

# 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.

---

VOL. XII.

LONDON: A. S. ROUSE,

15 & 16, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1895.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1894-95 . . . . .	1
A Serious and Startling Question . . . . .	3
“Ye have Done it unto Me” . . . . .	13
One Object Displaced by Another . . . . .	16
Nehemiah . . . . .	19
Ten Years in Heaven . . . . .	26
Answers to Correspondents { 28, 57, 81, 110, 137, 167, 195, 222, 247, 276, 304, 327	
The Great Commission . . . . .	29
Creation's Shadows . . . . .	38
Random Truths . . . . .	47
The Lord of Glory . . . . .	53
The Merchant Man and the Pearl . . . . .	57
The Wrecker's Light . . . . .	61
The Importance of Prayer . . . . .	66
Eternal Punishment . . . . .	85
God has Spoken to Us . . . . .	92
The Blood that Shelters . . . . .	94
The Abundance of the Blessings of Grace . . . . .	100
Gideon and his Three Hundred Lappers . . . . .	107
Profit from Bible Study . . . . .	113
“Redeeming the Time” . . . . .	121
The Priesthood of Christ . . . . .	124
“The Wilderness”; or, “The Edge of the Wilderness”	130
Two Questions Answered . . . . .	141
Can I be Sure I have Eternal Life? . . . . .	147
“The Patience of Christ” . . . . .	150

iv	CONTENTS.	PAGE
Extract on Worship . . . . .		155
Profit from Bible Study. Part II. . . . .		157
Hints for Young Preachers . . . . .		162
Progress . . . . .		169
Enquiring Saints . . . . .		176
“In the Days of thy Youth” . . . . .		178
Marks of True Prayer . . . . .		189
Lot’s Warning . . . . .		197
A Word on Service . . . . .		207
“There is no God” . . . . .		213
“Give Attendance to Reading” . . . . .		219
<u>As He Stands</u> . . . . .		223
The Mind that was in Christ . . . . .		231
“Where is thy Brother?” . . . . .		238
A Threefold Deliverance . . . . .		243
Soul Declension . . . . .		251
Facing the Truth . . . . .		268
Neutrality . . . . .		269
Why do you Doubt? . . . . .		273
Contact with Christ . . . . .		279
The Judgment-seat of Christ . . . . .		287
Stranded, but Saved . . . . .		299
The Lord’s Prayers . . . . .		307
Legal Experiences . . . . .		312
Christ’s Good Confession . . . . .		314
“Continued—Continuing—Continue” . . . . .		320
The Only Lamp for our Feet . . . . .		326
Fragments . . . . .	166, 167,	221
 POETRY—		
Filled and Satisfied . . . . .		319
To-Morrow . . . . .		325
Fragments . . . . .	149,	237

## SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



1894-5.

**A** NOTHER year has passed away, and your journey of life, Christian, is three hundred and sixty-five days nearer its end than when the year began. I am not going to condole with you on that account. The worldling mourns the flight of time. The wonder is that he does not mourn it more, for the flying hours bear him ever on to the place where death and darkness reign. Did he realize the fact he would not simply mourn. Screams of terror would rend the air, for every swing of the pendulum means one step nearer the Judge, the judgment-seat, the verdict, the sentence, and the dark prison of despair, whose iron gates, once shut, will never open more. Not so you. The ship in which you sail is homeward bound. Soon you will see the shores of that dear country where your heart has long been living, soon you will behold the face of Him "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

A new year now peeps above the horizon.

XII.

What shall it bring? We cannot tell. The secrets enfolded in its bosom are known to God alone. Changes in this world of change need not surprise us, for they are sure to come. All earthly things, too, carry within them the seeds of decay and death. But precious it is to remember that the Lord abides. He is the Eternal One. And as we stand, in thought, on some mountain height, and watch the passing away of the years, our ears seem to catch those inspiring words, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but *Thou remainest*; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but *Thou art the same*, and Thy years shall not fail." It is enough. There we rest, and our hearts are hushed, subdued, and blessed.

Yes, He remains, and He is the same—eternal and immutable. Strengthened by this we face the untrodden way. The night is dark, many sorrows afflict the church, dear ties of fellowship are broken, and others may break to-morrow, but amid the wreck and ruin of everything *He abides*. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Brethren, eternity approaches. Let us be up and doing, let us be about our Master's business during our Master's absence, for soon we shall see the golden streaks of morning betokening His return.

## A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION.

A KIND correspondent has sent us a tract, published by a Cornish vicar, whose parish is not a hundred miles away from the little town of St. Austell. It is one of a series, and it has been diligently circulated in a certain neighbourhood where some itinerant servants of Christ have sought to preach the simple word of God.

It is more than likely that these plain preachers of the Word told their hearers that the gospel of the grace of God did not simply set a man a hoping to be saved when he should come to die, but that it gave—and was intended by God to give—the knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins. The *knowledge of salvation*, I say, not the hope of it, for that is the word employed in Luke i. 77.

No doubt this seemed in some eyes very dreadful, an offence almost worthy of stripes and imprisonment. If we remember rightly, Mrs. Bevan, in her *Life of John Wesley*, tells of a man who was brought before the magistrate and sent to prison for daring to say that he was saved. Singularly enough this took place in the very county where the author of this tract follows his vocation. At present it will hardly do to bring a man before the bench on such a charge,

## 4 A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION.

so we presume this tract was written, published, and is circulated to counteract such notions. Here is its title, "*The Churchman's Answer to the Question, ARE YOU SAVED?*" and this is how it begins:

"I DARESAY *you* have been asked this very serious and startling question, perhaps several times in your life. Some zealous Plymouth Brother, or some enthusiastic Salvationist, has held you by the button and bluntly asked you whether you *felt you were saved*, and you have hardly known what to say. The question has filled you with the gloomiest fears and misgivings. No, you did not feel anything of the kind, and therefore you feared you must be lost."

Well, but we happen to know many who would not be filled with "the gloomiest fears and misgivings," by any question of the kind. If it were asked them a hundred times they would answer it a hundred times in the same way, soberly and in the fear of God. They would declare, with deep gratitude, that through His infinite mercy they were saved and they knew it. And I venture to say their confidence would remain unshaken, no matter by whom assailed, for it is founded on the word of the living God, carried into their soul by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If it be demanded as to what is meant by being "saved" one might answer thus: "I was once lost but am now found, once dead but now alive, once guilty but now pardoned, once condemned but now justified, once at enmity with God but now reconciled, once afar off but

## A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION. 5

now brought nigh, once covered with rags but now clothed with the best robe, once on the broad but now in the narrow way, once under wrath but now in divine favour, a child of God, an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, chosen in Him before the world's foundation, and one of those of whom it is said, 'and whom He called them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.'" All this and more is meant when a person confesses, that by the grace of God, by His sovereign mercy, and through the infinite merits of the Saviour's precious blood, *he is saved.*

Do you think, good reader, that in saying these things the man says too much? Are they but the vain words of a proud and presumptuous mind? Let us see. Can you spare fifteen minutes to put the matter to the test? If so, nothing is easier. Take up your Bible and turn to the following passages, which kindly read with care. Unless we are much mistaken you will find that the man's confession, in all its parts, is but the echo of words which the Holy Ghost has engraven for ever on the sacred rock of Holy Scripture.

Luke xv. 24, Romans iv. 7, Romans iii. 26, Acts xiii. 38, 39, Romans v. 10, Ephesians ii. 13, Luke xv. 22, 1 Peter ii. 25, Ephesians ii. 3-6, Romans viii. 17, Ephesians i. 4, Romans viii. 30.

Having read those passages, let me ask you, Whether of the twain is the more presumptuous—



## 6 A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION.

the man who humbly believes God's word, however astonishing, or the man who by disbelieving it dares to call his Maker a liar?

“But this inquiry has also led, I daresay, to another reflection—‘Why does not my clergyman,’ you have said to yourself, ‘ask me this question? He comes to my cottage, speaks to me about Church-going and sacraments, comforts me in sorrow, prays by my sick-bed and the like, but he never pointedly asks me “Are you saved?” And other clergymen, I observe, are just like him. They never ask us, point blank, even in the pulpit, whether we are saved or not. Now why is this? Is it because they don't understand their business? Are they really “blind leaders of the blind”? They say they “watch for our souls, as those who must give an account,” and yet they never look us straight in the face and ask us—what must be the most momentous of all questions—*Are you saved?*’”

Can this terrible confession be true of all the clergy? Is it a fact that among the thousands who preach Sunday after Sunday, in the cities, towns, and villages of Britain, there is not a single clergyman who, from the pulpit, in the home, or by the bedside of the dying, ever asks this momentous question in any shape whatever? Are they all dumb dogs that cannot bark? shepherds that cannot understand? We do not believe it. There are many, we hope, who do ask it, and ask it with anxious solicitude, though the writer of this tract, alas! is not among the number. Were it otherwise we might call on every Christian to make it a matter of earnest, importunate prayer, that the Lord of the harvest

## A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION. 7

would cause this great question to ring in every corner of every parish throughout the land.

And so "Church-going and sacraments," forsooth, are the things to be talked about! With these the messengers of Christ are to smooth the pillow of the dying, and light up with hope the dark chamber over which death has flung his shadow. What! Are they to daub the wall with untempered mortar? Are they to cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," and persuade men to build their house on the treacherous sand, which the storm and rain shall sweep away? No, by God's help, no; but let them go to the living and the dying, and preach to them the preaching that God shall tell them of. His gospel is not about "Church-going and sacraments," but about His Son Jesus Christ, who became flesh, lived, died, and rose again, who is the appointed Judge of quick and dead, and to whom give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.

And now we are told the reason why this question, "*Are you saved?*" is never asked.

"Your clergy cannot ask you this plain question, whatever others may do, because it would be, first, *unscriptural*; secondly, *misleading*; thirdly, *mystifying*; and, finally, it would be impossible for you to answer in the affirmative. I say it would be *unscriptural*. For if scripture sanctions such questions as these, if our blessed Lord or His apostles ever asked them, pray let the passage be produced."

## 8      A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION.

So according to this there is not a man living upon earth to-day who is justified in speaking of himself as saved !

Now the answer to this demand, so vauntingly put forth, is this: The gospel which the apostles preached was a new message, and those to whom it was announced had never heard the like before. In the case of the apostle Paul this was particularly so, for he laboured chiefly among the heathen. It would have been absurd of him to ask the worshippers of Diana, or the idolatrous Athenians to whom he discoursed on Mars' hill, whether they were saved. He knew they were not. Salvation is the fruit of faith, as anyone may see by reading Romans x. 9. But how shall a man have faith in One of whom he has not heard ? It was necessary, therefore, that Christ should be first preached both to Jews and Gentiles, and salvation through His name made known. Let it be supposed that some days after the memorable preaching in Antioch of Pisidia, during which those wonderful words were spoken which are quoted in Acts xiii. 38, 39, let it be supposed, I say, that we had met one of the listeners. We accost him, "Well, Aristarchus, the stranger-preachers who spoke to us last Sabbath declared to us glad tidings. They told us of forgiveness of sins, and of justification from all things, for those who believed the gospel. How does it stand with you ? Are your sins forgiven ? Are you among the justified ?" Would such ques-

## A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION. 9

tions have been "*unscriptural*" and out of place? I trow not. Again, Were there a mighty famine raging through the land, and in your town or village a governmental depôt had been opened for the free distribution of bread to the poor, would it, I should like to know, be a very "*misleading*" and "*mystifying*" question were you to ask some woe-begone mother whether she had been to the depôt for bread? Until the depôt had been opened, and the fact publicly made known, the question could have had no place or meaning. Afterwards it would have been of all questions the most proper. So now the true servants of Christ declare unto men glad tidings. They warn them against vain reliance on "Church-going and sacraments," and tell them of forgiveness of sins, of salvation and eternal life, the purchase of the sufferings, blood-shedding, and death of the Son of God. They tell them that these everlasting blessings are freely offered without money or price, and beseech men to receive them as God's free gift through faith in His beloved Son. Surely in a land where such tidings are announced, where the Bible, in which these glad tidings are made known, is found in almost every home, we may justly ask those who listen whether they are forgiven, are saved, and have eternal life? It is but another way of asking, whether the gospel which they hear is indeed believed, for believing and being forgiven, believing and being saved, believing

## 10 A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION.

and having everlasting life, are ever joined together in the blessed Word of God. Who can read John v. 24, John iii. 36, and deny it?

If any reader still objects and says, "Yes, but a man may be forgiven, justified, and have everlasting life, and yet not be entitled to speak of himself as saved, for salvation is a future thing, is it not?" to that we reply, True, salvation in its *fullest* sense is future, and, of course, in that meaning of the word we are not yet saved. Nor shall we be till the Lord comes to change our body of humiliation, and fashion it by His almighty power like unto His body of glory. (Phil. iii. 21.) For this we wait, comforted by the thought that "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Rom. xiii. 11.) But that does not, in any way whatever, war against what we have said. Salvation, so far as the soul is concerned, is an accomplished fact, and the truth of this, we make bold to say, is so interwoven with other truths of scripture, that if you dislodge it, the whole fabric is shaken to its foundations.

One more quotation must suffice. In this we are very kindly informed what answer we should make to the next man who asks us, "Are you saved?"

"You will say to him: 'I am extremely obliged to you for your good intentions. I know you mean well. You desire my salvation, and therefore I cannot but

## A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION. 11

be grateful to you. But your question proceeds from a misunderstanding of scripture. It comes from taking the ideas and traditions of men instead of the word of God. No, I am not saved; but I hope, by God's grace, I am "being saved." No more, let me tell you, are you saved, and nothing can be more dangerous, more perilous, than to think you are, when it is a dead certainty that without prayer, and watching, and perseverance you will be lost.'"

Now the importance of prayer, and watching, and perseverance is very great. God forbid that these should be made little of. But to use these essential elements of Christian life to deprive us of all assurance of present salvation is a very bad piece of work. Whether the question, "Are you saved?" proceeds from ignorance of scripture, and from taking the ideas and traditions of men in place of the word of God, as this tract alleges, the reader himself must judge. We are content to abide the verdict if the voice of Holy Writ be heard and heeded.

Reader, whatever men may say, or you may think, the word of God tells us of a *finished work*, and shews us that the One who did it sat down for ever on the right hand of God. (Heb. x. 12.) What is the meaning of His being seated there, if His one sacrifice has not completely taken away all our sins? By that one offering the Christian is "PERFECTED FOR EVER"; and in order to set us free from every fear, God Himself most solemnly declares that our sins and iniquities He

## 12      A SERIOUS AND STARTLING QUESTION.

will remember no more. (Heb. x. 17.) In the first epistle of John v. 13 we further read, "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." Mark those words, "*that ye may know.*" For that very object had these things been written. Moreover, we have died with Christ, for so scripture speaks, and in His grave have we been buried. Thus in the Divine reckoning our standing as guilty children of Adam has come to an end, never more to be revived. I speak of believers now, and only of such. A new standing ground is ours, and new associations. God has set us "*in Christ Jesus.*" We belong to His company, we are of His order, for "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." (Heb. ii. 11.) Of these truths this tract knows nothing. It can speak of "Church-going and sacraments;" but of the superabounding grace of God that associates even now a poor, vile, but repentant, sinner—forgiven, justified, and having eternal life and the gift of the Holy Ghost—with Christ and with all the blessedness of that scene where Christ now is, there is not one word. For the unfortunate parishioners who sit under such ministrations, whether it be in the county of Cornwall or elsewhere, we feel the sincerest pity. We can only urge them to search the scriptures for themselves, humbly, prayerfully, and God will give them light.

## “YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME.”

## A WORD TO OUR YOUNGER SISTERS.

THERE is something very sweet in the thought, that any little kindness we may show to one who belongs to Christ is regarded by Him as though it were shewn to Himself. This is very clearly expressed in those familiar words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Were the Lord to come to earth, as in olden days, how many homes would be thrown open to Him, how many would be ready, like the beloved family at Bethany, to prepare Him a supper and to minister to His utmost need. Personally He is no longer here, yet in another and very true sense He is here—here in His members, so that we still have the privilege of ministering unto Him.

Sometimes the question is asked, “What can I do?” It is asked by those who are young in years, whose means are scanty and whose opportunities for serving are but few.

To such we would say, Do not despise the doing of little things. Practical Christianity is rarely more beautiful than when in a meek and quiet spirit she occupies herself in matters that



## 14 "YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."

are small. And the Lord takes notice of it, and writes down the action in His book. A cup of cold water, given in His name, and out of love to Him, shall not lose its reward. Only let the motive be right, and your two mites of personal effort, when cast into the treasury of God, shall be more in His sight than many splendid deeds.

There is a lovely word in the first chapter of the epistle of James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." How heavenly, how divine is this! Very dear to God are "the fatherless and widows." Can you not visit such? Mark, it does not say, "*talk to,*" but "*visit.*" You may feel that others, older and more experienced than yourself, could talk to them better, and better express in words the sympathy their sorrow should receive. That may be quite true, but sympathy is not confined to words, it can and does show itself in acts.

Many "fatherless and widows" among the Lord's loved ones are poor and struggling. On the mother's shoulders everything rests now. She has to be both mother and father to her little ones, and her hands are more than full. She would be so glad to be at the meetings for prayer sometimes, but the children cannot be left alone in the house. She would like to hear the ministry of the Word from that servant of

## "YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME." 15

Christ whom the Lord has sent into the neighbourhood for a few days, but her duties keep her at home. Ah! if you were to call in the afternoon, and suggest your coming to take charge for a couple of hours so that she might get out, what sunshine you would shed in that circle over which the shadow of death still lingers! And when you left you might ask whether there were no socks you could take home and darn, or some sewing that you could do to spare the fingers which too often ache.

Then there is that overworked mother. It is true she is not a widow. Her husband, thank God, is still spared to her, but she would be grateful enough for a little help. I do not mean help in the shape of money, but help such as willing hands and a willing heart could give. And remember the Lord says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto *one of the least* of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." One of the least! It is easy, we all know, to serve one of the greatest. We like to serve such because of what they are. But if you say a kind word, or lend a helping hand to *one of the least*, you say a kind word and lend a helping hand to Christ Himself, for so He regards it.

Will you think of this?

---

## ONE OBJECT DISPLACED BY ANOTHER.

IT has been said, and with much truth, that "a straw shews which way the wind blows," and is it not equally true that a very small thing indicates what occupies the heart? If the heart's object is not Christ it will be something else. It is of little use speaking against the thing that occupies a person's heart. One does not hear of much good coming of simply opposing what the heart likes. Bring in something better and the end is gained.

The truth of this was recently demonstrated in a little incident, which for the sake of illustration we will briefly relate. When we were visiting the poor, sick mother of a little cottage girl, about six years old, the child was tenderly nursing a dirty, dilapidated doll. By way of experiment we tried in various ways to persuade the little girl that the doll she thought so much of was by no means a nice one. But instead of the effect being to induce her to discard it she pressed it all the closer to her bosom, stating that she liked it very much and would not like to part with it. We then adopted the plan previously anticipated, and drew out a pretty *new* doll, nicely dressed, which we placed as a present upon the child's arm, and which she at

## ONE OBJECT DISPLACED BY ANOTHER. 17

once took to, allowing doll number one to drop upon the floor, and to be put into a corner, not again to be enquired for so far as we know.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” We read of the Thessalonians that they “*turned to God* from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) It does not say that they *turned* FROM IDOLS to God, though of course that was true, but it is not put in that way, and the way in which it is put makes all the difference.

Paul preached *Christ* to those idolatrous Thessalonians, and we are not told that he preached against their idols. No, that would have been worse than useless. But once their hearts were brought by the Spirit into occupation with the Son of God, their idols were let go. When once anyone’s heart gets engaged with Christ, all else is displaced or distanced in proportion as Christ has His true place there. *He* is enough the mind and heart to *fill*.

When the disciples were troubled about Jesus going away from them, He knew exactly what would most effectually comfort their hearts, and said, “*I will come again, and receive you unto myself*; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John xiv. 3.) At the Lord’s ascension, too, when the disciples, with disappointed hopes, were watching

## 18 ONE OBJECT DISPLACED BY ANOTHER.

Him go into heaven, they were told, for the comfort of their sorrowing hearts, that "this *same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i. 11.) We have known a child cry because his mother has been going away, and neither sweet, nor coin, would pacify him, nothing short of assuring him of the mother's sure return would dry those tears. If our hearts miss the Lord we *want* Him; but do you not see, dear reader, in proportion as our hearts are otherwise taken up, the desire to see His blessed face is lessened? When those same Thessalonians were afterwards in sorrow as to their departed relatives, it is said for their consolation that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise *first*: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together *with them* in the clouds, TO MEET THE LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be *with the Lord*." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) Wishing to be with the Lord to get free from trials and difficulties is quite below the mark. Nothing short of occupation with the Blessed One and love for Him who first loved us will suffice. May the Lord in His grace conduct our hearts more and more into acquaintance with Himself, so that everything that hinders may be removed, for His name's sake.

J. N.

## NEHEMIAH.

THE history of Nehemiah furnishes many practical and profitable lessons for a day like this. The opening of the book introduces us into the palace of Artaxerxes Longimanus, King of Persia, where Nehemiah serves as cupbearer to the king. Tidings of deep import had been brought to him by some of his brethren from Judah. "The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." (Chapter i. 3.) Overwhelming news this to a godly Jew, whose earthly hopes were centred in that favoured spot where Jehovah had chosen to place His name. And it gave rise to the deepest exercise and the most profound sorrow of heart. Jerusalem and its inhabitants the prey of ruthless strangers, her gates demolished, her walls laid low, "the city of the great King" trodden under foot of the Gentiles! This was grief upon grief. How could he help his poor afflicted brethren, how restore Jerusalem's broken down walls and repair her breaches? Alas! if he looked to an arm of flesh the case was altogether hopeless.

But Nehemiah was a man of faith, and the

living God was his resource. He knew that Israel was only reaping the bitter fruit of her wickedness, that Jehovah was behind it all, and that the Gentile nations were only instruments in His hand for the discipline of His erring people. But if this were so, was there then no remedy? Had the God of Israel utterly abandoned His chosen? Had they ceased to be His heritage? Surely not. And on this elevated platform Nehemiah takes his stand.

In verses 4 to 11 we find Nehemiah's deep and humbling confession of sin, and his importunate appeal to Jehovah, based on the ground of His relationship with Israel. Carefully note the self-abasement and unfeigned sorrow of heart expressed in these remarkable verses, for therein lies the secret of all the joy and blessing unfolded in the subsequent chapters. It was no superficial work with Nehemiah. His sorrow was deep and real, and his confession of failure, ingratitude, and sin, both as to the people and as to himself, absolute and unsparing. "*I . . . wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven . . . we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.*" Suited words and suited attitude of soul for one who was in the secret of Jehovah's ways with His people. Chapter ii. shows how fully his prayer was answered. So it has ever been in the ways of God. *Wherever there is true brokenness of spirit*

## NEHEMIAH.

21

*with confidence in the living God* there is the response on His part, no matter what the age or dispensation. This principle is abundantly illustrated in the portion before us.

But let us ask ourselves whether there is any need for similar self-judgment and confession in our own day. Have we anything to mourn over? With the records of the past handed down to us for our profit, in all their divine accuracy, and with a full revelation of God's mind in the Scriptures, does the present condition of things answer thereto? May we not sorrowfully own that with all our amazing privileges the state of Christendom to-day is such as to fill us with sorrow and alarm? For what are the specific features of Christianity? Is it not that God has made Himself known in the person of His Son?—that the cross has furnished Him with a righteous basis on which He can act in the fullest grace, consistently with all that He is as a God of infinite holiness?—that the feeblest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may now cry "Abba, Father?" Heir of God, joint heir with Christ, predestinated, called, justified, soon to be glorified, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, brought to God, made a member of the body of Christ—these are some of the things which scripture plainly teaches are true of a believer, and if true of one then surely of all. (Romans viii. 15-17, 30-39; 1 Cor. xii. 27; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Peter iii. 18;



Eph. i. 4, 7, 22, 23 ; iii. 16-21.) For there is not a blessing in Christianity that may not be freely appropriated by each member of Christ's body. But are the children of God in the knowledge and enjoyment of these things which are indeed the common birthright of *all true believers*? Are you, dear reader, living in the enjoyment of these things? If not, how great is your loss!

What are we surrounded with on every hand to-day? We see two great opposing elements under the direct control of one mighty leader, ranged in deadly hostility against the Son of God. Infidelity, bold and daring, would fain obliterate every trace of God from the earth, and a ritualistic religion, with Satan at its back, is fast paving the way for the man of sin "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.) And what should be our attitude if we would be true to our absent Lord? Nehemiah will give us the answer. His lot was cast in evil days. He was a captive in a strange land, wave after wave of trouble had swept over God's chosen people until all hope had well-nigh fled, a crushing stroke had just descended upon his spirit, prostrating him in the dust with grief, shame, and deep contrition before his God. But Nehemiah's dire extremity was God's opportunity.

The moment of triumph had come. He wrestled with God and "prevailed," like one in an earlier day. (Gen. xxxii. 24-28.) He recognized and owned the justice of Jehovah's dealings, but he also rose to the height of his privilege as representing the Lord's chosen people, and he claims, on behalf of his city and nation, that for which his heart yearned. Magnificent fruit of a well-grounded faith! This, too, is our resource in these dark and troublous days. The living God is our unfailing Refuge. He who was the faithful God of Israel is all that and infinitely more to us, now that in the light of a fuller revelation we know Him as our Father.

It is most refreshing and encouraging to trace the onward course of God's faithful servant and witness, as detailed in the succeeding chapters of this book of Nehemiah. Two things characterize him at the start, and continue to mark him in his path of active service for the Lord—a lowly and dependant spirit, and the most implicit confidence in the word and power of God. Important traits, which no child or servant of God to-day can afford to be without!

We have spoken of two great systems of evil with which we are surrounded—that which is openly antagonistic, and the more subtle, but none the less deadly and dangerous form of counterfeit Christianity, in which the enemy assumes the garb of an angel of light. (2 Cor. xi. 14.) Now if we

are to act for God in the midst of all this tide of evil, serving His saints, and calling poor sinners out of it, we must begin, like Nehemiah, with ourselves. Let everything be owned and fully judged in the light of God's holy presence, then in the joy of communion we may go forth and serve Him acceptably.

We are a heavenly people, and to serve as such the manner of our service and the weapons of our warfare must needs be in keeping with our calling. All that we need, whether for personal guidance, service, warfare, or worship, our God has provided in His great store-house and armoury, the holy scriptures. Ours is a heavenly calling, therefore our walk and ways should savour of it, whether in our homes, in the mart, the exchange, the office, the mill, the mine, the workshop, or the field. If we are abiding in Him according to the truth of John's first epistle (ii. 28), Christ will be reproduced in us by the Holy Ghost, and this is no small part of the testimony for the present moment.

Nehemiah, after a due recognition of God's hand, and a consequent deep self-judgment and confession, as to his own share in the common failure, could rise to the height of God's thoughts about His people. But Israel's hopes and prospects centred *on the earth*. The land of Canaan and Jerusalem were their boundaries. God's ways and dealings with His people in that

day had reference to their conduct and behaviour in the land. The principle on which He acted was, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah i. 19, 20.) The gospel which comes from the heart of the blessed God to-day shows how He can take up a sinner laden with sins, forgive, cleanse, and unite him to Christ, and then send him forth in the power of that heavenly association to lead a heavenly life in the very place of his sinnership. Have you thus risen to God's thoughts respecting you? His counsels, His plans, yea, His very heart has been told out in the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. (1 Tim. i. 11.)

It is only as we lay hold of God's present thoughts and purposes respecting His people, that we shall be able to render testimony in keeping with the present dispensation. Hence the importance of a true starting point. Israel's call was earthly; ours is heavenly. Nehemiah's service, great and blessed as it was, and moreover in full keeping with the Lord's mind for that day, was only for, and connected with, the land of Judah.

It is instructive to notice the various tactics of the enemy in his endeavour to frustrate the work of the Lord in Nehemiah's hand; at one time, after the manner of the roaring lion (chapter

iv. 7, 8), at another with subtlety and craft. (vi. 5-13.) But his resource was ever in the powerful arm and faithful word of a covenant keeping God. The contrast between chapters i. and iii. and chapter viii. affords a lovely illustration of how God responds to the earnest appeal of an exercised soul who has His interests at heart.

Dear fellow-Christian, never was there a greater need of faithful, true-hearted men of God than now—men ready to stand in the breach, and to maintain the truth given to us for the present moment. Let us see to it, that in the remaining brief interval of the Lord's absence our lives may be bright with His praise and fruitful in His service.

Again we say, this can only be as we are maintained in the enjoyment of our place and portion in the Beloved. (Eph. i. 6.)

G. F. E.

---

## TEN YEARS IN HEAVEN.

I HEARD a beautiful story lately—a story to stir the heart, and to stimulate the faith of the most tried of God's people. In a lonely part of Scotland lived a poor man and his wife and daughter. They were all he had, but death came and took them from him. Those who have suffered as he, will understand something of his loss. His health gave way, and soon he became totally blind. In his loneliness and pain he bethought

him of the poor, untaught shepherd boys in the mountain, and these he gathered together, and told them of the love of God, of the life of Jesus, of the power of the Gospel of that love and that life. And he did not tell them in vain.

The lonely, fruitful years went by, until one day a Christian visited the blind teacher, and, seeing everything as it was to outside eyes, he told him how he sympathized with him, how the Lord Jesus was touched with the feeling of his infirmities, and how there would one day be an end to it all, and at last he said:—

“You have the great consolation, you will soon be in heaven.”

The sightless eyes lifted themselves, the worn hands were clasped, a beautiful smile illumined the scarred face:—

“Soon be in heaven, did you say, sir?” asked the old Christian, “I have been there ten years already!”

Ten years in heaven! And you, mourner, may have been carrying your burdens all that time alone, and you might have been there too!

Step out from among the embers of your grief, and they will soon be ashes. No matter how heavy your cross, how bitter your cup, how deep your chastening, the hand that bruises is the hand that blesses, and, in the house of your mourning, you may, even now, as you arise and seek the arms of your Father, begin the first year of many years in heaven.—*Extracted.*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. F. P.—If a hymn be given out in the assembly which another thinks should only be sung in part, he ought to be very sure indeed of his having the Lord's mind before he takes it upon himself to decide which verses shall be sung. As to the right or wrong in the instance of which you speak we can express no judgment, as no rule applies to every case.

LESLIE.—Every Christian who seeks to help on his fellow-believer in the things of God must be allowed to do so according to his own measure of light. We cannot lay down rules for the guidance of others, nor should we sit in judgment upon them. To their own Master they stand or fall. For our own part we do not feel called upon to speak to everybody about his ecclesiastical position, not even to those who are on the ground you mention, though in talking with them the subject might possibly arise sooner than with some. But we need divine guidance if we would set before souls meat in due season. Now it is certain that any truths the Lord has taught us out of His holy word form part of the common heritage of all His people. They are not ours by any peculiar rights of proprietorship, but belong equally to them, though from one cause or another they may be hid from their eyes. We do not see therefore what plea would justify your withholding the children's bread from the children to whom it belongs.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION.

MARK xvi. 15, 16.

LET us picture to ourselves the risen Saviour, standing among His disciples for the last time ere "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Placing ourselves among that little company, we hear Him speak those parting words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." That was to be their life-work, at least those words seem to express what *He* would have their life-work to be.

A great commission this, brethren, and solemn too, as all must surely feel as they listen to what He further said, "He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved*; but he that believeth not *shall be damned*." Plain, very plain, is this. Thank God, the inspired evangelist, years afterward, could bear witness that "they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

Those early preachers have long since ceased from their labours, and their great mission, descending through successive generations, is found in our hands to-day. On *our* shoulders rests the heavy responsibility of making the Glad Tidings known. As far as in us lies, by every



means within our power, we are under an eternal obligation to see that our Master's message reaches the ear of those to whom it is sent. Are we alive to our charge, and are we conscientiously endeavouring to fulfil it ?

The apostle Paul sets us a striking example. He speaks of himself as a debtor unto all men, no matter who they were, or what their station in life. (Roman i. 14.) In what way had he become their debtor ? In this way, that to him had been entrusted tidings of infinite moment "to every creature under heaven." It was due, then, to them, and to the One whom he sought to serve, that these tidings, so big with momentous results, should be carried everywhere, to every creature, in accordance with his Master's will. Nor would his conscience let him rest till, to his very utmost, he had done this. Deeply did he feel his responsibility. "Necessity is laid upon me," said he, "yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." And he sought to preach it, and did preach it, "not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation : but as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see ; and they that have not heard shall understand." Thus did this choice servant of Christ realize his responsibility, and thus did he clear himself from the blood of all men. (Acts xx. 26.) Do we realize ours, and are we as clear as he was ?

When the Earl of Essex stood high in the favour of Queen Elizabeth, her Majesty, so runs the story, gave Essex a ring, and pledged her royal word that if ever he was placed in circumstances where she could befriend him, he had but to send that ring to her. When Essex lay under sentence of death, which Elizabeth alone could revoke, he entrusted the ring to one of the titled ladies of her court, who undertook to give it to the Queen. From unworthy motives she withheld it, and only confessed her guilt under pressure of conscience, after Essex had been beheaded in the Tower. It is said that Elizabeth never forgave her. Against two did this unhappy woman sin—her Sovereign and the prisoner, whose life might have been spared had she been loyal to her trust.

And if we are disloyal to the great trust that has been committed to us, how shall we meet our Master in the day of our account? or what could we say to any who pass away unsaved, who ought to have heard the saving word from our lips, but heard it not? “If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?” (Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.) Searching questions these! What can we say to them?

With what agitated feelings do we read the story of some great railway disaster, in which there have been many killed, many injured, and others have had most marvellous deliverances. We mourn the dead—hurried out of the land of the living without a moment's warning—and deeply sympathize with the maimed, whose bruised limbs and broken bones will shorten their journey to the tomb. And should this calamitous event have been due to the carelessness of the signalman, to the inattention of the driver, or to the want of proper precautions on the part of the company, how justly and bitterly are they condemned. *But what if we neglect to flash the danger signal, and suffer men for want of warning to hurry on to judgment and the burning lake?* No catastrophe on land or sea can be likened to the final ruin, the eternal damnation, of the souls of men. Nor can anything relieve us of our responsibility. “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” (Ezek. xxxiii. 8.)

It is easy to imagine some reader exclaiming, “But we are not all preachers.” True, if you whittle down the meaning of the verb “to preach” to the addressing a public audience. Certainly, all cannot do that. But you have no business to restrict the meaning of the word thus

There are many modes of preaching besides expounding to a crowd, many other ways of carrying out the will of our ascended Lord, ways which we shall not here define, but which do not and cannot remain hid when the heart begins to blaze and burn with love to dying men. Ah! the weak point is there. Our hearts are so feebly affected by the love of Christ, and by the tremendous facts we profess to believe. (2 Cor. v. 11-15.)

Nor will it do to say that the Church is the great object of the love of Christ, and in being occupied with her hopes, calling, and destiny you may be excused from giving more than a passing thought to the perishing multitudes in this and other lands. I know the Church is the object of the love of Christ, and that He nourishes and cherishes it, but why use that fact to belittle the carrying out of His great commission? You talk of fellowship in heavenly joys. Good; but have you forgotten that the repentance of *one* sinner fills the heart of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—with joy too great, too deep, even for that heart to keep to itself? “Rejoice with Me” is His call to others to share this joy with Him. Oh, it is wonderful to think of it! And do you forget that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to Luke xv., are *now, at this very hour*, engaged with the salvation of sinners? It is one of heaven’s present joys. Have you no fellowship with that? and are you so absorbed

with the Church and your own blessings, that you can look upon this panorama of grace and joy with an eye unmoistened, and a heart unmoved?

No man on earth cared more for the Church than Paul, no one laboured so much for her good, yet even in the closing stages of his marvellous career, unmoved by bonds and afflictions, his ambition was to finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, *to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* (Acts xx. 24.) Let us think much of the gospel, of our obligation to speed the gospel chariot on its way. By pen and press, by prayer and purse, by personal testimony, let us spread abroad, even to the ends of the earth, the tidings of life and peace!

And if you are a preacher, in the narrow and modern meaning of the term, let me put it to you whether we are not in danger of keeping too much to beaten tracks—of working fields which have been already ploughed, and sown, and reaped, and gleaned—of dragging our nets through ponds that are almost emptied of their fish? Is it any marvel then that there is often much labour with but little result? A man may have excellent fishing tackle, the best of bait, and he himself be a good angler into the bargain, but if he fishes in waters where there are no fish, he will go home with an empty basket. Why spend your strength thus? Think of “the regions beyond.” Your parish has the globe for its

## THE GREAT COMMISSION.

35

circumference. Under the guidance of your Master, go where your voice has not yet been heard, and where the reaping-hook of some richly-blessed evangelist has not made that particular spot, for the time being, as void of sheaves as the floor of the room in which you eat your dinner.

Nor is it enough that the glad tidings should be simply and faithfully proclaimed. Plain, scriptural preaching is indeed a great thing, but we are mistaken if we think it to be everything. We have been content, perhaps, thus to preach and to comfort ourselves with the thought that God's word shall not return to Him void, little thinking that the passage from which we draw our comfort means something vastly different from what many dream. More is called for than plain preaching if souls are to be won. "He that goeth forth and *weepeth*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm cxxvi.) "*Weepeth.*" Brethren, that's the word. We may be assured that when men weep over souls, then will souls weep under them, and be converted too. If any inquire why it should be so, why the state of the preacher's heart affects the message that he bears, we can only answer that the Lord has so appointed it. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Alas! we too often preach the gospel in a "take-it-or-leave-it"

sort of fashion, as if it were not in solemn truth a matter of life or death, of heaven or hell. We want more warmth, more tenderness, more pleading power. The flowers and fruits of the sunny south are not to be grown under polar skies. Let us pray for tender hearts— hearts more like the Master's, for He held not back His tears from unsaved men. (Luke xix. 41.)

If some of us are not preachers, let us take care, when an evangelist is among us, that we gather souls—unsaved souls—together to hear the words of life. There is a great lack of energy as to this, and of conscience too, at least there is room for plenty more. God can save souls anywhere, but they cannot be saved in the building where your evangelist is preaching, unless they are first brought within its four walls; and if people cannot be induced to go there, then see if some other place cannot be hired to which they will be willing to go. At all events, gather them together. Now the special blessing of God often rests on service of this sort. How many could testify that they owe their conversion, under God, to their going, at the urgent invitation of a friend, to hear the gospel? In some instances they went unwillingly, and were saved in spite of themselves, according to those gracious words, "I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me." (Romans x. 20.)

Do any fear that in what has been said, we have lost sight of the Holy Ghost? Not at all. Power belongeth unto God. We own this from the bottom of our heart, and feel it too. But that in no way weakens our side of the question. Shall we forbear to plant and water because it is God alone who can give the increase? Nay, the planting and the watering are both right and must be done, though we know that it is only God's hand that can make them prosper. Indeed, if there be one thing more powerful than another to impel us to unwearied labour, it is the fact that the Lord Himself works with us. No effort, however small, no means, however insignificant, if the hand of the Lord be with us, but what may yield undying results.

How far, then, are we fulfilling the great trust committed to our hands to-day? Even in Great Britain and Ireland there are multitudes to whom the blessed news of salvation, full and free, is an unknown story. But what about "the regions beyond"? There is the great English-speaking race in Canada, the United States, South Africa, and the more distant colonies. There are the millions of China, India, and "darkest Africa." To "every creature" is the gospel addressed, and into "all the world" the servants of Christ are to go. Oh that the Lord would stir our hearts, so that His work might break forth on every side!



## CREATION'S SHADOWS.

GENESIS i. ii.

**I**N these early chapters of the book of Genesis we read the story of God's creation, told out in all its sweet simplicity, and ever opening up new beauties to the one who seeks in all humility to learn His ways. Let us read this story once again, with hearts open to receive its blessed teaching. As we read it, seven stages in the Creation seem to stand out before us clothed with unmistakable meaning. They foreshadow points in God's present dealings with man, though, perhaps, not exactly in the same order.

In verse 2 we see the state of the earth before God moulded it according to His pleasure. What was this state? Without form, and void, and filled with darkness. We need not stop to consider this in itself, but let us look at it as a picture of the natural man away from God. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 19.) We may ask, "Is this indeed true of all men, or only of those whom the world looks upon as evil?" Surely it is true of all,—of the outwardly respectable and religious as well as of the thief and the drunkard. We know so little of the depth of darkness and sin in these hearts of ours. Would that we knew it better, then, indeed, should we distrust them more. "The heart is deceitful

above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart." (Jer. xvii. 9, 10.) The unconverted often go on utterly careless of their state, quite indifferent to the great fact that they must one day stand before God, with their heart of sin bared before His holy eye, and then to go to their "own place" (Acts i. 25), "the blackness of darkness for ever." (Jude 13.) Some, however, are not wholly careless, their past sins sometimes trouble them, and they are seeking to make some preparation to meet God. But, alas! what are they doing? Trying to train that heart to produce fruit for God, forgetful of His verdict upon it, "deceitful above all things." Surely such cannot have recognized that fact, or how could they dare to bring to God the produce of such a heart as this? It will not do. The natural man is in darkness, without God, and without hope. He can bear no fruit for God, there must be a new creation.

