Eve we cannot tell. And, like the Thessa-

* See *Simple Testimony* for April, 1894.

lonians, he received it, not as the word of men, but as it was in truth, the word of God. (1 Thess. ii. 13.) Thus Abel took the second step—he believed. It was “by faith” he offered, and his faith came by hearing, as we have seen.

Now when the word of God is heard and believed as His word, the third step, or repentance, always follows.

Thus the Thessalonians, who received it as the word of God, received it with “much affliction” (1 Thess. i. 6), and when there is repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ follows. (Acts xx. 21.)

With Abel, his faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (the fourth step) was shown in the sacrifice he brought. As Genesis iv. 4 tells us, he “brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.” In other words he came to God as a poor repentant sinner, with no merit of his own, but with the blood and fat which represent the life and excellency of the spotless victim which he brought. He confessed by his sacrifice (what every poor sinner must own if he is ever to be saved), that through the death and bloodshedding of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in due time would offer Himself without spot to God, and suffer for sins, the just for the unjust, he confessed by that alone he could draw near to a holy God.

The fifth step, or acceptance, followed immediately “he obtained witness that he was righteous,

God testifying of his gifts"; but this was speedily followed by martyrdom. Cain slew him because, as 1 John iii. 12 says, "his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

Thus the sixth step is, to be cast out or persecuted by the world. (Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 12.) No need to separate from them; if we are faithful to Christ they will cast us out. (See Luke vi. 22, 23.) But it does not always go so far as martyrdom. Finally we have the seventh step, testimony—"He being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. xi. 4.) Now, my reader, remember the way of Abel and its seven steps.

Some are still at the first step; they have heard the Gospel again and again, but they have not hearkened. It is written, in John v. 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"—or we might read it, "they *that have heard* shall live." Well, have you heard? that is, have you hearkened? When a man hearkens to the voice of the Son of God, speaking to him in the gospel, faith always follows. It comes to his soul as the word of God. This is the second step, and many have heard and believed, and are now at the third step, "much affliction," or "repentance toward God."

It is a blessed thing to see souls here, for the more deep and real their repentance, or condemnation of themselves in the light of God's word, the

greater their joy in the Holy Ghost. (1 Thess. i. 6.) When they take the fourth step, and trust their souls for time and eternity to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, they learn that His precious blood shed there cleanseth from every sin (1 John i. 7, R.V.), and that such is the excellency of the One who offered Himself without spot to God, and so perfect the work He has done, that God has raised Him up from the dead. What a blessed thing it is to know that!

Now it is the resurrection of Christ, which is the great proof of God's acceptance of Him and of the sacrifice He offered, that leads us on to the fifth step, namely, our personal acceptance with Him. God had respect to Abel's offering, he obtained witness that he was righteous, and this was in figure what we have now through the death and resurrection and ascension of the Saviour. (See Eph. i. 6 and 1 John iv. 17.) Now the moment we confess Christ, or the world knows that we claim to be accepted in Him, through what He has done, we find ourselves at the sixth step, or persecution. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John xv. 19.) And remember we must not resist. See James v. 6, "Ye have condemned and killed the just: and he doth not resist you," and also 1 Peter ii. 19-24.

I am sure of this, that whenever the Lord's people have resisted their enemies by force of arms, it has been to the serious loss of the whole Church of God. "But," says someone, "How can you bear testimony if you do not resist? Will not the enemy put out the light?" So no doubt the devil thought when he got Cain to kill Abel; but "he being dead, yet speaketh," or is "yet spoken of," that is, in spite of all the devil can do, Abel and his way of approach to God are not forgotten. The light lit then has never been and never will be quenched; although the vessel of the testimony suffered martyrdom. He was killed, and did not resist. (James v. 6.) Still his testimony of how man can approach God and be for God, although outside of Eden, still goes on.

Now if my reader will turn to Philippians ii. 15, he will see that this is what the Christian is left here for.

"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."

The Lord grant that we may be so in the way of Abel, that we may shine as lights for Him here till He come. Amen.

W. M.

GREAT QUESTIONS ;

OR,

“WHAT SHALL WE THEN SAY TO
THESE THINGS?”