Let us now turn to our second point, "The Spirit of God moved." Oh, wondrous thought! How sweet even now to trace God's handiwork in this once lovely creation, alas! so sadly marred and stained with sin. We see around us on every side the traces of what sin has wrought. We read it in the faces of sorrow-stricken humanity. We gaze upon it in that slow procession which wends its way to the tomb in yonder cemetery. What could those precincts tell us of broken hearts, and blighted hopes, and wasted lives! Oh! who can

tell the mighty cry of anguish that ascends up to heaven, as the tide of sorrow and death rolls relentlessly over this earth? It was not always so, and as we read those beautiful words, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5), we are reminded that it will not always be so. No, God will yet have, instead of the old creation, a new creation, untainted with the breath of sin.

Look back for a moment where we left the unconverted man — in darkness, without God, without hope. Let us inquire if it is possible for him to be brought into the blessing of this new creation. Thank God, it is. In John xvi. 8 we read that the Spirit of God is here on earth "to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Look at His work in that man's soul. He has found out that he is a sinner, he has been one for more than forty years, but only now has he discovered how great his sins, how terrible his state before God. Oh, marvellous work! impossible to man, but wrought in our hearts by the power of God the Holy Ghost. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.)

Our third point is in verse 3, "God said, Let there be *light*: and there was light." His word called that light into existence, and so it is in the new creation, for we read, in 2 Cor. iv. 6, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,

hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Here we are reminded that God caused the light to shine out of darkness, and that, in like manner, He shines in our hearts. We may be astonished at such grace as this. We may exclaim, Can He indeed pierce through the darkness of our hearts? Yes, He can; and as of old His spoken word caused the light to shine, so now His *written* word causes the light to shine in our hearts. What does that word do as it sheds its beams upon us? It gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Let us inquire further, What is the glory of God here referred to? We find the answer in John xvii. 4: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." "God is glorified in Him." (John xiii. 31.) Man was created for God's glory, but had come short of it, and had filled the earth with sin. But here we get One brought before us, the perfect Man, God's own Son. Let us consider what He has done. He came into this world, He passed through it, ever doing those things which pleased the Father, and then He laid down His life, He died, the "Just for the unjust." He met all the claims of God, He bore the full penalty of sin, and shed His precious blood to wash away our sins. But now He is risen, exalted upon the Father's throne, and there in His blessed face we read the wondrous story of the glory of God.

Oh, soul, burdened with the weight of thy guilt, is not this enough to meet thy need? The work is finished, and God has accepted it, and has highly exalted the One who did it, giving Him "a name which is above every name." There is nothing left for thee to do but to trust in Him. The light of that glory may fell thee to the earth, as it did Saul of Tarsus (Acts ix. 4); but lift up thy head, and in yonder heavens see by faith Jesus, the Son of God.

We get another side of the effect of the glory of God in Acts vii. 55. Stephen was there in the midst of his enemies, they were seeking to take his life, hurling stones at him with all the vehemence that hatred could excite; yet we behold him unmoved and calm. No bitter reproach, no cry for mercy, escapes his lips, he is praying that God may forgive their sin, he is committing his spirit into the keeping of his Lord. How can we explain this? What secret of power did he possess? Surely we have the answer in those words, "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus." (Acts vii. 55.) Oh, followers of that same Jesus, who is still rejected here, you who are often cast down and discouraged; you who seem to have laboured in vain; you who are passing through deep waters; you upon whom the world loves to shower her cold stones of scorn, take courage, look away from this "light affliction, which is but for a moment," and let your eyes by

faith pierce the dark clouds around you, and see in yonder heavens Jesus, the Son of God.

Now let us return to our chapter, and in verse 20, as well as in chapter ii. 7, we find our fourth point—life. We do not here go into the different kinds of life spoken of. God called both into being. Alas! we all know too well the sad story of how man forfeited that life through disobedience, and entailed the bitter fruit of his act upon the whole human race. Let us turn to another well-known verse (John iii. 16.) Let us listen again to its wonderful words, which have brought healing and life to so many weary and sin-sick souls. “God so loved the world.” Did God love that world, which had so departed from Him? Yes, indeed, and He *so* loved that He gave His Son to die, to be put by man’s wicked hands upon a cross of shame, there to bear the punishment of sin, to die for us. Thank God He is not there to-day; He died, He was buried, and then He lay in the tomb. Oh, let the tidings go far and wide, sound the joyful news over land and sea! The grave is empty, the Lord is risen and glorified. He sits upon the Father’s throne, and whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but “have everlasting life.”

In chapter ii. 9 we come to our fifth point—growth. Let us note that it was God who caused the trees to grow. Now if we apply this to ourselves, we find the same desire on God’s side. He would have each one of us growing. But our

wills are contrary sometimes, we do not fulfil the conditions necessary for our growth, as, for instance, those laid down in Eph. iv. 14, 15, and 1 Peter ii. 2. Then, in 2 Peter iii. 18, we find the beautiful exhortation, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Oh, fellow-Christians! how little we know of this. *Grace!* Let us drink in the word, in all its blessed meaning. Let us contemplate the wondrous grace of God which has been made known to us—that grace which sought us in our sin, and folly, and misery, and brought us home to God. Let us ask ourselves, Are we *growing* in this grace? Is it this that is seen in our walk and ways day by day? Oh, let us take this searching question to heart, and see to it that we do "grow in grace, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." How may we grow in this knowledge? Surely only by studying the Word of God, and by communion with Himself. As we study each blessed page which tells us of His pathway here, we seem to grow in acquaintance with our Lord. If we know Him, we shall know what suits Him. We shall not need to ask, Is this right? Is that right? If we know Him, that will settle all.

Our sixth point is mentioned several times in chap. i. We will notice it in verse 11—"The fruit tree yielding fruit." Have we realized the fact that we are fruit trees, that we should be bearing fruit for our Lord and Master? We may

ask, How can we bear fruit acceptable to Him? We find the answer in John xv. 5, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing." What is it to abide in Christ? The figure used at the beginning of the verse explains it to us, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." The branches of the vine get all their strength, food, and nourishment from the vine, and therefore bring forth the fruit of the vine, that is, grapes. So with us, if we are drawing all our strength, and food, and nourishment, from Christ by walking in communion with Him, we shall bring forth fruit suitable to Him. Let us look for a moment at what the fruit is. We find it in Gal. v. 22, 23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Oh! fellow-Christians, let us trace these things in the life of our Lord and Master; only in Him can we see them in perfection. Let our eyes be more and more fastened upon Him, let us be "looking upon Jesus as He walked." (John i. 36.) Then, in our feeble measure, we shall reflect His image, and those around us will see the spirit of the Master shining in us, and will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. (Acts iv. 13.)

Now we come to the seventh and last point—rest. In chapter ii. 2 we read God "rested." That rest, we know, was soon broken by man's sin; but God will yet have His rest, and, more wonder-



ful than all, He will call us to share it. We all know what it is to have our quiet resting-places even here, and how we long sometimes for a little rest in the midst of our busy lives! The longing, too, is often satisfied by Him who said to His disciples when on earth, "Come ye . . . apart into a desert place, and rest a while." (Mark vi. 31.) We have known the desert places under the shelter of His hand. When the chilling blast of sorrow has almost withered our poor trembling hearts, we have tasted the sweetness of resting in His perfect love which never makes mistakes. But it is of another rest we wish to speak now. In Hebrews iv. 9 we read, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." What a prospect for us! How it cheers our hearts! But let us remember the time has not yet come when we shall enter fully into rest. God is working now, as we see in those words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John v. 17.) Yes, God the Father is working; God the Son is working; and God the Holy Ghost is working, and we are called to work too. Let us then take courage and be diligent, knowing that "the time is short." (1 Cor. vii. 29.) And if we sometimes grow weary *in* the work, though surely not weary *of* it, let us lift our eyes to yonder rest above, where our Lord and Master will "rest in His love," and where we shall see His face, and dwell in the unbroken sunshine of His presence for ever and ever.

J. L.

## RANDOM TRUTHS ;

OR,

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM'S SERVANT.

GENESIS xxiv.

IT is hardly necessary to ask you to read the 24th chapter of Genesis, in order to follow me in this little sketch. No doubt the least advanced who reads these words is familiar with the beautiful story that is told there of Abraham, the "friend of God," desiring a wife for his son Isaac. Yet it might be helpful to have our Bibles before us, helpful both to writer and reader; for however familiar the sacred page may be, however well known the incident, we cannot too deeply impress the truths of Scripture on our minds. And not on our minds only. May each holy precept, promise, and command be stamped with indelible ink on the fleshy tablets of our HEARTS!

My young readers, I beg you to read your Bible. Make a friend of your Bible, love your Bible, reverence it deeply, look upon it as a precious legacy to be guarded with care. Let the infidel scoff, the worldling laugh, we, the readers and treasurers of God's holy word, will have the laugh on our side one day. What does the true Etonian say?—

"Titters won't hurt you,  
Neither will chaff."

And are we Christians to be less brave than he?

Young fellows! don't blush when your flippant comrades discover the well-worn Testament on your desk. Stick to your colours, my lads, at home *and* abroad. Fathers! let your growing children *see* that you value the Word which is able to make them wise unto salvation. Mothers! if you would have Timothys for sons, remember you must be a Lois, or a Eunice.

Let us now turn to our chapter. There are many beautiful views of this simple yet wonderfully prophetic story, many grand truths to be gleaned from it, but on this occasion, with God's help, we will gather a little advice and encouragement for some of the workers in the Master's vast vineyard. For I am sure, many who will scan these lines belong to that happy band, all of whom are apprenticed to the heavenly Master, bound not by parchment deeds, but by most wondrous cords of love. We are not all "old hands" yet. Some of us are only just commencing our apprenticeship, and we stumble and falter over the tasks that fall into our hands. But surely our Master is worthy of devoted servants, and let us hope that none of us will ever grow weary of any little work we can do for His sake.

"He knoweth the way is weary,  
That often our eyes are dim,  
And the hardest task makes easy  
If we do it all for Him."

Now for the servant side of this scene. The first thing that strikes me, as I glance over the page, is that we have here a *nameless servant*. Lesson number one. Are we content to be nameless servants? He is only a servant engaged upon an errand for his master. He pursues his way quietly and unobtrusively, his own interests lost sight of, his thoughts ever occupied with the master whom he loved to extol, whom he deemed it an honour to serve. (*vv.* 34, 35.) All honour be to Him who deigned in later years to take upon Himself the form of a servant, though He was Lord of all. (*Phil.* ii. 7.)

As we follow him, this nameless servant, we find him a man of prayer—lesson number two. “Pray, brethren, pray.” Nothing can be done without prayer. Do not our hearts yearn for encouragement, advice, guidance, blessing? Pray then, young and old, and wait for the answer. The man of prayer is the man of power, but prayer without faith is surely of little avail.

Now see him in verse 22 with the golden ear-ring. He knows just wherewith to captivate a soul. Sunday-school teachers, win the ears of your scholars. Bible-readers, whisper the name of Jesus in the ears of the dying. Fathers, mothers, gain the *ears* of your boys and girls, ere the devil has opportunity to win them by well-timed flattery. Thank God for the ears that do wear the “golden ear-ring,” but oh! that we

were more anxious to see them hanging from ears that seem so hard to be won !

“And two bracelets for her hands.” (verse 22.) These few words remind me of a scene enacted on London Bridge some while ago. A member of the Metropolitan Police force was wending his way across the bridge, having in charge a strong-looking youth of about nineteen. His hand was tightly gripping the lad’s collar, but their progress, with that of some eager pedestrians, was frequently hindered by the youth’s frantic efforts to escape. Once or twice he had nearly managed to slip from his captor’s grasp, using his hands freely, until, simultaneously with a whispered word from a passing bricklayer, of “*Use the bracelets, guvnor,*” the officer drew out a pair of handcuffs, and in a moment escape was practically impossible. And if we are the Saviour’s willing captives shall we not slip the golden bracelets on to other wrists ? No servant need be without aught that would render his work more perfect, more suitable for the Master’s presence. The choicest goods of His storehouse are laid at his disposal. The ear-ring, the bracelet, the raiment, the jewels of silver and gold, are all his to bestow. Bring out then these wonderful bracelets, and bid the timid, struggling soul gaze at the gracious inscription which they bear. What are the words ? “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? . . . .

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." (Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.) And again, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, *neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.* My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and *no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.* I and My Father are one." (John x. 27-30.) Once His, always His, for time and for eternity! Oh! how sweet that captivity! Once known, not for worlds would we return to the mock freedom we once pretended to enjoy. Little the poor hungry worldling knows of freedom. *His* liberty may be compared to that of a tiny kite tied to the earth by a string. So far may'st thou fly, poor soul, in thy pursuit of pleasure, only to be pulled down, down, down again at the will of thy dread master!

Verse 52 gives us the *humble servant*, worshipping the Lord for success in his mission, and in verse 54 we have the *pilgrim servant*. "Send me away unto my master." Pathetic appeal! Though for a while there was room in Laban's house, the faithful servant, with his heart full of love and longing for his absent master, whose God had so

prospered his way, cries, "Hinder me not, hinder me not." Up and away he goes ere the morning's sun is high, unwilling to linger even for the space of ten days, and he took Rebekah with him. (*v.* 61.)

Dear young workers—you who have been blessed with souls for your hire—where are your Rebekahs? Are you leaving them to struggle on alone, weary and sad, stumbling over the hillocks on the sandy desert, almost longing for the earthly pleasures in which they once had part? No true servant you if such be the case. Yet perchance they may be following you, as Rebekah did, and, ah! what the example? Sincerely do I trust that, like Paul, you, even if in a small measure, may be able to say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. xi. 1.) It is *not* enough to see a soul saved, to hear a trembling voice exclaim "I believe." We must take our Rebekahs along with us—if not in actual presence, they must occupy a large place in our hearts and prayers. Then, when the journey is over, when all work is done, not one soul left behind, or allowed to fall unnoticed by the way, how sweet will be the interview when the servant shall tell Isaac all things he hath done.

D. B.

## THE LORD OF GLORY.

ALL along the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth He manifested the Godhead in the perfection of humanity ; yet His Divine Glory was hidden, except to faith, from which "He could not be hid." There was the Eternal Son in human form ; full—full of grace and truth. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As though the Father said to us, "I have found My pleasure in Him, and now I set Him before you to find your pleasure in Him." The Object heaven could look down upon, is the Object we can look up to. Here is the meeting point for God and man. In Him there is for man true fellowship with God.

The great discovery for the soul of man is, "God was in Christ," "God was manifest in the flesh." His unclothed excellence it was not possible for man to see, to look upon ; but yet, to faith, the Lord walked here as the bright shining sun, illuminating all around, and the path before. As He passed among men the question raised was, "Who has eyes to see Me?" I do not believe that His Glory would ever dazzle or put the believing soul at a distance from Him : but to be at ease in the presence of His Glory—of His Person—we must know the grace of His heart. We may walk about in the joy and comfort of the light which He sheds upon us, often not regarding the *source* from which it comes. If we would contemplate the source, we must stop and look upon Him. "Behold the



Lamb of God!" "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." "A great High Priest!"

The Lord was always the perfect Servant; and as the perfect Servant He was the lover of the saints—the people of His God. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." How familiar He was with those who knew Him; He calls them by their names: He called Philip by his name. "He calleth His own sheep by name." What nearness, and what beauty in being exercised with the tenderness of the mind of Christ! "We have the mind of Christ." But what discoveries are there for our souls to make in the display of His grace and His affections. What a thing (in man's esteem) it is to find a gold mine—a field of diamonds! How much more to find Christ! Nothing can compensate the soul for the lack of a personal knowledge of Christ. I speak of the secret which the soul of every saint should possess—the secret of personal communion.

The journey through this world is as a journey through a long dark path, with glorious light above you and before you. Christ is that light. You want a lamp for your feet and a light for your path. The Word which speaks of Christ is that light. Christ in glory is the end to be obtained. As we pass along a dark and narrow passage, with a light at the far end, we get more light every step of the way we go. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

His word is, "I go to prepare a place for you." *He* is our Forerunner.—*Notes.*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H.—There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit will be poured out afresh, in a day that follows the catching away of the heavenly saints referred to at the end of 1 Thessalonians iv. Many passages show this, and notably Joel ii. 28. But though this seems clear, yet it would be a mistake to suppose that the gift of the Spirit in that day will involve union with Christ as is the case now. Divine wisdom designs blessing of another order for those on whom the Spirit then falls. Earth, not heaven, will be the sphere in which they will be blessed. In what particular way the Spirit will be received we ourselves cannot undertake to define, for in attempting to do so we should be going beyond our present measure of light. Others seeing more might be able to say more.

J. M. G.—It is impossible to restrict the gift of tongues in Acts ii. to the apostles. The account implies that many, if not all, of the company gathered together when the Holy Ghost was given received this singular power, and no doubt under the impulse of the Holy Spirit they declared in various ways and in divers dialects “the wonderful works of God.” One may have spoken in one dialect, a second in another, while some may have been able to speak in more tongues than one. Hence the strangers in Jerusalem heard, every man in his own tongue wherein he was

born, the blessed things that were declared. God, who at the building of Babel confounded man's speech so that they understood not one another, now wrought miraculously in an opposite direction in order that the gospel might reach those who had come from many lands.

We regret the delay in answering this inquiry. It has arisen in consequence of your letter having been addressed to the publisher instead of to the editor of this magazine.

PROPHECY.—The New Testament definition of a prophet is that he is one who speaks unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. xiv. 3), not necessarily a foreteller of events. When the assembly was gathered together according to 1 Cor. xiv., the prophets, if so led of the Spirit, might speak two or three. (*v.* 29.) But, however gifted, the women were to keep silence in the assembly, and on no account to take a place designed, in the wisdom of God, for men only. That women might be enriched with the gift of prophecy it is evident, for the daughters of Philip the evangelist were so. (Acts xxi. 9.) In what way they exercised their gift, and in what sphere, we are not told. All we know is that the assembly was not the sphere for its exercise. Doubtless, in ways that would not expose them to the public gaze, from which even nature and every delicate feeling would lead them to shrink, they employed the gift with which they were endowed, to the glory of God and the good of others. This gift is distinct from that of the teacher or evangelist, as we may learn from Ephesians iv. 11.

## THE MERCHANT MAN AND THE PEARL.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls : who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

MATTHEW xiii. 45, 46.

SOME of us in old days used to read this parable upside down. We thought the pearl of great price was the Lord Jesus, and the merchant man none other than the seeking sinner, who, having found the priceless pearl, parted with all he had to make it his. Many, no doubt, still read it thus, or rather, misread it, for assuredly such is not its meaning. The indifferent sinner is very far indeed from seeking goodly pearls, and when awakened by the Holy Spirit of God to some concern about his soul, he learns sooner or later that Christ is not like a jewel put up for sale in the market-square. The Saviour is God's “unspeakable *gift*,” and salvation is without money and without price. Besides, what has the sinner to give in exchange for the pearl of great price, supposing Christ to be it? His righteousnesses are but as “filthy rags.” Of what value then are they? And if his *best* things are thus described, what can be said of the rest?

If we turn the parable the other way about we  
XII.

## 58 THE MERCHANT MAN AND THE PEARL.

shall see how simple and beautiful is its meaning. The Lord Jesus is the Merchant Man—the *seeker* of goodly pearls. How frequently is He spoken of as a *Seeker*! No sooner had Satan achieved his malignant triumph in the garden of Eden, and the fallen pair had hid themselves behind the trees, than we behold Him fulfilling this gracious mission. “Adam, where art thou?” is a cry that reveals a seeking God, and in those “coats of skin” with which He afterwards clad the guilty pair, we see the earliest emblems of redemption by blood, and of a righteousness that fits for the Paradise of God on high, in the midst of which blooms and blossoms the Tree of Life. (Revelation ii. 7.)

Who of us, too, does not remember those gracious words that justified the joys of God’s salvation being shed abroad in the heart of one, who was not only a publican, but chief among that odious class? “For the Son of Man is come *to seek* and to save that which was lost.” (Luke xix. 10.) Many a hard heart has been broken by the grace that shines in that simple saying. “I am so happy now,” said a poor woman as she grasped the hand of her visitor, and drew him aside into her little parlour. She had been long in great distress about her soul, and often had the visitor sought in vain to comfort her. “Thank God!” said he; “but what makes you so happy?” “It was a text I heard last Sunday,” she replied,

## THE MERCHANT MAN AND THE PEARL. 59

‘when Mr. —— was preaching. It was nothing he said in his sermon; but in the midst of it he quoted a text, which I am sure I must have heard thousands of times before, but I never before thought what it meant. He seemed just to be looking at me, and as his eye fell on me he said, ‘The Son of Man is come *to seek* and to save that which was lost.’ It was that word ‘*seek*’ that went home to my heart. I thought I had been seeking God for years; but here was a new idea to me; the truth was He had been seeking me. I looked up into His face as the tears ran down my cheeks, and said, ‘O my Lord! Are you looking for me? What! looking for a poor, wretched sinner like me?’ As the thought laid hold upon my heart, I was filled with an unspeakable joy; and I felt as if I must shout out there and then, and glorify the Good Shepherd, whom I seemed to see looking everywhere, if only He might find a poor wretch like me.”

The Good Shepherd! Ah, how in that office He shines as the unwearied Seeker. He leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goes after the one that is lost *until He finds it*. The wandering sheep seeks not the fold from which it strays. It lacks the sagacity which some other animals possess, and every step is likely to take it farther afield. So with the sinner. Therefore the Shepherd in painstaking love seeks His wandering ones. Why does He do this? It is

## 60 THE MERCHANT MAN AND THE PEARL.

because they are precious in His sight. Herein is a marvellous thing. Worthless in ourselves, worse than worthless, for we were "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." (Titus iii. 3.) Yet the Son of God has loved us and laid down His life for our sakes. And now from the glory of God where He dwells, He seeks His lost ones until He finds them, and when found He lays them on His shoulders rejoicing! (Luke xv.)

So then the Lord Jesus is the Merchant Man, seeking goodly pearls.

But the parable speaks of "One Pearl of great price"; not of many, but of *One*. What is that Pearl? It is the Church. Most precious is she to Christ. There is but *one* Church. It is composed of all believers on the face of the earth—all who are truly saved. It is strange, passing strange, that He should speak of her as the "One Pearl of great price." But so He does, and a great price has He paid to make her His. "Christ also loved the Church, and *gave Himself* for it." His agony and bloody sweat, His cross and passion: these attest the greatness of His love, and shew the wondrous price paid for her redemption.

It is only as we understand the place we have in His heart that He will acquire a larger place in ours. Love begets love. Nor is it humility to take a lower place than love assigns.

We may marvel much that we should be so dear to Christ, so beautiful, and of such worth in His eyes, but let us never doubt it. Believing it we shall rejoice, and as we do so He will become more precious to us, yea, the Chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely.

---

### THE WRECKER'S LIGHT.

THE wreck of a ship is a small thing when compared with the wreck of a soul. Stranded vessels have often been recovered and fitted out afresh for sea, and backsliding children of God have been brought back after wandering far from Him.

“My soul He doth restore,  
Whene'er I go astray.”

It is evident that no child of God was ever totally wrecked or, in other words, eternally lost, for the good Shepherd “giveth His life for the sheep,” and assures them that “they shall never perish.” (John x.) But who can tell what the end will be when the heart of a believer begins to wander from God? Who knows what became of Hymenæus and Alexander? Their position was indeed a most solemn one, according to 1 Timothy i. 20. They were professors of Christianity, but failed to keep a good look-out. Allured and deceived by “the wrecker's light,”



they were landed high and dry in their transgression against God. "High" enough to be seen by those that passed by, and "dry" enough to lead others to dread such a position, and induce them to say—

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

"The rebellious," we are told, "dwell in a *dry* land." Hymenæus and Alexander found it so, and so does every one whose heart departs from the Lord. "For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh." (Jeremiah xvii. 5, 6.)

The persons of whom we have been speaking had made shipwreck "concerning faith," and were afterward "delivered unto Satan" by the apostle Paul. They had suffered themselves to be seduced by the enemy, and were given over to him for a time, like wrecks in the hands of the wreckers—not dashed to pieces on the rocks and lost to view, but left so as to be seen by others, who, taking warning, might give heed to their ways, according to the word of God.

A ship might be ever so well built, and fitted out with every necessary thing for the voyage, but what would this avail if carelessness characterized the officers and crew? Neither would the captain be wholly to blame, supposing the vessel

## THE WRECKER'S LIGHT.

63

ran aground while the man at the wheel was asleep, or the one supposed to be "on the look-out" was "below."

Some Christians may have more responsibility than others, but all are responsible to "keep a good look-out." "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith," says the apostle, "quit you like men, be strong." So also in the gospel of Mark: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto *all*, Watch." (1 Cor. xvi. 13; Mark xiii. 33 to end.)

Some Christians have not had so much experience as others. The cabin-boy is not expected to know as much as the chief mate, but he is supposed to know the compass, and in what direction the vessel is going. The man that knows ever so much, but fails to "keep a good look-out," endangers his own life and the life of others. The word of God is both chart and compass to the Christian, and to him the Holy Ghost has been given so as to enable him to enjoy what is heavenly and divine,

and also to detect all kinds of evil, and avoid them.

The "little children" of whom we read in the first epistle of John had had but little experience in the things of God, but they *knew the truth*, and knew also "*that no lie is of the truth.*" They could refer to that "which was from the beginning," and, led by the Holy Ghost, and by the instincts of the new nature which each one possessed, they were enabled to trace all that is good to its source in God, and all that is bad to the devil.

Hymenæus and Alexander may have known more than the ordinary run of Christians in their day, but their knowledge neither saved them from making shipwreck of faith, nor recovered them after they had done so.

If mere knowledge were the only thing needed by the Christian voyager, the more he read his Bible the safer he would be. But we know that mere "knowledge puffeth up," and the results of only having this have been disastrous among the people of God. The case of King David proves that the most prominent and intelligent are in danger of becoming a prey to the enemy, while simple souls are preserved according to His word, as is witnessed in the case of Joseph, who, though youthful, was faithful in the time of his temptation. The safety and prosperity of the Christian will always be in proportion to his confidence in God, his lowliness of mind, his distrust of self,

his watchfulness, and prayer, and knowledge of God's word.

It was not in the last and "perilous times" that Hymenæus and Alexander made shipwreck of faith. In their day the church had reached its "high water mark," and her present condition was only anticipated by those who knew, by divine revelation, what her future history on earth would be. If such dreadful disaster was the result of unwatchfulness under such favourable circumstances, what earnest heed we ought to give to our ways in these closing days. Dangers stand thick; difficulties are on the increase; and nothing but the grace of God can preserve us from the vanities of this evil world, and from following the alluring lights of the evil one. May we be fortified by the truth, and energized by the Holy Spirit, and not only preserved from evil, but rendered capable of overcoming it for our own souls' good and for the honour of His great name.

"When the world would bid me leave Thee,  
 Telling me of shame and loss,  
 Saviour, guard me, lest I grieve Thee,  
 Lest I cease to love Thy cross:  
     This is treasure;  
 All the rest I count but dross."

H. H.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.

IF it were asked, "What amongst Christians is the great need of the present hour?" several answers might be given, but foremost among them would be "*a need of more prayer*"—that the people of God should, in the words of Scripture, continue "with one accord in prayer and supplication." The necessity for this is so obvious that it might seem unnecessary to say much about it, were it not equally clear how much it is neglected; and in a day like the present there is special need that the importance of prayer should be insisted upon.

Prayer touches every department of life. It affects the individual, the church at large, and every kind of service for the Lord. The subject might be treated in its relation to all of these; but it is of the deepest moment that each individual Christian should be impressed with the need of much prayer; and then, through the individual, every other circle will feel the influence.

How often it has been noticed in the history of the church that prayer and the manifestation of divine blessing accompany each other. There is repeated and striking testimony to this in the Acts of the Apostles. Before the descent of the

Holy Ghost we read that the disciples continued in prayer. In chap. iv., "When they had *prayed* the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." In chap. x., at the very time God was going to bring the Gentile publicly into blessing, and while men were on their way to fetch Peter, who was the chosen instrument for its accomplishment, we read, "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray." In chap. xii. "many were gathered together praying" the night Peter was liberated from prison. And in chap. xvi. the conversion of both Lydia and the jailer was preceded by prayer. Other scriptures afford instances of the same thing, all testifying to the supreme importance of waiting upon God. It may be asked, Will God act in the same way to-day? He may not act precisely in the same way; but one thing we may always be assured of, He will never fail to answer faith. We cannot have faith about a thing that God will not do. Alas! often we have not faith about a thing He would do. He loves to be counted on.

Having made these few prefatory remarks, let us consider first

#### HOW WE ARE TO PRAY.

1. In Jude 20 we are exhorted to *pray in the Holy Ghost*. How often in scripture prayer and the Holy Spirit are connected. (See Rom. viii.

26, 27; Eph. vi. 18; Jude 20.) We need to realize our entire dependence upon Him if we are to pray aright. A man of prayer will generally be a man filled with the Spirit, and certainly one filled with the Spirit will be a man of prayer. Praying in the Holy Ghost guards us against vain repetitions. Our prayers would often be shorter if they were more "in the Holy Ghost." How frequently we begin in the Spirit and pray ourselves out of it. We must be very dependent and self-emptied to pray in the Holy Ghost. And He would lead us to think not so much of our personal needs, but of Christ's interest and what concerns the glory of God. He would also keep us in the conscious sense of being in the presence of God and of addressing Him. How important that our prayers should be simple talk with God, and not the mere out-pouring of words. There is liberty to tell God everything according to Phil. iv., and so have the peace of God which passeth all understanding; but this should precede assembly prayer, and is not so strikingly connected with the Holy Ghost. Should we not think more of the prayer meeting if we went there to pray "in the Holy Ghost"? He would lead us into the whole range of Christ's interests, and all connected with God's glory. Nothing can surpass the sweetness of Phil. iv., telling everything out to God, and exchanging our care for His peace. Still, our personal needs are not the

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.

69

highest subjects of prayer; but, as we have said, they precede the other.

2. If our prayers are to be of much avail we must

## PRAY EARNESTLY.

Earnestness is almost the life of prayer. We are commonly in earnest when we have a great matter in hand, and is not prayer the greatest of all? We can be earnest about everything else—earnest in our business, in our studies, in our various pursuits—then let us be downright in earnest when we pray. What is there that earnest prayer cannot accomplish? It can bring about a settlement of every difficulty, obtain relief in every trial, and cause the heaviest burden to become light, not because it is anything in itself, but because it moves the Arm that moves the world.

Turn to James v. 17 and see what it says on this point: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed *earnestly* that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." It does not say only that he prayed, but that he prayed *earnestly*; or, as the margin gives it, he prayed "in his prayer," as though the very idea of prayer without earnestness was an anomaly. And now read the last clause of the preceding verse, "The effectual *fervent* prayer of a righteous man availeth much." May such fervour ever



characterize our prayer! In a time of great trouble in Scotland, when Popery seemed to be gaining the ascendancy, one of the Reformers was overheard to pray, "O Lord, give me Scotland *or I die*," and this was repeated thrice with great fervour. This was a large request, but the prayer was answered. It was effectual because it was fervent.

3. This leads us to a third consideration; viz., that we should

#### PRAY ALWAYS.

This does not mean we are always to be on our knees, or even always speaking audibly to God. We can breathe without ourselves or anyone else being conscious of it, so should we be able to pray. May our praying become almost as natural and continuous. (Ephesians vi. 18.)

Elsewhere the apostle Paul insists that we are to pray without ceasing. (1 Thess. v. 17.) The apostles said, "We will give ourselves *continually* to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts vi.) How essential that these two things should go together! Much speaking and little supplication leave both preacher and hearer in a barren condition. The servant of Christ especially needs to remember this. Someone has well said, "We are often for preaching to awaken others, but we should be more upon praying for it. Prayer is more powerful than preaching. It is prayer that gives preaching all its power." The

story is related of one very much used in the salvation of souls, that it was revealed to him that the large number of conversions was due, not so much to his preaching as to the prayers of an illiterate brother who always sat near to him and prayed during the meeting. Would that this man might have many imitators! If the children of God only realized that perhaps more depends upon their prayers than upon the preacher's efforts, results would be greater and more manifest than they are.

Let us remember then this double exhortation, "Praying always" and "without ceasing." And while it is most important this should characterize us, might we not with advantage increase our *regular* times for secret prayer? Perhaps we are inclined to pity the poor Mahomedan who five times a day is called to his devotions, and obeys the summons whatever his engagement. But does it not read us a lesson? especially those words the crier utters in the early morning—

"PRAYERS ARE BETTER THAN SLEEP."

Depend upon it our days would be happier and more useful did we pray more, and we should be less affected by the influence of things around us were we oftener upon our knees. Habitual prayerfulness infallibly tells its tale. Daniel prayed at least three times a day, and the apostle Paul *seems* as though he was doing hardly anything else. Let us seek to imitate them. It may

not be an easy matter to closet ourselves alone with God in the middle of the day, but where there is a sense of its importance, the occasion can often be made, if only it be for five minutes. And it will well repay the effort. A business man might make it a rule always to seek God's face the first thing on reaching home after the day's work. Satan will suggest all kinds of difficulties, and put obstacles in the way; and what is far more of a hindrance, there may be disinclination on our own part. But all this can be overcome by the grace of God. Let us pray that we may pray. And not only should we be always in the spirit of prayer, and have our regular times for secret devotion, but *special seasons* of waiting upon God will yield to us the greater blessing. In reading the gospels it would appear that our blessed Lord even sought such occasions. One instance is recorded in Luke vi. 12, "It came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued *all night* in prayer to God"; and in Mark i. 35 we read, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." If He chose to do this, how much more necessary for us! What a savour there would be about everything we said and did, if we knew such occasions more frequently.

Let us then pray *in the Holy Ghost*, let us pray

*earnestly*, let us *pray always*, and in addition let us *pray every-where*. (1 Tim. ii. 8.) Do not let us suppose the bedside to be the only place. We have seen that our Lord used a mountain, and in another place we are told He withdrew Himself into the wilderness; and in Acts xvi. we learn that the place where prayer was wont to be made was the *river-side*, and even the prison. Indeed, where is

#### PRAYER OUT OF PLACE?

If anywhere then there the Christian ought not to be. A valued and highly gifted servant of God in his country rambles with a friend was often known to say, as they came to some secluded spot, "Here is a delightful place for prayer"; and he would speak to God as naturally as just before he had to his companion. It is not only then that men everywhere are to pray, but men may also pray everywhere, and with how much blessing to themselves and others who can tell?

Having considered how, when, and where we are to pray, it may not be out of place to mention a few leading topics for prayer. Scripture will easily furnish us with some.

1. We are told in Ephesians vi. 18 to make prayer and supplication *for all saints*. It is most desirable that every child of God should bear this in mind. Again and again reference is made to it in the Word. (See 2 Thess. i. 11; Col. iv. 12; Eph. i. 16, iii. 14.) And we find the great

apostle not only ministering to the saints, but continually praying for them; nay, even the Lord Himself did so. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." (John xvii. 20.)

Alas! how frequently we neglect this holy and priceless privilege, if we do not forget it altogether. No doubt we sometimes remember the saints as a fitting conclusion to our prayers; but is it a practice with us to make special prayer and supplication on their behalf? So important is this that we may well ask the reader not to allow even a day to pass without praying for all saints in general, and for some in particular. We press this earnestly and affectionately upon the attention of all God's people. Reader, are you obeying the plain direction given in God's word? If not, we entreat you for your own sake, for the sake of others, and, above all, for the Lord's sake, to begin at once. Reasons will occur to every spiritually-minded person why it is our high privilege as well as our absolute duty to intercede for others.

2. It is needful too that we should pray regularly for the *Lord's servants*. While they occupy a post of honour, it is also one of danger and difficulty. And they are exposed more than ordinary Christians to the attacks of Satan, and to be led astray by their own hearts. What a blessing too they may be made to others if used of God. We need to pray for them then in this

twofold way, that they may be preserved, and that utterance may be given unto them. (See Heb. xiii. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 1; Col. iv. 3; Eph. vi. 19.) A careful comparison of these scriptures will show us how varied are the needs of the Lord's servants, and that praying for the workmen is one of the most effectual means of aiding in the work.

3. We are exhorted in 1 Tim. ii. 1-8 to

PRAY FOR ALL MEN,

for kings, and for all that are in authority (or eminent place). And the reason is given—"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Thus prayer of this sort will bring down the greatest blessing on ourselves as well as on others, and it is "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." May we *not* forget to do this. While we pray for saints and for servants let us pray for all men, even for kings. What a privilege! Better to pray for a king than to be one; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. If we were kings we should do many things that were not so. Abraham was privileged to pray for Sodom, and to know God's mind about it. This was infinitely preferable to "a seat in the gate." The Christian is in a similar position with regard to this world. He is apart from it in relationship with the Ruler of the universe, and if a praying Christian he wields a mightier weapon than earth's greatest

potentate. Depend upon it, the more we are morally outside of everything *with God* the more effective will our prayers be. The prayers of Abraham outside Sodom did more to save it than Lot's influence within.

We see then we have plenty to pray about; and while we pray for others do not let us forget to pray for ourselves, our families, our relatives; for "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Having treated the subject of prayer in these various ways, we close with a few practical reflections.

If prayer is of such importance as we have tried to show from actual experience and from scripture, the neglect of it must be of serious consequence. How

#### MANY A WRONG STEP

would never have been taken if there had been more prayer about it in secret, and with others. And, on the other hand, how many a good intention has never ripened into action, and many a first effort in the right direction has in the end borne no fruit, for want of prayer. Many a downward course would have been prevented if there had been more frequent access to a throne of grace. A man who neglects prayer is like an army without ammunition. How much ill we are preserved from, let alone how much good we obtain, through continual waiting upon God, none of us will ever fully know in this world. This at

least may be said—and said especially to those who are entering upon life—that *no* step should be taken, of whatever kind, without first asking in the light of God's word, "Can He bless me in this?" and if not, let the enterprise be abandoned at any cost. And if we find ourselves settling down into a cold, formal state, is not the grand remedy *prayer*? We believe it is. It was very likely the neglect of it that led to such a sad condition. May not prayer indeed be said to be the thermometer which tests our spiritual temperature?

All this has more or less to do with the individual in secret. But would there not also be immense benefit derived from praying more with one another? If it be only a call at another Christian home, before leaving could not the opportunity be found for a little prayer? Might we not invite others to pray with us in our houses more frequently than we do? If we think of leaving a neighbourhood, or a situation, or some new project is before us, might it not prove of great advantage to ask one or two brethren in the Lord to pray with us about it? We may often conclude that a thing is wrong in itself, or that it is the wrong time for doing it, if we would not like to seek the fellowship of our brethren. How much better it would doubtless be for all of us, for teachers and taught, for high and low, indeed for everyone, if it were only more of a habit to meet together in twos and threes for prayer. "If



two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 19.) Never, as Christians—except at the Lord's table—are we drawn closer to one another, than in this meeting together before a throne of grace. Such a practice would not only foster the truest communion, but there would be far less likelihood of any "falling out by the way."

It is of the utmost importance to remember that the true preparation for prayer is *sincerity*. The Psalmist says, "If I regard *iniquity* in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." How can anyone consistently ask God for blessing, or conscientiously expect an answer, if not walking in His ways? James says in his epistle (chap. iv. 2, 3), "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Do we not here see the reasons our petitions are so often unanswered? We either regard "iniquity," or else we do not ask simply and solely for God's glory. It is the effectual fervent prayer of a RIGHTEOUS man that availeth *much*. (James v. 16.) That is, one who renders what is due to God and to his neighbour.

#### HOW PRAYER TESTS US!

It is not necessary to perform the evil. "If I regard iniquity in my *heart*, the Lord will not hear me." And in all we ask are we willing that *only God* should be glorified?

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.

79

Some perhaps think that to pray often, or for long is very difficult. Perhaps, dear friend, it is because you pray so little. Prayer is like running. The more a person practises the longer he can keep up. But one who seldom runs is soon out of breath. The more you pray, the more you will desire to pray, and the easier you will find it. There have been men of God who have given three or four hours each day to prayer, and said they could not do with less. Once, perhaps, they found it as difficult to pray for ten minutes as you do.

Finally, when we pray let us ever remember to whom we are speaking. And though He is our Father, and we speak to Him as children, may it ever be with a profound sense of our own nothingness. To address

## THE KING ETERNAL

immortal, invisible, as though we were on terms of equality with Him, or had a right to demand from Him, is altogether out of place. Such prayers will certainly not be heard. Confessing fully what we are, we should at the same time bless God for what He is. Someone has said that true prayer is composed of confession, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and adoration.

Let us never forget to plead the name of Christ. Alas! do we not often bring it in at the end as a matter of form sometimes without realizing what it is to ask in His name? The Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever

ye shall ask the Father in *my name*, He will give it you." (John xvi. 23.) It implies communion. We must have a will in conformity with the Father's will, and be acquainted with His desires and thoughts, truly to ask in His Son's name.

The first chapter of Luke presents us with a striking picture of true prayer. The whole multitude is seen praying without, and Zacharias is burning incense within. They were simultaneous, and so it will be in our case if we truly ask all in Christ's name. Then our prayers will come before God as incense, and the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice. Oh for a deeper, more abiding sense, that we receive every answer, not on the ground of what we are, but through the merits of Christ. On the other hand, what encouragement God gives us to pray! In John xiv. to xvi. seven times over the Lord tells His disciples to "*ask*." Was it not because He was leading them into the knowledge of the blessed relationship that was theirs through redemption and the gift of eternal life?

In conclusion, may reader and writer ever remember, as one has said, "God giveth *all* to prayer"; and while this is our blessed experience in a world of need and sorrow, we can also look forward to the fulfilment of the sublime prediction of the Psalmist, "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come." (Psalm lxxv. 2.)

R. E.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. J. W.—It is indeed a sorrowful thing when anyone calling himself a Christian rejects the plain teaching of the word of God because it does not fit in with his thoughts. To us it may be hard to reconcile two passages which *seem* to contradict each other; but we may be quite sure there is no real contradiction, and had we more light we should see how beautifully they agree. Now it is quite true that in John v. 24 the Lord says that the believer shall not come into judgment; and yet in 2 Cor. v. 10 we are told that “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” At first sight these two statements look as if they came into conflict. Shall we then hold to the one and reject the other? It will be at our peril if we do; for assuredly the passage we refuse is as truly the word of God as the one we accept. Rather let us pray that our eyes may be opened to see the meaning of both, for then shall we understand that the harmony is perfect.

Having said this much a brief word of explanation may be necessary. In John v. 22, 24 the Lord tells us that all judgment has been committed unto Him, and that He has received authority to execute it at the appointed hour. From verse 29 we also learn that there will be a resurrection unto judgment as well as unto life—two distinct resurrections unto two distinct futures. I use the word “*judgment*,” for such is the word here translated “damnation,” as any one may see by looking at the Revised Version. Then in verse 24 we are most blessedly assured that the believer shall

never come into judgment. If it be objected that the verse speaks of condemnation, not of judgment, we answer, No; it is of judgment that it speaks; for the word is the same as is used in verses 22, 24, 29, as another glance at the Revised Version will show. Judgment, then, which awaits all who are out of Christ, will have nothing to say to those who have fled to Him for refuge. The Lord's words as to this are clear and definite, and they shall never pass away.

But what about all of us appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ? All must indeed appear there, both saved and unsaved, though not at the same time, nor with the same prospects. As to the interval between the manifestation of the one, and of the other, at that tribunal, Revelation xx. 5 informs us exactly how long it will be. The saved will not stand as criminals before that judgment-bar. Every condemnatory charge has been fully met in the death of Christ. Moreover, they have been already justified by God Himself, justified from everything that could condemn. (Romans viii. 33.) How, then, could they be judged for the very things from which they had been previously justified? It could not be. Still, our life will pass in review there. We shall know how the gracious eye of God has followed us all our earthly days, how we have been borne with in our wanderings, guarded, restored, and blessed in ways we have little dreamed of. Then, too, shall we know the Lord's estimation of our course, and receive His approval of all He can commend. How glad shall we also be to have everything condemned that ought to be condemned; for in that day we shall see eye to eye with Christ. Many things will then be clear to us that are now obscure, and the effect

will be to give us a far deeper sense of divine grace, and of the wonderfulness of the One with whom we have to do. Solemn as it is to think of the judgment-seat of Christ, there is real blessedness connected with it, and what losers should we be were there no such thing. But if the teaching of the Word will not be listened to, you can only pray, and hope that the one you pray for may be led to a better state of mind. Mere argument does but little good, and it often provokes.

As to your further point—exercise of heart about a matter is good and profitable. But if we really act on Philippians iv. 6, in connection with things relating to our pilgrim life, confiding in the perfect, present love of God, we shall have our hearts and minds guarded by His own peace, and this is very blessed.

C. G., JOHN XVI. 23.—The point is altogether missed if we suppose this passage to prohibit prayer ever being addressed to the Lord Jesus. From such a thought, moreover, every spiritual mind would instinctively recoil. In 2 Cor. xii., the apostle Paul prays thrice to the Lord to remove from him the “thorn in the flesh,” and it is easy to conceive circumstances in which it would be most appropriate to address both prayer and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ—witness Stephen in Acts vii. 59. Now in that part of the gospel of John, in which the passage stands, the Lord declares unto His disciples the Father’s name, and assures them that they themselves are objects of the Father’s love. There should be no need then for Him to pray the Father for them. Martha had had that thought, as chapter xi. 22 shews. But in the day when the Holy Ghost should come,

and they should know that the children's place was theirs, then let them remember that they could go direct to the Father, in His name, assured that He would give whatsoever they asked. Alas! how many there are, in this our day, who but little credit the Father's love, and who have recourse to the Lord Jesus as if the Father's love were less than His. This passage is a sure antidote for all such thoughts.

T. B., JOHN XX. 23.—It must be carefully borne in mind that *eternal* remission or retention of sins is not the question here. That is entirely outside the sphere in which man moves and acts, for to God alone belongs the power to remit or retain sins eternally. Blessed be His name, wherever faith in Him who justifies the ungodly is found, the individual who exercises that faith is eternally forgiven. (Romans iv. 7, 8.) But there is a sphere in which the Assembly can act in forgiving or retaining. Compare 1 Cor. v. with 2 Cor. ii. 6–10. See also James v. 15. These passages will assist your understanding John xx. 23. Read also "*Forgiveness in its three aspects*," by Geo. Cutting, published at the office of this magazine.

G. T. S.—We fear we cannot give any very helpful answer to your inquiry as to the difference between sins and iniquities. The former seems to us a more general term, including acts of omission and commission, the consequences of which affect ourselves more particularly, whereas the latter may affect others, and may carry with it the idea of injustice. It is with hesitancy, however, we say even this much. Transgression is of course an infraction of a known law.

## ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

SOBERLY speaking, very few now - a - days believe in an eternity of punishment for sin. Tennyson has immortalized the doctrine of "the larger hope" in his poems—Archdeacon Farrar contends for it in his eloquent and captivating prose.

Universalism and Annihilationism, broadly speaking, divide the believers of "the larger hope"—the one holding sway chiefly in England, the other in America—the one teaching that all, purified by fire, will eventually find salvation — the other, that when the unrepentant expiate their guilt by suffering, they cease to exist. The logical outcome of the one is that the Devil himself will be saved; the other that God Himself will cease to exist, though their teachers do not extend their theories to their extreme and legitimate lengths.

The old Puritans believed in eternal punishment, but their stern idea of the awful demerit of sin is fast dying out. The nineteenth century takes as her guide the fitful torch of reason rather than the clear light of God's imperishable word.

Side by side with the attack upon the Bible  
XII.



doctrine of eternal punishment, are assaults upon the inspiration of the Scriptures; the full deity of Christ when here upon earth and His atonement by blood.

It is assuredly true that certain leading truths in the Scripture are like the main stones of an arch; take one stone away and the whole arch is destroyed.

Here let me quote an extract from a letter by the late Henry Ward Beecher. In 1871 he was Editor of the *Independent*, and in reply to a letter sent him by a friend, regarding an article in his paper on the doctrine of future punishment, Mr. Beecher says:—

“The fact that the strongest asseverations of endless punishment are found in the synoptical gospels is true. It is only by a line of refined reasoning that we can get rid of the force of the old orthodox argument. Indeed, I suspect that no man can get away from the doctrine of endless punishment except by a process which very materially lowers the doctrine of inspiration. I am free to confess that my mind more and more moves away from the doctrine of endless punishment, but it is at the expense of that belief in the supreme authority of Scripture, and an increase of faith that the living reason of men must determine living questions, and that the moral sense which Christianity educates must in the end sit in judgment on the qualities of religion itself.”

This is plain and to the point. If endless

punishment be not true, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is not true. Mr. Beecher discards one, to be honest he discards both. Take one stone of the arch away, another is loosened and soon falls out.

Again, "the strongest asseverations of endless punishment," which are found in the synoptical gospels, fall from the lips of the Son of God Himself, and He upholds the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures by continually quoting from them as authoritative.

To meet this difficulty there are men to be found, who unblushingly and blasphemously assert, that Christ voluntarily abridged and limited His divine powers when here on earth—that He did not, could not, know everything, that He was inaccurate, and so on. This theory, christened "The doctrine of the *Kenosis*," is largely founded on Philippians ii. 7, twisted, distorted, and immorally handled.

Thus, in addition to the inspiration of the Scriptures being assailed, we find men daring enough to attack the deity of Christ when He was here upon earth.

Then again, Is it not a patent fact, not to be by any possibility controverted, that the believers in "the larger hope" are becoming more and more leavened by Unitarianism, till at length in whole congregations one looks in vain for those who believe in the atoning value of the precious

blood of Christ? They judge of sin as it affects themselves, and deny its eternal demerit in God's sight.

If I give up the plain scriptural teaching of eternal punishment, to be honest I must perforce forfeit the Bible, with all my blessings in Christ and all my prospects of glory. The price is too great. We take our stand here, and say with Paul on the sinking ship, "I BELIEVE GOD."

G. W. Foote, the editor of the *Freethinker*, commenting on a well-known annual theological lecture, noticed how heaven was over and over again mentioned, and hell scarcely alluded to—the usual trend of modern theological thought. He then described his position in something like the following language:

"For our part we believe in neither; if we believed in either we should believe in both. If there is an eternal heaven to gain, there must be an eternal hell to shun; they must be eternal correlatives, one of the other; they can no more be divorced than the Siamese twins could be separated."

His language is plain and logical from *his* standpoint. It should be well thought over by those who have not the courage to believe God in spite of reason and intellect.

Again, let me give you an example of the weak and illogical position taken up by the "higher critics."

Travelling from London to the North of

England some years ago, I got into conversation with a young man. Very soon the talk drifted to religious topics.

He picked up a book he had been reading, and asked me if I knew it, and what I thought of it. Its subject was Universalism, its author the Rev. Dr. Allon, since dead, with a preface by Canon Basil Wilberforce. I told the young man the title of the book was immeasurably weak, and enough to condemn it at once.

He seemed startled, and begged for an explanation. I replied, "It bases its teaching, according to its title, upon three things in the following order :

- "1. The Reason of Man.
- "2. The Fathers.
- "3. The Holy Scriptures.

"Here the first and primary appeal is to man's fallen, perverted reason. The Scriptures tell us, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God,' 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.' Man will judge by his own desires and by his limited knowledge. It is like a criminal acting as judge in his own case. Who could expect him to mete out to himself even-handed judgment ?

"Appeal No. 2 is made to 'the Fathers.' Every one knows there is a great gulf fixed between

the lofty inspired writings of Scripture and the weak and puerile writings—generally speaking—of ‘the Fathers.’ It is the difference between the Himalayas, with their everlasting robe of dazzling snow, and the Surrey downs. Then appeal No. 3 is made to the Scriptures. It would not be decent to entirely ignore them, and the few passages quoted are misinterpreted, wrested out of their connection and misapplied.” Running rapidly through that section of it, I pointed out two or three glaring cases.

The young man could not answer my argument upon the title, but he still stuck to his opinions. It just showed how foolish men make themselves to the feeblest child of God when they begin to traffic intellectually in divine truth. “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” Passing successfully through a theological college, mastering the dead languages, and having a critical knowledge of the letter of the Word, is no substitute whatever for the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

But now let us quote you one passage, that will suffice for our purpose. Three times over from the lips of the Son of God Himself, when speaking of hell, fall the awfully solemn words, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (See Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.)

Supposing the “worm” to be a figure of the remorse of a lifetime of sin, of a conscience

quicken for ever into undying reproaches, and "the fire" to be a figure of God's punishment for ever and ever of the damned in hell, still the words lose nothing of their solemnity and awfulness. *He* speaks of "the fire that NEVER shall be quenched."

We take our stand upon this one statement of the Son of God thrice emphasized. If this one statement be not true, the whole fabric of Christianity must go. It is not possible that Christ spoke other than the absolute truth, awful as that truth might be.

If this *plain* statement be not true, and we want neither a knowledge of Greek nor Hebrew here, then Christ is not God, the Bible is not the Scriptures of truth, our light is replaced by a worse than Egyptian darkness, "We are of all men most miserable."

Other passages might be adduced, but we forbear. Our object has been served, if some have got a glimmering as to where the denial of endless punishment would land them. Be not afraid to say, "I believe it, because God says it." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

In conclusion let us, who know through the finished work of Christ the eternal forgiveness of our sins, live as if we believed these solemn things. Let us not trifle, nor criminally waste our precious, golden opportunities of serving Him, but earnestly strive to persuade men to "flee from

the wrath to come." "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," was a dominant factor in Paul's earnestness. And if perchance this paper catch the eye of one still a stranger to the God of love, and the God of light, let him know that God has provided a Saviour for him. On the cross Jesus exclaimed in thrilling tones, "IT IS FINISHED," words which will never be uttered in the flames of an endless hell, for there "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Oh, flee to the arms of Infinite Love to-day! The work is done. God now invites thee. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

A. J. P.

---

## GOD HAS SPOKEN TO US.

"SAVED! I should not like to say that. How can anyone know for a certainty that he is saved?"

"But if God Himself told you, would you believe Him?"

"Yes, certainly, if God told me, I should believe Him."

"And if you are a believer God has told you that you may know that you are saved."

The lady to whom I was speaking looked as if she expected to hear of some supernatural visitation. I cannot forget her disappointment,

and dissatisfied muttering, "*What, only the Bible!*" as I opened the book by which God speaks to us.

The Bible, dear friend, is the word of the living God. It testifies to the finished work of His Son; who says to you in the Bible, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) It is "only the Bible" which says to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31), and warns you that he who believes not is condemned already. It is "only the Bible" which will survive the wreck of this world's grandeur and greatness, for God says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall NOT pass away." I pray you take your stand upon the only rock that will never be moved. Receive the declaration of "forgiveness of sins" from the word of the living God. "Through this Man [Christ Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

May you, dear friend, credit every word in the Bible, and, looking away from yourself, be able, by the grace of God's Spirit, to say, "I know that I am saved, for God has told me so."

H. N.



## THE BLOOD THAT SHELTERS.

ON that eventful night, when the first-born in all the land of Egypt fell, it was one thing alone that sheltered the homes of the Israelites. Apart from that, their first-born, too, would have fallen, and the "great cry" that broke from palace and mansion, house and hut, in the land of the Pharaohs, would have been heard as loudly in the dwellings of the sons of Jacob. What was that one thing so mighty to shield from the sword of the destroyer? It was the blood of the lamb slain, sprinkled on the lintel and door-posts of every house. Nothing more was needed and nothing less sufficed. (Exodus xii.)

Herein is expressed, in figure, a transcendent truth which, if we would have assured peace, must be clearly seen. There is nothing in heaven, or on earth, that can shelter sinful men from the just judgment of God but the precious blood of Christ. Nothing we can either do, say, or feel can ever take the place of that.

Be our sorrow for sin ever so deep, our repentance ever so profound, our change of life ever so decided, all these avail nothing. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul," and "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Leviticus xvii. 11; Hebrews ix. 22.)

## THE BLOOD THAT SHELTERS.

95

It is of the greatest moment to understand this thoroughly. Perhaps you have often prayed for forgiveness, and have risen from your knees resolving to lead a better life, believing that in doing so the assurance of pardon would flow into your soul. In this you have been disappointed. The better life has not been led, your struggles after holiness have not succeeded, and shattered hopes lie thick around you like leaves on the forest path. But supposing it had been otherwise. Were the inward state and the outward life all you would have them be, would this give true peace with God or shelter from His righteous ire? Assuredly not. This would be to place experiences where the precious blood of Christ alone should stand—a common, but fatal mistake. No doubt among the thousands of Israel on the night of the passover you might have found experiences of every kind and colour. But, as already shewn, the safety of the firstborn lay alone in this, that the blood of a victim on which death had already passed was on the lintel. When the eye of God beheld the blood He passed over that house. The destroyer did not enter there.

Your experiences, beloved reader, may have shewn you with increasing clearness that you are both ungodly, and without strength to extricate yourself from that unhappy state. So far they have been useful, and they confirm the truth of Romans v. 6. But then, remember, it was for such

that Jesus died. Now that death—the death of God’s own Son—settles for evermore the solemn question of our sin and guilt. It furnishes all that the throne of Eternal Justice was bound to require, if any were to be justified and saved. Can aught that you may feel, say, or do, give to that death an efficacy which it does not already possess? Your desires after holiness are right, but so long as you are seeking this as a means of acceptance with God, you are trying to establish your own righteousness, and in that attempt you will never succeed. Would that you were willing to take the place before God of one who is altogether bad, in whom no good dwells, and who has no strength to meet those holy demands of which the law of Moses is the measure! If you saw this to be your actual state, you would know how dependent you were on the grace of God, and you would rely wholly on the atonement which Christ has made.

If your difficulty lies in the question, “How may anyone know that he is saved?” let me answer it, in the Scotch fashion, by asking another. “How did the Israelites know that they were safe? Had they nothing but their feelings to tell them so?” If the head of an Israelitish family had said that he knew his firstborn was safe because he felt so happy, and because he had loved and served God faithfully, his confidence would have rested on a wholly false basis. We

may be assured he said nothing of the kind, but, the blood being on the lintel, he frankly acknowledged that the ground of his present peace, in view of the midnight hour, lay in the faithful promise of a God whose word he could fully trust.—“When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” Simple and blessed words!

It is so with us. How many passages of Holy Scripture have been written with the express purpose of setting the soul at rest in the knowledge of salvation. Do you demand an example? We quote at once Romans x. 9: “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.” There is no uncertainty in this faithful saying, and its meaning is most marvellously plain.

Do not mix up your feelings and experiences with the atoning work of Christ, or with the unerring word of God, which brings the knowledge of salvation to everyone who believes. These two eternal things remain unaffected by any experience of ours, and therefore the ground of our peace is always the same, be our experiences what they may.

In 1833, through the perseverance of Wilberforce, the British Parliament voted twenty millions of money to emancipate the slaves in the colonies

of Britain. It is easier to imagine than to describe the effect of these tidings on the blacks. Could you have gone and asked those who received their freedom how it was obtained, they would have told you that a great ransom had been paid for their deliverance. But how did they know that they were free? Because they were almost frantic with joy? Nay, for their joy was the result of their knowing, and their knowing was by the proclamation of the British king.

Anxious reader, there is the whole matter. The ransom has been given—full and sufficient—and the royal proclamation has been issued. It runneth on this wise, “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.” (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Why not believe it and rejoice?

Under the shelter of the blood, and knowing they were safe, the Israelites ate of the lamb roast with fire: with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs did they eat it. But the meal within the house added naught to the value of the blood without, though it was most necessary that it should be eaten. So the believer, in the enjoyment of assured peace, feeds, in a spiritual sense, on Christ who passed under the fire of divine judgment on account of His people’s sins. With bitter herbs, for repentance is not lacking, he

## THE BLOOD THAT SHELTERS.

99

feeds on Christ, and the feelings of his soul find expression in these well-known lines—

“ Alas ! and did my Saviour bleed ?  
 And did my Saviour die ?  
 Would He devote that sacred head  
 For such a worm as I ?

“ Was it for crimes that I have done  
 He groaned upon the tree ?  
 Amazing pity, grace unknown,  
 And love beyond degree ! ”

Nor is the unleavened bread forgotten, for the sin, once loved, or thought but lightly of, is now turned away from, and the instincts of the new nature and the indwelling Spirit lead the believer to see that holiness becomes God's people for ever.

One word more. It was with loins girded, with shoes on their feet, with staff in hand, and in haste, that the Israelites ate the paschal lamb. The hour of their deliverance had come. On that self-same night they were to start on their memorable journey, which should end among the hills and valleys of Canaan—that goodly land flowing with milk and honey. So with the believer. From the first moment of his coming under the shelter of the precious blood of Christ, his face, so to speak, is set towards the Canaan above. The links with the Egypt-world are broken, and the bourne of all his hopes is that place whither his Saviour is gone. But we close. God grant that it may be yours thus to be sheltered, and thus to feed on the Lamb for sinners slain.

## THE ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSINGS OF GRACE.

OUR God is the God of all grace (1 Peter v. 10), and to-day is the day of grace. (John i. 16-17.) God delights to minister grace in a manner worthy of Himself, according to His estimate of Christ and His finished work (who can fathom it?), for the joy of His own heart. Hence we read, “Where sin abounded *grace did much more abound*: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans v. 20.) And “if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive *abundance of grace* and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (Romans v. 17.) Who are *they*? *All who believe* the gospel of His grace.

Now this gracious gospel contains many precious truths. Let us take note of five; forgiveness, peace, deliverance, life, and the gift of the Spirit.

The first thing that a troubled sinner needs is *forgiveness*. “Through this Man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*.” (Acts xiii. 38.) “To Him give all the prophets witness,

## ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE. 101

that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive *remission of sins.*" (Acts x. 43.) The moment we take our place as *self-judged* sinners before God, and believe on His Son, *we are forgiven.* "Your sins *are forgiven* you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) He says to you, as to the poor woman in Luke vii., "Thy sins *are forgiven.*" (v. 48.) Now this forgiveness is full, free, and eternal. Isaiah says: "He will *abundantly pardon.*" Abundant grace administers *abundant pardon* to any, and every, soul that believeth. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans iv. 7-8.)

But there is more. God not only pardons abundantly, but He justifies. In Romans iv., the apostle says, "If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for *our justification.* Therefore being *justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans iv. 24, 25; v. 1.) Not only then are our sins pardoned, but we are justified. And what is the consequence? *Peace.* We have peace with God through Him; present, perfect, permanent, everlasting peace. Jeremiah, speaking of God's earthly people, in language which is equally applicable—and that in the highest sense, to His people of to-day, says; "Behold, I



## 102 ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE.

will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the *abundance of peace* and truth." (Jer. xxxiii. 6.) Hence the portion of every Christian is not only *abundance of pardon*, but also *abundance of peace* with Him who ministers it.

But remark further, Jeremiah also links *truth* with peace. The portion of God's people is *abundance of truth*. Now in John viii. 31, 32, our Lord said to His disciples, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye *My disciples indeed*; and ye shall *know the truth*, and the *truth shall make you free*." And again, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be *free indeed*." (John viii. 36.) Now apply these blessed statements in connection with the precious truth of *deliverance*, so often treated of in these pages. If we bow to the full testimony of God concerning the work of His Son (see Romans v.—viii.), we are *delivered now* from sin's power and dominion, though it remains in us till the end of our life on earth. Believing God, and reckoning with Him, the Holy Ghost works effectually in us, delivering us now, and setting us free from sin, to serve God. It is the wonderful effect of truth applied in power to our souls, and Jeremiah speaks of *the abundance of truth*. We are made free, and are in Christ before God for ever, and there is no condemnation, for "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free* from the law of sin and

## ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE. 103

death." (Romans viii. 1-2.) It is *an abundant deliverance*.

In referring to "the Spirit of life," we touch another deeply blessed subject. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more *abundantly*"—or simply *abundantly*; the word "more" is not in the original. (John x. 10.) There are not two distinct truths here, as some have thought. Life was in the Word before the world was. (John i. 4.) But the Word was made flesh (John i. 14), and Jesus, the Son, said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John xiv. 6.) Life was manifested in His person. He was it. And He came that His own might have it, and that *in abundance*. He died that we might live. Life and incorruptibility were brought to light through the gospel. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth on Me hath* everlasting life." (John vi. 47.) This *abundant life*, eternal life, is God's gift. We have it in Him, who triumphed over death. We have passed from death unto life,—unto life that death cannot touch, *abundant life* in the One, who, risen from the dead, has gone into glory, into a sphere where death never has been, and never can be. "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 3, 4.)

Not only so, but the Spirit Himself takes

## 104 ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE.

up His abode in the body of the Christian. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost"? This great gift—the presence of the Holy Ghost—is the chief characteristic of Christianity. It is a precious truth, with very wide bearings, but it must suffice for our purpose simply to call the reader's attention to the *abundant* character of this blessing. In Titus iii. 5, 6, the apostle, speaking of the Spirit, says, "Which He shed on us *abundantly* through Jesus Christ our Saviour." We are sealed with the Holy Ghost for the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) We have the earnest of the Spirit. (2 Cor. i. 21.) We have the first-fruits. (Rom. viii. 23.) We are anointed (2 Cor. i. 21.) And the whole extent of the blessing is of the most *abundant* character. Hence by *the abundant grace* of our God we have forgiveness, peace, deliverance, life, and the gift of the Spirit in abundance. Our portion may be compared in the very highest degree to that of Zebulun, "they shall suck of the *abundance of the seas*, and of treasures hid in the sand." (Deut. xxxiii. 19.)

Before we proceed further we would earnestly put the question to each of our readers, Are these blessings yours? Can you rejoice before God in the present knowledge of abundant pardon, abundant peace, abundant deliverance, abundant life, and the abundant presence of the Spirit in

## ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE. 105

you? Are you, in short, a child of God in the full conscious blessing of the superabounding grace of God? If so, in the sense of such a marvellous portion, how applicable are the words of the psalmist, "How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light." (Psalm xxxvi. 7-9.)

We are in a dissatisfied world, which has long lost the original paradise, but which seeks pleasure and satisfaction where all is vanity and pursuit of the wind. The soul's satisfaction can only be found in the things of God. And He has provided the very fatness of His house as our portion, that we may be *abundantly satisfied* now and to *all eternity*.

And now, being the happy recipients of this unbounded blessing, if left here for a little while, until we enjoy it in all its fulness without let in the eternal glory of God, we are called to follow Christ, and to glorify Him. The apostle Peter, in speaking of this blessed pathway, enumerates in his second epistle the moral qualities which should characterise us. (2 Peter i. 5-7.) And in the end of verse 10 he adds, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an

## 106 ABUNDANCE OF THE BLESSING OF GRACE.

entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." One may compare the entrance into the glory of the kingdom of our Lord, of the Christian who practises these things, to a fine vessel entering the home harbour after a long voyage, deeply laden with gold and precious stones. How different to one who, though saved by faith, pursues a pathway of negligence, to find at the end of his career, though he himself is preserved in mercy by the grace of God, his cargo (so to speak) is valueless, and only fit to be burned. (1 Cor. iii. 15.) May the gracious Lord exercise every soul who is satisfied with the fatness of His house, that he may be found practising these things, so blessedly exhibited to perfection in the pathway of Christ Himself, while he looks for the accomplishment in the eternal future of the exceeding great and precious promises of God.

But do not be surprised, if you serve the Lord, and pursue such a pathway, should you meet in some measure, or in some way, with a similar experience to the apostle Paul's. (2 Cor. xi. 23-27.) All that will live godly *in Christ Jesus* shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. iii. 12.) It is impossible to be faithful to Him, and not suffer in some form or other at the hand of man.

E. H. C.

## GIDEON AND HIS THREE HUNDRED LAPPERS.

THE Scriptures shew us plainly that God has been pleased in His infinite wisdom, at different times and in various ways, to test His people, so as to keep them in the safe path of dependence and obedience, for His glory and their blessing.

It has been in proving them, at one time by trials and difficulties, and at another by the very mercies needful for them. This was so with Israel of old, and it is so more or less with God's people to-day. There is a case illustrating this in Gideon's day, recorded for our learning in the seventh chapter of the book of Judges. As to Gideon's army, it there tells us of those who were *ready*: of those who *returned*: of those who *remained*: of those *retained* and of the *rest*. It is instructive to see what God tells us of these five classes. The whole army of 32,000 were in a sense *ready* to go forward to fight their enemies, but when tested 22,000 *returned* as fearful and afraid.

There *remained* 10,000 men of courage, but when further tested there were only 300 *retained* whom God could trust, and the *rest* were sent

## 108 GIDEON AND HIS THREE HUNDRED LAPPERS.

back to their tents. It is written, "The Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

"And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were *three hundred men*: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the *rest* of Israel every man unto his tent, and *retained* those three hundred men." (*vv.* 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.)

How solemn that, out of such a large number as 10,000, God could only retain, for His use, 300 men, as trustworthy and proof against being drawn aside by partaking too bountifully of their commonest, every-day, needful mercies! Such

## GIDEON AND HIS THREE HUNDRED LAPPERS. 109

evidently was their moral state! We see in those retained 300 men the secret of *dependence* and *obedience*. *Wisdom* too was shewn. "He divided the three hundred men into three companies." They acted *corporately*—"The three hundred blew the trumpets." They acted individually too—"They stood every man in *his place*." They all had *one object*—"Look on me, and do likewise." They were all of one mind—"As I do, so shall ye do." All spake the same thing—"Say, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." All had self-abnegation—They "brake the pitchers." Faith was in exercise, and the victory was the Lord's, who had already given assurance of certain victory, which was as real to faith before the battle as it was after it. Mere knowledge of God's word, great human intelligence in the truth, long years of honoured service, much experience and the like, good as they may be in themselves, are utterly powerless to sustain and preserve God's people for Himself in this day—a day surely of ease and abounding mercies.

Nothing short of dependence upon Himself and obedience to His word will suffice. Our blessed Lord was the only perfect exemplification of this, and it is very remarkable to see how successfully He met every temptation of Satan with quotations from the book of Deuteronomy, which as we know contains special instruction for the saint's walk; and He left us an example that we should walk



## 110            ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

in His steps. Moreover, we have many examples in God's word, showing how blessed it is to be characterized by *dependence* and *obedience*, and how solemnly disastrous it is to be found in an opposite path. The foe, knowing our tendencies and well acquainted with our weakest points, directs his attacks accordingly. What would answer his purpose with one saint would probably have no power whatever with another. May the Lord in His rich grace keep us in this respect like Gideon's three hundred lappers, for His glory and His name's sake!

“With scrip on the back, and a staff in the hand,  
We march on in haste through an enemy's land;  
The road may be rough, but it cannot be long,  
And we'll smooth it with hope, whilst we cheer it with song.”

J. N.

---

 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

I. M. (EPHESIANS V. 14).—In the New Translation of J. N. D. this verse stands thus: “Wake up, [thou] that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee.” Hereby are we warned that it is possible for a saint to be asleep among the dead, and, alas! not only is it possible, but how many instances do we see around us, and how easily might we ourselves be overcome by this deadly stupor. In that unhappy case he hears not, sees not, nor can he communicate aught to others, and though he be not a dead man, yet, so far as these things go, he is as

good as dead. Is not Samson asleep on the knees of Delilah a striking and solemn illustration? How soon he lost the locks of his Nazariteship! And then, with his eyes put out and himself bound with fetters of brass, he was made to grind in the prison house. What a pitiable spectacle! Nor was this all, for when the lords of the Philistines gathered themselves together to do honour to their god and their hearts were merry, Samson was called from his prison to make them sport. To such humiliating and degrading depths may a man descend who sleeps among the dead. What a warning to us! Is any Christian in that state? An earnest voice bids him wake up and quit that company. To be asleep is bad enough, to be asleep among the dead is worse. Not only is there the arousing call, but with it the exceedingly gracious promise, "Christ shall shine upon thee"—not a mere gleam of light, but Christ shall shine full-orbed upon the soul. This is grace indeed! Such we understand to be the meaning of this verse.

G. A. (COLOSSIANS i. 21-23).—The first of these three verses shews us what we were in our unconverted days—alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works. Now, blessed be God, we are reconciled, the enmity and alienation gone. This has been accomplished through the death of Christ, and the divine purpose is to present us holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight: *if we continue in the faith*. Now, though it is well to guard with jealous care those great truths that relate to our standing in Christ perfect, complete, and eternal, of which nothing can deprive us, yet, on the other hand, we must be careful

## 112            ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

not to enfeeble the warnings given by unerring wisdom and in the deepest love. There was that about the Colossians which called for these warning words. They were in danger of giving heed to the vain speculations of the human mind, of being beguiled with enticing words, of being made a spoil of by designing men, who, with all their parade of wisdom and of religious observances, were but the tools of the devil. Of such let them beware, and see to it that they continue in the faith grounded and settled. This was their safeguard. We need not say that "the faith" here spoken of is not the individual faith begotten in the soul by the Spirit of God, but rather what is called "the Christian faith," that is, the vast range of truth that constitutes the Christianity of the Bible. In this we are responsible to continue, and by the grace of God it is our desire and purpose so to do. Then we should remember there have always been those who seemingly began well, and ended by shewing themselves bitter enemies to Christ and His truth. Whether there was reason to fear there were such among the Colossians we cannot say, but these words of caution were called for, and while they lead to watchfulness, they in no way weaken the assurance that the sincere believer in Christ shall be kept, through grace, to the end.

A. W. P.—It is kind of you to send us your lines for insertion. Alas! we cannot possibly make room for them.

---

## PROFIT FROM BIBLE STUDY.

“DO you ever read the Bible without profiting?” is a question one has often asked, and the way in which it has been answered—“Indeed, many times”—is certainly suggestive, and as certainly, unsatisfactory.

Then as we read the language in which saints of old time wrote of the word of the Lord—esteeming it more than necessary food, and finding it the joy and rejoicing of the heart—the lack of such experience is the more keenly felt.

And there are many young Christians (perhaps older ones as well) who read their Bibles with the sense that they should derive both profit and pleasure from the occupation, but are much disappointed to find they get little of either. A thoughtless observer will condemn such off hand, when their interest begins to flag; yet it is not censure, but counsel they need. We call the worldling superficial, and so he is, but not more so than the Christian who condemns his brother for having difficulties which he has never taken the trouble to understand.

It is of all moment to realize that acquaintance with the word of God is a means to an end, but, in itself is not the end we aim at. *Conduct and communion* are the objects of Bible study, and if

our reading results in neither, it matters not what we may know, nor what beauties we have discovered, we read in vain. Mathematics may be studied either for its own sake, or for its use, and one may be acquainted with the most advanced branches while requiring only the simplest rules in daily life. The student has the satisfaction of knowing something he could very well do without! It was not for such study that the Bible was given to us. In a word, our reading must be *purposeful*, rather than *speculative*.

Our intelligence is not the measure of our spiritual stature, but the use our intelligence has been to us. Rather should it humble us when we find that those who are far behind us in understanding are our leaders in piety. You have discovered a striking parallel, perhaps. Well! You have grasped the scope of a prophecy, or the meaning of a symbol. Quite so. But do you find yourself nearer to God in consequence? And has the Lord used you in His service lately? And tell me about your recent answers to prayer. What! Has your Scripture study furthered you in none of these things?

We may safely say that most doctrinal evil is the result of speculative study of the Word. The writer is convinced that this is one of the greatest dangers of the hour. Let us take to heart the lesson of the manna; for that heavenly food became corrupt if not used, just as head

knowledge of the Bible has been the destruction of those who have not assimilated its teaching.

Every reference of the Word to itself suggests a *use*, either as a lamp, or counsellor, or guide, or comforter, &c. It is better to practise a little of Scripture teaching than to understand a great deal.

Our personal experience and the word of God must be brought together, like the flint and steel. It is in their contact that we get light. The importance of this can hardly be overrated. Too little do we realize *why* we are placed in our circumstances. To hear some Christians talk one would think their only idea about this world is that they must get out of it as quickly as possible. It is such who comfort themselves with the delusion that all they fail to learn here will be made good to them hereafter; and ignore the priceless instruction of present circumstances.

But how often have familiar Scriptures glowed with a new and precious meaning, when read in the light of our own experience. And thus are we taught of God; nor may we any longer despise the passing present things. Inscrutable wisdom has chosen our environment, for ends beyond our comprehension.

Let us not deceive ourselves. There is no repetition in God's ways, and we have no right to assume that what we have neglected here will be enjoyed later on. Rather let us realize that the valuable and characteristic lessons of our

wilderness experience not only will not, but *cannot*, be received, when the conditions of our being are no longer the same. Think you we shall know hereafter the *comfort of the Scriptures*? Shall we then hear words spoken in season to the weary, or realize Christ's priestly sympathy with our suffering? Shall we hereafter enter into the blessed fellowship of our Lord's humiliation, or find the treasure of His reproach?

When you give an open Bible to a young convert you may lead him to the precincts of his vast inheritance, the richness of which exceeds his conception, but where his spirit may starve in the midst of plenty, unless he knows how to garner its stores. To carry the figure further—how easily one may lose the benefits of a property which he does not know how to use. Cutting for fuel trees needed for shade, eating of fruit which his constitution does not need, neglecting or ignoring the very things he requires.

Instead of absorbing divine truths in a promiscuous way, without any particular object in view, let us search for what the soul thirsts for, and our reading will have new life and blessing. "Ah," but one will say, "my difficulty is that I have so little appetite for the Word!" Very likely, but the little desire is the very natural consequence of little benefit in the past, which is itself the result of defective use of Scripture. Now I do not ask if you hunger for the heavenly

food, but have you any soul-hunger at all? Have you *any* spiritual needs, doubts, or difficulties; or are you so rich and increased that you need nothing? Then bring whatever longing you feel or whatever difficulty you have met to the written word. Seek by the Spirit's teaching to get God's mind about the matter, or divine consolations in the circumstance, and you will come away, if one may be allowed to say so, both satisfied and hungry for more!

This then is the fundamental principle we have before us. To study with profit we must study with definite purpose; often finding the occasion in our own experience. It is really wonderful the range of study which is suggested by a method which at first sight would seem greatly to limit it. Indeed there is hardly a doctrine, promise, or fact recorded, which will not, sooner or later, come under review. Are you young? The Word is full of counsel and exhortation for you. Are you old? Scripture is rich in promise and consolation. Have you responsibilities, joys, sorrows? You cannot afford to lose the light of revelation on your circumstances. Do you feel you need instruction as to worship? You will find it in the Word. Or service? Read Timothy; Romans xii.; 1 Cor. xii., xiii.; and many more scriptures. Are you tried by false brethren? Then read all God wrote down of Israel's faithlessness; and



how Paul was tried by those roots of bitterness in the early church. Have you joy in the Lord's people? So had he; but you need to turn up the passages, and see how the apostle speaks of it. I cannot describe every branch of this study, nor is it necessary; but having briefly stated the principle I must say a little about method, or the reader's benefit may end with good intentions.

The wise man wrote, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; THEN shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 3-5.)

The flowers and fruits of revelation are upon the surface, but the gems of truth must be quarried from the rock by earnest soul-toil. Will God give His treasures to the slothful? Never! Why if half the energy we put into secular studies of no eternal importance were brought to bear on the Scriptures of truth, our profiting would surprise us, and our progress be manifest to all. Think of the concentrated energy brought to bear on the poor soil of science, while the surface of Scripture is barely scratched. Well may angels wonder! But will it repay the labour? Yes, indeed, a hundred-fold.

A certain preparedness of spirit is necessary to profit from the Word. "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." (Psalm xxv. 9.) Often has the soul

bowed in adoration at the wisdom that has given teaching which *cannot* be received in pride of human learning, or retained together with a bad conscience, but which is open, in all its prodigal richness, to the poor in heart. To the writer this is one of the most remarkable of the distinctive features of Christianity.

A certain time for the Word is of all importance. Think well over your daily engagements, and choose one or two periods least liable to interruption. The last ten minutes of the day is not the best time for reading the Bible, for, as someone has said, it is not well to give our sleepy hours to God.

A note-book is valuable, and in its index should be written at once the title of any subject to be looked into when leisure permits. The title-deeds of your inheritance will early claim attention—I refer to the central doctrines of the gospel—forgiveness, justification, redemption, etc. The signature which assures them to you may be scrutinized—I mean the evidences of divine authorship with which the Book abounds—and this page may well be kept open for many additions later on.\*

Above all, the character of the God with whom

\* Some proofs are only evident to a *friend* of God, but to such an one they come with convincing power. Your enemy might call you a hypocrite, and I do not see how you could convince him you are not; but having known you personally for many years I may say, "For me there are a thousand proofs to the contrary."

you have to do must be studied. His nature, characteristics, likings, and dislikings. This is our first care with an earthly friend ; how much more necessary when we come to our Saviour God !

But it is not intended to discourage consecutive reading of the various books which compose the Bible, so long as the fundamental principles are kept in view—a purpose, and a desire. Yet the purpose in reading a book may be widely different this month to what it was last. Let us take the epistle to the Philippians for instance. Then I may have read it in order to trace out the four aspects of Christ's sufficiency for His own. To-day I may study it to see the relation in which the assembly stands to the gospel. Later on I may read it to find the motives for joy and rejoicing which were set before the Philippians ; or again, taking it as a letter acknowledging receipt of a delayed contribution, I read it with desire to enter into the mutual sympathies of the servant and the saints.

The advice to "Read the Bible on your knees" is good. To turn the Word into prayer as we read is a helpful way to get at its meaning, and feel its influence.

One life and character built on the solid Rock of Inspiration is the fairest sight in this moral wilderness ; nor is there truer greatness, in an age of independence, than intelligent subjection to the word and will of God.

S. E. MCN.

## “REDEEMING THE TIME.”

I WAS travelling in the train the other day with a fellow-labourer in the gospel field. The conversation drifted somehow or other to the subject of shaving.

“Shaving takes one working week out of the working year in my case, I reckon,” he said.

I began to calculate it rather curiously. It took up ten minutes each week-day. Ten minutes is the sixth of an hour. Working nine hours a day, it took up the fifty-fourth of the working day; that is, the fifty-fourth of the year of fifty-two weeks, which is practically one working week clean gone out of the working year.

Trivial as the conversation seemed for the moment, I must confess it has since opened up the field for many a serious reflection.

I admit I was startled, as I thought how precious the minutes were; and humbled as I thought of the many never-to-be-recalled hours, worse than wasted.

I bring the incident before the readers of *Simple Testimony*, at the risk of being smiled at.

The value of the odd moments for reading, for prayer, for dropping a word of comfort, for handing out a gospel booklet or two, came home to me in

no ordinary way. I thought with redoubled interest of the Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian saints—"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"; that is, seizing the precious, priceless opportunities as they occur. They are ours for the moment—ours to use or to abuse—then gone for ever beyond recall.

"Oh," says the Christian young man, "if I only had the opportunity of crossing the seas, and preaching the gospel to the poor, dark heathen, how I should rejoice!"