“IF *God be for us, who can be against us?*”

THIS is the first of four questions found in the close of Romans viii. After bringing before the saints a wondrous range of blessing, the apostle exclaims, “*What shall we then say to these things?*” And then he adds, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Who indeed? He had given abundant proof of the former, having shewn that the believer is both justified, reconciled, made free in Christ, a child of God, and an heir of glory. What need we further to shew that He is *for* us? And if God be *for* us, every foe is silenced and powerless. Satan dare not raise his voice. God’s challenge (for such it is) remains unanswered. It is unanswerable, and the apostle continues, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” No greater proof could He give of His wondrous love towards us than the gift of Christ. “He spared not His own Son” that He might spare us. He “delivered Him up for us all,” that He might deliver us. Jesus bore our judgment, and went into death, that we might not

perish. God was for us when we were all against Him. And

“That He might spare His enemies,
He would not spare His Son.”

Now, having given the greatest gift He possibly could bestow, surely He will not withhold the less. Hence that precious addition, “How shall He not *with Him* also *freely give us all things?*” This is followed by a second challenge:

“*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?*” Again the enemy is silent. The believer in Jesus is one of God’s elect. This blessed truth had been brought out in the previous verses, but not until the justification, reconciliation, deliverance, and relationship of the Christian had been clearly established. The truth of our election of God had been revealed, after every possible charge against us had been preferred and met. Sinners, enemies and ungodly we were, but God shews in this wondrous epistle how perfectly He has dealt with our sins, overcome our enmity, and placed us in Christ, where there is no condemnation. Having thus given us rest, and made us happy as His children, in His own blessed presence, He tells us that we were the objects of His eternal counsel, His own elect. Who shall lay anything to their charge? There is a little hymn often sung which runs, “Every charge our God refuses”; but strictly speaking there is no charge now. There *were* plenty of charges against

us, but *Christ hath answered with His blood.* Hence there are no more. As the apostle adds, "It is God that justifieth." And He has done it so perfectly, that no charge whatever remains. Again a third challenge goes forth:

"*Who is he that condemneth?*" Who? Who can condemn Christ? Man condemned Him once, but can never do it again. God condemned Him once for all as the holy Sin-bearer on the cross, and raised Him to glory. The Christian is *now in Christ.* And if there is no condemnation to Christ, there can be no condemnation to the Christian. Christ bore the whole condemnation on the cross once for all, and died. He lives again in the full favour of God in glory. All condemnation is gone for ever. God sees every believer in Him, in the same favour as He is in. How could condemnation reach us there? Impossible. Do you think that Satan would let the challenge pass if he could accept it? Do you think that he would remain silent, if he had power to condemn? Never. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Romans viii. 1.) Many, as they read it, fear to give it its full force, being conscious of failure in themselves, and consequently *condemn themselves.* But notwithstanding all the believer's weakness and failure (and God has amply provided elsewhere in His word for that), nothing can touch the absolute character of that

blessed statement. It does not say there is now no condemnation to those whose sins are forgiven, though that be quite true, but "to them which are in Christ Jesus."

"No condemnation, O my soul,
'Tis God that speaks the word ;
Perfect in comeliness art thou
In Christ, the risen Lord."

Moreover, the apostle adds four blessed facts, which shew what a perfect provision God in His grace has made for us. (i.) "It is Christ that died, (ii.) yea rather, that is risen again, (iii.) who is even at the right hand of God, (iv.) who also maketh intercession for us." Whichever way we look, our deep need is perfectly met in this precious statement. If we cast the eye back, we see the death and resurrection of Christ, which have delivered us completely from all condemnation ; if we look up, we see Him at the right hand of God, the One in whom we are for ever accepted ; and if we look on, and think of our weakness, we are reminded that He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Finally, we have a fourth challenge :

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?"
None ; neither Satan, demon, nor ungodly men. His love is perfect ; He loved and gave Himself for us. His love is immutable and eternal. Having given Himself for us, we belong to Him. We are His both by redemption and by purchase. The price paid was His own precious blood. His love provides for us, shelters us,

delivers us, and will preserve us every step of our journey through this scene, until it finds its perfect satisfaction in having all His loved ones with and like Himself in glory.