Yet, often alas! the heathen crying at our very doors are neglected. Remember, the zeal that does not spend itself upon the opportunities that force themselves upon us in the office, the factory, the train, the tram, or in our walks abroad, is a vanishing quantity on the foreign field. On the other hand the earnestness that is displayed at home will not die because it is transplanted to a foreign soil. It is too hardy for that, not "a hardy annual," but a perennial. Abiding earnestness kept warm and operative through communion with a God whose love lingers over this world, growing hoary in its guilt, and fast ripening for judgment—this is what we want! Oh to be in touch with His sympathies!

I was also struck upon reflecting as to where the text "*Redeeming the time*" occurs. Not in the epistle to the Romans, which expounds the groundwork of *the gospel*, but in the Epistle to

the Ephesians, which brings out the teaching about *the Church*.

Although we are seen as seated together in Christ in heavenly places, the subjects of God's everlasting counsels, the objects of His ineffable delight and love, yet we are not spoiled for the opportunities of the passing hour. Though we may be amazed at the range of our heavenly blessings, yet we are not walking with our heads in the clouds.

Occupation with Christ does not lead to our not seeing the smallest opportunities around us, little in their appearance to man's eyes, but big with possibilities of service for Him.

The apostle Paul closes our brief text with the pregnant words, "*Because the days are evil.*" The darker and more difficult the days become, the more loudly does the apostle's exhortation fall upon our dull and inattentive ears.

May both writer and reader be stirred up to godly zeal and earnestness in this matter. Remember we cannot all do great things. Suffice it if we get the Master's smile of approval, and His cheering, "WELL DONE!" None can stretch a mile at one terrific bound, but by taking hundreds of little steps all can accomplish the distance. The Lord comes quickly. Do we *really* believe it? Let us, then, redeem the time.

A. J. P.

## THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

**N**O one can read the Epistle to the Hebrews with any degree of care, and not see that the Priesthood of Christ is one of the great subjects treated of in this important section of Holy Scripture.

It is very certain that heaven is the sphere in which the Lord Jesus exercises His Priesthood. One passage settles that point, "If He were on earth, He should not be a priest." (Heb. viii. 4.) The Priesthood of Christ is clearly then a heavenly ministry; something that is going on now.

Whatever thoughts we may have on this great and affecting subject, we must carefully see that they come not into conflict either with the truth of God's eternal love, or with the worth of the sacrifice of Christ, by which we are "perfected for ever" before God. No doctrine, however true, is rightly held if it weaken in our soul either of those two immense truths.

Let us be increasingly assured that God loves us perfectly. It is a love that passes all telling—an ocean without bottom or shore. It is not fickle as human love sometimes is. It changes not with the changes often found in us. It does not ebb

and flow like the tides of the sea. It abides, changeless as the unchanging One, the same yesterday, and to-day, and *for ever*, a sky across whose face floats no cloud.

As to our acceptance, too, it is full, perfect, and complete. Christ is our righteousness. "As He is, so are we in this world." Identified with Him, we are entitled to say that His acceptance, as the risen, glorified Man, is the measure of ours. He has borne our sins and thus put them away. In the cloudless favour of God He stands, and, as one with Him, we are in that favour likewise. Speaking thus, we see ourselves in an order of things wherein no change can ever come. Here indeed the heart finds rest.

The Priesthood of Christ, strictly speaking, is not connected with that range of truth. It has to do with us as belonging to the pilgrim band, journeying on to the rest that remains. Each individual of that redeemed company is in himself a poor, weak thing, having many infirmities. He is subject to sorrows, trials, difficulties, dangers, and exposed to the attacks of sin, the flesh, and the devil. It is as such he needs the Priesthood of Christ, and it is by its exercise that he is sustained and kept on his way.

There are three passages in the Hebrews which I would quote as having reference to the Priesthood of Christ. Of course there are more, but it is only of these that I would now briefly speak.



We shall find in them three very precious things : *succour, sympathy, and salvation.*

“Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Heb. ii. 17, 18.)

The word “tempted” is used, we need not say, in the sense of trial. The Lord Jesus in His earthly path was thus tried. He never used His Godhead power to shield Himself from the trials that thronged around Him. Having taken the place of man, He bore all, and went through all, as a holy, dependant man should. The trials to which He was subject caused Him to suffer the more acutely, because His feelings and human sensibilities were never deadened as, alas! ours are. And though He is now in heaven, where trials have no place, He does not forget, we may surely say, the earthly experiences. He knows the succour which the tempted need, and He is able to send them succour in every dark, distressful hour. Does not the thought of this brace us up for the journey? Difficulties we may have to encounter, burdens to bear, and foes to fight, but our great Priest is both “merciful and faithful,” and on His succour we may always count.

“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 an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as 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.)

How sweet is the thought that our great Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens, can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." His sympathy is deep and true. He feels for us in our human weakness. The knowledge of this comes home to us in a way that succour alone would not. A cold hand might give welcome succour in the time of need; but when sympathy accompanies succour, when the tears of the succourer mingle with those of the succoured it is sweet indeed, as balm to the bruised heart. Now our great Priest, Jesus the Son of God, both succours and sympathizes. Therefore we are exhorted to hold fast our profession and to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The mercy here spoken of is what the saints need individually. Mercy has already done great things for us; but mercy, in the sense of divine pity and compassion for our weakness, we always want, and shall as long as we are compassed with infirmities. Our God has it in abundance for us, together with season-

able help. To Him then, whose throne is a throne of grace, we may boldly go.

Our infirmities, too, furnish occasions for our learning by experience more and more of the grace of Christ. So the Apostle Paul found it, and so he tells us in 2 Cor. xii. He was enabled indeed to speak of *glorying* in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. All of us may not have reached that point yet. But we have known suffering saints who have told us that the sorrow was well worth enduring, for the sake of the sympathy and consolation of the living Christ. Oh, how much should we miss did we know nothing of the Priesthood of Jesus the Son of God!

“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.” (Hebrews vii. 23–25.)

“He ever liveth.” Unlike the priests of old, who continued not by reason of death, our great Priest ever liveth, and His priesthood is unchangeable. What others have found Him to be in generations past we shall find Him to be both now and for ever. We may sometimes wish that we had by our side, to give us help and counsel, one whom death has taken away. But wish as we may we cannot recall those who have gone. Let us

rejoice that death shall never deprive us of Christ. "He ever liveth" and is able to save to the uttermost—to the very end of our pilgrim course. The soul's salvation we have already received. We are, through grace, among those who "believe to the saving of the soul." This being so, how blessed to know that our ever-living High Priest is able to guard us in every peril, to cover us with the shield of His salvation, and to bring us triumphantly through everything that might oppose. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. The succour, sympathy and salvation of Christ then are always ours. How precious these are!

Other passages in the same epistle also speak of the Priesthood of Christ; but of these we shall say nothing. Did we look at them we should see that He appears in the presence of God for us, and like the priest of old He bears the names of "the Israel of God" upon His shoulders and His breast, in glory and beauty. In the heavenly courts we are represented by our great Priest, Jesus the Son of God. How amazing this is! Then too we have Him set before us as a great Priest over the House of God, and we, viewed as priestly worshippers, are encouraged to draw near with holy boldness. But we close. May the Holy Spirit Himself graciously lead us into a fuller heart-knowledge of this blessed subject.

“THE WILDERNESS”; OR, “THE EDGE  
OF THE WILDERNESS.”

EXODUS xiii. 20 ; xv. 22.

WHEN God communicated to Moses His intention to deliver His people from the bondage of the Egyptians, He spoke of this deliverance in a two-fold way. Not only would He “deliver them out of *the hand* of the Egyptians,” but He would “bring them up out of *that land*.” (Exodus iii. 8.) Thus early Jehovah made it clear that He never intended to set His people free from the bondage of Pharaoh, that they might remain in Egypt, but expressly to take them out of it.

The Spirit of God has recorded for us, accurately, the occasion on which each of these undertakings was accomplished; for chapter xii. closes with this distinct statement, “*The self-same day* the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of *the land* of Egypt by their armies,” while chapter xiv. closes equally distinctly with the announcement, “Thus the Lord saved Israel *that day* out of *the hand* of the Egyptians.” In this distinct way Jehovah fulfilled in detail His gracious word to Moses on behalf of His captive people; for “God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” (Chap. ii. 24.)

The first stage in their journeyings from Egypt, under divine guidance, brought the people to Succoth (chap. xii. 37); the second to "Etham, in the edge of the wilderness"; a necessary stage, for the wilderness must be *entered* at some point.

But there were two dangers peculiar to this camping ground. Firstly, it was so near to Egypt that it was a very easy matter to return to that land. Secondly, there was nothing to hinder their oppressors from following after, to re-capture the freshly-liberated people.

To secure the two special objects before Jehovah—separation from the land, and deliverance from the hand of the Egyptian—yet another stage was necessary; viz., that to Marah, where for the first time the Israelites were properly in "the wilderness," separated as well as delivered.

But between Etham and Marah what took place?

1st. The power of Jehovah was marvellously shewn in the *judgment* of the Egyptians.

2nd. The *deliverance* of the people was accomplished.

3rd. An impassable barrier effected their permanent *separation* from the land of the Egyptians.

Under the immediate sense of the final judgment of the oppressor, and their own national deliverance, it is not surprising that the pressure of praise found expression in that marvellous triumph song of chapter xv. There, too, they celebrate the power and excellency of Jehovah;

while they even anticipate triumphs yet to come. "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance." So they sang. Alas! how soon from those very lips came the sad reversal of their passing convictions.

By the Red Sea deliverance, Israel was consequently fairly launched into the wilderness. Their return into Egypt, by the pathway of waters through which Jehovah had brought them, was a physical impossibility. The waters which rolled *over* their oppressors, it must be carefully noted, equally rolled *between* them and the land out of which they had been brought. The identical event that accomplished their *liberation* accomplished also their *separation* from the land of Egypt.

On this latter point, it is noteworthy that the song of redemption is silent. Nor is the reason difficult to discover. As a people they would have been satisfied, when set free from bondage, to have remained in the land "by the flesh pots," and "eat bread to the full," as is clearly proved from Ex. xvi. 3. Egypt, while truly the scene of their bondage and misery, was also the scene of the gratification of their fleshly inclinations and desires. But between them and the possibility of gratifying these desires, there now rolled the waters of separation, which were also the waters of judgment and deliverance.

It is clear that at the "edge of the wilderness,"

## OR, "THE EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS." 133

the experience of the Israelites did not and could not, include these three wonderful dealings of Jehovah with their enemies and with themselves. There was consequently a vast characteristic difference between their experiences at "the edge of the wilderness," and "in the wilderness" in its full meaning.

Turning now to the application of the type to the believer of the present day, we read in 1 Cor. x. 6, "Now these things were our examples," *i.e.*, the things that happened to the Israelites, not the Israelites themselves.

There is doubtless, therefore, instruction of a practical and profitable nature, beneath these special incidents which befell Israel. May the gracious Lord give us hearts to appreciate, and grace to profit by, the lessons therein contained.

It is clear from the type that our God has no intention of leaving His redeemed ones, after they have been sheltered under the blood of Christ from His own righteous judgment, any longer in this Egypt-world.

This is a point of extreme importance. "In the selfsame night" of shelter beneath the blood, God brings His redeemed ones out of Egypt; *i.e.*, the world to "the edge of the wilderness." But at this stage the world, so to speak, is easy of access. There is no apparent barrier lying between the believer and his return to the scene in which all his gratifications have hitherto been found.



Though a necessary stage in the journey, this is no lengthy halting-place according to the mind of God.

The three aspects of the Red Sea already alluded to, viz., judgment, deliverance, and separation, are clearly represented in the death of Christ. The Scripture in the New Testament for the first two of these is Heb. ii. 14, 15, "That *through death* He might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The Scripture for the last is found in Gal. i. 4, "Who (Christ) gave Himself for our sins, *that He might deliver us from this present evil world.*" For these, among other reasons, "the Red Sea aspect of Christ's death" is sometimes spoken of.

The blessed Saviour has thus completely fulfilled the type, and by His death brought about judgment for the enemy, and deliverance and separation for the believer.

But separation, since it conflicts with natural inclinations and desires in the direction of the world, is not so readily entered into as the two former aspects of Christ's death, which do not fail to furnish ground for praise and thanksgiving.

Nevertheless it is of immense importance to seek to understand spiritually that the death which accomplishes our *liberation* according to God also accomplishes our *separation*. This can

## OR, "THE EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS." 135

only be divinely learned by diligently following the guidance of God, as Israel followed the guidance of the pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness.

When, under divine guidance, the Marah stage has been reached in the soul's history, the death of Christ practically forms for the believer a real barrier between him and the world. Hence the important difference between "the edge of the wilderness," and "the wilderness" in its full sense.

When the former stage only has been spiritually reached, links with the world are either not yet broken, or are easily taken up by the believer; and that because he has not yet seen his separation from it through the death of Christ. It is sorrowful indeed to reflect upon the years during which the soul has still lingered at "the edge of the wilderness," contrary to God's express purpose and desire, instead of diligently following the distinct guidance of God, by means of which the soul that follows is led on step by step.

It is very important to remember that mere intellectual knowledge may place a believer *mentally* far beyond the stage at which he really is *with God in His soul*.

Consequently it is quite possible to be mentally as far on as over Jordan, while spiritually the Red Sea has not yet been crossed, as to its full meaning for our souls.

If truly at Marah, separation from the world according to the inclinations and desires of the

natural mind is practically discovered to be "bitter," yet the cross of Christ, of which the tree is a symbol, makes the bitter sweet. There is sweetness sensibly realized *in that which separates*, since it only separates from that which must hinder and mar the soul's enjoyment of God, and of His own heavenly resources in the wilderness. It will readily be seen that food and water obtainable from Egypt could only have marred for Israel "the manna and the springing well" of Jehovah's heavenly supplying.

We may well and profitably raise the question with ourselves, How is it with us? Is it "the edge of the wilderness" or "the wilderness"? We have only to ask ourselves, Have we any unnecessary or voluntary link with the world as to its interests, pleasures, principles, or pathway? If so, however long we may have been on our pilgrimage, we are evidently still only at "the edge of the wilderness." The Marah camping is not yet ours in divine reality.

Another question, too, may be asked; viz., How is this aspect of Christ's death best and soonest reached? If the type is again to be our instructor, *By soul diligence, under divine guidance.* Unerringly Jehovah led. With willing feet, so far at least, Israel followed. If it be so with us in spiritual reality and earnestness, progress according to God will be the happy and God-honouring result.

M. C. G.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. E. M.—John xvi. 27. Although these words were addressed in the first instance to those who loved and companied with the Lord when He was here on earth, they undoubtedly expand and embrace all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, no matter what the day in which they live. The Lord is seeking to lead “His own” into the knowledge of the Father’s love, and to shield them from the thought that they could not go immediately to Him with whatever they might have to ask. Remember the religious associations in which they and their fathers had been reared. Think of the vail which, until it was rent at the Saviour’s death, shut God in and man out. In the thick darkness God had dwelt, and man was kept at a distance. Now whatever gleams of light may have shone in the types and services of the ceremonial law, everything declared that access to God for them as a people was not yet possible. Into the holiest of all the high priest alone could go, and he only at the appointed time. Consider the habits of thought all this must have formed in the mind of a Jew. But this system had waxed old, and was ready to vanish away. *The Sacrifice*, to which all other sacrifices had pointed, was about to be offered, by which the vail should be rent and the way into the holiest laid open to all believers. Besides, a name other than Jehovah had been, and would be, declared—even *the Father’s*

*name*, hitherto unknown. That name speaks of a new relationship and of a love that had only been enjoyed by the only-begotten Son, ever in the bosom of the Father. In that love others now should share, and to the Father they themselves should go for all their wants, for they were loved by Him. What an advance was this on all that had been known before!

Then as to the declaring the Father's name, about which you ask in connection with John xvii. 26, the Lord stands, so it seems to us, on a point from whence He looks backwards and forwards. He had been declaring in His ministry among them the Father's name. Supposing they did not understand one word about it, and did not enter into the enjoyment of it in the least degree, yet the Father's name was no longer an undivulged secret—it had been made known. But He would still declare it, He says. After His resurrection He did this in His wondrous message to them by Mary of Magdala: "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." From the glory, too, He declared it, not alone by the gift of the Spirit, but through the inspired ministry of His servants preserved for us in the epistles of the New Testament. But do you not see that the revelation of the Father's name is one thing, and our understanding and enjoying the relationship in which it necessarily sets us is another? If there were not a saint on earth to-day who knew anything about it, still it would be a fact that the Father's name has been and is most gloriously, most fully, revealed. Children of God then we are. Amazing privilege! which is ours now. (1 John iii. 2.) But if the Lord

has taught us to look up and call His Father our Father He would have us also know that the love wherewith He is loved rests not on Him alone. In that love we have our part—loved as He is loved. Nor is the revelation of this love to be in word only. In the Scriptures it is indeed revealed, but the love revealed there is to dwell in our hearts, and the One who first made that love known and brought us into it is to dwell there too. Here indeed are heavenly springs! Do you ask how this is to be made good in you? We answer, by your believing that you are thus loved, by your suffering nothing to lead you to doubt it, and by your earnestly desiring to be led into the fuller knowledge of it under the good hand of the Spirit of God.

You inquire what difference there is between the love of the Father in John xvi. 27, and in 1 John ii. 15. None that we know of. In the latter passage the young men are warned not to love the world. It was their special danger. If any did love it, how could the Father's love be in him? An object of that love he might be, for alas! it is quite possible for a child of God to love this present world; but if he loves it there cannot be the enjoyment of the love of the Father. Now the constituent elements of what is called "the world," are the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. When these control the heart the love of the Father is excluded as by an inevitable law. This is indeed searching, and, as you truly say, it goes much farther than outwardly sharing in the vain pleasures of the world. From these one may be kept, and yet in our hearts the world may be enshrined, and our surroundings may

## 140          ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

shew it to the least discerning. Ah! the word of God *is* searching. It detects the thoughts and intents of the heart, nor is there anything that is not manifest in His sight, for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Love not the world then. Turn from the temptress, for destruction and misery are in her ways, and her fair speeches and flattering words lead down to the chambers of death. This all they who go after her shall most surely find.

J. S. H.—Rev. iii. 8, 11. We understand the open door to mean a door of service, of testimony, of witness for Christ, a door which He Himself has opened, and which none can shut. The holding fast in verse 11 is connected with the Lord's coming quickly. Nothing is to becloud that blessed hope, nothing to be placed between us and it. When He comes the crown shall be ours, but if we allow any theory, or doctrine, of men to rob us of the hope of the immediate return of the Lord we allow our crown, so to speak, to be taken away.

O.—Many thanks for your kind note. We see you regard "that day" of John xvi. 23 as the day when the believing remnant of Israel, of whom the disciples were a sample, shall see their Messiah in manifested glory, and prayer shall be turned into praise, as in the closing verses of Psalm lxxii. For ourselves, we had always viewed it as given in the answer to C. G. in our March issue. We shall hope to weigh your interpretation, which is quite new to us, and gladly give it room, so that our readers may do the same.

## TWO QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

AT the close of a Bible-reading for young men, held during the winter months in the heart of the great city of London, a young man handed me a slip of paper, on which he had written the following questions:—

- I. What is meant by “peace with God”?
- II. What does the “sealing of the Spirit” mean?

These questions he would fain have asked during the meeting, but failed to do so, either from want of opportunity or lack of courage—probably the latter. Glancing at the questions, and believing them to be of general interest, I promised they should be answered in the pages of this magazine.

You ask, my dear young friend, the meaning of “*Peace with God.*” You know, I presume, where the term occurs. It is found in Romans v. 1, and, as far as I remember, nowhere else. It is the natural consequence of the doctrine unfolded in the preceding portion of the epistle, and it is not too much to say that everyone who understands and receives in faith the doctrine there laid down, has peace with God. We shall do well, then, diligently to inquire what that doctrine is.

XII.



Let us begin with the well-known, but solemn statement, of chapter iii. 23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Here, at least, is something in which there is no difference. In how many things do men differ! In educational attainments, in natural disposition, in tastes, habits, and social standing there are numberless differences, but in this there is none—"All have sinned." The taint of sin infects every member of the human race, and shews itself in all of us by many outward and visible signs. No argument is needed to convince you of the truth of this. But if you see sin everywhere, like a poisonous miasma that spreads itself over the wide surface of the globe, I most earnestly hope you have seen it, above all, in your own heart. There it comes nearest to you, and there the plague of it is most deeply felt. If you know anything of this, you will not be content to stop at the broad statement that "All have sinned." You will own with the prodigal "*I* have sinned," and say with Job, "Behold, *I* am vile."

Nor is it only true that we are guilty of sin in one another's sight. Your own conscience accuses you of sin against God, and the doctrine we are considering confirms the accusation. The ills that you have done are offences against the law of God—that law which is holy, just, and good. Before Him, then, you are assuredly guilty, nor can you plead aught in your own defence (chap.

iii. 19)—your mouth is stopped. From this point of view how threatening is your future, how black with storm, and cloud, and tempest! It is vain to protest that you will do better in days to come. The past cannot be undone, nor can you tear out from the book of God those pages on which your sins are written. What then can you do? Is there no one able and willing to undertake your cause? Is there no escape from the wrath to come? The only answer we can give is this—you can do nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING, unless it be to stand still and see the salvation of God.

Fitness for heaven, for the presence of God, we have none. Nor can we make ourselves fit, any more than the negro can wash himself white. This, too, is the doctrine of the epistle (chap. iii. 20). But, blessed be God! He has it in His heart to make us fit, to clothe us with a robe of righteousness, in which no flaw shall ever be found (chap. viii. 33). How can He do this? If it can be done, it will be all of His free grace, for certainly we can shew no reason why He should act so. It is at this point that the apostle utters the word "*redemption.*" Ponder that word, for it speaks of deliverance from the consequences of our sins, and from the state of guilt in which sin has plunged us. In whom is this redemption found? "In Christ Jesus." Thus our thoughts are turned from ourselves to another, and from our worthless doings to the wondrous work already accomplished by

the Son of God, when He Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree. There His precious blood was shed, there His life laid down — a sacrifice for sin, there was propitiation made, there the claims of the Throne satisfied. If, then, there is a redemption available for the guilty, and, thank God, there is, that redemption is “in Christ Jesus,” and in none other.

All this you may be ready to admit, and yet experience no sense of relief. You are very far indeed from enjoying “*Peace with God.*” Nor can you possibly enjoy it until you see that not only does this redemption avail for you, but that you avail yourself of it. When you sit down hungry to your dinner, you know that everything on the table is for you, but your famished feelings are not satisfied with knowing that. The dinner must be eaten. In like manner the gospel of the grace of God must be appropriated by the individual soul. Now there are two great facts to which the gospel gives the utmost prominence. These are set before us in chapter iv. 25. What are those facts? They are the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His glorious resurrection. Consider them. Behold upon the shameful cross our suffering Substitute. See Him delivered for our offences, stricken, bruised, and put to grief. From Him the face of God is turned away, while the quaking earth and rending rocks, and the darkness covering all the land,

furnish the outward symbols of the inward anguish which no tongue can tell or creature know. On Him the burden of your many sins is laid. For you He drinks the bitter cup and dies. Pause and meditate upon those sufferings, and then, carrying the remembrance of them with you, pass on, in thought, to the morning of the third day. Stand by the side of the sealed sepulchre, guarded as it is by the Roman watch. Within its narrow walls loving hands, three days ago, laid the dead body of the Saviour. Suddenly a shining one descends from the sky. The keepers shake, and fall to the earth as dead. Angel hands roll back the stone, and the way into the chamber of death is open. Enter in. Lo, the grave is empty! The Lord is gone! God has raised Him from the dead. We no longer see the averted Face, and the uplifted hand of Justice presenting her inexorable demands. These have been for ever set to rest, and from every condemning charge our risen Substitute is clear. And His clearance is ours. A *risen* Christ tells of sins put away, of God being satisfied, yea, glorified about the question of our sins. The great work is done, *once for all*, and now in a *risen* Saviour, gone up into glory, we see the measure and manner of our justification.

It is in believing these simple but stupendous truths that we are justified, and knowing ourselves to be justified, we have peace with God. In him-

self the believer is nothing but a guilty sinner, wholly undone, and as such he stands still and sees the salvation of God. It is indeed GOD'S salvation. In His most loving will it originated, and to accomplish it He spared not His own Son. Can anyone receive these blessed tidings and not have peace with God? Impossible. So surely as effect follows cause, so peace with God follows the the belief of gospel truth.

Is all this clear to you, my dear young friend? Have you peace? Can you say that, as far as your sins and your salvation are concerned, you stand under a cloudless sky? Do you find in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ an answer to every disquieting question? If God is satisfied, what should you not be?

Let me now say a brief word on

#### THE SEALING WITH THE SPIRIT.

This great gift follows faith in the precious blood of Christ. In the day of the leper's cleansing the blood was first put on his ear, hand, and foot, and afterwards the oil. Now the oil was a symbol of the Holy Ghost. It is God who seals the believer with His Spirit according to Ephesians i. 13. He marks him as His own. Nor is this seal ever removed, for it is placed, so to speak, on the believer in view of the great day of coming redemption, when omnipotent power shall claim and possess all that has been bought by redeeming

## CAN I BE SURE I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE? 147

blood. (Eph. iv. 30.) But the gift of the Spirit is placed in different connections in the Scripture. The body of the believer is said to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Therefore is he to take care how he uses his body, seeing it is the dwelling-place of so great a Guest. Moreover it is the Holy Spirit that dwells within him, and for that reason he is to avoid all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil-speaking, for anything unholy must necessarily grieve the *Holy* Spirit. But we are touching a large subject, and it is possible that enough has been already said to furnish you with the help you asked for. If not, let us hear from you again.

## CAN I BE SURE I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

**D**ID you say that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ have eternal life?

Scripture says so (John iii. 36): "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

We will notice some things about eternal life. First, it comes to us in the way of righteousness. Grace is reigning "through righteousness unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans v. 21.) Secondly, eternal life is a free gift. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans vi. 23.)

God stands towards the sinner as a Giver. What does a giver require but a suited receiver?

## 148 CAN I BE SURE I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

And it is to those who are perishing that God gives eternal life. He has said, by His servant John, "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.) And this is said to give the believer a full, certain, present knowledge of the possession of life.

Paul, the chief of sinners, says, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Timothy i. 12); and he also asserts of real Christians that "we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.) God, who has given us eternal life, has written to tell us that we have it, and has sent the Holy Ghost to give us the happy consciousness of the things so freely given.

"But," it may be asked, "are there any means by which I may know that I have this blessed gift?"

The apostle John gives us a very sweet and simple test by which we may know that we have eternal life. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.) Do you really from your heart prefer the company of the people of God to that of others, simply because they are His people? I well remember the time when I would rather have been anywhere than in the company of those who made Christ their

## CAN I BE SURE I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE? 149

theme. Now, through God's grace, it is my joy to be with those who love Him? Is it yours? Paul, Peter, and John give it as a mark of a child of God. Loving the brethren will not save you; but John tells us that this is a sure sign indicating those who are saved. Peter says, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren." (1 Peter i. 22.) Paul also gives thanks to God: "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints." (Col. i. 3, 4.) We can quote only a few passages. Let the reader take a pencil and underline in his Bible all the texts in which the word "know" occurs; and, if honest, he can never utter such a sentiment as this: "I cannot tell whether I have eternal life, and I do not think there are any who can."

"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.)

H. N.

---

"FAIR the scene that lies before me,  
 Life eternal Jesus gives ;  
 While He waves His banner o'er me,  
 Peace and joy my soul receives :  
 Sure His promise !  
 I shall live because He lives."



## “THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST.”

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.”—2 THESS. iii. 5. (Margin.)

“The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”—REV. i. 9.

WHAT a beautiful prayer for the Thessalonian saints was that of the apostle, as recorded in 2 Thess. iii. 5! We must remember that persecutions and tribulations were at that time their portion (chap. i. 4), and the hope of the Lord’s coming had become dim in their souls. This, as we know from chapter ii., was the work of the enemy, who spared no pains (verse 2) to persuade them that the day of Christ was present, as verse 2 should read.

Now Paul, in writing to these same Thessalonians in his first epistle, had told them of the coming of the Lord into the air (chap. iv. 15–18) for His saints—an event which must necessarily precede the day of Christ, in order that they “also which sleep in Jesus” (chap. iv. 14) may come with Him, as all His saints will, when He takes the kingdom. (See Rev. xix.) Thus we see the object of the enemy has always been, since the Lord went away (Acts i. 9–11), to rob us of the hope of His return, just as his object was, in Genesis iii. 4–5, to make man believe that God

did not love him, and I need scarcely say it is his object still.

How blessedly then the prayer comes in for saints in trial—"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God"—and for saints whose hope is dim, "and into the patience of Christ."

The passage I have quoted from Rev. i. 9 makes it plain what is the patience of Christ. The kingdom is His, but He will not take it without His co-heirs (Rom. viii. 17; James ii. 5), and so He waits in patience till the Church is complete, and then He will come for His saints, and He and His saints will possess the kingdom. (Compare Daniel vii. 22, 27; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. iii. 21.) Now, to have our hearts directed into the patience of Christ we must necessarily be looking and waiting for what He is looking and waiting for, and this, as we have seen, is, first, the completion of His elect; secondly, His coming for them into the air; and, thirdly, the time when He will possess the kingdom.

It is all summed up in the sentence "the coming of the Lord" (James v. 7, 8), and my object in this paper is to show how this hope enters into everything connected with our daily life.

We will begin with Luke xix. 11-27, which brings out clearly how a certain nobleman (the Lord) has gone into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return.

Meanwhile, He has given a gift to each of His servants, and has said, "Occupy till I come."

Thus we find that all service for the Master is to go on till He come.

You may be called to preach the gospel, but remember He does not say, "Preach as long as people will listen," or "Preach as long as you get converts," or "Preach till old age comes," or "Preach till you die"; He says, "Till I come."

Or you may be called to labour with your hands that you may have to give to him that needeth (Eph. iv. 28), but here again it is, "Till I come."

Next, in John xxi. 20-22, we find the disciple that Jesus loved following. This is the first step in service. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me" (John xii. 26); in other words, to be servants of Christ, and to serve acceptably, we must first follow Him, or be His disciples. And remember "it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." (Matt. x. 25.) It is vain to talk of discipleship and yet seek, or retain, a higher position in this world, or in its favour, than the Master has. And all this, I take it, goes on "till He come." Thirdly, in 1 Corinthians iv. 1-5, the apostle speaks of man's judgment of his conduct. Personally he knew of nothing wrong (verse 4), but while that made him indifferent as to people's opinions, it did not justify him. He did not pretend to think that he was blameless; on

## "THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST."

153

the contrary, he waited for the time when the Lord should come to find out what He thought of his conduct. In other words, he took care of his conduct, and was content to wait until the Lord came to get his character vindicated. Fourthly, in 1 Corinthians xi. 23-26, we find we are to eat the bread and drink the wine of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, and that, in thus eating and drinking, we shew His death till He come. In plain language, the passage teaches that it is our privilege to remember the Lord in His death, and thus identify ourselves with Him in His rejection "till He come." It is not even from week to week, but "till He come."

Finally, in Revelation ii. 25, the Lord says to Thyatira, "That which ye have already hold fast till I come." How blessed! Truth learned from God is never out of date, it is always to be held fast, that is, to be lived by. (Compare James i. 22-25.) No time and no circumstances can ever weaken or alter the divine authority of the Word of God, or its applicability to our path and our needs. We have in it an unfailing guide and resource till He come, and then we shall no longer either walk or live by faith, but by sight.

Thus we find that when our hearts are directed into the patience of Christ:

(1) All our service goes on in view of His coming, and till He come.

(2) The lowly place of discipleship in associa-

tion with the rejected Jesus is ours, till He come.

(3) While careful of our conduct, we can bear the reproach and scorn of the world, and wait to be approved till He come.

(4) It is our happy lot to shew forth His death, and remember Him in the Supper of Communion, till He come.

(5) Every bit of truth, all that He has given us from His word, we are in nowise to surrender, but hold fast till He come.

One word more. To be in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ means that I refuse every and any place of power and authority in a world that has rejected my Lord, and has said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke xix. 14.) To accept such a place now, is to say in principle, as Babylon says in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 7.) What does a heart true to Christ care for authority and power in a place where He has none and where He has been, and is still refused? On the contrary, it is such that keep the word of His patience. (Rev. iii. 10.)

Reader, what do you know of the patience of Christ?

W. M.

## EXTRACT ON WORSHIP.

THE privilege of being able to render worship to God is granted to two or three gathered together in the name of Jesus. Disciples are so gathered when it is the power of His name, known amongst them as the common tie, which is recognised as the principle of their assembly. Jesus, in accordance with His promise, is there as the joy and strength of their common service.

The Lord said to Israel, "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exodus xx. 24.) Again, it is said (Deut. xii.) that they should offer their offerings in the place which He would choose to set His name there, which had its definitive accomplishment at Jerusalem. (1 Kings viii. 29.) But now God is known in the blessedness of His presence—where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus. There Jesus Himself has said He would be in the midst of them. Sweet encouragement for the feebleness of His people! If there were thousands of disciples gathered in one place, how great soever the encouragement given by such a work of the Spirit, the presence of Jesus Himself—the most precious of all things—is vouchsafed even to two or three of the least of those that are His, if it is truly in His name that they are met. Let it be only His name in which it is done. The fleshly pride, which loves to make much of a gift, and would claim lordship over God's heritage—human arrangement which would seek to avoid simple dependence upon God—the narrowness which would welcome upon the ground of peculiar views—none of these is the name of Christ. Those who unite in the name of Christ embrace, in heart and mind, all those who are His—all the members of His body. They embrace them in the principle upon which they are met, otherwise it would not be *in His name* that they were united; for one cannot exclude from the power of His name those that are His. His heart embraces them, and we are not united according

to His heart if, in principle, our assembly does not embrace them. Clearly His name does not embrace the world, nor sin, nor that which denies the truth which that name reveals.

The name of Jesus unites in one those that are His. He that gathers not with Him scatters abroad.

Christians are bound to maintain holiness and truth, and to make constant progress towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. To hinder this, and to seek to fashion souls according to the mould of particular views, tends towards the destruction of practical unity.

Nothing but spirituality, subject to the Word and regulated by grace—in a word, the guidance of the Spirit of God—can, in certain cases, discern between that which is a step forward and that which is the insisting upon some private view. For the spirit of the world, which is opposed to progress in divine things, and to that which presents more of Christ, will stamp with the name of “particular views” all that which tends to make our responsibility to Christ deeper and more felt; and a spirit of sectarian narrowness will treat as progress all that makes much of its own notions. Moreover, supposing an assembly of worshippers is truly founded upon the basis of the unity of the church of God—if the mass of the assembly is not in a state to bear that which would be a true step in advance it is useless to insist upon it; to do so would tend to division rather than to progress. Such was the case of the Corinthians. The apostle had to nourish them with milk; they were not able to bear stronger food.

On the contrary, when it is a return to a Judaizing spirit, which would compromise the gospel, the apostle refuses to stop. (Heb. v. 12, 14; vi. 1, 4.) The energetic wisdom of the Spirit of God is needed by the Church. It is not the intention of God that she should be able to do without it, or be exempt from dependence upon Him who gives it.

J. N. D.

I have said this much concerning things which are but accessory to my subject, because they refer to difficulties which are constantly occurring in the Christian's path. My remarks are applicable only to an assembly based upon the eternal foundation of the unity of the church of God. If that is compromised there is no ground for any union at all, according to God.

## PROFIT FROM BIBLE STUDY.

## SECOND PAPER.

“ I HAVE explained to you, gentlemen,” said a well-known Professor, addressing his class, “ the application of graphic statics to strains in ironwork ; and you may think that you understand the subject. But, let me tell you, you cannot, and never will understand it, until you take a roof-truss, or girder, and work out for yourself each strain in every member ; and having done that, you will know more about the application of graphic statics than I can tell you in many lectures.”

These words, though referring to a widely different subject, strikingly illustrate the importance of *experimental* knowledge of the Scriptures. We easily persuade ourselves that we know that which, in reality, we only know about ! What great principle of divine truth can we say we *know* until we have, indeed, made its acquaintance in a practical way ? Sin is a mere theological expression, until we are overwhelmed by its discovery in ourselves. Divine love we scarcely appreciate, or understand, until we find we are its object. The depths of Divine grace we can only measure by our own unworthiness, and then only in part.



And how can we know Divine sympathy and support in suffering, if we never suffer? Or priestly succour, apart from our own infirmity? How really does a man trust God for his daily bread, if his income is a thousand a year? And yet, in one way, a much wider sphere is open to us than our own circumstances offer. We may serve a sort of apprenticeship in the fellowship of another's suffering, or need; yes, and even in the confession of another's sin. And here there are no limits, except those our own littleness imposes. What deep exercise of heart; what searching of the Word; what communion with God we may know about a matter, which, after all, more nearly concerns another!

"But my circumstances are so much against me," one may say. I do not believe it. You may not know how to take advantage of them, but, were you near the Lord, you would not find them an obstacle, but an occasion, for the spiritual life. When did a circumstance hinder the Lord Jesus from glorifying God? Rather He turned everything to account, both good and evil, finding every condition an opportunity for gratifying the Father's heart, and thus *increasing* in God's favour.

We find study, prayer, service, and circumstances acting and inter-acting on each other, each necessitated and nourished by the rest. Study needing prayer for its intelligence, service

for its exercise, and circumstances for its occasion. Prayer, continually suggested by its three companions. Service, apart from study, without freshness; apart from prayer, powerless; apart from circumstances, impossible. We may call these our four class-books; but we need them all if we would master our subject.

A change in our circumstances, perhaps trying to us at the time, may be promotion in the school of God. And how differently we shall look back on each trial in our pathway if its memory is linked with a deeper appreciation of Scripture, or light upon some passage of the Word, until then little understood!

“They are beautiful photographs,” said someone the other day, “but they require *toning* before they will stand exposure to the light.” How like ourselves! The image of Christ, reflected through the Word on the sensitive soul of the believer, is indeed beautiful, but it needs “toning” in actual contact with the daily life, that it may become permanent—and this is the Father’s care.

The conviction grows upon the student of Scripture that Christ is the key to every truth. We understand nothing until we find its relation to Him. It is all too easy to have Christianity without Christ, the machinery without the motive power, and the reader may well pray for the light of His presence upon the written Word. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” and

there is life and love from the letter of the Word when we find it so.

Be very sure that Satan's object is to keep you from close company with the Lord Jesus. He will let you follow any object—bad, if you will; good, if you must—fill you with temperance, morality, yes, and sound doctrine also, if only he can keep you from your Saviour.

Have it, then, settled in your soul that Christ is the end, as well as the key, of Scripture. Look on your Bible as but the pathway to His company. Your profit from its study is not in proportion to your apprehension of truth, but in proportion to your knowledge of God.

The disciples' hearts burned within them while He talked with them by the way, and no wonder, for He showed them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. Their enlightened understanding perceived that every avenue of truth led up to Him.

"But," the reader may say, "were you not telling us that our circumstances will suggest our studies?" Certainly, and with reason, but I neither said, nor meant, that your study should end with yourself. The incidents of our experience may occasion our search of Scripture, but will not limit it. Beginning from the particular condition in which we are found, we are led on to a general apprehension of God's purposes, and to acquaintance with Himself.

An electrician will tell you that there must be contact at both ends before the electric current can flow through a wire, and so with Divine truth. We must find that it not only concerns God, but that it touches us also, and the personal stake in it brings it home to us.

The method of study suggested in these papers should not entirely displace consecutive reading of the Word. It rather takes for granted that the Bible has already been read through several times, and that its study now requires more a special than a general character. S. E. MCN.

---

“THE Bible is the writing of the living God. Each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it, dropped from the everlasting lips; each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Albeit that Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen. God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp, and let sweet psalms of melody drop from his fingers; but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp. Solomon sang canticles of love, and gave forth words of consummate wisdom; but God directed his lips and made the preacher eloquent. Everywhere I find God speaking—it is God’s voice, not man’s—the words are God’s words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty. This Bible is God’s Bible, and when I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, ‘I am the book of God! Man, read me! I am God’s writing; study my page, for I was penned by God. Love me, for He is my Author, and you will see Him visible and manifest everywhere.’”—*Extracted.*

## HINTS FOR YOUNG PREACHERS.

WITH regard to study and preparation for preaching, I am so ineffective a preacher myself, that to give advice to others seems out of place. I could not speak of any definite plans or lines on which I work; but one or two things suggest themselves that you can think over.

1. *Personal acceptance.* (Psalm lxvi. 16.) We must be in the sense of what grace has done for us, to be duly qualified to speak of that grace to others. I regard it as a fixed principle never to speak of anything beyond that which my faith has grasped, in measure at least. (2 Cor. iv. 13.) Forgiveness of sins, deliverance from sin, our being in Christ as to our standing, and in the Spirit as to our new character as Christians before God; in these we ought to be thoroughly versed; depend upon it our converts will never be clear if *we* are not clear ourselves.

2. *Personal holiness.* (Psalm li. 12-14.) This is most essential. What though we *know* truth if we do not practise it? The absolute renunciation of our own will, the unhesitating abandonment of everything unsuited to God and His word, a clean separation *to Christ*, these are always necessary for powerful service. What power have WE

apart from the Spirit of God? And if *He* be grieved and hindered, for what results can we hope? Moreover, I notice that Jacob's lambs took their colour from the rods put before the eyes of the sheep in the hour of their conception. (Genesis xxxi.) Too often is the unsatisfactory history of converts accounted for, by our own condition at the time they received spiritual being. They get an impress from us.

3. *Personal growth.* (Joshua i. 8.) It would be a very solemn thing to work merely for others, while neglecting our own souls. Whilst we should, I suppose, ever be simple in our ministry as far as possible, we should ever be apprehending more of God's mind for ourselves. We cannot neglect any part of it without damage, and especially should we know His mind for the present dispensation, and for the *fag end* of it too! To serve acceptably, we must be in God's mind for the moment; otherwise we become content with the mere conversion of sinners, without regard to their subsequent career.

Thus far as to generalities, but I suppose you want a few practical hints also. Again, I must say, that a more efficient soul-winner could better tell you; still take the following ones:

1. *Keep your heart open.* Cultivate love for souls. Dwell much on God's love, which gave up everything for sinners to be saved and blessed according to His purpose. You will soon learn

## 164      HINTS FOR YOUNG PREACHERS.

to give up leisure time, and *your* best, to be in line with His heart. Think of Jesus and His sufferings to save them, and you will learn to suffer hardships and fatigue to win souls for Him. Think of their past history, their present need, and the awful future of the unbelieving; I am sure these things should move us more, *as well as* the fact of God's *love* and *grace*. Think how Jesus, knowing though He did all God's purposes, yet wept unfeignedly when sinners rejected His testimony. And if you think of them, you will pray for them; and we learn to love those for whom we pray.

2. *Keep your eyes open.* Do not be afraid to illustrate your addresses from Nature, or Nature's objects. Nor hesitate to use in moderation instances of conversion, which you are prepared to substantiate. I am conscious of great lack in that matter myself. Despite the silly objection of some, we cannot improve on the Master's way of doing service, and who can read the gospels without remarking that He illustrated His addresses from the common objects of every-day life? He employed facts from natural history, episodes in domestic life, transactions between masters and servants, and even occurrences in the political world (kings and subjects) along with providential circumstances, such as accidents, &c., to give point to His words. Even the very *weather* served Him again and again.

3. *Keep your note-book open.* Some spend more time than others in this matter. For myself, I just jot down leading thoughts. In your private readings or meditations you will often pick up useful material. Use a note-book for yourself, as well as for your work. Often a train of thought will occur to you in a chapter of a book of the Bible; *jot it down* and pass on. Sometimes an illustration of a truth will flash into your mind—*jot it down*. Now and then a point or two for a gospel address will take shape as you watch and pray—*jot them down*. Or you may hear a pithy remark, or a stirring subject, from the lips of some other saint seeking to serve the Lord—*jot it down*. Do not scruple to make a note of it, nor, if led of the Lord, to preach from it yourself with your own words and your own illustrations. As your note-books multiply, copy any worthy items into your study Bible. It is exceedingly refreshing sometimes to go over these old memoranda, recalling what God has shown us in bygone times.

4. *Keep your purse open.* It is wonderful what an interest we take in the Lord's work, and that part of it He has set us in, when it costs us something. The rich man may perhaps pay £5 a night for a big hall to preach in. You can perhaps only afford a shilling a week for a cottage for your work. *He* may send books to all parts of the world in the Master's service. It is as



much as some can do to scrape together a few pence now and then for tracts. *He* may give his houses rent free to the needy, and clothe with warm covering the naked, and frequently feed the hungry; with others it is a severe push to give half-a-crown in the Master's name to some deserving soul. But whether the more, or the less, there is great sweetness and profit in doing that which costs us something, and God loves a cheerful giver. What grace it is that makes us givers in a world like this! And for myself I can say this, that ever since I gave my purse-strings into the hands of the Lord (though once or twice He has tried faith), *He has never let me see the bottom of it yet!* Go thou and do likewise.

We have stiff work here; but the ploughshare seems to furrow pretty well, and we are putting the seed in. Perhaps *we*, perhaps *others*, may reap; but as all the wheat is to go into the Master's garner, it makes little difference *which*. W. W.

*South Africa.*

---

“HE who does not earnestly pray over his work must surely be a vain and conceited man. He acts as if he thought himself sufficient for himself, and therefore needed not to appeal to God. Yet what a baseless pride to conceive that our preaching can ever be in itself so powerful that it can turn men from their sins, and bring them to God without the working of the Holy Ghost! The preacher who neglects to pray much must be very careless about his ministry. He cannot have computed the value of a soul, or estimated the meaning of eternity.”

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. H. M.—Romans vii. The Epistle to the Galatians shows that it is possible for those who have received the gospel and the gift of the Holy Spirit to become entangled in the meshes of the law, and thus to fall from grace. The Galatians were beguiled by men who preached circumcision, and the keeping of the law of Moses, as essential to salvation. (Acts xv.) But in some ways we are more privileged than they, inasmuch as we have the whole canon of Scripture in our hands, and therefore the grace of God should be more fully known, and we ourselves preserved from every kind of teaching that would lead us to fall away from it. We are, therefore, inclined to think that it is a rare thing now for anyone, after having been established in all the gracious liberty of Romans viii., to wholly relapse into the bondage described in Romans vii. It might be possible, but the case, we believe, is by no means common.

H. R. R.—1 Thess. iv. 13-18. We are apt to credit the saints of early days with a fuller measure of intelligence in Christian truth than facts would justify. These Thessalonian saints had not been long converted; they did not possess the written ministry of the apostles as we do, and what they knew about the Lord's return had been learnt from the teaching of the apostle Paul during his brief stay among them. Now we know how much of that

which is only heard soon passes away, and is forgotten. We need not wonder, then, that they needed definite instructions as to how those of their brethren who had fallen asleep should have their part in Christ's kingdom and public glory. This the apostle unfolds in the verses under our eye. First, there is the distinct assurance that those who "sleep in Jesus," or who have "fallen asleep through Jesus," God will bring with Jesus in the day of His glorious manifestation. How this shall be accomplished he then proceeds to show, by unfolding that which will take place, both in respect of the dead in Christ and of the living saints, *before* this glorious display. First, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven into the air; with an assembling shout, with Archangel's voice, and with trump of God shall He descend. Secondly, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Thirdly, we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus shall all of us always be with the Lord, and, therefore, with Him in that day when His kingdom shall be established in power and great glory. Such seems to us the simple teaching of the passage.

W. P.—The questions you ask require a much more extended answer than we could give them in the brief space of our Correspondence column. They are exhaustively dealt with in a book, entitled *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*. Money spent in buying that book is money well spent. It can be had at the office of this magazine, or ordered through any bookseller.

## PROGRESS.

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.”—PSALM xxvii. 4.

**S**AVED! Yes, it is indeed a great thing to be saved. No one will ever speak lightly of it who has seen in the smallest measure what it is to be *lost*. If we realise the meaning of that awful word in relation to the soul, we shall feel inexpressibly grateful to God that He has saved us, and has assured us of it, so that in His salvation we can rejoice all the day long.

But, then, let us bear in mind that the salvation of the soul is only the beginning of our spiritual life. If we rest content with that, and neither desire nor seek after anything more, we shall be but stunted trees in the garden of our Lord. A few green leaves and some sickly specks of blossom may show that the tree still lives, but so unlike what a tree of the Lord's planting should be—full of vigorous life, spreading out its branches on every side, and bearing in due season its rich ripe fruit.

Thank God, it will not be so if David's prayer be ours. Only it must be uttered by sincere lips,

XII.

and spring from a heart set on getting its answer. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Proverbs xiii. 4.)

This prayer, although divided into three parts, is but one. It is like a rope of three strands, each strand is separate, but when twisted together the three strands make but one rope. We will examine these parts presently, but observe, first of all, the numerical adjective with which the verse begins.

"*One* thing have I desired"—not many, but *one*. Oh, the blessing of an undivided heart! Paul had it when he said that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. *He* was a man of one idea. Many a heart is torn with numberless distractions. It wearies itself in the vain attempt to serve two masters, to blend things which never will blend—in short, to make the best of both worlds. When this is the case there is no fixedness of purpose, no singleness of eye, no pursuing with holy diligence those things which are after God. No wonder there is no growth, and where there is no growth there is barrenness and stagnation. Instead of the life being like a river, fresh and flowing, it resembles stagnant waters, over which Death spreads his dark wing and holds his undisputed sway.

"*One* thing have I *desired of the Lord.*"

Emphasize the four words we have underlined. When anything is earnestly desired, when the longing after it burns like a fire within our bones, we soon begin to pray about it; that is, if the object of our desire be right. It is happy indeed when our most earnest prayers are for progress in divine things, when the heart yearns for an enlarged understanding of those spiritual blessings with which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us. The two wonderful prayers of Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians are of this order. (Chapters i. 16-23, iii. 14-21.) Do you pray after the same fashion? "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." So said the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Solomon, and those words hold good in all days. (Proverbs ii.)

The divisions of this prayer are these—

1. "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."
2. "To behold the beauty of the Lord."
3. "To inquire in His temple."

Reading it in a Christian light, "the house of the Lord" speaks of *home*. Where is our home? Is it beneath or above the clouds? Surely, here on earth, the heart that loves Christ seeks no home.

“ We are but strangers here, we do not crave  
 A home on earth, which gave Thee but a grave ;  
 Thy cross has severed ties which bound us here,  
 Thyself our treasure in a brighter sphere.”

Our home, then, is there, where Christ is gone. And in that home-circle, “What standing,” we may ask, “have we”? Blessed be God, we are not servants, but sons; the children’s place is ours. We are one with Christ. Let us recall His wondrous words to Mary, “Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” (John xx. 17.) Mark the love that hastened to tell us of this new, this blessed place, which He had won for us at so great a cost. And now that He is gone up on high, heaven is open to us—not merely will be open when the Lord comes to fetch us, but is open now, so that in spirit we may dwell there, taste its joys, and grow in the knowledge of the Father’s love. If, then, the house of the Lord, as David knew it, was the place where he desired to dwell all the days of his life, much more should we desire it, for whatever the measure of David’s knowledge, his heart, it is certain, knew nothing of the blessedness of *the Father’s* name and love. The hour had not come in David’s day for the only-begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father, to manifest *the Father’s* name to men. But to us that name has been declared with all the love attaching to it, so that

the house of the Lord is now known as the family mansion—the place where the children's birth-right entitles them to be. Are *you* dwelling in the house of the Lord? Is it the present home of your heart? Do you live there as a dear child?

2. "*To behold the beauty of the Lord.*" When the daughters of Jerusalem demanded of the Bride in what respect her Beloved differed from another, she answered their inquiry by describing Him in the most glowing terms. All figures and forms of speech were laid under tribute, so that she might set His beauties forth—the "chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." This was her Beloved, and this was her Friend. (Solomon's Song, v. 9-16.) Would we not wish to speak thus rapturously of our Beloved, for her Beloved is ours? Oh, how feeble we are when we begin to speak of Him! We can discourse upon His finished work, His mighty sacrifice, the virtues of His blood, and a thousand things beside. We can expound doctrines—clearly, scripturally, helpfully—and make definitions with marvellous accuracy, but all this is not *Himself*, and the heart knows it well. It is only as we are consciously near Christ, abiding in His company, keeping ourselves in His love, that we learn a little of what He is, and are thus made able to speak of Him. Surely we should earnestly desire to behold His beauty. Then will



the heart ardently exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) Let us pray for this. Let us pray for it with deep longings, and He who satisfies the desire of every living thing will hear and answer.

3. "*To inquire in His temple.*" This suggests the thought of guidance, of seeking to know the mind of God. "O Lord, I know that the way of a man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah x. 23.) Easy enough to read those words, but do we indeed believe them? "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Yet, how often do we trust it, instead of inquiring in His temple! Now, God has promised to guide us with His counsel, only it must be sought. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." (James i. 5, 6.) Besides, in the sanctuary-light, things appear so different from what they seem when viewed in the glare and glamour of earth. Looked at from below we see them through a deceitful medium, and our judgment is entirely at fault. In the psalm from which we have just quoted (lxxiii.) we find this strikingly illustrated. The prosperity of the ungodly, their growing

wealth, their having more than heart could wish, was a puzzling and painful mystery until the psalmist went into the sanctuary of God, until he inquired in His temple. Then he understood their end. Then he saw that their happiness was only a bubble, the gay, but mad, prelude to a tragedy full of desolation and terror. It is good to get God's thoughts of things, to see that the weights and measures of heaven are *not* the same as those used in the markets of earth. In proportion as we do so, our own notions are abandoned, and in lowliness of mind we humbly and adoringly say, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

What say you, dear reader, to this prayer of David's? Will you not from this time make it your own? If, when read in the light of Christian truth, it seems to mark out a path too high, too unworldly, too heavenly, for you ever to hope to reach, remember there is no other for the Christian if he would walk worthy of God. Moreover, the Holy Spirit given unto us will assuredly lead into it if our hearts are but willing, and if we make it a subject of prayer and earnest desire. In this connection the words of our Lord are most certainly true, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

## ENQUIRING SAINTS.

I WAS asked the other day whether I had had any recent meeting for enquirers. I replied that I had not—that there were few enquiring sinners in the congregation; and I judged the reason to be that there were few enquiring *saints*.

“Enquiring saints!” That is a *new* phrase! We always supposed that *enquiring* belonged exclusively to sinners. But it is not so. Do we not read in Ezekiel xxxvi. 37, “Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them”? By *the house of Israel*; that is, by His people. You see that God expects His people to enquire. It is true that saints do not make the same enquiry that sinners do. The latter ask what they must do to be saved, whereas the enquiry of Christians is, “Wilt Thou not revive us again?”

It is a blessed state of things when the people of God are enquiring. It is good for themselves, and it has a most benign influence on others. When the people of God enquire, presently the impenitent begin to enquire. That question, “Wilt Thou not revive us?” is soon followed by the other, “What must I do to be saved?” Yes; when saints become anxious, it is not long ere sinners become anxious. The enquiry of three

thousand on the day of Pentecost—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" was preceded by the enquiry of the one hundred and twenty, who all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. Generally, I suppose, that is the *order*. First, saints enquire, and *then* sinners, and whenever, in any congregation religion does not flourish, one principal reason of it is that the saints are not enquiring. *They* do not attend their enquiry-meeting appointed for them. The saints' enquiry-meeting is the prayer-meeting. In that Christians meet together to enquire of the Lord "to do it for them." Now when this meeting is crowded and interesting—when the enquiry among Christians is general, and earnest, and importunate—the sinners' enquiry-meeting usually becomes crowded and interesting. Oh, that I could make my voice to be heard on this subject by all the dear people of God in the land! I would say, "You wonder and lament that sinners do not enquire; but are *you* enquiring? You wonder that they do not feel; but do *you* feel? Can you expect a heart of stone to feel when a heart of flesh does not? You are surprised that sinners can sleep. It is because you sleep alongside of them. Do you but awake and bestir yourselves, and look up and cry to God, and you will see how soon they will begin to be aroused, and to look about them, and to ask the meaning of your solicitude." Oh, that the saints would but enquire!

SELECTED.

“IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.”

ON the threshold of life's journey what a world of possibility presents itself, full of promise and expectation! One life—one only! There will be no coming back to correct mistakes; no tearing out the blotted pages. Each day is registered as it is lived, in the book of remembrance.

As the young Christian looks out over the untrodden future he sees three guides, each promising safe conduct and happiness. The world, with the cup of pleasure in its hand, would introduce him to all that society can offer. The flesh is ready to assure him that, with its aid, even company is not necessary to gratification. The devil will put both at his disposal, if he will honour him, by ignoring his Creator, now, in the days of his youth.

May *you*, my Reader, never face the perils of life's pilgrimage with these blind guides; nor yet alone, trusting, like the fool, to your own heart. One there is, who would lead you in ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. From the resurrection side of the grave He said to a disciple “FOLLOW THOU ME.” To-day He is saying the same to you, in the persuasive tones of a love which takes no refusal.

“IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.” 179

“Hold Thou my hand ! and closer, closer draw me  
 To Thy dear self—my hope, my joy, my all ;  
 Hold Thou my hand, lest haply I should wander ;  
 And missing Thee, my trembling feet should fall.”

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“Young people must have their fling” I am told, but on merely traditional authority, and I can fancy the wish is father to the thought; unless, indeed, it be a younger child of the father of lies. The apostle Paul wrote two letters to one who certainly was not old, who from childhood had known the Scriptures—like most of my readers, and whose heart was bright with unfeigned faith; but I read nothing in his counsel to Timothy about “having his fling.” Manly and wise letters they are, nevertheless, and full of tenderness, as the veteran warrior arms the younger one for the good fight of faith.

But if, indeed, you *must* have your fling, take care what it is you fling into eternity, whence you can never recall it. Not your conscience, or your character, as you value your soul’s welfare. Not one priceless hour thrown heedlessly away, for the devil to catch and stain with sin, and taunt you with afterwards, to your continual sorrow. Not energy of mind or body, for your Redeemer bought the entire stock on Calvary’s cross; paid the full price in unmeasured anguish, writing the receipt in His life’s blood, and sealing you, by the Spirit, as His very own, until the day of redemption.

## 180 "IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

Am I romancing? Is this a freak of fancy? You know it is solid fact, as true and stable as God's throne, and every hour you filch from His service is a cool and deliberate robbery, and an outrage on the rights of God. You may say this is strong language, and I admit it; but great interests are at stake, and the success or failure of a life is in the balance.

Let us squarely face the truth. Ye are *not* your own, ye are bought with a price. This solves a hundred perplexities, and makes the pathway a very plain, and a very bright one. The doubtful friendship, the worldly association, the un-Christlike habit, will be quietly laid down, in Another's strength, because not pleasing to the One whose rights of ownership are no longer disputed.

\* \* \* \* \*

"But must we renounce all pleasures, and conclude that the Spirit is grieved when we enjoy ourselves?" some may enquire. How many young Christians have been tripped up by these specious questions! It is not the feeling of pleasure which is condemned by the Word, but the pursuit of pleasure. Enjoyment is wrong when it is objective, but not when it is incidental. Do you understand that? And as I look at men of the world, too often irritable and ill at ease, I think that "I have set MYSELF always before me" is a very unsatisfactory motto for an immortal soul.

“IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.” 181

Our great Example “pleased not Himself”; and pleasure-seeking is essentially selfish.

But those Elims in the wilderness, those joys we can accept from a Father’s hand, and thank Him for, should be received with gratitude; yet even then with care lest the gift should displace the Giver.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

And now I must remind you that the Captain of our Salvation expects *unqualified obedience*, even from the youngest recruit. It is quite a mistake to assume that His discipline is lax with young soldiers. Why, how often we find them put on half rations, just because they assumed that, being young, they had licence to disobey! So the Word seems dry and empty, and spiritual joys fail, while they learn by sad experience that God is not mocked; no, not even by the youngest.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“It will be time enough if I begin to walk worthy of my calling when I am older,” one may say, and though no doubt the intention is sincere, the thought is a mischievous one. Do you propose to live a Christian youth when you are sixty? Will your bright example be a power for good amongst your schoolfellows when you retire from business?

There is an advertisement in most English post-offices to the effect that boys between cer-



## 182 "IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

tain ages are wanted for the Queen's service in the navy. The limits of age are strictly defined, and, once passed, the thought of that service can no longer be entertained. Other opportunities there may be, but that one never again.

Now if you saw it printed in black and white that the King of glory wants living examples of the Christian graces in the schoolroom, and playground, and workshop, would you dare leave that service to the indefinite future?

"Be THOU an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Timothy iv. 12.)

\* \* \* \* \*

One recognition has for long had peculiar weight with the writer—that the Lord Jesus, in every stage of His life down here, was altogether pleasing to His Father. In childhood, boyhood, youth, as well as in manhood, He was the object of heaven's delight; and that too, not in cloistered convent or lonely hermitage, but in this busy every-day world, surrounded by the young life of Nazareth, yet bearing Himself in it all with that grace of godliness, which alone can be near temptation without being defiled.

But His life was taken from the earth. And withal was God so well pleased that He proposed to continue that pleasure down here in the lives of His redeemed ones. No longer here in person,

"IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH." 183

Christ would be seen in those for whom He had sorrowed, and suffered, and died. His legacy to the children of His love, His one dying request was: "Take My name, take My meekness and gentleness, My character, and shew it in the world. Live it over again as I lived it." Let them read the living epistle—*Christ revealed* in His own.\*

But who shall render again to God, in some measure the joy He found in the youth of Jesus, with its perfect subjection, and its care for the Father's interests? Not Peter "the elder," or Paul "the aged," but some Timothy—some young reader of these lines, who as yet hardly values the privilege that angels might envy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even in *war* youth is treated with some consideration. "Wherefore should I smite thee to the ground?" said Abner to young Asahel, "how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?" But the enemy of souls has no pity. He takes advantage of ignorance and weakness, and entraps the heedless unawares. It is well we are not ignorant of his devices, but how can we express our indignation at those who thus serve him? For there are many who take diabolic pleasure in leading astray the inexperienced, and never rest content while innocence treads the path of virtue. Have they no heart to feel for a young life, full of bright hopes and

\* 2 Cor. iii. 3 ; Phil. ii. 5 ; 1 Peter ii. 21.

## 184 "IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

promise, and still a stranger to the "depths of Satan"; and must they drag it from its eminence, until, sullied by sin, and knowing with a knowledge of which ignorance is bliss, they have made another such a one as themselves?

\* \* \* \* \*

One of Satan's favourite weapons against the young convert is ridicule.

What! To be laughed at?

Oh, terrible affliction!

Why, were you not warned of that before you entered the service? True, your Saviour was jeered at, mocked, and derided for your sake, and He never flinched at the world's cruel scorning; but to so suffer for Him—that is quite another thing.

Oh, let us be ashamed of our shame, but never of our Saviour! Own Him, crown Him, where the world denies Him! Look the whole world in the face, and witness a good confession! None of the cowardice which blushes in silence when Christians are derided, or Christ dishonoured. None of that convenient forgetfulness, which never gives thanks before meat in the city restaurant, or at the employer's dinner table.

But perhaps you think your thanks by a private process, not visible to the naked eye, fearing to bring ridicule on divine things. Not always is discretion the better part of valour. Two young men sat down to supper at a West End café:—

"One moment."—The flow of talk was stayed,

"IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH." 185

and one head bowed in gratitude to Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

"Well, I confess I have few convictions myself, but I must say that I respect a man who acts up to his," was the first remark that broke the silence. And thus the conversation turned to the great central theme, beside which all others are trifling.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Some years ago I read a book called, *A Dying Man's Regrets*, being conversations of the celebrated French pastor, Adolphe Monod, with the students who watched beside his death-bed. How he spoke of prayer, and scripture study, and service! He looked back on life's neglected opportunities with a sad and suggestive retrospect. Let us face the present from the threshold of the grave, and ask, "As I leave this scene, to return no more, how shall I think of the way I am now spending my time?"

Robert Annan wrote ETERNITY on his doorstep, after God had written it on his heart, and into seven short years he crowded a lifetime of Christian endeavour.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The present is a *trifling* generation. A hunger for the comic is a sign of the times. Is my reader going with the crowd? The humourist is sought after by those we least respect, but he is at a discount in time of trial, and beside the death-bed he is like a fish out of water. Rather

## 186 "IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

let us appreciate those moral excellences which, though not brilliant, will wear well. For some years I have not thought it worth while to contract a friendship which must end with death. Will any of your friendships see no resurrection?

\* \* \* \* \*

This is an age of increased facilities, and reduced costs. We run where our fathers walked. The aim of modern invention is to make everything easy, and to give the largest returns for the smallest outlay. All this unfits us for the deep spiritual exercises still met with in the path of faith. Modern thought has yet to discover a short cut to piety. Young Good-Enough lounges through a chapter of the Bible in five minutes, and thinks there is little in it, since he gets nothing out. Not so, my friend; God does not make Himself cheap like that. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Prov. xiii. 4.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Some there are who would live in a fool's paradise, ignoring the consequence of sin. But there is sorrow and wrong on every hand, and would they do nothing to heal the one, and resist the other? Of One it could be said:

"Thou didst *attract* the wretched and the weak;  
Thy joy, the wanderers, and the lost, to seek."

And we may follow in His steps.

“IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.” 187

One characteristic of the Christian is that he is willing to know the whole truth, when the man of the world would often try to forget it. Speak to the one of his soul, his sins, or his future, and he will respond frankly and sincerely; while the other is offended by the reference, as if it would awaken a conscience he is rocking to sleep. To the former, sorrow, suffering, and death are not mysteries, but means to effectuate God's purposes; but to the latter they are an aggravation or a catastrophe.

\* \* \* \* \*

The writer has noticed that when those who well know the narrow pathway of separation to the Lord refuse to enter upon it, they seem, in a special way, the objects of divine displeasure. Choosing the broad road of worldly association, the happiness for which conscience has been sacrificed seems denied them, and in trial they lack the sustaining grace of God. To know the Lord's will, and do it not, is a serious responsibility. One who has felt the chastening of the Lord will not lightly court it a second time. Dear young reader, will *you* be one of the “King's Own”? The path of faithfulness may be a narrow one, but it is not a solitary way—there is room for two where Enoch walked with God. Don't bargain for happiness here and heaven hereafter on the easiest terms, but lay your one life at your Saviour's feet, without making any conditions.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 188 "IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

"Do you take that in?" said a dear old Christian friend\* to me, after explaining some passage of Scripture.

"Yes, I think so," I answered.

"Well then, live it out!" said he, with a bright smile of encouragement, and a warm clasp of the hand.

A reader of average intelligence will "take in" the drift of this paper, but it will require something beyond an effort of the understanding to put it into practice—a spirit, diffident of its own powers, but confident of divine enabling; and, above all, a heart directed into the love of God. When the reality of love dawns upon the soul, it is like the sunrise of eternal day, and turns "the shadow of death into the morning."

Do you think of God's love as a doctrine, or as a fact? Put it to yourself this way: There is One, on heaven's throne, who really *loves* me. More than pity: more than compassion;—an intense, eternal *love!* Are you loved by many here? Are you even understood by most? Your Saviour both loves and understands you altogether.

Does this not awaken a response in your own affections?

"Yet not only in remembrance  
Do we watch that stream of love—  
Still a mighty torrent flowing  
From the throne of God above.

\* C. H. M.

## MARKS OF TRUE PRAYER.

189

“Still a treasure all uncounted—  
 Still a story half untold—  
 Unexhausted, and unfathomed—  
 Fresh as in the days of old.”

“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.” (Phil. i. 20.) S. E. MCN.

*Lisbon.*

---

## MARKS OF TRUE PRAYER.

TRUE prayer is the expression of the soul's need, from the moment that it first enters upon the knowledge of God. “Behold, he prayeth,” is a distinct sign of a new born soul. (Acts ix. 11.) Of saying prayers both in Christendom, and outside of it, there is no end, but prayer is a communication of our souls with God. Once we begin to answer to the call of God we find our need of Him and His aid. We realize at once that the world around us is out of course and opposed alike to God and His people, and that we have two great enemies, Satan and our own treacherous hearts. Instinctively we turn to God. The Spirit of God unerringly leads all believers to the same source, God Himself, of whom we are born. We enter on the pathway of faith, and prayer is our great stay.

Now there are many important truths connected



with prayer in the scriptures. We desire to call our readers' attention to four of them; viz., dependence, perseverance, instance, and faith.

Such is our ignorance and waywardness, that we can do nothing right, apart from divine aid. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) Hence we need *dependence*. Prayers learned by heart, formal petitions, and prayers out of a book, prevail on all hands; but it is quite another thing to realize in our souls the Divine presence, to have the consciousness that His ear is listening to our feeblest breathings, and in dependence on the Spirit to pour out the desires of our hearts, prompted by Him, according to the mind and will of God. What a real thing prayer becomes in such case; what a blessed privilege! There, in His presence, one's spirit breathes another atmosphere than that which surrounds us in this poor world. There we can enjoy the calm and peace which are the fruit of having to do with Him who knows us perfectly, who delights in our company, whose heart finds joy in His people, and who loves to be enquired of by them. And He is ever ready to

administer that aid which we need, and to answer our petitions for ourselves and others. How needful, therefore, that we should realize our *dependence*, that our prayers and supplications may be in agreement with His blessed will!

Further, it is of the deepest moment *to persevere* in prayer. The men of this world are keenly alive to the importance of perseverance. Idleness, and neglect, and indifference bear their own sad fruit. Many young believers have been characterized by persevering prayer at the commencement of their Christian course, who, after a while, have grown cold and neglectful, and almost ceased to bow the heart and knee in prayer before God, or at most continue to do so in a mere formal way. How can such expect to prosper in soul, and to see blessing bestowed through them upon others? One of the surest signs of decline in spirituality is the neglect of persevering prayer. It is possible to keep up the outward form in private, in the family circle, and in the public prayer meeting, and for the heart to be as cold as a stone, and the prayer on the lips a mere mechanical utterance. Oh for more persevering prayer, in the power of the Holy Ghost!—more real waiting upon God in the growing sense that we cannot do without Him! daily, hourly clinging to Himself, and breathing out our heart's cry in His blessed ear. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to “pray *without ceasing*.” (1 Thess. v. 17.)

We read of the early disciples, that *prayer* was one of four things they continued stedfastly [or persevered] in. (Acts ii. 42.) And what was the effect? Fear upon every soul, wonders and signs wrought by the apostles, unity, love, gladness, praise, favour with all the people, and souls added. (Acts ii. 43–47.) What a blessed example for us! May our hearts be stirred thereby to the same stedfast perseverance.

Another quality which should characterize prayer is *instance*. The apostle writing to the saints in Rome, says, “Continuing *instant* in prayer.” A child, who really felt its need of anything, would not be satisfied with presenting that need to its parent in a mere formal way, and leaving it. No, if his heart were set on it, he would be instant in his petition, until he attained his desire. Now many things are laid upon the heart of the child of God, when he is walking with Him. Realizing our weakness, and desiring the glory of God, and our own and others spiritual welfare, we shall pray as if we meant what we say. We shall wait upon Him both with perseverance and *instance*, and our hearts will not be satisfied until we obtain our desires. The Lord Himself encourages us to this instance in Luke xi. 8, using the illustration of a man in this world giving bread to his friend because of his importunity. How much more will our Father give us according to our importunate desire!

And He so blessedly adds, "Ask, and it *shall* be given you; seek, and ye *shall* find; knock, and it *shall* be opened unto you. For *every one* that *asketh* *receiveth*; and he that *seeketh* *findeth*; and to him that *knocketh* it *shall be opened*." (Luke xi. 9, 10.) What could be a greater encouragement to us to instant prayer than the gracious principle here taught. And again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, *that your joy may be full*." (John xvi. 23, 24.)

Lastly, the all important adjunct of all our prayers and supplications should be *faith*. Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. xi. 6.) He has given us a whole and a long chapter on this subject in His word, which shews its importance (Heb. xi.), as well as numerous instances of faith and prayer throughout. Faith is a wonderful principle, and should characterize our whole Christian life. "We walk by *faith*, not by sight." (2 Cor. v. 7.) Hence its immense value in connection with prayer. Alas, how often our prayers remain unanswered, and why? Because we had *no faith*. What is the use of petitioning for a thousand and one things, and not expecting an answer? What value is there in prayer, when our souls are filled with doubt? What is the good of seeking wisdom and direction, when all the while we are plotting and scheming ourselves? Hence the

powerful words of the Holy Ghost through the apostle James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him *ask in faith, nothing wavering*. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. *For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.*" (James i. 5-7.) But if we walk with God, and pour out our petitions in His presence in the power of His Spirit, and in simple child-like faith, what shall we not receive in His own good time and way? Passage after passage encourages us on this ground. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." (1 John iii. 21.) "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if *we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.*" (1 John v. 14, 15.) And again, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing, ye shall receive.*" (Matt. xxi. 22.)

Now one might cite many other passages confirming the same blessed truth, the same blessed promises, but the above will suffice. Beloved brethren, we have to do with God, our Father. All the weakness and failure is on our side; the coldness, and neglect, and sin, are with us, God wants us to be in earnest, and to wait on Him in

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 195

dependence, and with perseverance, instance, and faith. He is faithful, and will prove His faithfulness. We have not, because we ask not. We receive not, because we ask amiss. But no good thing will He withhold when we pray according to His will and in confiding faith.

Much may be added on this momentous subject, for the scripture is full of passages which bear upon it, but if our hearts are stirred up through these feeble lines, God will be glorified, and we shall be more than amply repaid. E. H. C.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B——Y, BARBADOS.—(James v. 16.)—The exhortation that we should confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another, supposes there are faults to be confessed—*faults that affect others*. What is here enjoined is the opposite of self-justification and persistent pride. It is sorrowful to see these in anybody, and particularly so in a Christian. If we have committed faults, and, alas! who may not? let us have grace to confess them, not to God only, but to any who may be concerned. And let us pray one for another. When near God pride and self-justification have no place. Oh, how many existing difficulties, that may result in life-long sorrow to ourselves and others would vanish, were we only willing to act in the spirit of this precious text!

T. A. G. (Mark xvi. 16.)—This great commission entrusted to the disciples was by no means confined to the Jewish kingdom. The very terms of it forbid

the thought, for the gospel was to be preached *to every creature*, and that certainly goes far beyond the kingdom of Israel, either then or in days yet to come. It is a question of salvation or condemnation. If a man believed the gospel and was baptized he would be saved, if not, he would be condemned. Should anyone, convinced of the truth, nevertheless refuse to associate himself with the disciples, and to confess the Lord, so much the worse for him, his condemnation would be greater. It is for this reason that the Lord said, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved," at least, so we understand it.

C.G.F.—There can be no doubt that when the Lord Jesus assured the woman in the Pharisee's house that her sins were forgiven, and bade her go in peace, that her sins were *eternally* forgiven. We are inclined to think the same is true in Luke v. 20, though in this case the palsy *may* have come upon the man in consequence of certain sins which he had committed, and which had placed him under the governmental hand of God. Should this have been so, and it is only a surmise, then with the healing of the body went the forgiveness of the sins that had brought the sickness on him. But we delight to think that the forgiveness went beyond that. We see no reason why both governmental and eternal forgiveness should not be included in the absolution which the Lord so graciously pronounced.

G. O.—We thank you for your suggestive note. The articles in our present issue run much on the lines of which you speak. We ask for them a thoughtful and prayerful perusal. We should be glad to see this present number placed in the hands of every young Christian throughout the land.

## LOT'S WARNING ;

OR,

### THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

“Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain ; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”—GEN. xix. 17.

**I**N order to understand the message brought to Lot by the angel, it is necessary to clearly see the position in which Lot stood.

He had left his uncle Abraham on account of a dispute between their herdmen, and taking advantage of the offer to go which way he preferred, he had chosen the well-watered plain of Sodom. This led him at a later date to make his home in the city of Sodom, and he accepted a post of honour within its gates.

But we are told that “the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.” Their wickedness was so great that after long forbearance God determined to destroy both them and their city. Lot’s position therefore was a serious one.

Now I want to make it very plain to every reader who may not have fled to Christ, that his position is identical with that of Lot. He dwelt in a city God was going to overthrow ; you dwell in a world which God is about to visit with overwhelming judgment.

XII.



The cry of the world's sin, like that of Sodom, has reached up to heaven, and shall receive a like recompense. "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.)

My dear unconverted reader, you have sinned against the thrice holy God, and are in danger. Death may seize you, and, be sure of it, the day of judgment is drawing on apace. Your position as a sinner answers to that of Lot—the warning therefore comes to you with equal force.

Let us examine in detail the message that must have so startled Lot: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

I. "ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE." Why should Lot escape?

He was told to do so, *because judgment was coming speedily*. The sky may have been cloudless, and the city of Sodom never perhaps looked more enchanting, yet Lot had heard from the lips of the angels those terrible words, "The Lord hath sent us to destroy."

Many a scoffer, when warned of the judgment of God that overhangs this Christ-rejecting world, is ready to reply, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the begin-

ning of the creation." But, notwithstanding the unbelief of men, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter iii. 4, 10.)

Lot was warned to escape *because he himself was in danger*. Had Lot and his family remained in Sodom, it is evident that they would have perished in its overthrow. It is important that a man should awake to the fact, not merely that all have sinned, but that he himself has sinned, and is in danger of an eternal hell.

Let me suppose that in the dead of night you are disturbed by the cry of "Fire!" As you lie in your comfortable bed you can but pity the person whose life and goods are in danger. But presently you are startled by loud knocks at your door, and warning voices announce that it is *your* house that is in flames. How different are your feelings now! We want the unconverted reader to forget for the moment all others, and remember that he himself is in danger. God, who knows your position, pleads earnestly with you, saying, "Turn ye, turn ye; . . . for why will ye die?"

I would ask you to notice that the angels *not only warned Lot of the impending judgment, but pointed out a way of escape*. Who would bid a

drowning man to come upon dry land, and yet not throw a rope, or move a finger, for his rescue? Who would cry, "Flee from the flames" unless there were a ladder or a fire-escape to enable the trembling one in the burning house to do so? Neither would God say to us, "Flee from the wrath to come," unless He had provided a Saviour to whom we could flee.

It may be well to observe that *there was but one way of escape*. Thus is it now. Christ is the only Saviour; for we read in God's Word, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." There are many roads leading to London, but only one that leads to heaven. Earthly palaces have many entrances, but there is only one door to the paradise of God. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John x. 9.)

Notice, too, that as God had so graciously sent the angels with this message to Lot, *he could not remain in Sodom without being disobedient*. God in His mercy has made it the *duty* of every sinner that hears the gospel to flee to Jesus. He commands all men everywhere to repent.

Have you repented? If not, you are disobedient. God publishes the glad tidings for the obedience of faith. Have you believed in Jesus? If not, you are disobedient. When suffering from disease, how carefully do we obey our

physician, though he may possibly misunderstand our case. Shall we not much rather obey the Physician of the soul, whose skill is infinite, and who cannot make mistakes? We ought to obey God because He is God; but when He commands us to flee from destruction, it would indeed be foolish to hesitate, and mad to disobey.

Another important reason why Lot should hasten from Sodom was that *his example would be sure to exercise an influence upon others*. Had Lot remained in Sodom it is not probable that his daughters would have fled to the mountain. They would naturally suppose that, if their father believed Sodom was to be destroyed, he would flee from the city with all possible speed. A father who was climbing a snow-covered hill, followed by his little son, was forcibly reminded of his responsibility by the lad calling out, "Mind where you step, father, I am coming behind, and am putting my feet right into your marks."

Bethink thyself, dear reader, what influence art thou exercising? For a man by his example to lead his son, his daughter, or his friend, to the flames of hell is a horror that human language is inadequate to express.

II. "LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE." Why should not Lot look behind him? One reason no doubt was *the urgency of the case*. This was not a pleasure trip, but a flight for life. To look back would hinder, and every moment was precious, for the

fire was about to descend. Any who have not yet fled to Christ will do wisely to lay this warning to heart. During the civil war, in the days of Oliver Cromwell, a gentleman might have escaped from his enemies and saved his life, had he not lingered a few moments to *adjust his wig*, that he might appear a person of quality. What folly to waste a moment when life was in danger. Still greater is the folly of the man who allows any earthly consideration to hinder him from fleeing to Christ. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? (Mark viii. 36.)

In looking back *there was a danger of being tempted to return to Sodom*. Looking back might lead to going back, for the cities and the well-watered plain presented an attractive sight. Eve first looked at the forbidden fruit, and then was tempted and emboldened to steal it. It is to be feared that many a man, when aroused to his danger as a sinner, has lost his soul through looking back with desire upon worldly advantages and pleasures. "Remember Lot's wife." She looked back, and at once became a pillar of salt. No doubt she was led to look back by a hankering after the house and goods left behind. She wished for the safety of the mountain, and yet at the same time desired to dwell in the city of Sodom. The judgment that fell upon Lot's wife is a solemn warning to us. It speaks in

trumpet tones, saying, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

III. But, further, the angels said, "NEITHER STAY THOU IN ALL THE PLAIN." Though Lot was about to depart from Sodom, the angels saw *there was a danger of his lingering in some remote part of the plain.* The plain was pleasant, and the mountain side looked steep and rugged. But if Lot did not quit the plain, he would perish as certainly as though he remained in the midst of the city. There are some persons who, alarmed at the judgment to come, break off certain sinful habits—the drunkard becomes a sober man, and the thief abandons his dishonest practices—but they stop short of coming to Christ, and, therefore, are still exposed to the storm of God's wrath.

Let me mention a few of the plains in which the sinner may remain and perish.

*Many stop in the Plain of False Security.* They have not fled to Christ, and yet their peace is undisturbed. They feel no pain, and so presume they have no disease; no foe is in sight, and therefore they conclude there is no danger.

A labourer upon the railway lay down to rest himself awhile, and soon fell fast asleep. During his sleep he must have rolled forward a little until his limbs were upon the line. He felt no danger, for he was sleeping peacefully. Yet was he in the most imminent peril, for, in a few

moments, a train was due. There was no one at hand to arouse him, and presently the poor fellow was cut to pieces. Remember, that insensibility to danger is no proof of security. Scripture asserts that it is when men shall say "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction cometh.

*Not a few stop in the Plain of Self-righteousness.*

They will not submit to the righteousness of God, but persist in trying to weave a righteousness of their own. As the man invited to the king's feast refused the wedding garment, so do they reject the offered Saviour. We would say to such, Think you that Christ has died in vain? If we could reach heaven by our own works, would God have given His beloved Son to die upon the cross of Calvary? Surely not. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Romans iv. 5.)