“Through His name we are forgiven,
 Oh ! how He loves.
 Backward shall our foes be driven,
 Oh ! how He loves.
 Best of blessings He ’ll provide us,
 Nought but good shall e’er betide us,
 Safe to glory He will guide us,
 Oh ! how He loves.”

“Who shall *separate* us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (*vv.* 35, 36.) Nay, it is impossible. The saints of God may be exposed to all of these things ; they may, so to speak, carry their lives in their hands, as has oft been the case in times past, but, however great the trial, the perfect love of Christ has *always* been, and *is* still, an unfailing resource.

“Nay,” adds the apostle, “in *all these things* we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in

Christ Jesus our Lord." (vv. 37-39.) In this we see that the Christian is not only sustained amid all the trials of the pathway of faith, but he is one of a company who in all these things are *more than conquerors*. Of all the mighty conquerors of the old Roman world, who held their triumph in the streets of their great capital, none was equal to the feeblest saint in that city (or on the earth to-day) who walked by faith in the enjoyment of Christ's love. "*We are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.*" And then the apostle, ranging in thought through the whole creation, utters his deep persuasion that no created being or thing *shall be able* to separate us from the love of that blessed God who has saved us, and whose love is found in the risen Saviour, Christ Jesus our Lord.

"What shall we then say to these things?" to these four challenges, unanswered by the enemy, but coupled with further proofs of God's infinite love in Christ? Where is there room for a single doubt as to our present and eternal salvation? God has met every charge against us, as we have seen, in the finished work of His Son, and now challenges the universe either to say a word, or lay a charge against, or condemn, or separate the feeblest believer from the love of Christ. May every reader of these lines be led through grace to rest in that love, and rejoice without a doubt in the great salvation of God.

E. H. C.

EXTREMES MEETING.

COULD wider extremes be found, or more dissimilar characters be met, than the Roman centurion who had been "detailed" to see that the execution of the malefactors, as also of Him who was crucified in their midst, was carried into full effect, and either of those malefactors himself? Impossible! They differed in rank, position, circumstances, and character from him. The one was an officer of the law, the other a criminal who was condemned by it. The one stood there in necessary probity, the other hung on the cross in acknowledged guilt. The one was held in esteem, and carried a Roman commission; the other was universally execrated, and paid the penalty of the laws he had violated.

Such were the two men; and yet in one most essential matter they coincided. We read in Mark xv. 39, "And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God."

Again we read, in Luke xxiii. 42, "And he" (the "dying thief") "said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

In this did these two men concur—*they both acknowledged the deity of Jesus!*

The centurion confessed Him Son of God, the poor malefactor owned Him Lord and King.

Now, it may be said that the dying criminal was under extreme pressure, that he was tortured in every limb, and agonized in mind on account of his proven sins, that he was about to meet God and to render account to Him. He trembled in soul at the prospect, and therefore owned the Messiahship of Jesus.

Granting all that to him, how can the unforced confession of the centurion be accounted for? He was a freeman. He stood in life and liberty, and yet, in his confession, he went even further than the thief. What is the secret?

He noticed two things peculiar to the death of Jesus; first, that He "*so cried out*"; that is, there was no abatement of physical strength; and secondly, that He "*gave up the ghost*"; that is, He voluntarily dismissed His spirit. These two supernatural acts brought the conviction to this soldier—that the central figure on Calvary was more than man—He was the Son of God.

But mark, it was so deep a conviction that he gave utterance to it. May we not conclude that his heart had been divinely opened to a just appreciation of the personal glory of the meek and blessed Sufferer?

If so, what lessons were taught and learned

on Calvary! Two trophies, so widely dissimilar, were thus won by the Lord at the moment of His deepest sorrow.

Both were sinners, though, perhaps, of different degrees of guilt; the one appears before us in all the pride of military dignity, the other as on the brink of a felon's grave.

We read that whilst the soldiers "*mocked*," the malefactors "*reviled*" the crucified Lord, and it may be that our centurion was one of the mockers. At any rate he did not prevent those under his command from mocking, he therefore shared in their conduct.