*But by far the greatest number stop in the Plain of Procrastination.* They mean to come to Christ, but not now. Travellers upon the Alps see now and again a little black cross erected near some dangerous spot. It marks the fatal place where some unwary traveller has met with sudden death. How many a traveller to Eternity has found procrastination a slippery place, from which he has fallen into the bottomless pit. The poet tells us that "procrastination is the thief of

'time," but it is equally true that it is the thief of souls. "NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

IV. Lastly, the angels said, "ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN, LEST THOU BE CONSUMED."

Lot was directed to the mountain *because it was a place of safety*. Fleeing thither he would escape the impending judgment. It is evident that, after directing Lot to the mountain, God would not allow him to perish there.

Over the sinner's head hangs the awful sword of justice. God directs the anxious soul to Christ, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: *hear ye Him*." And what are the words of the Lord Jesus? Listen. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." To remove every fear from the hearts of those who trust in Him, Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." (John x. 28.)

It is important to notice that *the mountain was a place within reach*. So Christ is within reach of the feeblest. Even the daughters of Lot could flee to the mountain. The Lord Jesus is not far from every one of us. The faintest cry will reach His ear. Therefore the Scripture saith, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.)



Having plainly pointed out the way of escape, *the angels uttered words of solemn warning—* “*Escape,*” said they, “*lest thou be consumed.*”

Lot must either escape, or be destroyed. Similar is the message that God sends to-day to sinful men—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John iii. 36.)

Bear with me, dear reader, while I ask thee to look for a moment over the edge of Time into the black gulf of a lost Eternity. No candle relieves the gloom of that outer darkness. There is no fire-escape by which you may flee from the flames. Hope dwells not in those dreary regions, and sympathy is unknown; for each is swallowed up in his own sorrows. How canst thou endure the wrath of God for eternity?

We read that while Lot lingered the angels “laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.” When we think of the fast-approaching judgment, we would fain take you by the hand, and with all the earnestness and affection of which our hearts are capable, we would say: “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain.” FLEE TO THE SAVIOUR, lest thou be consumed.

C. H.

## A WORD ON SERVICE.

THE angels in heaven are willing messengers connected with the throne of God, and surely there is not one of them who would not readily come down to this fallen world to announce the glorious news of redemption. But God has not entrusted this service to those blessed, ministering spirits. In His wondrous grace He makes His own reconciled ones on the earth the bearers of His testimony.

In one sense we are called to serve God in everything. For instance, we read in Colossians iii. 17, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Hence we can serve Him in the smallest act of every-day life. Such service may be rendered both privately and publicly, and both in relation to the Church and to the world; and all is service to Christ.

*All* are called to serve. No Christian can sit down and fold his arms and say, "There is nothing that I can do for the Lord." Such conduct is simply the fruit of unbelief, dishonouring and displeasing to Him. We get a deeply solemn word from His own lips in Luke xix. 20-27, that should exercise our consciences. Each reader would do well to turn to the passage, and carefully weigh it in the presence of God.

It is true, on the other hand, that many have run without being sent. They abound in all kinds of religious, or semi-religious, work, alms-deeds, and efforts to improve their fellow-men; but they have never had to do with God about their own state as lost and guilty sinners before Him, much less do they know what it is to be amongst His saved people. They profess to serve God in these things, which are only "works of righteousness" which they have done. (Titus iii. 5.) Many indeed have gone so far as to take up a distinct ministerial position, and to profess to be the servants of the gospel of Christ, announcing all manner of doctrines, the fruit of deceived hearts. Blind leaders of the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. (Matt. xv. 14.) God is holy, and can accept no manner of service but that which is the fruit of faith, and the constraining love of Christ.

Before you attempt to serve God, the first question is, Are you quite clear as to your own salvation. Are you a Christian, happy in the presence of God? Salvation comes first, and then service. And if saved and happy, are you saying, "What can *I* do?" We answer, You must turn to God about it. The very first principle for all who serve is to learn *to obey*. The Lord is Master, and you must enquire of Him. The same One who calls and saves, sends us forth at His own bidding, to do His will, and not our own,

or another's. Be not ye, therefore, the servants of men. There is work to be done, and assuredly the Lord wants workers, and not idlers.

And not only is it needful to be saved and happy, but there must be *the maintenance of communion*. May be, there is something in *you* that needs judging before He can use you. To be fit for His use the vessel must be clean. It is all of His great grace to use any; and the same grace will amply reward in the future all that is done to His glory. As it has often been remarked, He could very well do His work without us, but this is not His way. Perhaps you are looking to do some *great* work, when He wants you to do what you consider a *small* one. May be, He wants you to go forward, when you want to be still, or, He wants you to be still, when you want to go forward. Ah! we need a broken will, a subject heart, an exercised conscience. Without Him we can do nothing. (John xv. 5.) It is only as we are in communion with Him, and dependent upon Him, that we can do anything right; and in the coming day how many of us will learn that

“Deeds of merit, as we thought them,  
He will show us were but sin.  
Little acts we had forgotten,  
He will tell us were for Him.”

But although it is true that all are called to serve, we find the Scripture also speaks of “the Lord’s servant.” This is evidently special. All are not called to serve in public testimony, pro-

claiming the Word of God. The Lord alone can raise up and qualify His own servants, and there is no need of any human sanction or authority whatever. Each will have many lessons to learn *in His school*, whether the chosen servant be an unlearned and ignorant fisherman, or brought up in the university at the feet of a modern Gamaliel. (Acts iv. 13; xxii. 3.) Man's wisdom would leave the former out of the ranks, but the Lord is wiser than man. And He who readeth the deep, secret thoughts and intents of every heart, knows and administers the needed discipline, carefully training His servants for the path to which His own grace has called them, that He may be glorified.

The blessed Lord Himself is our Example. Ever dependent and obedient, He did the will of God, even unto death. He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps, who did no sin. (1 Pet. ii. 21, 22.) All His service was the fruit of communion with God. He was the faithful and true Witness. Every moral quality shone perfectly in the Lord Jesus Christ. How blessed to trace His wondrous path, to see His complete devotedness to God and His interests on the earth, His perfect patience, His single-heartedness to do God's pleasure, His holy grace in all circumstances, His unswerving obedience even unto death! Neither the power and the malice of Satan, nor the hatred and scorn of men, could cause the patient, spot-

less One to swerve from the path of God's will. What a blessed example for all His servants in this evil day! May we all know more what it is to be occupied with Him, where He is, in the glory of God, and to patiently follow in His blessed footsteps until He come.

We have no thought to enter in this short paper into detailed exposition of Scriptures which bear upon this deeply important subject; but there is one more point which it is very necessary to observe, and that is that the Lord's servant should always seek to act *according to the Master's written word*. Many things are often introduced in connection with service which have no warrant in Scripture. But there is a day coming when every man's work shall be tried of what sort it is. Nothing will stand the test of the light of the Lord's holy presence, but what is in accordance with the revelation that He himself has given. (1 Cor. iii. 13.) We get many important instructions for the servant's guidance in 2 Timothy. Amongst others, "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*." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) "And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully*." (2 Tim. ii. 5.) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth*," etc. (2 Tim. ii. 15.)

Neither must we forget that, to be successful in service, we must be much in His presence in *prayer*.

The Lord, in His rich grace, will surely own all that He can, and blessed will it be for the servant who shall meet with His approval, and hear Him say, "Well done, *good and faithful* servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. xxv. 23.) "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." (1 Cor. iii. 8.)

One might add much more upon the subject, but we close by reminding our readers that "the time is short." Ere long all the Lord's own will be in the glory, and the blessed opportunities that we have now will be past and gone for ever. May we then become more deeply exercised both as to our privilege, and also as to our responsibility, redeeming the time, and encouraged to increased devotedness to the person and interests of the One who has saved us at the cost of His own awful sufferings and death. We are not our own, but bought with a price—*His blood*—and, therefore, called to glorify God in our body.

The Church is scattered; gathered saints are in weakness and trial; souls are perishing on all hands; Christ is coming, and the time is short. It is a wonderful moment for every true, devoted heart. May we all know how to make good use of it, and so become true followers of Him whose words are on record, "I do always those things that please Him" [the Father]. (John viii. 29.) E. H. C.

## “THERE IS NO GOD.”

SO say a few, and so think many, but the wish is the father of the thought, and it is wonderful what thoughts and sayings the will of man can invent.

The idea of God is distasteful to the natural mind.

“God” implies authority, and we all know that restraint is irksome; but, further, when “God” means holiness, and the judgment of evil, and the disallowance of that which we naturally like, then we do our utmost to banish from our minds, if possible, the existence of any such God at all.

Now, do not let my reader charge me with an over-strong condemnation of man. What is true of one is true of all; and, although all may not have taken the ground of avowed atheism, or even of pronounced infidelity, yet there is not one of us who, by nature, either loves God or seeks after Him.

No sooner had Adam sinned than he hid from God behind the trees of the garden—that is, sin had placed a moral gulf between the now fallen creature and his God. Man recoiled from God. Distrust had displaced love, and confidence had given way to dread.



Why hide from God? Yes, why? In that guilty, deceitful action, we may discover all the springs of sin. Hiding from God is but the negative of hatred of Him, and hatred is but the spring of the heart-utterance, "*No God.*"

Oh the heart! What a fountain-head of mischief and misery it is! Well says the Scripture, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And hence we read that "The fool hath said in his heart, 'No God!'" (Ps. xiv. 1.) Such a saying may not have reached the lips—may not have taken verbal form; but, in unspoken heart-language, the utterance is made, "No God!"

Now, is it not remarkable that the root-principle of all the infidelity of the day should have been announced in so old a Scripture as Psalm xiv. 1?

How prescient is Scripture! Did we know it better, we should be less taken aback by the evils that meet us. They are all anticipated and announced, in principle, in the Word of God; and there they are also condemned.

The wish that there should be no God—none to exercise full authority over us, or restrain our wills, or condemn our sins, or call us into judgment; none, in short, to whom we should be thus responsible—is latent in every human bosom. Sin has produced that wish; and how easy to advance from the idea to the belief, from the wish

to the word, "No God"! Yet, after all, he who should thus speak is called a "fool"; for can there be folly more self-evident than the rejection of God? Could you conceive the unfallen creature making such a denial? Impossible! It is reserved for fallen man to do so. Then, how awfully blinding must sin be!

Further, "No God" may be said by the Scientist, as readily as by the Secularist, by the profound scholar and thinker, as by the gross and profane. Wisdom cannot make God known, for "the world by wisdom knew not God." Learning, research, application of mind the most unwearied, is of no avail here.

And so, if science reaches the conclusion that there is no God, it but demonstrates the fact of its inability to find Him out.

The senses may take in a great deal; but their discoveries must be within the range of their apprehension. They cannot go beyond the sun. Their range is, therefore, limited.

Now, God is beyond the sun, beyond all creation; and, if He is to be known to man, He must deign to reveal Himself. What in us answers to a revelation on God's part? Clearly, reason does not need revelation. It only demands certain data. Granted so-and-so, and reason will furnish a conclusion. But, then, data are not a revelation.

Creation and things visible are data, and from

them man may conclude that there is a God—indeed, should do so, should own "His eternal power and Godhead," but, even in so doing, he would but conclude mentally that God is. His data are only external facts presenting themselves to the senses. There would not yet be any inward knowledge of God, any certainty.

It is not, therefore, reason that responds to revelation, but faith. God makes Himself known to faith. So we read that the righteousness of God is "revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17). Faith is not unreasonable, but it transcends reason. It dwells in a region far outside that of reason or science. It has to do with God in His proper sphere.

The man who says "There is no God" lacks the one quality that makes any of us divinely wise. Without faith we are fools, and the more we exercise that God-given grace, the more we please Him, and the more intimately we know Him.

"I know," said Paul, "whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12). Notice the order of the words—believing was the first act, and knowing was the result; and the knowledge is inward, it is the fruit of faith and of faithfulness, of walking in rich communion through storm or sunshine, winter or summer, an acquaintance as of one friend with another. Where there is faith there is the know-

ledge of God, and when there is subsequent faithfulness, that knowledge is intensified and made precious.

Alas ! how much they lose who throw overboard this worthiest of all knowledge as a thing unattainable or as a delusion. The loss is irreparable. If Satan can blind the mind by science, or poison the heart by sin—if he can succeed in making the heart endorse its own evil wish—he has accomplished his devilish end. Only remember that the devils believe and tremble. (James ii. 19.) To believe and know is the blessed portion of the Christian, but to believe and tremble is the dreadful state of devils.

I have met a Russian nobleman, who once wrote a pamphlet to disprove the existence of God. He was satisfied that his work was unanswerable by reason, but the thought struck him that, while he had satisfactorily silenced the feeble voice of reason, he had not touched that of faith. But how could he deal with faith? It seemed too intangible a foe. What could he do?

He was honest. He said to himself that if God reveals Himself, not to reason, but to faith, the only thing for him was to ask God graciously to do so. On bended knee he sought that favour, and an abundant answer was the kind result. God is good, for "*God is Love*," and cares for the soul of the hopeless atheist as for all. He so

loved the world that He gave His Son. The nobleman believed, and thus knew God, and lived for many years a most devoted Christian life. The pamphlet, which had seemed so conclusive to his darkened mind, was given to the flames, when God was made known to his soul through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and then the one labour of his life was to tell of that Saviour-God whose existence he had once denied.

That is but one instance. Happy the man who, in utter distrust, not only of his mind, but of his heart as well, humbles himself on bended knee before that God against whom he has most certainly sinned, and who thus gives eternal Love the occasion of kissing, embracing, clothing, and welcoming the poor prodigal to all the deep and certain blessings of the Father's house.

"That Thou should'st be so good to me,  
Should'st be the God Thou art,  
'Tis darkness to the intellect,  
But 't is sunshine to the heart."

"Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me." (Jer. ix. 24.)  
"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John xvii. 4.)

J. W. S.

## “GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING.”

1 TIMOTHY iv. 13.

SOME years ago, when spending a few days at the village of H——, in the north of Devon, it was proposed to have a preaching in the open air one evening, and we set out during the day in different directions to invite the people. In one of the cottages was dear old Margaret W——, and it is one little saying of this aged saint that calls forth these few lines. The writer's heart has often been encouraged by the remembrance of her words. Margaret's days of toil on earth were drawing to a close; a busy life had been hers, working, year after year, as tailoress at the many farm-houses around, till age at length demanded that the well-plied needle should be laid aside. “I can't do much *now*,” she said, “but I *read* a little, and I *work* a little, and I *look up!*” Her words sank into our hearts with sweetness and instruction.

Dear toiling mother, if such should read these lines, do thy oft-revolving duties weary thee, fulfilled, it may be, unseen by any save *One* who notes everything? “*Look up!*” yea, “*read a little,*” too. The Lord can make a *little* go a *long*

## 220 "GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING."

way. "He that gathered *little* had no *lack*." Thus shall you be helped with secret strength.

"Secret blessings, richly flowing,  
Lead to everlasting day."

The following year we were again at H——. We soon visited the cottage of our dear old friend, where we still found her, but now quite bent and feeble; the little room she lived in also showing signs of its occupant's waning strength and inability to keep it as was her wont. On reminding her of the previous year, and the lesson she had unconsciously imparted, and from which we had so profited, "Ah!" she said, "my *sight* is *nearly* gone now; I can't read, and I can't work, I can *only look up!*" The goal was nearly reached, the haven close at hand! The next year we went to H—— again. This time even the "*looking-up*" was over, for dear, happy Margaret was GONE up.

She "being dead, yet speaketh." *While* we can read *let us read*, if only "*a little*," daily, *prayerfully*, with *faith*. Nothing can make up for this. Leanness of soul and a train of sorrows result from its neglect. "*As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*" One knows that the daily things will swallow up *more* than the "twelve hours in a day," if we allow them; but "seek ye FIRST" is the blessed Lord's own injunction. Alphabetically, even, *word* comes before *work*. "O that

“GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING.” 221

they were *wise*” sounds as a touching appeal. As sure as we *do* so, we shall find our duties will get quite as well attended to, and with a happier heart, for we shall also have given the Lord Jesus *His* portion—OUR EAR. Mary sat at His feet and *heard His word*. May we *do* this, dear reader, more than we have ever *yet* done. Then shall we be better fitted to *work*, even “a little,” for Him. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye *do*, *do* all to the glory of God.” “*Looking* [off] unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith,” till the happy moment when we all shall be *caught up* in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

“Till then, good-night, good-night,  
Work on, and watch, and pray ;  
We part each one this hour of night,  
We meet again at day.”

A. M. N.

“May God seal our mouths in eternal silence, sooner than let us preach *and be content* while souls are being damned. I should look upon it as being all but a type of apostasy, a very proof of reprobation, if my heart did not yearn for souls and travail in birth till Christ be formed in them.”

“I never did see any genuine conversions under any man, however great his ability, or however, apparently, great his industry, *unless he was full of life and fire.*”

“You do not expect to serve Christ earnestly without meeting rebuffs, do you? You will be bitterly mistaken if you do.”



## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. T. (Isaiah lxii 1.)—If you look at the sixth and seventh verses of this chapter, you will find they explain the first verse, which you think so hard to understand. The reference is to the office of a remembrancer in kings' courts, whose duty it was to remind the king of promises made, and thus to guard against their being forgotten. Now, God had given many precious promises which could only receive their fulfilment in the full blessing of Israel. These promises, indeed, He will neither forget nor fail to fulfil. Yet, in His condescending grace, He adapts Himself to human customs and habits of thought, and tells Jerusalem that He has set watchmen upon her walls, who are not to keep silence nor give Him rest until His word concerning her exaltation and blessing come to pass. Hence the speaker, in the first verse, avows that for Zion's sake he will not hold his peace, and for Jerusalem's sake he will not rest till all this be accomplished—he will earnestly perform the duties of a remembrancer till Zion's glory come. We need hardly say it refers to what will take place after the Church is taken away, when God will begin to work afresh for the deliverance, restoration, and ultimate glory of the children of Israel here on earth.

E. G. D.—Your contention was quite right. With jealous care the Holy Ghost guards the perfect purity,

the absolute sinlessness, of our Lord Jesus Christ. In proof of this we need but quote 2 Corinthians v. 21, 1 Peter ii. 22, 1 John iii. 5. In the mouth of these three inspired witnesses is this established. Moreover we hold it to be vital truth, not only that the blessed Lord was in every sense without sin, but that it was wholly impossible that He should yield to sin. To assert the contrary is a most fatal error. The doctrine of the peccability of the Lord Jesus—that is, of His liability to sin, though keeping Himself from it—is a blasphemous deceit. It is true that the Lord often gave Himself to prayer, for His manhood was a reality, and all that should mark a perfect man characterized Him. But to use the human perfections of the Lord to support the doctrine you so justly denounced is base indeed.

J. A. (Romans xi.)—Let it carefully borne in mind that this much-misunderstood chapter does not deal with individuals. It deals with the Israelites *as a whole* and with the Gentiles *as a whole*, at least with that part of them professedly occupying Christian ground. To illustrate his doctrine the apostle employs the simile of an olive-tree, an object familiar enough to those to whom he wrote. By the rejection of their Messiah, Israel, *as a nation*, were like branches broken off, though there were individuals belonging to it who were saved according to “the election of grace.” In being “broken off” they ceased to partake of “the root and fatness of the olive-tree”—that place of privilege and blessing no longer belonged to them. But the Gentiles, whose

## 224      ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

natural condition is described in Ephesians ii. 12, and is here likened to a "wild olive," have been grafted in among the branches that remained, and the place of privilege and blessing, which Israel, nationally, lost, is now theirs. But the Gentiles, thus privileged, are warned not to be high-minded, but fear. It was by faith alone they stood—as they professedly acknowledged—and He who spared not the natural branches might also not spare them. Let them continue in God's goodness. Alas! the Gentiles have failed even as Israel did, and they, too, will be "cut off"—that is, they will lose the distinct place of privilege conferred upon them when they were grafted in. Be careful not to introduce here either the question of our salvation or of our church position. The latter was as new to a believing Israelite as to a believing Gentile, whereas, in this passage, the Gentiles are placed in a position which some of the natural branches had ever occupied and continued to occupy. Nor can there be any "cutting off" from Christ of any *vitally* connected with Him. The good olive-tree scarcely points to Christ. It has reference, we believe, to Abraham, who was called out to be a distinct witness for God on earth, and whose descendants, in the Isaac and Jacob line, came into that privileged place in virtue of their descent. As to your question on Romans xii. 1, the "living sacrifice" refers to our whole life, now that the mercies of God have visited us. The body is ever to be used as an instrument for God's glory.

---

## AS HE SEES.

NUMBERS xxiii., xxiv.

IT was forty years and more ago since the Redeemed Host had stood and sung their great Hymn of Praise on the shores of the Red Sea. Little did any of them think, as they sang that magnificent anthem of the free, that at the end of so many weary years Canaan would still remain unconquered and unpossessed. Nor would it have happened so, had it not been for their unbelief. Forty years! Ah, it is a long span, and whether then or now, time, good reader, tells many tales! What years they were! years of fretfulness, impatience, lusts, envy, spiritual barrenness, and idolatry. The sorrowful story is all told in Psalm cvi., if anyone cares to read it. Yet withal, God was gracious and faithful. Discipline them He did, but the pillar of His presence never left them. Daily the manna fell. Water from the smitten rock satisfied their thirst, and their raiment waxed not old, neither did their feet swell those forty years!

And now the time had come when the Jordan should be crossed. The children of Israel pitch in the plains of Moab, and Balak, Moab's king, is going to make one supreme effort to hinder their

XII.

entering the land of promise. Will he succeed? If Jehovah be for them, as in days of old, the foes of Israel shall not prevail. But will He be? The experiences of the wilderness had plainly shewn what was in their heart, and with all this in remembrance, would God be still their God? Had their fickleness, sin, and unbelief failed to alienate Him? Were they, notwithstanding all, the people of His choice?

Many a reader will bear me witness that similar questions agitate the soul to-day. At conversion, when the value of the precious blood of Christ is somewhat known, and deliverance from Satan's power enjoyed, all is bright, and sunshine and flowers are everywhere. But as months roll by, changes come. Many things make it manifest to the converted soul, that "the flesh" is still within, that it remains unchanged, and avails itself of every possible occasion to make its presence felt. Possibly the soul reviews its past, and sees how chequered its course has been. Humiliated, distressed, and not fully understanding the riches of divine grace, it anxiously wonders how it stands with God. It may not doubt its salvation, but it would give anything to be assured that *the love of God* abides unaltered and unalterable.

This scripture comes in to answer all such questions, and to confirm and establish our souls in the grace wherein we stand. It discloses

God's thoughts of His people, and shews us the way in which He views them. And let it be carefully noted that all this takes place, not when they were under the shelter of the sprinkled blood in Egypt, nor at the dawn of their deliverance at the Red Sea, but after forty years of wilderness life, when all the evil of their hearts had fully come to light. We beg special attention to that point, as it invests the passage with peculiar grace and beauty.

It will suffice for our present object if we take a few words from each of the four prophecies of Balaam. The man himself was awfully wicked, as his subsequent counsel and end prove. (Chap. xxxi. 8-16.) Hired by Balak to curse the people, God controls Balaam, and the mouth that was meant to curse was made to bless.

We shall find in Balaam's words four things.

1. The separation of God's people from the world to Himself. (xxiii. 9.)

2. Their complete justification and the unchangeableness of God's grace. (Chap. xxiii. 19-23.)

3. Their perfect acceptance. (Chap. xxiv. 5, 6.)

4. The glory that awaits them. (Chap. xxiv. 16-19.)

However much it may be forgotten, the believer in Jesus is separated from the world and set apart for God. Of course, a truth so great should lead to a walk that corresponds; but we are not speaking of the walk now, but of the fact itself. Divine power has separated the believer, and set

him apart, and we know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever. (Eccles. iii. 14.) Just as a piece of rock, when separated from the great bulk of which it once formed part, can never be replaced, so the believer can never, *in God's sight*, be of the world any more. He may become worldly in mind and ways, and thus practically deny what he actually is, as Lot did; he may so act as to bring upon himself the severest discipline of God; all that is perfectly true, but it is impossible that he should ever again be "reckoned among the nations." Let us see this clearly, and hold it fast. Surely if anything could have deprived Israel of their privileged position as a people separated to the Lord, their wilderness course was enough to do so. But God's grace is great, and in "the vision of the Almighty" the Redeemed Host are ever seen dwelling "alone." They are called out, separated to God, and He never ceases to claim them as His.

Should these lines catch the eye of one on whose path the candle of the Lord once shined, but who is now walking in the light of the fire which his own hand has kindled, remember, O erring child of God, that thou art still His, and because of this He earnestly entreats thee to return. Still upon thy ear, thy hand, and foot is the sanctifying blood and the anointing oil, as it was with the leper in the day that he was cleansed. That ear was thus set apart to hear

His voice, that hand to do His work, that foot to walk in His ways, and to carry His messages. To what end art thou employing them this day? Learn from the scripture we are now considering, that thou art still precious in His sight, that thou art loved with an everlasting love, that God has marked thee off as His own for ever. O let His grace, so full, so rich, so free, wean thy heart from every unworthy object. Remember from whence thou art fallen. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto Him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously"; so will He heal your backsliding and will love you freely.

In the second prophecy Balaam at once announces that "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it." With God there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Hence it is said, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." What words, after forty years of provocation! In the practical ways of the people there had been iniquity and perverseness beyond measure, for which He had had, in His government, to deal with them repeatedly; but when their justification is in view, He beholds not, He sees not. Why is



this? It is because the blood which justifies is ever before His eye. In their case the blood had yet to be shed, in ours it has been. But whether then or now, God remembers and forgets not the one great Sacrifice which justifies Him in justifying us. The worth of that atoning blood ever abides the same, and with God there is no change. In us there have been many changes. Our life, alas! since our conversion, instead of being like a straight line, has been woefully zigzag. Had we only that to dwell upon we should soon feel depressed and desponding, but, turning from ourselves with loathing, we can rejoice in the greatness of God's grace, in the unchangeableness of His love, and in the one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which we are perfected for ever. (Heb. x. 14.)

It is indeed important to see that nothing can deprive the believer of his standing before God. It rests on an immutable foundation. Were it based on anything in himself—on his love, his devotedness, his faithful following of Christ—he might well tremble and be dismayed. There would be no confidence, inasmuch as all confidence that has self for its resting-place is a delusion and a snare. But our standing in the Divine Presence has its foundation in the infinite grace of God, and in the atonement effected at Calvary by the sufferings and death of God's own Son. There God has found perfect and everlasting satisfaction in reference to the sins

and failures of His people, whether before or after their conversion. On that wondrous work the eye of God ever rests, and there is found the answer to every charge the accuser may bring, or our own heart suggest.

The third prophecy carries us a step further. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters." Thus they are seen to be beautiful in God's sight, comely in the comeliness which He has put upon them. It is so with the believer. Not only are his sins put away, but he is identified with the One who has for ever removed them. He is one with Christ, accepted in all His acceptableness. This great truth the Holy Ghost has set forth in many a precious passage of Holy Scripture. Of these we may be allowed to quote three. "As is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 48.) "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." (Heb. ii. 11.) "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) There is, we need hardly say, an immense difference between our practical state and what we are when viewed as one with Christ. But we must not allow the low character of our state to debar us from receiving what God says as to our

acceptance in His sight. The former we may justly deplore, while in the latter we rejoice with unspeakable joy.

The closing prophecy speaks of glory yet to come. The "sceptre" and "dominion" shall be found by-and-bye in the midst of God's earthly people, when the glorious promises given to their fathers shall be fulfilled. For us the glory lies in a heavenly sphere. In hope of it we rejoice, for into it we shall ere long be brought. "Whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. viii. 30.) God will perfect in glory that to which He has set His hand, for He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. All therefore is sure and certain.

The Christian reader will pardon our reminding him again that these are the thoughts of God about His people, as their wilderness journey was about to end. Had they been disclosed at the beginning, and not at the finish, we might have been tempted to think that what was true of them then, before they had so repeatedly failed, may not have been afterwards. This scripture shews that it was not so. Separate, clear from every charge, clothed with unfading beauty and heirs of coming glory, it is thus the people of God are ever viewed. Nor can anything, present or to come, nullify this or bring God's counsels to nought.

## THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5-11.

“LET this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Has God Himself become our example? Yes! It is traced out for us in the following verses.

“In the form of God.” Divine attributes were His. He made the worlds. He was the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of His Person. No one who was not God could be in the form of God. He could say, “I proceeded forth, and came from God.” “Before Abraham was, I am.” The form means all that belonged to God. All that is true of God is true of Christ. He was with God. Without Him was not anything made that was made. “In Him was life.” Omnipotence and omniscience belong equally to Him.

This being so, it was no object of rapine to Him to be on an equality with God. He could not be more than He was, He could not raise Himself. This is in contrast to Adam, and even to Satan. Satan aspired to something above what God had made him, and he fell. Then he procured man’s fall by the same means. But with Christ there was nothing above *Him*. He who was in the form of God could not go higher, He could

## • 232 THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

only go lower. This He did; "He emptied Himself." He laid aside the *form*, the outward glory, that which was too bright for mortal eye, and all that He was—for He never could be less than He was—lay hid under a servant's *form*. He could not cease to be God, however low He came; but all that would have amazed and dazzled us He doffed, He kept in the beams of His effulgence, so that one might look upon His face, and learn to know Him. This was the wondrous sign given to those simple, untaught shepherds, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And yet He was Emmanuel. Does not this awaken sensibilities in our hearts nothing else could?—that One who was in the form of God should be willing to take the form of a servant? As He could say, "I am among you as He that serveth." Angels had been *His* ministers and servants. And He comes now not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He was "seen of angels." What must they have felt as they witnessed that One so infinitely above them made a little lower than they? The highest taking the lowest place. He would say to a poor sinner, "Give Me to drink." The call of a blind beggar would arrest Him. "Jesus stood," and the question immediately comes, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" He would wash His disciples' feet. And yet He was the One who had measured the waters in the hollow of His

hand, and before whom all nations are as nothing, and counted to Him less than nothing and vanity.

And then we read He "was made in the likeness of men." He would serve as a man. Angels had been, and are, servants, but the Lord Jesus would come lower than they. It would have been an immeasurable descent from the form of God to the very highest created being; but He passed by the shining ranks of angels and of seraphs, and descended lower still, even to man's estate. Formerly it had been said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"; now *God* comes in the likeness of men. Only there is this difference between Genesis i. and Philippians ii., the first word spoken there in connection with man is "dominion," here it is "He humbled Himself."

In taking man's place He took all that it involved, sin apart. Therefore we read, "He humbled Himself." This was true, even at His birth. Though Lord of all, He claimed nothing. No costly canopy was spread over that head. No royal dainties fell to His lot. A wayside inn and a manger received Him into the world His hands had made. And yet to announce the great fact all heaven was jubilant, and heaven-sent messengers made lowly ones on earth acquainted with the joyful news of a Saviour's birth. But a manger was His place, and shepherds His attendants, as

## 234 THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

far as earth was concerned. "He humbled Himself." And this was in keeping with His entire life. His parents were poor, His home at Nazareth. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" told how He had humbled Himself. And later the enquiry of John the Baptist seemed to tell the same tale, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" At His baptism we see the same thing. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," says John, "and comest Thou to me?" And the answer the humbled One makes is, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." On the Mount of Transfiguration, when His title to the glory, as man, was fully owned, He does not enter it, for He would not enter it alone; He descends, and from that point He has "the death of the cross" before Him. Similarly, on the occasion of the Samaritans refusing to make ready for Him, when the cities where most of His mighty works were done rejected Him, and, finally, in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross of Calvary, we see the same humbling of Himself.

But more, He "became obedient unto death." He never could have tasted death except in the way of obedience. This tells us who He was. No other man could be *obedient* unto death, for all were *subject* to death, through disobedience. Death had no claim upon Him. Notice how scripture puts it: "He by the *grace* of God should

## THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST. 235

taste death for everything." It was grace, it was obedience; in no other way could death come in His path. He was obedient *unto death*. Who can tell what death must have been to Him? The garden of Gethsemane discloses to us something of what it was, where, in prospect of it, He sweat as it were great drops of blood, and three times over said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But it was not possible, and so He drank it. And when His disciples sought to rescue Him from it, He says, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He "became obedient unto death."

And this death was "even the death of the cross." We should not pass lightly over a statement like this. In scripture there is no redundancy of language, and an emphatic statement of this kind is to be carefully noticed. It was a shameful death. He became a curse, His death was with the wicked, "He was numbered with the transgressors." This shows the wonderful effect of His demeanour upon the centurion, to lead him to exclaim of One who was *crucified*, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

Thus His pathway was ever downward till it touched the lowest point; and all the result of obedience. It is important to observe this. It was not a self-appointed path; it was in subjection to the will of Another. As He said, "Lo, I come



## 236 THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

to do Thy will, O God." We can think of it therefore as what it was to the heart of God. And immediately in the next verse we get God's answer to it, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." Here we have two things—He went to the lowest depth—He has been placed in the glory's highest height; having humbled *Himself*, God has exalted *Him*. This shows what God thought of that pathway which, to man's eye, went ever downward. It is the divine answer to all the mockings, the revilings, and the scorn endured at the hands of man. Here we have One whom God could exalt. If we did not know this, however lovely the life of Jesus, all would be incomplete, like a broken arch. But, thanks be to God, we know that Jesus has won the meed and crown. And having followed Him to the lowest point, where death intervenes, we are not perforce obliged to stop there, we can dwell with enraptured hearts upon the "wherefore" that follows. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

We are not told what the name is (if indeed it is another name than Jesus), which is above

## THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST. 237

every name. But we do not need to enquire, for we are informed amply of its significance. It is enough for our hearts that He who was despised and rejected of men is now supreme; and made so by God. And as it was written upon His cross, "This is Jesus," so at that very name, every knee is to bow, and every tongue confess.

And this will be to the glory of God the Father. When on earth He ever declared Himself to be sent of God; His rejection was therefore a dishonour to the One who had sent Him, and consequently the homage paid to Him is "to the glory of God the Father." How blessed to follow Jesus into such a place, and see where His pathway leads. His lowliness moves the heart, His glory satisfies it. And thus the deepest longings awakened by the Spirit in us are met, in seeing all that is of God, consummated in the emptying and the humbling, the obedience unto death and the exaltation of Jesus.

R. E.

---

"JESUS! What mem'ries thrill our hearts  
Of Thy blest footprints here,  
While now to heaven our eyes we turn,  
And gaze upon Thee there!

"Jesus our Saviour, quickly come!  
That we may with Thee be.  
Heaven's morning breaks and glory dawns,  
When Thy blest face we see."

## “WHERE IS THY BROTHER?”

ONE of the saddest scenes in scripture is recorded in Genesis iv., where the first murderer, coming fresh from the terrible spot where he had shed his brother's blood, is met by God with the searching enquiry, “*Where is Abel thy brother?*”

In marked and beautiful contrast with this, we have an incident recorded in John i. 40-42, of two other brothers, which is just as refreshing as the other is forbidding.

John the Baptist had been preaching on the banks of Jordan, and his immense audiences from all that region testified to the spiritual energy which characterized his testimony. But John was not seeking a following. No. He was simply the voice preparing the way for a greater One; and as Jesus approaches him one day, it is with rapturous delight that he draws the attention of his hearers to Him as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” “Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! *And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*” Jesus turning to them said, “*What seek*

ye?” They reply, “Master, where dwellest *Thou?*” It was not a *what*—a mere thing—that they were seeking. Oh, no! It was a *person* that attracted them—“Where dwellest *Thou?*” Nothing short of a person, and that the person of the Christ, can really satisfy the heart.

Jesus then invites the two to come with Him, and they “*abode* with Him that day.” What passed between them has not been recorded; but they learned enough of the blessed Lord in those few hours to know that henceforth life was only worth living, as it was spent in fellowship with Him. From that time they were joined to Him by eternal bands.

Dear reader, have *you* been thus alone in the presence of the Lord, and found the sweetness and satisfaction which that presence affords?

But their joy was not to be self-contained; real joy never is. It must find vent somewhere. And so when they come forth from His presence, their hearts are so full of what they have seen, and heard, and received, that they long to spread the news, that others, too, may be sharers with them.

It is pretty certain that the unnamed disciple in *v.* 40 is John the Beloved. If so, these first two disciples were John and Andrew.

How do they tell out their newly-found joy? Do they gather a concourse of people in the open air, or go into some crowded synagogue? No.

From what follows one would think those same words which appear at the commencement of this article were whispered in their ears by the Spirit, “*Where is thy brother?*”

Although John does not record it himself, it is more than probable that at this time he went off to tell his brother James; and of Andrew it says, “*He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found . . . the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.*”

We can imagine Andrew going up to his worldly, impetuous, but large-hearted brother. Putting his arm through Peter's, he begins to tell him of the events of the previous evening—of that wonderful Man, of His heart-searching words, of His matchless person, of His peace-giving message. Peter is interested; his heart is touched; he feels that his brother has something of which he knows nothing; and, expressing the desire to know this Saviour also, Andrew brings him to Jesus. From that day Peter's heart was reached, and although he had much yet to learn, still he, too, becomes a follower of Christ.

Now is there not a lesson in this for all to whom Christ has revealed Himself as Saviour? Is it not true that many have been saved for years, and have amassed perhaps a large amount of truth, but their brothers or neighbours are no better off for it? Andrew, only knowing Christ a day and doubling his numbers the very next day,

and *you*, knowing Him for years, and still living in all your solitariness as far as soul-winning is concerned! Is not this a deeply searching thought? “I have no gift as a teacher, or evangelist, or writer,” you may argue. Perhaps not. It is to the rank and file we are speaking now, and we desire to press home this truth, that *all whom Christ has found should make it their life business to be finding others*. As Carey, afterwards the great missionary, used to say, when working at his trade, “Preaching the gospel is my business; I just make shoes for a living.”

Yes, dear reader, *you* have an individual responsibility. There are certain ones within your reach, whom you can influence as no one else can. “*Where is thy brother*”? You cannot shelve your responsibility on to the evangelists, or anyone else. There is your relative, friend, business acquaintance, and there are those in your employ. God is throwing you in *closest* contact with them every day, and *it is yours to bring them to Jesus*.

But where did Andrew’s secret of success lay? His service was not one of compulsion, but of love. He did not know much, but he loved much. His head was not very full, but his heart was, and what he had received had been made practical in his soul; would that all truth were with those that have so much of it. What he did know was Jesus. He was intimate with Him.

*He abode with Him that day, and when he came forth from His presence there was a freshness, a sweetness, and a power in his words that carried conviction with them.*

Beloved reader, seek to cultivate that communion with Him, that gives, first of all, love for souls, and then power to attract them to Jesus.

We read very little of Andrew after this. His life seems to have been of the quiet, unassuming sort, and he is kept in the background; but the one he brought to Jesus—Peter—was afterwards used of God to the conversion of thousands.

We cannot all be Peters. We may all be Andrews. God's way for us may be to keep us in the background, unseen and unheard of by the great mass. If, however, we live close to the blessed Lord, and abide in Him, He will so fill us with Himself, that while we may not be able to preach to the numbers, our consistent walk, and the word dropped here and there, will be used of Him in reaching the *ones*. These in turn may go out and win their hundreds to Christ, and thus He shall have all the glory, and we shall have the reward.

May the Lord stir us all up more to this individual effort, for His own blessed name's sake.

H. G.

## A THREEFOLD DELIVERANCE.

“For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.”—Ps. cxvi. 8.

**H**OW true are the words of that well-known hymn: “I need Thee every hour.” When we were anxious about our eternal destiny, we found none to help save Christ, and all along the pilgrim journey we increasingly learn our need of Him.

In the verse which heads this paper, are mentioned three ways in which God graciously worked to deliver the Psalmist.

I. “Thou hast delivered my soul from death.” In Heb. ix. 27, 28, we get three looks. The first is a look forward. The time when our eyes gazed on the future, and we saw death and the awful judgment of God facing us in our path, will never be forgotten. We knew we were unprepared for it. Great was our fear as we considered the doom which must so surely befall us. But God directed our eyes in another direction, and this second look is backward. We saw the Saviour once offered to bear the sins of many. Death and judgment, which were so justly ours, fell upon the spotless Victim. And God proclaims by Paul, “Be it known unto you . . . men and



brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

My reader, have you a doubt about this? If so, take a steady look at that cross, where the holy Lamb of God bore the judgment of God and died. Hear Him cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" That judgment was yours, that death was yours. Now look into heaven's glory, and see Him in a place where *death* cannot enter; and instead of bearing the *judgment*, He is enjoying all God's favour. You, through simple faith in Him, are brought into all that scene of life and favour into which He has passed. Now, can you not sing with us:

"Death and judgment are behind us,  
Grace and glory are before;  
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,  
There they spent their utmost power."

The third look is an upward one, full of expectancy, for we await the happy moment when He shall come to take us to be with Himself, without dying at all. Thus we are completely delivered from death as to our souls, and as to our bodies; if it should be that we are called away, death is no longer a savage monster whom we fear, but it has become the gentle messenger from God to take us the sooner into the presence of Him, whom, not having seen, we love.

II. "Mine eyes from tears." For a little while we are left here, in a place where sorrow abounds;

the sad results of sin are seen on every hand. Now there is a word of immense comfort for our hearts in Heb. xiii. 8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Perchance some fellow Christian, who is overwhelmed with sorrow, may read these lines. Some have had their heart strings torn by the loss of those most dear to them; some lie day after day on a bed of sickness. The father feels the anxiety of business, the mother is tried by the constant calls upon her hands and mind throughout the busy day.

To one and all may these words which speak of the unchanging love of our Saviour come home with soothing balm to-day. When do you think did He love you most? The cross indeed was the greatest expression of His love; but His heart is set upon you now with the same intensity of love as prompted Him to go to death, even the death of the cross. Consider His ways on earth. The One who restored to the sorrowing mother her son, who wept in sympathy with Mary, whose every act was love, is engaged now in the glory in the blessed work of sustaining and succouring His people.

"Lord, in all Thy power and glory,  
Still Thy thoughts and eyes are here;  
Watching o'er Thy ransomed people,  
To Thy gracious heart so dear."

III. "My feet from falling." Though we are brought by the death and resurrection of our

Lord Jesus Christ into a place of perfect favour, we still have within that evil nature which delights only in sin. It may be that some reader of this paper has been tripped up by a besetting sin. We need not mention it, he knows it too well. Again and again he has resolved to overcome it, but after a little time he has failed more grievously. He feels that his case, whatever others may say, is hopeless. We would assure you, dear brother, that God can deliver, and has delivered many from sins which held them in the most cruel bondage. How can this be done? First we would ask, are you really in earnest in seeking to escape from the dominion of this sin? Would you, if you had the opportunity, be freed from it now, even if the cost were much greater than you expected? If so, give up every bit of confidence in yourself, own your utter helplessness and sinfulness in the presence of God. Then fully and simply cast yourself entirely upon Him, expecting Him, and Him alone, to keep you. Do not cry to Him only when you fail, or when you feel the temptation, but at all times. One look of faith saves the soul, one continued look of faith will keep you from falling. The power which starts the railway train is the same power which keeps it going. It is the same with the Christian. The power which gives him the start is Christ, and Christ alone can keep him going on. Strictly speaking all sin is besetting sin, and

we can only be kept by "Looking unto Jesus." (Heb. xii. 1, 2.) Scripture has a solemn warning for the Christian who indulges in sin, and allows it to pass unjudged. Many have bitterly experienced the truth of those words, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. vi. 8.)

Well may we, in view of these great deliverances, join David in his outburst of praise and worship: "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications." S. H. P.

---

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. P. W.—We know from long experience that the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer in Jesus is objected to by many, on the ground that it would lead to carelessness of walk. It is thought that if a man is sure of going to heaven he will cast away all fear of God, and go and live the life of the ungodly. But those who argue thus do not sufficiently consider that the believer, having been born of God, possesses a life altogether distinct from the sinful Adam-life which he inherits by natural birth, and that the nature of this new life is to love holiness and everything else that is according to God. Hence the new-born soul in Romans vii. can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Let it be well observed that what we are now speaking of is neither the old life made better, nor the old life taken away, but the positive communication of a new life,

## 248      ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

the outgoings of whose nature are manifested in love to God's children and in the following after righteousness, as we may learn from 1 John iii. In addition to this there is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit acts in the new nature, and thus forms a new source of thoughts and affections, to which an unconverted man is entirely a stranger. Hence we read in Galatians v. 17 that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." There will not be always actual conflict, for if we walk in the Spirit the desires of the flesh shall be held in check, but both flesh and Spirit are in the believer and are always antagonistic.

But there is another point which, though coming last, might well be first. It is this—Does Scripture distinctly teach that the believer in Christ is for ever saved? If so, there is an end of all controversy. We believe it does, both directly and indirectly. From among the passages which teach this directly, we may name John v. 24; John vi. 39, 40; John x. 27-30; Romans viii. 30. As to the passages that teach it indirectly, one hardly knows where to begin, for the truth in question is so interlaced with other truths that it meets the eye on almost every page. For instance, we read that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." For how many of our sins did He die—some, or all? If for *all*, then surely in dying for them He put them *all* away. Now if our sins are put away, can they be ever recalled and charged afresh to us? Again, the believer in Jesus is

declared in Acts xiii. 39 to be justified from all things—cleared from every condemning charge. If justified from all things, can he ever again be held guilty? Can a man be justified from *all* his sins, and yet be called to answer for them before the great white throne? In Hebrews x. 17, God declares He will remember our sins no more. Is there, then, any possibility of their being remembered, notwithstanding this solemn declaration? Can God ever become a liar? May He, in His grace, pardon even the asking of such a question. And so we might go on, did our space permit, but we trust enough has been said to show what Scripture says on this important matter. If not, you will find the subject more fully dealt with in a pamphlet called *Fallen from grace, or Castaway*, to be had for twopence from the publisher of this magazine.

T. G.—We hardly know what you mean by inquiring whether “new birth is earthly or heavenly?” If you ask whether the new birth is exclusively a *Christian* truth, we answer, No, it is not. In patriarchal days and in the Mosaic dispensation, men needed to be born again, as they do to-day, and will do in days yet to come. In short, since man is a fallen creature, he needs to be born again, no matter what the age in which his lot is cast. Now Nicodemus should have known this, seeing he was a master of Israel. It was one of the old things of which no scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven should have been ignorant. If Nicodemus was startled, amazed, and incredulous as he heard this, what would he say were the Lord to tell him of heavenly things—things new and distinctly Christian?

## 250      ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Secondly. Salvation does include more than the new birth. It takes in the forgiveness of sins known now through the gospel, nor must we exclude from it the soul's being brought to God in Christ, and through His precious blood. New birth tells of one side of the sinner's need, salvation speaks of the blessedness into which God brings the believer. If this is not quite plain we shall be glad to hear from you again, and we will try to make it plainer.

A. S.—1 Corinthians xv. 29. We understand this verse to refer to those who, by their confession of Christ in baptism, take the place of those who by death have been called out of the ranks of Christ's soldiers. If Satan by storms of persecution thinned the ranks, others were ready to step forward and fill the gaps thus made. But why do so if the dead rise not at all? Why did they, by baptism, take the place of those who had died, seeing that a similar end might overtake them, if the dead rise not, if in this life only they had hope in Christ? But the hope of the Christian is connected with resurrection—the other side of death. Is all this, then, but folly and vanity? It is so if the dead rise not. This seems the argument here. But having said this, we would earnestly warn you against lending an ear to any who make so much of baptism. It has its place and there let it be kept. There are not a few who are far from holding the faith of God's elect, who exalt baptism to a place it was never designed to fill, and use it to ends which nothing can justify.

---

## SOUL DECLENSION.

THIS common complaint is a disease which threatens every Christian, and we need to be continually on our guard against it. Physical decline is bad enough, but spiritual decline is infinitely worse. We cannot fail to notice the unmistakable signs of consumption—the wasting frame, the hollow cheeks, the hectic flush, the failing powers—these are some of the outward tokens of the fatal disease beneath; and just as certain, though perhaps not so palpable, will be the indications, when the heart has turned aside from cleaving to the Lord, and the feet slipped away from the right path. There are

TWO KINDS OF CONSUMPTION, slow and rapid, so the fall of a believer is sometimes sudden, sometimes little by little. And as with the physical disease, so with the spiritual, the seeds of decay are often there long before they are noticeable. The decline and fall of a once flourishing empire is sad enough, but the decline and fall of a believer is sadder still. Yet are we not too often reminded that such things are happening around us, and at times in so startling a manner as almost to raise the question, “Can So-and-so be a child of God?” And if *we* are preserved from any glaring inconsistency, yet

XII.



are we not all in danger of sinking to a lower level than we once occupied, and of growing careless and cold?

How important that each of us, instead of having to mourn over a backward movement, should be like Isaac, of whom we read in Genesis xxvi., "And the man

WAXED GREAT, AND WENT FORWARD,

and grew until he became very great." Of how few this can be said as to their spiritual career! Reader, does this describe thy spiritual progress? How has it been with you the last few weeks, or months, or years? Has it been advance, or decline? Where are you, as to the state of your soul, at the present moment? Take your bearings, we beseech you. Ascertain your position. Are you speeding onward to the heavenly shore, borne along by the power of the Holy Ghost, or are you drifting? If the latter, the longer you remain as you are, the more you will go astray, and the harder it will be for you to recover the lost ground.

TAKE THE HELM AND STEER

once more for the desired haven. Neither let anyone imagine it is enough to stand still. We cannot do that for long, the currents around us are too strong. It means either forward or backward, progress or retrogression, with every one of us. How is it with you?

1. One great danger we need to be on our guard against is a *self-satisfied state*. Reader, beware of becoming satisfied with your spiritual progress. Nothing is more insidious, and yet there is hardly anything to which we are more liable. It suits us admirably to think, "Well, there is not much the matter with me." Take care; one thing has happened already, if you think that. You are getting out of the presence of God. A soul near to God will never be self-satisfied. A celebrated painter, when he had finished a certain picture,

BROKE HIS PALETTE,

because he said he had satisfied himself, and therefore he knew his power was gone. It will be the same with us as Christians; the moment a sense of satisfaction begins to steal over us, our power will be gone, and decline will have begun. It was self-satisfaction in Peter that led to his fall. Let us rather seek to be like Paul, who said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after . . . this one thing I do. . . . I press toward the mark."

Self-satisfaction will inevitably lead to sloth. Look at the bride in Canticles. (Chap. v.) Her beloved is outside, and she is too lazy to open to him. He has been there long, for his head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. But

SHE HAS BEEN ASLEEP,

and her only reply to his knocking is the expression of her self-satisfaction, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" Satisfied to be without her beloved! And are we content to be without the company of Christ? More occupied with what He has done for us, than with what He wishes to be to us. If His Person does not command our affections, soul declension will soon set in. It had already done so in the case of the bride. And what was the end? "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me." Depend upon it, if Christ is not our object, nothing will keep our hearts, and sooner or later, as we have seen, we shall be exposed. Let us then seriously ask ourselves, "Is Christ to me all that He once was?" For the decline of the individual often begins where the decline of the Church began—"Thou hast left thy first love."

2. *Worldly associations* will infallibly lead to soul declension. Witness Naomi!

HARK TO HER SAD CONFESSION:

"I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." Such is the effect of forming worldly alliances. She had gone into the world, and the Almighty had had to testify against her. Once she was "pleasant," now "bitter." Are there any reading these lines who are in a like

case? Is the language of your heart something like what is described in the verse of a hymn—

“Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I sought the Lord,  
Where is that soul-transporting view  
Of Jesus and His word?”

Dear friend, has the world spoiled your taste for heavenly things? Have you formed some worldly alliance that has robbed you of the joy and peace that once were yours? If so, at this moment, without further delay, return as Naomi did. Like her you may have suffered severely from your folly, and like her you may have to return empty. But return. Remember the “house of bread,” where alone true satisfaction can be found. Remember those feasts you once enjoyed. And although God, in His governmental dealings, has had to testify against you and afflict you, remember, if once His child, He still remains your Father, and your place has never been filled since you left it. Get back at once to the place where God visits His people and gives them bread, and never, never leave it again.

3. *Earthly prosperity* is another occasion of soul declension. In proportion as a man's purse fills, his soul seems to empty. Many a one, zealous for the Lord in early days, whose spiritual career at the spring seemed to promise abundant fruitfulness, has failed to realize these expectations.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE CAUSE?

Worldly success. Scripture may well speak of the *deceitfulness* of riches. How few can bear prosperity! It tests many more than does adversity. David was a better man when he was hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, than when sitting at ease upon his throne. Never did the sun rise so brightly upon any earthly career as upon Solomon's, and for a time no one ever made better use of his opportunities, but in the end he proved unfaithful. Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of God at the beginning, but when he had "riches and honour in abundance," he joined affinity with Ahab. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

How is it with us? Do we want earthly prosperity or soul prosperity? Mark this, very few can have the two. Which do you choose? If God send you wealth, He may take away your health, or send you some other affliction that may act as ballast. Better this than what was said of Israel should happen to you. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." Rather may Agur's prayer be ours: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." (Prov. xxx. 8, 9.)

This suggests another thought, viz., that "the cares of this world," as well as the deceitfulness

## SOUL DECLENSION.

257

of riches, choke the word. The tree promised fair, the blossom was full and abundant; but there came

## A KILLING FROST,

and much of the fruit was spoiled. Perhaps, my reader, this is so with you. You sink beneath a load of care, and do not know how to rise above it. Anxiety withers everything. And you have almost ceased to hope for anything different. You are as badly off as the man of wealth; he has not known how to use his money, and so it became a bane instead of a blessing; and you have not known what to do with your care. And yet it might have been a blessing to you. You have been crushed by it, when the Lord only sent it to make you lean upon Him; and you have tasted only the bitterness, when, if you had looked at it in His presence, and accepted it from Him, even this strong grief, like the carcass of the lion, would have yielded sweetness. And what has been the effect of it all?

## YOU HAVE DECLINED IN SOUL.

What else could be the effect of not trusting Him? But do not think that all is hopeless. He is ready to be trusted now. Remember He has said, He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Believe Him to be as good as His word. He has said, "Be careful for nothing," and has told you to carry everything to Him in prayer; and if you only do this, instead of your care that now weighs you down, you shall have His peace that will make your heart lighter

XII.\*

than a child's. For has He not said, "Casting *all* your care upon Him; for He careth for you?"

Why should not you be able to say, as well as others, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (yes, even this disease of doubt and unbelief); "who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with *lovingkindness and tender mercies*; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's?" Then, instead of backsliding, you will be drawn nearer to God—you will mount up.

Perhaps there may be someone who says, "But my cares are the result of my own folly," and therefore you think you must bear them as best you can. And so you go on month after month, your

DESPONDENCY GROWING DEEPER,

and your heart more and more seared, and further removed from God. But let me ask you, Were not the troubles and sorrows that befell Naomi all the result of her own folly? But did she use this as an argument for remaining in the land of Moab. Not at all. She heard the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, and, wanderer as she was, she knew enough of the God of Israel to know that if she went back there would be bread for her. And so it will be with you. His grace towards you has not changed,

and never will. It began with you because of Christ, when you deserved nothing, and will continue for the same reason, though, if possible, you deserve still less, for Christ has not changed, though you have. All that we deserved at our very worst was laid upon Him, in order that we might get what He deserves; and so we not only taste now the riches of His grace, but in the ages to come God is going to shew "the *exceeding* riches of His grace in His kindness towards us *through Christ Jesus.*"

4. We would briefly notice a fourth reason for soul declension—it is *lack of patience in running the race.* We are exhorted to run with *patience.* (Heb. xii. 1.) This seems to imply that the race may be long, and will test our power of endurance. Some races are accomplished in a single spurt—not so with this. Many could get through

#### A HUNDRED YARDS' RACE

very well, who would cut a sorry figure when it came to five miles, or even half that distance. This would be too great a tax upon their staying power. And so, in view of the heavenly race, the apostle says, "Ye have need of endurance." How many have fallen out of the race for lack of this quality! The path became monotonous, or they encountered difficulties they did not expect, and so they turned aside into an easier way. They think heaven will be a very pleasant place at the close of life's journey; but earth is



exceedingly nice, so long as they are here, and while they were in the race they could not enjoy it; and as long as heaven is reached at last, that is the great thing to them!

But what about the recompense of the reward? (Heb. xi. 26.) Moses was

A MAN OF A DIFFERENT STAMP.

He chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Having begun the race, may we seek grace to continue, in order that we may finish our course. The apostle Paul, in writing his second epistle to Timothy says, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of." Alas! how many are turned aside by evil doctrine. Of himself, after many years of service, he says, when speaking before Agrippa, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day"; and at the close he is able to say with triumph, "I have finished my course." So with Caleb. He could say at fourscore and five, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in." Is it not often when we are getting past middle life that decline begins?

5. A fifth reason is that *some evil propensity is*

*allowed to remain unjudged.* No one knew anything about it, perhaps they hardly admitted it to themselves; but, nevertheless, it was being nurtured in the heart, and one day the ravenous beast proved

TOO STRONG FOR ITS CAGE,

and broke loose. This has often happened (sometimes when least expected), and many a downfall has been the consequence. Look at that beautiful gourd, sheltering Jonah from the heat of the sun. What refreshing shade it affords him! But suddenly it withers. What has done it? Has some terrible hurricane swept by, or is it the effect of the burning rays of the sun? No; it has been done by a worm, a little insignificant creature that someone might have trodden under foot, and hardly noticed. So with us. The smallest evil, if allowed a place, even in the heart, may prove to be a worm that will wither our Christian life. Let us, then, scan our hearts carefully and constantly to ascertain if any evil tendency is there that needs to be judged. And, oh! even if it be a right hand, cut it off, or a right eye, pluck it out. As you value your peace and prosperity, do not allow the evil thing to find a lodgment in your breast.

There are numbers of things, too, though not wrong in themselves, any of which may easily become a snare.

The all-important thing is, not whether it is  
A SNARE TO OTHER PEOPLE,

but, is it a snare to us? How may we know? The answer is, Are you under the *power* of it? Money is not an evil in itself, but multitudes are completely under its spell. Dress is a necessity, and some find no temptation in it at all, while others are completely carried away by it. With each of us there is something. And the question we have to ask ourselves in regard to it is—and may the Lord enable us now, at this very moment, to answer it to Him—Have I control over it, or has it control over me?

Do not be satisfied, we beseech you, with saying, “It is only a little thing.” It is the little foxes that spoil the vines. Flies are only little, but “dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour.” We all remember the story of how

#### A TRAIN WAS STOPPED BY FLIES

that had got into the grease-box of the engine, thereby impeding the proper outflow. Diminutive creatures to bring to a standstill a thing so weighty! So some little sin, allowed in secret, may, sooner or later, throw us off the line altogether. The other day, several hundred tons of chalk had to be detached from a cliff; it took a large quantity of explosive material to do it, and immense force had to be exerted, and yet that chalk was but the conglomeration of

#### MYRIADS OF TINY SHELLS,

thousands of which could easily be crushed

between the thumb and finger. And so with some habit; it seemed such a light matter at first, but by-and-by it may become a load that you cannot throw off. If we are careful about the little failings, we shall not have to mourn over the great ones; and if the first beginnings of evil are nipped in the bud, we shall escape the greater consequences. A man comes to a point where the road divides; to take the wrong turning only requires a single step, but having taken it, the longer he follows that path the further he goes astray. So it is morally. We have to get back to the point of departure before there can be further progress. How painful the process is many can tell.

6. Once more, soul declension may result from *want of watchfulness and prayer*. Who can forget the words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, on the night of His betrayal—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"—or fail to remember the sad result, in one case at least, of not so doing? And we find this one, doubtless in remembrance of his own fall, exhorting others to "watch unto prayer." (1 Peter iv. 7.)

#### AN ARMY MARCHING

through an enemy's country is always on the alert, and so should we be. To be surprised is often to lose the battle, though otherwise well-equipped for the fray. We have an ever-watchful enemy, and he goes about as a roaring lion,

seeking whom he may devour. We need, therefore, to be vigilant, for we do not know when to expect an attack. There are his wiles, too. Our only safeguard is to have on the whole armour of God, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance."

Let us watch carefully our own hearts. They may easily become a hot-bed for unbelief and worldliness. "Ill weeds grow apace," and need constantly to be grubbed up, as much as the pleasant fruits need to be cultivated. How easily, too, we sink into a cold, formal state—outwardly correct, but

INWARDLY ICE-BOUND!

It is easy to lapse into this state, but harder to recover from it. If a gardener allows his greenhouse fire to get low on a cold night, he may find in the morning irreparable damage done. Let us keep ever in the warm sunshine of Christ's love, and our spiritual thermometer will be at its proper level.

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,  
It is not night if Thou be near."

The soul that is near Him never need fear decline.

7. Lastly, and very briefly, Would there not be less likelihood of soul declension if we were more *diligent*? "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." The best antidote to going backward is to go forward. A business man looks for his turnover to be larger each year; and if it is so, and

his regular profit is maintained, and his customers are reliable, he feels safe. But he would not feel safe otherwise. So a believer should not feel satisfied unless he is continually advancing. We are to go on adding. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance," and so on. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." In other words, if we do not go forward we shall go backward. If we do not add to what we have, we shall lose what we have got. Like

A MAN ON A BICYCLE,

we are only safe as we advance. And so Peter concludes, "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."

Shall we have this abundant entrance? It seems like what most of us have seen as we have looked out to sea—a well-manned ship, with every stitch of canvas set, and flag unfurled aloft, making for port! How splendid she looks as wind and sea bear her along to her desired haven! But another sight presents itself—that of a ship with sails rent, and mast overboard,

and rudder gone—little more than a hulk—being towed into port.

May we use all diligence, that so we may have an abundant entrance.

Having thus considered some of the causes of soul declension, we would in conclusion suggest a few of the safeguards against it. "Prevention is better than cure." What were all

#### THE BEST REMEDIES IN HAMBURG

worth when the cholera was raging, a few years ago, compared with the preventive measures employed in this country, which, under God, were successful in keeping the fell disease from fastening upon our shores?

The first safeguard is, that we cultivate a spirit of dependence. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Seek to be guided in everything by His Word. He has said, "I will guide thee with Mine eye"; that is, if you wait upon God you will get light as to every step of your pathway. Until the cloud moves, our only safety is in abiding where we are.

If we are dependent we shall more easily learn to be *content*. And this is an immense safeguard. Many have been

#### LED OFF THE RIGHT PATH

because they grasped after something they had not got. Be satisfied with God, and you will have all that is for your good.

## SOUL DECLENSION.

267

Moreover, if we are contented, we are also likely to have a *single eye*. How the possession of this would get rid at once of a host of things that trouble us! If Lot had had a single eye he would not have looked at the well-watered plains, and as a consequence would probably never have entered Sodom. If we can truly say,

“Jesus, Thou art enough,  
The mind and heart to fill,”

the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, will have no charm for us.

In seeking to *help others*, too, we shall find a great safeguard. We cannot do this unless we are going on ourselves.

## THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE

is more potent than any words. And the thought that we must practise ourselves what we have preached to others, we should often find a great stimulus.

But the greatest safeguard of all will be the cultivation of habitual nearness to Christ, and of increased acquaintance with Him. Without this, dependence, contentment, a single eye, a desire to help others, are not only useless, but impossible. Let us go on to know more of the meaning of His own words in John x., “I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, *and am known of Mine*, as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.”

And as a final safeguard may we make this our



constant prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

R. E.

---

### FACING THE TRUTH.

It is always a foolish thing for people to close their eyes to the truth, and yet it is one of the most natural things for the natural man to do. The sinner out of Christ believes in his heart that he is heading for a hopeless hell, yet he seeks to close his eyes to the fact, forgetting that it is far the best thing to face facts, and, if they are ominous, endeavour to change his position towards them. But the sinner is not the only one at fault. The believer may often be charged with similar folly. If he meets a truth in God's word which seems to contradict his preconceived notions, he is apt to shut his eyes to it, and, though the truth may force itself upon him again and again, yet each time it comes it is possibly put away as being a "non-essential." Truth is an integer, and "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."

We cannot afford to give a single word of God the go by. Let us look truth square in the face, and if it condemns any line of action, be it ever so small, let us bow to the truth, for God must be true, even though it should make every man a liar. The man who shuts his eyes to truth must, according to a natural, as well as a spiritual law, soon become blind to that truth. "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you," were the solemn words spoken by our Saviour to such as we have above referred to, and if we close our eyes to any light which God has given in His word, we shall be losers here and hereafter. Let us be true to God; true to His word. Thus, and thus only, shall we be found walking in the light, treading that path which, as a shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

H. G.

## NEUTRALITY.

**T**HERE can be no neutrality in divine things. When Christ's interests are at stake, we must be either for Him, or for His adversaries. We have it from His own lips, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matt. xii. 30). To this there is, and can be, no exception.

I turn to the Old Testament for illustration. We will begin with Exodus xxxii.

When Moses went up into the mountain to commune with God, and to receive the tables of the law from His hand, there was no need to ask, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Such a question in the camp of Israel would have been superfluous. But when Moses returned with the tables of the law in his hand, Aaron had made the golden calf, and the Israelites were worshipping it; and "Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." (v. 26.) No one could be neutral at such a time; they must declare themselves either on the Lord's side or against Him.

The second illustration is in Judges iv. and v.

God gave Deborah and Barak a great victory over the Canaanites, which they celebrated in a song; but the inhabitants of Meroz, instead of sharing in the victory, were cursed. (Judges v. 23.) "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; *because* they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." In other words, they were cursed because they were neutral.

Thirdly, in Judges xix and xx., we read of the terrible state of things in Israel, and how, with much suffering and loss, Israel put away the evil from among them; but in chapter xxi. 8-12, it comes out on enquiry that the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead had been neutral, and they are treated exactly as the people of Benjamin had been treated, who had sinned against the Lord.

Fourthly, we have the solemn history of the old prophet of Bethel, in 1 Kings xiii.

In chapter xii., we find the worship of the golden calves introduced by Jeroboam, with the avowed purpose of keeping the people from going to Jerusalem, God's centre of worship. One of these golden calves was set up in Bethel. Chap. xiii. 11 tells us that an old prophet dwelt there, but we do not read of a word of protest from him against the king and his altar. On the other hand, there is no reason to think he joined in the idolatrous worship of the calf. He was neutral. Consequently we read of a man of God, sent by

God out of Judah, to cry against the altar in the word of the Lord.

Notice how carefully he was warned against having fellowship with *anyone* at Bethel. He was to eat no bread, nor drink water *there* (v. 17), nor to return the way by which he went. Now Jehovah, whose word this was, knew before sending him that the old prophet dwelt there, but He meant the man of God from Judah to have no fellowship with him. We also see divine wisdom in his being forbidden to return the way he went; for that would have emboldened the weak ones to go to Bethel, and join in idol worship. (Compare 1 Cor. viii.) "Surely," they would have said, "it must be right when such a man of God goes." But although many saw him go, none saw him return. They consequently concluded that after all, he was only on a journey, and Bethel lay in his way.

What a melancholy thing it is to read of the determined effort of the old prophet to make the man of God from Judah recognize him in his neutral position!

First of all, he goes a journey to reach him. (v. 13.) Secondly, he lies, and deliberately falsifies the word of the Lord to accomplish his purpose. What a warning, for all time, to beware of those who are neutral in the things of God, and who, like the Pharisees, will compass sea and land to make one proselyte! (Matt. xxiii. 15.)

Finally, what can be worse than spiritual neutrality, or indifference to Christ, as set forth in Rev. iii. 15-18? "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

The next verse tells of gold tried in the fire, of white raiment, and of eye-salve; that is, divine righteousness, practical righteousness, and spiritual discernment. Where these things are found, there is no lukewarmness, neutrality, or indifference to Christ. But wherever we find neutrality, in what is due to Christ, we are sure to see spiritual blindness and want of practical righteousness, as in the case of the old prophet of Bethel. Whether the gold tried in the fire is also lacking, we must leave the judgment-seat of Christ to disclose. It is said in 2 Tim. ii. 19, "The Lord knoweth them that are His"; but our side of it is, not neutrality or indifference, but, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

Reader, beware of neutrality!

"Who is on the Lord's side?"

W. M.

## WHY DO YOU DOUBT?

“ I WISH I always had the assurance of my salvation, as you seem to have of yours,” said a lady to a Christian, a little while ago. “ You must be very happy.”

“ Why should you not have it, dear madam? It is yours by right and title as much as it is mine. You are a believer in Christ. You have come to Him, and you know that nothing but His precious blood can atone for your sins. This being so, you are entitled to the assurance of your salvation, and you ought to have it.”

“ Yes, but my faith is very small, and I find so much sin within. Others appear to be so good, so holy, and I am not.”

“ That may be quite true, but were you as holy as the angels, and your faith such that you could remove mountains, and you were to believe you were saved because of that, your assurance would rest on a false foundation. Believing in your own holiness and faith is a very different thing from believing God.

“ You tell me that your faith is very small. Why is that? Is it that your Saviour is so little worthy of your confidence? Is His word to be but doubtfully received? Suppose some friend

tells you something — something that concerns you, and which, if true, will greatly add to your happiness. After your friend is gone, you say to another, ‘My faith as to that is very small,’ and as you speak, your voice falters and your eyes swim in tears. Is it not plain that you do not believe what has been told you, and is not your want of faith a reflection cast on the truthfulness of your friend? Assuredly it is.

“Jesus, your best Friend, speaks to you. He tells you that He Himself has borne your sins in His own body on the tree. Everything that made for your condemnation He has removed from God’s sight for ever. Washed in His precious blood you are cleansed from all sin. No one can now condemn you, for God Himself justifies you. Yea, more than that, God Himself loves you, and owns you as His child. Why should you doubt this, seeing that it is the Lord who tells you so? Will you doubt the Lord?”

“What you say is very beautiful and very comforting, but — —”

“But what? The eye of your mind, I see, is now beginning to look within. The littleness of your faith, your own unworthiness, and your lack of enjoyment, at once start up before you. In other words SELF engages your thoughts, not Christ and His work and words.

“Look away from *self*. Look up into the glory of God and see Jesus there, who was once forsaken on account of your sins. The work by which our sins were purged is all done, and there is nothing, absolutely nothing, for us to do but joyfully to believe it. His resurrection is our justification, and His acceptance on high is the measure of ours. In infinite grace He identified Himself with our sins on the cross, that we, cleared from our sins, might be one with Him in all the favour and love in which He now is. Being one with Christ we live because He lives. If He swims we swim; if He sinks we sink; if He stands we stand; if He falls we fall. How sure and certain, then, everything is. There is no room for doubt or fear.”

“But we must love and serve Him, must we not?”

“Certainly, but do not say one word about loving and serving Him, till you are assured of your salvation and acceptance with God. Seek to understand the meaning of GRACE. Fathom its depth, measure its height, and explore its length and breadth, if you can. ‘By *grace* are ye saved.’ Salvation is all of grace, and, therefore, our love, our service, and everything else of a similar kind to which the word *our* can be attached, must go out of court. And it is *eternal* salvation, because it is all of grace from



first to last. When we know this, and can rejoice that we are in the everlasting favour and love of God, we may then rightly seek to live to Him all our earthly days. May this blessing be yours, dear friend."

Reader, how do you stand in reference to these things?

---

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. W.—The state of the heart is far more important than the attitude of the body, and undue concern about the latter betrays a mind occupied with petty things. Moreover, most of us are creatures of habit, and what we did yesterday we are very likely to do to-day by the mere force of custom. If one prefers to stand, and a second to kneel, and a third to remain seated when someone, as the mouthpiece of the rest, is addressing God in praise and worship, so let it be; we know of no Scripture that enjoins a rigid uniformity in such matters. In private devotions, we believe, everybody kneels, and if this were so in public we should not complain, though in certain circumstances the practice might greatly disturb, and be, after all, a matter of form, and nothing more. We cannot, however, too strongly deprecate the lack of reverence which is sometimes seen in those who should know better. We have been grieved and astonished to behold men professedly in the presence of the Lord, lounging in their seats much as a man might do at his

own fireside after a hard day's work. This is most unseemly.

As to your other question, remember the love we know now is the same love that we shall know in heaven—the same Saviour, the same God and Father. The things, too, which God has prepared for them that love Him are no longer hid; they are revealed in the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit is given that we might enter into those things here on earth. We shall, indeed, enjoy them without aught to hinder when we are with the Lord; still our apprehension and enjoyment of them should be ever increasing while here below.

Personally speaking, we have not the slightest hesitation in singing—

“Unseen, we love Thee; dear Thy name;  
But when our eyes behold,  
With joyful wonder we'll exclaim,  
'The half had not been told!'"

We have often sung it, and hope, please God, to do so again with all our heart. If anyone demurs to the last line, and says that *all* has been told, not half, I answer, that human speech is but a narrow vehicle for expressing all that Christ is. He is infinite, and His love immeasurable, and words are all too poor and mean to set His glories forth. Besides, when Paul was caught up into Paradise, and knew not whether he was in the body or out of it, he heard “unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter”—“things not suited to this lower world and our mortal condition.” (See New Translation and

foot-note to 2 Corinthians xii.) What those things are not even the wisest on earth can tell; but, I presume, we shall know them when we are no longer in our mortal condition, and have reached that sphere to which they properly belong. Still, we know very well what people mean when they tell us that "all is out now." They mean, so we presume, that the cycle of divine truth is complete; that the eternal purpose of God concerning Christ and His saints is made known; that, whereas saints of Old Testament days had to say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," we can rejoice that those things are now revealed according to 1 Corinthians ii. 9, 10, revealed too in words which the Holy Ghost has chosen. If this be what is meant, we endorse it most cordially, and without the least reserve.

"ELAKISTOTEROS."—The words printed in *italics* in the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures are so printed that every reader may know that they are no part of the Scriptures as originally written. They are sometimes necessary in order to make English, and sometimes they would be better if omitted. In Ephesians i. 20, ii. 6, iii. 10 "heavenly places" simply mean "the heavenlies"; and so also in chapter vi. 12 where, in our version, it is "high places." It should be "the heavenlies" throughout.

---

## CONTACT WITH CHRIST.

OUTLINE OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT PORT ANTONIO, JAMAICA,  
JANUARY 24TH, 1895.

**W**ILL you permit me to ask you a personal question? *Have you ever been in contact with the Lord Jesus Christ?*

You may know a great deal about Christ. Your mind may be well stocked with Scriptural knowledge as to His life on earth, His death upon the Cross, and His ascension to heaven, but have you ever got into living contact with *Himself?*

Probably you have been in contact with Christian friends, and Christian influences, all your life, but again let me ask, Have you ever got into close quarters with *Christ?* Has your soul been in contact with *Him?*

Do not seek to evade this question by telling me that you believe what the Bible says, and that you enjoy attending your place of worship, and that you regularly say your prayers. I am glad to hear all that, but the point that I am seeking to press upon you, is the deep importance of personal contact with the Saviour. Until a soul gets into contact with Christ, that soul is a withered, dead, polluted thing; but the moment there is contact, it is filled with health and life and blessing.

XII.

Imagine a land that is visited by a long spell of drought. No rain has fallen for many months. The fields are parched and brown with the heat. The trees, once so fair and lovely, are now withered and drooping. Their leaves are dry, and hang as if there were no life in them. One morning, however, we notice that a wonderful change has come over one of the trees. It seems to have taken a new lease of life. Its leaves are no longer withered and drooping. What is it that has happened to it? What is the cause of the marvellous change in the appearance of this tree? I will tell you. Inch by inch one of its rootlets has pierced its way through the hard, dry soil, till at last it has reached the river's bank, and is now *in contact* with the life-restoring water.

This, then, is the cause of the sudden change in the tree: *contact with the water*.

In just the same way, if you would be converted, and your soul filled with joy, you must get into personal contact with the Fountain-head of all blessing, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you will open your Testament, and read half a dozen verses in Luke viii., commencing at verse 43, you will find an illustration of this. An afflicted woman, helpless, disappointed, and ready to despair, puts forth her hand and touches the blessed Lord. She gets into *contact with Himself*, and lo! in the twinkling of an eye, she is healed! One moment in the presence of the Saviour ac-

compleishes what twelve long years of toil had altogether failed to effect.

Perhaps, among my readers, there is one who would *like* to draw near and touch the Saviour, but hardly knows how.

Well, the only way you can do it is by *faith*. You cannot get near to Him by efforts of your own. You might labour from now till your dying day; you might pray till your knees grow as hard as a camel's, and weep till your eyes dissolve in their sockets, and yet be as far as ever from Christ. The only way to draw near and touch Him is by faith. Simple, childlike faith in Himself; faith in His power; faith in His love; faith that says, "Lord! I have no one and nothing to trust to but Thyself, but *I do trust Thee*."

"Ah!" says some unhappy soul, "if it is a matter of faith, it is a poor look out for me, for I am afraid I haven't very much. Some people seem to have such strong faith, but mine seems so weak and feeble."

Let me remind you, then, of one thing. The blessed Saviour, who invites you to come and touch Him, is "FULL OF GRACE." Mark those words; they are the very words of Holy Scripture.

"But how does that bear upon the point?" you ask. In this way. If I were to place upon the table a glass filled to the very brim with water—so full that it could not hold another drop—and if you were to give it one little tiny, trembling

touch, what would be the result? Why, if the glass were *quite* full, the feeblest touch would be enough to make the water overflow. Now that is a picture of the Saviour. He is so full of grace and love, that the weakest and most trembling touch is enough to make the blessing overflow, down upon the head, and into the heart, of the most unworthy sinner on earth. You need not wait till your faith grows stronger. You may come just as you are, with your misgivings and fears. He will not disdain the touch even of *your* hand.

But one may well ask, "What shall I obtain if I touch the Lord Jesus, and thus get into contact with Him?" The answer to this question is— You will get what the woman, whose case is described in Luke viii., got. You will have your sins forgiven, your soul saved, and your heart made happy with divine peace and joy.

"All that is well worth having!" you exclaim. It is indeed, but I have not come to the end of the list yet.

"What!" you say, "surely no heart could wish for more than that! Forgiveness, salvation, and peace: what more would you have? *I* should be more than satisfied if only I could make sure of *those* blessings."

No doubt you would. But God delights to bless, not according to our thoughts, but according to His own thoughts. *He* is not satisfied with merely meeting our need, in forgiving our sins

and saving our souls, but in order to gratify His own heart of love, He heaps upon us blessing after blessing, till we are lost in wonder at the wealth of blessing with which we are surrounded.

Turn for a moment to John xx. verse 17: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not."

"Why," you say, "that is strange. It seems to contradict all that you have been saying. You have been asking us to come and touch Christ, and now you turn us to a passage where He forbids it, and says, 'Touch me not.' What does it all mean?"

Let me try and make it plain to you.

"But stay," you reply, "before you try to make it plain, why do you not finish what you were saying just now? Why not complete the list of the blessings which flow from contact with Christ, before you refer to those strange words 'Touch me not'?"

Well, dear friend, it may seem strange, but my reason for turning to those three words, "Touch me not," is that in *them* lies the secret of all those further and additional blessings.

At the time when the woman of Luke viii. touched the Lord, He was walking about upon earth as a Man amongst men, full of grace and mercy, dispensing blessing on every hand. The sick were cured, the dead were raised, lepers were cleansed, the hungry were fed; the blind, the deaf, the palsied, the withered, all reaped a rich



harvest of blessing from the presence of the Lord amongst them. Any who pleased were welcome to touch Him, and we read that "as many as touched Him were made whole." More than that, He could meet the need of their *souls*, and fill their hearts with the gladness of His salvation.

But bear in mind that all this time Calvary, with its untold sufferings, was yet future. The Saviour had yet to go to the cross, and shed His blood to atone for sin. The sacrifice to which we owe all our blessing had not yet been offered. The time had not yet come for the Son of God to be "delivered for our offences, and . . . raised again for our justification."

In John xx., however, where we read, "Touch Me not," the case is very different. When the Lord uttered these words, the cross and its agonies were over. He had drained the bitter cup of God's holy wrath, and had borne the storm of His righteous judgment against sin. For three days He had lain in the cold grave, and now, as a Mighty Victor, He had burst the bands of death asunder, and had risen triumphant from the tomb. He was about to ascend to His Father, and take His rightful place upon the throne of power and glory, and He knew that WHEN SEATED THERE, as a consequence of His mighty work upon the cross, He would be able to dispense blessing such as was never heard of when He

was on earth. So He said to Mary, "Touch Me not"; that is, "Don't touch Me NOW; wait until I have ascended to My Father; and THEN come and touch Me, and all that I have earned by My death upon the cross shall be yours."

Blessed as it was to touch Christ upon earth, it is unspeakably more blessed to get into contact with Christ in glory. Great as was the blessing that flowed from Him when in humiliation, far greater is the blessing that flows from Him now that He is glorified at God's right hand.

It would be impossible, within so short a compass, to speak of all the blessings that are given to the believer as a result of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. But I might just point out two, that are specially mentioned in John xx.

The first is RELATIONSHIP. The Lord says, in verse 17, "Go to My brethren." Note that word: "My brethren." Hitherto they had been disciples, servants, friends. But now He says, "Go to My *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father." That is, that as a consequence of His dying, rising, and ascending, we who believe on Him are His brethren—His Father is our Father. We are linked with Him in the relationship in which He Himself stands.

Never had such a thing been heard of till Christ rose from the dead. Speaking of Himself, in John xii., He had said: "Except a corn of

wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone." Christ was that corn of wheat; and unless He had died, and risen again, He could have had no brethren. But now, as the Risen Man, He can speak to us of "My Father and your Father." How precious this is! How infinitely beyond the blessings which were enjoyed in previous times. Forgiveness is one thing, relationship quite another. Through grace, both belong to the believer.

A second blessing, spoken of in John xx. is in verse 22—THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

It says, "He breathed on them" and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This again, was quite new. Other Scriptures clearly show that the gift of the Holy Ghost depended upon the ascension of Christ. For instance, we read in John vii., "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Again, in John xvi.: "If I go not away, the Comforter (*i.e.* the Holy Spirit) will not come unto you." But now that Christ *has* ascended up on high, the Holy Ghost is given to everyone who touches Him by faith.

Would that I could tell you of all the blessings that flow from contact with the Saviour in glory. But this I cannot now do. Great and magnificent as they are, they may all be *yours*, if only you will see to it that your soul gets into living contact with Him who is the Fountain-head of blessing.

H. P. B.

## THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

“For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”—2 COR. v. 10.

MANY real Christians get troubled in mind about this passage. Perhaps they have found peace from such a verse as John v. 24: “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.” You remember the joy it gave you when you could say, for the first time, “Thank God, I have His own word to tell me I shall never come into judgment.” Then you came across this verse, “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,” and it seemed to upset the other altogether. So you began to think that, after all, you would have to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and the question of your sins be raised again. Then fear came into the soul, and you wondered whether you would find yourself at last on the left hand of the Judge.