But, whether a mocking soldier or a reviling malefactor, there was that in the death of Jesus that reached the hearts of both. Oh, wondrous power, and infinite grace! And the two gems gathered on Calvary are among the brightest in the Saviour's crown. The confessions too of these widely different men in such diverse circumstances are worthy of notice to latest ages.

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 35, 36.)

J. W. S.

“WHAT MAN IS THIS?”

“What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?”

GEN. xxiv. 65.

YOU know the story and its spiritual significance. I need only observe, therefore, that there are *two* in one country, the father and the son, and *two* in another country, far away, the ruler of Abraham’s house and the bride.

The steward had only one thought, his master, his wealth, his glory; above all his master’s son, “and unto him hath he given all that he hath.” Even so the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, has come down to show the things of Christ, to win our “eyes,” and to conduct us to the Bridegroom. But how is the Bridegroom occupied? He goes out into the field to meditate, to pray at eventide (v. 63); His feet are on the path along which His church is coming. His face is towards her; for her His petitions ascend. *The church is the fruit of His intercession*, as well as of His creative power and of His great birth pangs, and this will greatly augment His nuptial joy. Who knows but that in another minute He might arise, and we, “caught up,” might be asking, “What man is this that cometh to meet us?” Angels might answer, “Your next of kin, your mighty man of wealth, the One whom the king delights to honour, the Bridegroom coming out of His palace, the long-expected Jesus.”

EXTRACTED.

THE REGIONS BEYOND.

IT seems to me a great pity that from among the younger men among us, who have been *approved* as servants of Christ, there are not more with faith and energy to go out into new ground in other countries. I can speak from some years' experience of such that there is no work like it. Tent-preaching in English villages is happy and nice work, and one can thank God heartily for both those whom He sends to it, and for all the blessing to souls He vouchsafes through it. *But England is not the world*; and I cannot but believe that if there were *faith* to break away from beaten tracks and ordinary modes of service (as did Jonathan in 1 Sam. xiv.), there would be, as in his case, mighty results wrought by God. He ever honours *faith*.

In pioneering work one may have to "rough it" in many ways, but it is an honour to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, in whatever way they may come.

I am sure it would do many much good to go out, if needs be, *alone*, in dependence upon God, and break up new ground. Trials of faith there would surely be, but if God send, He will sustain.

Neither we, as individuals, nor assemblies, as gathered companies, could say to any "*Go*," but by our prayers we might seek that God would exercise some of His servants as to unworked places.

If there were no other country, there is this poor Ireland! What splendid open doors are here! No language save English is needed. Among the Protestants of this country there are thousands perishing for lack of knowledge.

For myself, were I young, and possessed of the physical powers I once had, it would be the joy of my heart to get upon unbroken ground in other lands.

Now one's work is of a different sort in the main, though glad at times to take a turn (through the Lord's favour) at this kind for a while. F. C.

DONEGAL, *August*, 1894.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BRIXTON.—Matthew xviii. 20.—Mr. Darby in his Translation renders this verse thus: "For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them." Not *in*, but *unto*. Between these two prepositions there is a difference. Gathered together *in His name* conveys the idea of being gathered by His authority, and as representing Him, HE HIMSELF BEING ABSENT. *Gathered unto His name* scarcely embraces that idea. It brings the person of the Lord Jesus Christ more particularly before the heart—all that He is and which His name expresses. Nor is this idea all, however blessed; for when speaking of the two or three gathered to His name, He makes haste to add, "There am I in the midst of them." There seems hardly room for the thought of His being in the midst if we read it as gathered *in His name*. It supposes that he is *not* there; *unto His name* supposes, thank God, nothing of the kind.

1 CORINTHIANS v.—The individual here dealt with is clearly a believer who had been guilty of gross sin. He was delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, *that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*. We very much question whether such ground could be taken to-day. Apostolic power was needed for so solemn an act, and no one, as far as we know, possesses apostolic power now. This passage helps also to show the difference between *in* and *unto* the name, as discussed in the preceding paragraph. Here it is justly *in*, not *unto*.