Now all that comes from your taking it for granted that the judgment-seat of Christ in this verse refers to one distinct day or time, whereas it does nothing of the sort.

11-11-1895

## 288 THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

The verse before us does indeed say that "we must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," and that *seems* to contradict the thought of the believer never coming into judgment. But we may safely say that Scripture cannot contradict itself. So 2 Cor. v. 10 does not contradict John v. 24. Still, when it says, "we must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," *it means all*—both converted and unconverted.

"Well," a person naturally exclaims, "when you say that, do you mean that the good and bad will stand together before the judgment-seat of Christ?"

No, because the "judgment-seat of Christ" is a very wide term. There are three distinct occasions, all of which might be called the judgment-seat of Christ. We will look at them presently.

How do we know that this 10th verse of 2 Cor. v. applies to the unconverted?

We have only to read the 11th verse to see that—"Knowing therefore *the terror of the Lord*, we persuade men."

"What does *the terror of the Lord* mean?"

Ah! the Apostle thinks of what a solemn thing it will be for the unconverted sinner to appear before God, with all his sins to answer for! He trembles, but not for himself. There is no terror for him. Jesus has taken away all fear of judgment from his heart; but he persuades men, as they value their own souls, to escape from coming wrath. This shows that

## THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST. 289

when the Apostle said "*All*" must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, he had the wicked, as well as the saints, in mind.

Let us now look at the three distinct occasions which may be justly spoken of as "the judgment-seat of Christ."

First. In 2 Tim. iv. 1, we read "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge *the quick* and *the dead* at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word."

The judgment of *the quick*, or living, you will find in Matt. xxv. 31. We know this parable of the sheep and goats is often brought forward to prove that there is to be a general resurrection. All good people are said to be the sheep, and all bad people the goats. But this passage does not speak of any one being raised. There is no resurrection mentioned in the chapter. It is the judgment of living nations, or Gentiles, on earth, who will be living when Jesus comes back as King in glory. Observe another thing. In verse 40, "The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Now it has been very wisely said, "If the sheep are *all* the good people, and the goats *all* the bad, who are these brethren?" You see that will not fit in at all. Well, the brethren spoken of here are supposed to be certain Jews that will be faithful to Jehovah

## 290 THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

after the Church has been taken up. They will go out and preach the gospel of the kingdom that we read of in Matt. xxiv. 14. These Jewish messengers will preach the gospel in very much the same way as the disciples did when the Lord was here on earth, and as the Gentiles reject or receive them, so they will be either blessed, or sent into everlasting punishment. This, then—the judgment of the living—might be called the judgment-seat of Christ. He judges *the quick* at His appearing and kingdom.

Let us now look at the judgment of "*the dead.*" Turn to Rev. xx. In the 11th verse we read, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." This judgment takes place not in Time, but *in Eternity*. I think it is very important to notice that the earth, as we see it at present, will have vanished away. Having served its purpose, it will be as a thing that is done with. But the unconverted sinner is not gone—he is not annihilated. No! The man who dies in his sins will stand in his *body* before the Great White Throne: he will be judged as a man, and will receive the things done in his body. And who will be the Judge? The Lord Jesus. The Apostle Peter says, in Acts x. 42, "And He

commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." The One who might have been their Saviour, will then be their Judge.

Notice the words, "The books were opened." These are what we might term the books of responsibility. A business man keeps books that he might know all that is owing to him, and all that he owes. And for what purpose are we told that God keeps books? Surely it is that we may remember that nothing is forgotten by Him. Man now thinks that he can commit sin after sin, and tries to persuade himself that God keeps no account. But it is not so. There, on the pages of those books, every man's name is recorded. Then, as it were, after the name of So-and-So, professing Christian, follow his privileges—had the Bible all his life, heard the gospel preached Sunday after Sunday, and so on—and then a list of sins, sins, sins; and the last condemning sin of all, "rejecter of the Christ of God." I should not like my name to be written in those books.

Let us remark here that great account is taken of privileges. We see this taught in Luke xii. 47, 48, "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten



## 292 THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." There is a poor heathen living out in Africa, who never heard the blessed gospel of God's grace—he will be beaten with but few stripes: and there is a man living in England who has heard the gospel, and has had every privilege, but he has turned his back upon Christ: he shall be beaten with many stripes. You remember how the Lord upbraided those cities in which most of His mighty works were done: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." The very thought of it is enough to make a sinner tremble.

But there is another book. It does not say that the sinner is judged out of the book of life. The book of life is a record, so to speak, kept by God, in which is written the name of every one of His own beloved people. "Then what is the use of opening the book of life there?" one might enquire. Simply to see, as a last chance, if his name is written therein.

Here, then, is the final judgment-seat of Christ for the unconverted. The Apostle Paul had this in mind when he said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." What

Paul did may we do also. He had no fear for himself, the question of his sins was settled; but the terror of the Lord, and the love of that blessed Saviour who gave Himself a ransom for all, that all who trust in Him might be sheltered from that coming judgment, constrained him to persuade men.

Now we come to what is our chief purpose in writing this article. We have seen the judgment-seat for the living in Matthew xxv., and for the dead at the Great White Throne in Rev. xx. But what about believers? When will they stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? It will be sometime between the coming of the Lord Jesus to take them to heaven, and His appearing *with* them when He comes back to this world in glory to set up His Kingdom.

What is the next thing that may happen for believers? It is what the Apostle Paul tells us about in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." There is nothing that has necessarily to take place before the Lord comes into the air (*not to earth*) to take His own to be with Himself for ever. Much will happen

## 294 THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

before He can appear in glory with them. This is often very puzzling to people. I remember reading a book, in which the writer declared that it was a most remarkable thing, which he could not attempt to explain, that the early Christians appear to have been looking for the Lord to come at any time, and yet it was evident that many things must happen before He could return to this earth, and he could not reconcile the two things. This difficulty is solved in an instant when we see that before the Lord appears in glory He is first coming for us, so that when He appears publicly in glory, all His saints will be seen coming with Him. The last time the world saw Jesus He was alone upon the cross; but the next time the world sees Jesus, will He be alone? No! He will come with all the trophies of His victory: He will come with all His saints.

I daresay some reader will be saying, "Is everything to be manifest at the judgment-seat of Christ? If so, how do you reconcile that with a verse in Hebrews x. ? We read there that God has said, 'Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.'" Well, let us look at the passage. Read first the 3rd verse—"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." The meaning of that is, that every time the year came to an end, God raised the question of sins again, and there had to be fresh sacrifices. Now compare that with verse 17—"And their

sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” What does this mean? It means that when once we believe in Christ, and trust Him for salvation, the question of all our sins is settled for ever before God, on the ground of the eternal efficacy of the blood of Christ, and He will never raise it more. *You* may raise it in your own soul many a time, and so may I, but *God* never will. Our sins may come out before the judgment-seat, but the question of their being imputed will never be raised.

But what leads us to believe that everything will come out at the judgment-seat of Christ? Let us turn to Luke xii. At the close of the 1st verse the Lord says to His disciples, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed: neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light: and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.” There is a sweeping statement. Think of all the things that are covered up, the secret sins that are committed, things concealed from the ears and eyes of men. All will come out. There is *nothing* (and nothing means nothing) covered that shall not be revealed: neither hid that shall not be known.

You may say, “Do you mean that all I did before my conversion will come out before the judgment-seat of Christ?” I ask, Why do you

## 296 THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

shrink from that thought? Do you not care to think that all you have ever done will be made manifest in that day? Then I fear you have never laid hold of the wonderful fact that all you have done, and all that you are by nature, has already come out at the cross. "Yes!" you may say, "I know my sins were put away there." I would ask you, how many of them? Not some, but *all*. "What! my sins *after* I was converted?" There is no such thing in Scripture as sins put away before and after conversion. A good many people have said to me, "I know that my sins were put away up to the time I believed, but my trouble is that I have committed sins since then—what about them?" When Jesus bore your sins and mine, they were *all* future, every one of them. The Lord laid them all upon Him. It is wonderful to think of it! God laid them on the One who is going to sit on the Great White Throne. The Judge has come before the judgment-day, and in grace and love has charged Himself with all our sins, so that He might have nothing to judge us for in that coming day.

Does any reader say, "Well, if the question of our sins cannot be raised, why do we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ at all?" One thing we shall be there for is this—it will then be settled as to rewards for faithfulness to the Lord during the few years we are down here. All we have ever done for the blessed Lord will

## THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST. 297

then be seen. Every bit of service that the Lord Himself has given us power and grace to do for Him, He will then give us credit for as if we had done it of ourselves. Perhaps things we thought nothing of here will be so magnified by the Lord in that day that He will, as it were, say, "Look what you did for Me." Some will receive rewards, and alas! there are those who will suffer loss, but they themselves will be saved, yet so as by fire.

And we must remember the solemn side, as well as the joyful side of that coming day. There is such a thing as a man professing to serve the Lord here, whose work in that day will not stand; it proves to be nothing but wood, hay, stubble. (1 Cor. iii. 10-15.)

I would say one thing, by the way, which, although very old, is very true, and will be a help, I think, in looking into our subject. Whenever it is a question of grace, and the value of Christ's work, then it is the Lord's coming from heaven to take us up to be with Himself for ever that Scripture speaks of. This has nothing to do with work for the Lord, or service. But when it is a question of service, or faithfulness, or our responsibility as Christians, then it is always the Lord's appearing with us in glory that is looked at.

Instead of the judgment-seat of Christ being a dreadful thing, it is a very blessed one to the believer. You need not be afraid. When you stand before that judgment-seat you will be like

## 298 THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

Christ Himself. You will have said "Good-bye" to all that you were as a lost child of Adam, you will have dropped every link with the old creation. When you look back you will see, it may be for the first time, how really bad you were when God picked you up. We shall look at it all, but shall be able to say, "That is not what *I am*, but what *I was*." Even now the believer can say, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more *I* that do it, but *sin* that dwelleth in me." How much more when we have dropped the last link with this old creation! Perhaps we should never understand, except for that day, how the Lord had to deal with us; how we might have been killed before we were converted; how He spoke to us—perhaps in a dream, or through some sickness—how He kept us from harm along the way; how He preserved us all the way through, up to the very last moment. What, think you, will be the result of seeing all that? Trembling and fear? No, I believe it will produce nothing but praise. It will be like the ending of the Psalms, which, after all the trials, sorrows, exercises of soul which are there set forth, close with Hallelujah! So it will be in that day.

“ When this passing world is done,  
 When has sunk yon radiant sun,  
 When I stand with Christ in glory,  
 Looking o’er life’s finished story—  
 Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
 Not till then, how much I owe.”

R. F. K.

## STRANDED, BUT SAVED.

THE course of the professing church is strikingly illustrated by Paul's voyage to Rome, the account of which is given in Acts xxvii. In verse 8 we find the outward-bound vessel fully freighted and safely sheltered in a place called "Fair Havens." Paul the prisoner was the Lord's weather-prophet at the time, and had his advice been taken, the vessel might have been saved from shipwreck, as the besieged city was delivered from destruction by the wisdom of the poor wise man in Eccles. ix. 15. "Sirs," said Paul, "I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." Alas! "the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard." The centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship more than the things which were spoken by Paul. So the vessel proceeded on her voyage with the south wind blowing softly, as though Providence frowned on Paul, and favoured those that heeded not his warning.

It soon became evident who was right—Paul, or the master of the ship. And when Paul was proved to be right, the centurion was seen to have been fatally wrong in relying on the ship-master's experience, and disregarding the counsel of the Lord's servant.



The only reliable authority is the word of God. Hence it is written, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii. 20.) The word of God is the Christian's chart and compass. By means of this, the Holy Spirit guides him over the sea of life, with all its dangers, and gives him to understand the purposes of God.

So fierce was the storm that overtook the Rome-ward bound vessel, that even life was despaired of by those on board. Then it was revealed to Paul by an angel of God, that there should be no loss of any man's life, but of the ship. So after he had chided them for refusing counsel at the commencement of the voyage, the apostle exhorts all on board to "be of good cheer," assuring them of their present safety and future deliverance, in accordance with the will of God and the angel's message. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." (v. 44.),

The one who predicted the storm and shipwreck, and knew how disastrous the voyage to Rome would be, was also made acquainted with that which awaited the assembly of God in its course through this world.

The storm-clouds were gathering in the distance, when the apostle delivered his prophetic speech in Acts xx., "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall

men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up." (vv. 29-32.)

A true prophet was known in olden times by the fulfilment of what he prophesied. Those that dared to doubt Paul's word at the commencement of the voyage could do so no more when *the storm was raging*. Nor can we question his words to the elders of Ephesus, *seeing they have been fulfilled*. The wolf has attacked the flock from without, the worst of evils have been practised within, and the same apostle tells us that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Tim. iii. 13.) Yet the saint can take courage, and say,

"Let the hurricane roar,  
'T will the sooner be o'er ;  
We'll weather the blast, and shelter at last,  
Safe on the heavenly shore."

It is interesting to see the apostle coming forward, after many dreary days and starless nights, when hope had fled, and fear had taken possession of the men on board, not only to assure them of their safety, and bid them "to be of good cheer," but also to provide them with food, and to encourage them to partake of it while they waited for the break of day.

Free from fear himself, and full of confidence

in God, he raised his heart and voice in thanksgiving in the presence of them all, and broke the bread and began to eat. Such was the effect of his exhortation and example, that they were "all of good cheer, and they also took some meat . . . . And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship." (Acts xxvii. 36-38.)

The utterances of Eliphaz, the Temanite, were beautifully fulfilled in the case of the apostle Paul on this occasion. "Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee. . . . when men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up." (Job xxii. 28, 29.)

The one that foretold the disaster was enabled to minister comfort to the distressed.

Those who look for a return of pentecostal times in the Church, and for the conversion of the world, through the preaching of the gospel during the present dispensation, have surely overlooked the apostle's farewell address in Acts xx., and also his second epistle to Timothy, both of which are prophetic. The latter exposes the evils for which the former prepares us, and warns the individual Christian in regard thereto. The truth they contain has been confirmed already by much that is both preached and practised in the professing Church, and "worse and worse" are the words employed in Scripture, to shew the progress of evil therein.

On the other hand, if we know the worst about the Church, as foretold in Scripture, and

can clearly see her decline, let us not be—like Paul's companions—ready to despair. The one who foretold the ruin of the Church calls upon us to "be of good cheer." The God who gave His servant Paul the lives of all them that sailed with him, gave the saints to Jesus long before the world began, and has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son.

"With such a hope let us rejoice,  
We soon shall hear the Saviour's voice."

If we accept Paul's ministry respecting the ruin of the Church, let us also accept what he says as regards the purpose of God, and the eternal salvation of all them that believe.

We have all had our part in the failure of the Church, and have laid ourselves open to reproof through our waywardness and want of subjection to the word of God. Therefore, we do well to humble ourselves, and deplore our sad condition. But since God has a purpose, and that to bring us to glory, we can "be of good cheer," and wait for the morning. We can eat of the spiritual meat which God has given, and drink of that spiritual rock which follows us; and when we have "eaten enough," we can rise up "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," and work for the One for whom we are waiting—

"And though by storms assailed,  
And though by trials pressed,  
Himself our Life, He bears us up,  
Right onward to the rest."

H. H.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. HENCE.—It may be possible for men so to harden their hearts against Christ; so repeatedly to resist the Holy Ghost, and to say unto God, “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways,” that at length they are taken at their word, and left alone. But this is certainly not your case. Instead of your conscience being in a stupor, it is keenly alive, and in place of treating the concerns of your soul with fatal indifference, they give you increasing anxiety, and drive you to your knees in fervent prayer. These are not the marks of one abandoned by God.

But your prayers for pardon and peace receive no answer. At least you say so, and this alarms and leads you to fear you are God-forsaken. At this point we believe you have missed your way. For what passage of Holy Scripture, let me ask, exhorts an anxious sinner to pray for salvation? I know of none. Do not misunderstand me. When a man is really awakened to see his lost condition, he will soon sink upon his knees, and blessed indeed it is to find him there. Still, Scripture nowhere says, “Sinner, pray to God to save you, and keep on praying till you feel you have got what you want.” It was not thus that Paul and Silas answered the distressed jailer when he pleadingly enquired, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They directed his thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ, as we would direct yours. They bade the trembling man believe on Him, and assured him that in doing so he would undoubtedly be saved. And so we say to you.

Impossible that any should believe on the Saviour and not be saved on the spot. But we would most

anxiously guard you against supposing that the belief of facts you have never doubted is the same thing as believing on Christ to the saving of the soul. Possibly you have given credence all your days to many great truths of the Gospel; but something beyond that is needed now, even confidence in the Saviour who loved and died for you. And this is to believe on Him. Oh! how worthy He is of your implicit trust. Withhold it then no longer, but commit yourself, a guilty, lost sinner, to Him who glories in being the Seeker and Saviour of such.

Many an encouraging word does He give lest any should hesitate. Are they heavy-laden? "Come unto Me," He says, "and I will give you rest." Do they feel their unworthiness to such a degree that they fear their approach would be repelled? "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," is His gracious reply to such misgivings. Again and again He calls, in words of pleading tenderness. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth"; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"; "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked . . . . turn ye, turn ye . . . for why will ye die?" What could be simpler and plainer than that?

And surely if you believe on Him, you will not refuse to receive His words, knowing them to be true and faithful. This is how peace will reach you—through belief of the truth. Too many grope in the dark for years, owing to their not being clear on these important points. They pray to be saved instead of confiding in the Saviour, and expect the knowledge of salvation to reach them through a change of feelings. Vain and delusive hope! Suited feelings the truth will assuredly beget, if it be believed; but it is the truth that begets them.

Once more let me urge you to confide in Him who is revealed in Scripture as the Saviour of the lost. He is not altogether unknown to you. His incarnation, His life on earth, His sufferings and death, His resurrection and ascension to God's right hand, are facts familiar to you from childhood. May what you know of Him lead you to trust Him unreservedly. He loves to be trusted, and those that know His name will put their trust in Him.

J. B. GALATIANS vi. 7, 8.—The principle enunciated in this passage applies with equal force to all men, saved and unsaved. It has reference to chap. v. 15–26, and sums up in two words the harvests that our sowing yields, "corruption" and "life-everlasting." In chapter v. 15–26, the apostle deals with the matter with a freer hand. Returning to the subject for a moment here he re-states the principle in few and solemn words, to which we do well to give heed.

A. R. F.—Very likely the writer of the well-known hymn, "From every stormy wind that blows," did not accurately distinguish between the mercy-seat and the throne of grace as scripture speaks of them. In singing it we rejoice that there is a refuge from every stormy wind, a spot where mercy is richly dispensed to needy souls; mercy that the saint needs though not taking the same form perhaps as that shewn him when, as an unsaved sinner, he first drew near to God. Such, at least, have been our own thoughts when we have sung the hymn in question with comfort of heart. But we feel very much for any who, like yourself, suffer from a mind rigidly exact. Many things must grate upon their ears which others do not notice. These catch what is meant and a little verbal inaccuracy does not seriously affect them. We should hardly consider the hymn suitable for every occasion. In a meeting for prayer it would find its most fitting place.

## THE LORD'S PRAYERS.

THE subject of prayer is one of the most interesting and important for the Christian, and what can be more delightful than to read and meditate on the Lord's prayers?

When we speak of the Lord's prayers, we do not include what is generally called the Lord's prayer. Properly speaking it is the disciples' prayer, although the difference between the prayers in Matthew vi. 9-13, and Luke xi. 2-4 shows they were not to use it as a mere formula, but "after this manner . . . pray ye." It is evident the Lord never used this form of words Himself, for He (it is needless to say) had no sins to be forgiven.

We often read of the Lord praying, as in Luke iii. 21, ix. 28, 29, Matt. xiv. 23, and in Luke vi. 12 He "continued all night in prayer to God." Again, in Luke xxii. 32, He tells Simon Peter He had prayed for him. But when we speak of the Lord's prayers, we do not mean any of these; we refer to the occasions on which the Spirit of God has recorded for us, the very words He used in prayer. There are seven of His prayers thus recorded, and we propose to take them in order, and meditate on them,

XII.



counting on the Lord for real edification from the study.

The first prayer we find in Matt. xi. 25, 26. John had come in the way of righteousness, neither eating nor drinking (*v.* 18), and they said "He hath a devil." Jesus had come in grace, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, and they called Him in derision, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. (*v.* 19.) Added to this the cities where His mighty works were done, had not repented. (*vv.* 20-24.) In short His ministry was rejected by Israel, and He might well say in the words of Isaiah xlix. 4 "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." But Matthew tells us, "at that time" Jesus said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

What a beautiful prayer at such a moment! How it tells us of One who not only walked in the full enjoyment of His relationship with the Father, but also in the love of that relationship—of One who had perfect delight in the Father's will being done, no matter at what cost to Himself.

The next prayer we find in John xi. 41, 42. It is at the grave of Lazarus, in the presence, not

only of human sorrow, but of death and corruption. "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."

He could say to Martha (*v.* 25), "I am the resurrection, and the life:" yet having taken the place of man, the place of dependence, He would only call Lazarus from the tomb, as the One who was heard. The time was not yet for unveiling His glory as the resurrection and the life, to the people who stood by.

The next prayer is in John xii. 27, 28. He, the corn of wheat, must die, or abide for ever alone (*v.* 24); but the Lord could not contemplate His death, and all that it meant, in being made sin, and bearing the wrath of God, without His soul being troubled, as He tells us Himself in, verse 27. All in that verse I take to be a soliloquy, and "Father, glorify Thy name" is His prayer. It meant the cross to Him, but the Father, and the Father's name being glorified, was more to Him than life itself. Compare John xiv. 30, 31, where He speaks of His death, and gives as reasons for it, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do."

We have now come to John xvii., which is surely pre-eminently the Lord's prayer. What an unburdening of His heart to the Father, about

His own which were in the world, the men whom the Father had given Him. How wonderful to know we are the Father's gift to the Son, and how blessed to know the Lord's desires for us—that we may be one, that we should be kept from the evil in the world, and that we may be with Him where He is, to behold His glory.

Next, we have His prayer in the garden, as recorded in Mark xiv. 36, as well as in Matthew and Luke. "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." How such a prayer conveys to us, the reality of the cross, and all the terrible suffering it meant to Him. As we read in Isa. liii. 7, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not his mouth:" and again in verse 10, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief." But while the Lord Jesus endured the cross, I need not say that His prayer in the garden, three times repeated (Matt. xxvi. 44), only shows us His perfection. This comes out in a striking way in Luke xxii. Satan comes to Judas in verse 3, and enters into him (the wicked man), and has his own way with him; He comes to Peter (the weak man), and he denies his Lord (see *vv.* 31-34, 54-62); He comes to Jesus (the perfect man), and He prays more earnestly! (*v.* 44.)

The next prayer is in Luke xxiii. 34, when He was crucified. Ingratitude, injustice, and all the

suffering the cruel heart of man could devise, had been heaped on Him, but it aroused no resentment in His breast, it drew no cry for vengeance from His lips. On the contrary, at such a moment, He uttered that lovely prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Lastly, we have His prayer in Luke xxiii. 46. "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost." What a fitting close to such a life, and how different to the cry He had uttered just before, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then He was draining the cup of wrath and bearing the judgment that we deserved. But having drained the cup, and exhausted the judgment, He can say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He is no longer the forsaken One, and no one takes His life from Him, as He says in John x. 17, 18: "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

Thus we have followed the Lord in these wonderful prayers, that allow us to see, so to speak, into His private life, and to be deeply interested witnesses of the blessed communion in which He lived with the Father.

We have first, His prayer when His ministry was rejected.

Secondly, His prayer at the grave of Lazarus.

Thirdly, His prayer when the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or abide alone.

Fourthly, His prayer for His own which are in the world.

Fifthly, His prayer when Satan came to Him, with the power of death, in the garden.

Sixthly, His prayer when He was crucified.

And lastly, His prayer at the moment He laid down His life.

Remark how in all His prayers He says, "Father." As we meditate on these things, may we learn to know Him better. W. MOORE.

---

## LEGAL EXPERIENCES.

"The strength of sin is the law."—1 COR. xv. 56.

SO long as I am under law, in any sense or measure, I am under the power of sin. And the most insidious way in which one is under law is for holiness, and not for pardon—although, in truth, there is not peace, for holiness is sought for in order to get it. There is a feeling that God is not pleased with us because we are not good enough, or because we are not so good as we ought to be. That is thorough legality. It is entire forgetfulness of Christ. It is seeking for fruits in us, in order to commend us to God.

And it shows itself in the want of rest in the soul *because of what we are*; that is, the soul is not simply resting on Christ. Christ may be known as a Saviour from wrath and condemnation, and the soul be seeking, now that it is saved, *to clothe itself before God with the fruits of the life* that He has given. And, inasmuch as these are never an adequate covering before Him, there is a feeling of fear, and a consciousness of not having that which can commend us to Him; and so the soul gets off Christ entirely, and into bondage, thus looking at the fruits of the Spirit as our covering, and not Christ, and looking for these to cover, and not at Him who has covered us all of His grace.

The soul has not come to the end of itself: it has not come to know that it is as powerless for good as it was alive for evil, and that Christ is my covering, my robe, *now, just as I am, and that all my fruits will never add one ray to His glory as my robe*; that I am perfect through His comeliness put upon me, as much as when displayed in glory. Oh, the heavenly joy and peace there is found in knowing Christ as thus made of God to us righteousness, not merely having forgiveness in Him, but this perfect righteousness, in which I am not only spotless, but comely in the eyes of God! Now, in all these legal experiences, Christ is not known thus. Hence the experiences.

*Selected.*

## CHRIST'S GOOD CONFESSION.

PAUL, in giving his son Timothy a solemn injunction to keep "this commandment without spot" (1 Timothy vi. 14), charged him "in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." He links Christ Jesus with God in the wording of this solemn charge. God is spoken of as the quickener of all things, and the one feature that marks the Lord Jesus Christ is the "good confession" He made before the Roman governor. No reference is made to His glorious resurrection or ascension, nor indeed to any of the miracles He wrought, bearing, as each of them did, so rich a testimony to His power and grace, but special notice is taken of His conduct before the judge.

We may ask ourselves, Why is this? Was there anything in that confession that could be placed on a par with His acts of power, or His resurrection? In reading the details of His manner before Pilate, we might, perhaps, fail to see the reason of this inspired reference. If we examine the first three gospels, we find that when asked by Pilate if He were "the King of the Jews," He quietly, but firmly, admitted the fact. He could not do otherwise. He had been

born King of the Jews (see Matt. ii.), and as such He died, the superscription on the cross giving the public emblazonment of it.

But that was not all. Though charged with many things He answered nothing; and Pilate marvelled. Defence He made none. The accusations, falsely preferred, fell back on the consciences of the accusers. Many there were to condemn, none, alas, to befriend! Where were the nine? Where the crowds of healed, and fed, and forgiven? Where were those who had shared His benefactions, and heard His accents of love? He looked for pity, and found none! He stood alone, and was ominously silent before the governor. He could have repelled every charge, and vindicated Himself against each accuser, but self-defence was not His object when self-surrender, absolute and unequivocal, was the business of His blessed life below.

Washing his hands of the case, Pilate, with sad culpability, gave Him over to His enemies; and, so far as these gospels teach us, other confession the Lord did not make before Pilate. But when we turn to John (see chapter xviii.) we find the same confession clearly made, enlarged upon, and presented in the manner peculiar to the fourth gospel. The blessed Lord admits that He is King of the Jews, but as ever in this gospel rejected by them, He, in turn, intimates that He cannot acknowledge the nation. Re-



jection is mutual, how unwillingly so on His part need not be said. How often would He have gathered them, but as often they would not! That being so, He answered Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence." Notice, He does not say that His servants would have fought that He should not be delivered to the *Gentiles*. That would have been insurrection, but it was the Jews who, instead of accepting this their true King, were bitterly and implacably opposed to Him. Had the Lord, therefore, sought to establish His kingdom by force there would have been conflict between His followers and the nation. (He was, like David, King-rejected.) Hence He said, "Now is My kingdom not from hence." It was not of this world. Its spring and character were of a new and heavenly order, one to which the idea of carnal warfare was completely foreign. He attaches to His kingdom a new, and moral, and heavenly character. He does not relinquish His claim as King of Israel—that ever abides—but He rises into a higher region, and declares that He came for something more than to reign on earth.

"To this end," He says, "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is

of the truth heareth My voice." And now, assuredly, we reach the "*good confession*."

The commandment that Paul enjoined so earnestly on Timothy was that he should keep the truth—that Christianity in its pure and heavenly nature, in its close relation with the new creation, and in its unworldly source and character, should be strenuously maintained by him.

The Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth"—the witness to it—so that, if not found in her, it cannot be found anywhere. And Timothy, too, had an individual part to bear in this sacred witness. Now, says the Lord, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

That, amid a thousand other most gracious objects, was the one grand point in His birth and entrance into the world. Quite true, He was "born King of the Jews," but He was quite as truly born a witness to the truth.

"The Word became flesh" indeed; but here He is seen as born. His manhood is simply stated, though He, thus born, said also "for this cause came I into the world."

To come into the world He must have existed before that coming. And thus we have His Godhead stated as simply. We have the "*I*" who was born, and the "*I*" who came—the "*I*" of Bethlehem, and the "*I*" who was before Abraham. Yet, He it was who stood in human form and in lowly grace, before Pontius Pilate.

And had no one the eye to see, in that lowly form, One who was infinitely more than "*the Man Christ Jesus*," who had been sent by the High Priest as a prisoner to the judge? An opened eye was assuredly needed.

To be of the truth is needed for this—then, and only then, is His voice heard.

"What is truth?" said Pilate, as he passed away from His presence who was the Truth.

The same quiet firmness marks our blessed Lord, in bearing witness to the truth as marked Him in acknowledging His King-ship. His confession before Pilate was unfaltering; it was "*good!*"

And now, we may see, perhaps, why Paul adduced to Timothy the instance of the Master's confession before Pilate, as an incentive to his own testimony. The bright example of Jesus is ever the truest encouragement and stimulus to the faith of His followers.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life"—says Paul. The fight is good though stiff, and the life is true, and precious, and eternal, "whereunto," he adds, "thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Words of comfort and cheer (not of flattery) for the oft-tried heart of this faithful young soldier.

And only think, dear reader, that Christ Jesus witnessed a "good confession" before Pontius Pilate, as an example to ourselves that we should do the same. May we follow Him. J. W. S.

## FILLED AND SATISFIED.

JOHN vii. 37; iv. 14.

“Oh, God! Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts find no rest till they rest in Thee.”—ST. AUGUSTINE.

FULL of richest gifts, yet empty,  
Oh, my soul, how poor the bliss  
Which imperfectly doth fill thee!

Thou wert made for more than this.  
All the thrones and all the pleasures  
Of the world's alluring board,  
Could not satisfy the cravings  
Of a spirit formed for God.

All the floods and all the rivers,  
All the torrents and the rain,  
Flow into the ocean's fulness,  
Yet her depth can still contain.  
So if to thine arms thou gatherest,  
As thou goest on thy way,  
All the love and all the sweetness  
Of the fairest earthly day;

Yet, my soul, thou still wouldst wander,  
Seeking rest thou couldst not find;  
Incompleteness is the measure  
Of all human joy combined.

Oh! my soul, and is it vainly  
Thou wert made so deep and wide?  
Nay! for Jesus Christ is jealous  
In thy largeness to reside.

Made alone for God, God only  
Can thy longing spirit still;  
Only He who made the vessel  
Can the empty vessel fill.

Break, oh, God! the chains that bind me  
Captive to aught else but Thee;  
Draw me, fill me, overflow me,  
Now, as soon eternally.

Suggested by and partly translated from a French poem.

S. C. M. A.

“CONTINUED—CONTINUING—  
CONTINUE.”

THESE words may be compared to a chain of three links, extending from the earliest days of the church down to the end of this present dispensation.

The first two words occur in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. ii. 42 and 46), and are connected with Pentecostal times, and the third one with the last days and perilous times. The former has reference to the assembly as a whole, the latter was addressed to Timothy as an individual. (See 2 Tim. iii. 14.)

We learn from the passage in the Acts what the early Christians were accredited with doing, and from the one in 2 Timothy what our individual responsibility is, when spiritual decline has set in, and the love of many is waxing cold.

Christianity was introduced at first with remarkable tokens of divine power. The effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost were evident to all around. Truth carried conviction to the hearts of many, and grace triumphed where evil had prevailed. Persons of influence embraced the gospel, and even “sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” (Acts ii. 45.) Their eyes

“CONTINUED—CONTINUING—CONTINUE.” 321

were turned towards heaven, and their hearts from self to Christ.

We are not to suppose, however, that Christianity was intended to set aside every earthly distinction among the people of God, and reduce all to one common level. All believers occupy the same position before Him. They are called to enjoy the same privileges, and to share the same heavenly inheritance. In this respect the poor brother is ‘exalted,’ and the rich one is made low. Earthly riches we know cannot contribute to heavenly happiness, and grace enables both rich and poor to “rejoice” together, according to the exhortation in James i. 9, 10.

At the same time, God has so ordered it that His people should occupy different positions in this life, which we as Christians are called to acknowledge. Not claiming for ourselves honour which is not due to us, or refusing to give to others the honour which is due to them. To act so is both unseemly in the eyes of men, and contrary to the Word of God. (Rom. xiii. 7.) A more humble position in life sometimes becomes a most honourable one, on account of the faithfulness of the person that occupies it. This is clearly seen in the case of the “widow indeed,” to whose name a long list of good works is attached in 1 Tim. v. 10, and who serves as an example of one continuing in the apostles’ doctrine, or teaching. “To do good, and to com-

322 "CONTINUED—CONTINUING—CONTINUE."

municate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 16.) This was part of their teaching, and she did not forget it.

It was no mean service on the part of a poor widow, who would give up her only bedroom to a servant of God, and then gladly retire to rest on a couch below. Who could refuse such hospitality, or hinder such acceptable sacrifice from ascending to God?

There were about three thousand souls added to the assembly on the day of Pentecost, "and they continued stedfastly," we are told, "in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." (Acts ii. 42, 43.)

"The wonders and signs" have ceased, and the apostles themselves have passed away. Their "doctrine," however, has not ceased, and will remain as long as the assembly is on earth. Therefore the breaking of bread and prayers are among the things which Christians are called to continue in until the Lord comes, when prayer will cease, and praise will be the employment of His people for evermore.

The Jewish system of religion had waxed old when Christianity was introduced, and was "ready to vanish away." The latter was never intended to improve the former, but to displace it entirely. (See Luke v. 36.) Nevertheless, the former did not cease during the lifetime of the

“CONTINUED—CONTINUING—CONTINUE.” 323

apostles, and the temple at Jerusalem was constantly resorted to for public worship, as the following verses prove—“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.” (Acts ii. 46, 47.) The Jewish system, with its place of worship, is now among the things which have passed away, and the assembly of God composed of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit,” has taken the place of it on the earth. (Eph. ii. 22.)

There was no reason for brotherly love to decline when the temple had gone to decay, but, sad to say, it did. The lack of it to-day is felt on every hand, and proves that Christians have not continued in the apostles’ doctrine, which exhorts us to “love one another with a pure heart fervently.” (1 Peter i. 22; Heb. xiii. 1.)

But there is no reason why it should not revive again; only our love towards the Lord must increase before our love for His saints will revive. And why should it not be so? “Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” (Ps. lxxxv. 6.)

We have seen what characterized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in those bygone, brighter days, when thousands of hearts were united in



## 324 "CONTINUED—CONTINUING—CONTINUE."

love, and thousands of voices uplifted in praise, thanksgiving, and prayer; when the Word of God mightily prevailed, and "great power" accompanied the testimony of His servants, and "great grace" was upon all His people. (Acts iv. 33.)

Let us now consider for a moment what our individual responsibility is in the light of the following passage of scripture. It is the last link of our chain, and applies to the closing days of the dispensation: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them," &c. (2 Tim. iii. 14.)

What Timothy had learned, he learned from the apostle Paul; and what the apostle had received, he received from the Lord. "The mystery" of the Church, "the Gospel," "the breaking of bread," and "the coming of the Lord," all came to him from the same source—the Lord in glory. (Eph. iii. 5–8; Gal. i. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xi. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 15.)

The decline of the church had already set in, and Timothy was exhorted as an individual to "continue." What applied to him, applies, in a great extent, to every child of God. The same holy Scriptures, which are able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," contain "the apostles' doctrine." We have the same Spirit to guide us into all truth; the same Object to engage our affections; and the

## TO-MORROW.

325

same blessed hope to animate us. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. x. 37.)

It calls for faith, however, on our part, to profit by the presence of His Spirit and the ministry of His Word. But when the heart is set upon doing the will of God, it is surprising to see how much there is that may still be continued in for His glory by Christians, individually and collectively.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." (John vii. 17.)

H. H.

---

 TO-MORROW.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—MATT. vi. 34.

**D**OES each day upon its wing,  
 Its allotted burden bring?  
 Load it not besides with sorrow  
 Which belongeth to the morrow.

*Strength is promised, strength is given,*  
 When the heart by God is riven ;  
 But fore-date the day of woe,  
 And alone thou bear'st the blow.

*One thing only claims thy care ;*  
 Seek thou first by faith and prayer  
 That all-glorious world above,  
 Scene of righteousness and love ;  
 And whate'er thou need'st below,  
*He* thou trustest will bestow.

—*Words of Truth.*

## THE ONLY LAMP FOR OUR FEET.

WHEN we are in right earnest endeavouring to walk by faith, the path we tread narrows exceedingly, and it is anything but easy to keep our footing well. That which with less faith we could have done in times past, without stretching our conscience much, we now, with more faith, find we must turn from altogether. To walk according to conscience, and to walk according to God's word, are widely different. Samuel's conscience, in a manner, approved Jesse's eldest son as the proper king, but God's word appointed the youngest. At one time I was in — with a good conscience, I am out of it now because of His word. What we call blessing, is not blessing if it be not according to His Word. (See Psalm cxix. 9, 25, 28, 41, 58, 76, 101, 107, 116, 133, 169, 170.) Neither young nor old can truly cleanse their *way* by walking according to conscience. To cleanse *our way* we must take heed thereto, according to His word. It, and it only, is the lamp unto our feet, and the light unto our path; not conscience in any wise. Conscience is not the shedder of light around us, but the receiver of light shed by the word of God. Therefore, if it has only partially received that light, as is almost universally the case, there will be, in the most

devoted, and in the most conscientious children of God, a swerving from God's word in some things.

Yet, little as our light may be, we know our walk is *less*. Rutherford lamented, in his own case, that practice was short and narrow, and light so long and broad. "Many sit beside light," said he, "as sick folk beside meat, and cannot make use of it."

W. R.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ELAKISTOTEROS.—The seven parables of Matt. xiii. may, and we believe should, be divided into two parts, the first four having been spoken to the multitude on the sea-shore, and the remaining three to the disciples within the house. This distinction has been often remarked by others, and is therefore nothing new. Bear in mind that these parables are similitudes of the "kingdom of heaven," and remember that the kingdom and the Church are by no means the same thing. The Church is in the kingdom, but the terms are not identical. The treasure and the pearl in the two parables, of which you speak particularly, are regarded by many as referring exclusively to the Church, the former setting forth its worth, and the latter its beauty; while others see in the "treasure hid in a field," an allusion to the elect remnant of Israel, hidden among the nations, but which will be discovered and brought to light after the Church has been called to heaven. The disciples who followed the Lord when He was here on earth, are sometimes viewed as a sample of this elect remnant—we say *sometimes*, as in some places in the Gospels they may be viewed in other lights.

A. J. L. JOHN xviii. 10.—We know of no reason why the servant's name should have been mentioned here, together with the fact of its being the *right* ear that Simon Peter, in his mistaken zeal, cut off, unless to place it in the power of any to verify the statement should they be disposed to do so. It is not impossible that "some great meaning" may lie, hidden away, in the record, as you are inclined to believe, but we are ignorant of it ourselves, and always feel afraid to indulge in fanciful interpretations.

A. D. PHILIPPIANS iii. 10, 11.—The apostle desires to know Christ—he did indeed know Him, but he ardently desired to know Him better, and the power of His resurrection. It was a *risen* Christ he desired thus to know, not simply One known on earth as others had known Him in the days of His flesh, but One risen the other side of death, alive to die no more. To those who understand it aright, who see what it involves, the resurrection of Christ is a truth of immense power. It places our hopes in another sphere, and sets before us a goal beyond death and the grave, towards which we should run with unflagging steps. The power, then, of this great truth the apostle desired to know in all its fulness. And if his whole being was set on reaching the risen Christ in glory, as it surely was, he did not mind what the road that took him there; yea, he could long for fellowship in the sufferings of an earth-rejected Saviour, even if they led up to a death like His. Such we understand to be the meaning of these remarkable verses.

F. P. LUKE xvi.—The unjust steward's lord commended the *wisdom* of his servant, though he could

but frown on his dishonesty. Wisely, *not rightly*, the man had acted, having his own interests in view. The future to him was threatening, and he sought to make provision for it, though at the expense of his master, whom he had already served so badly. Let us, then, show wisdom, but of another sort, in using present things and opportunities with a clear eye to the future—using them so that we shall receive a full reward in a day to come.

J. W. Mc.Q.—If your own conscience is uneasy as to it, you had better set it at rest by yielding to its demands. But it is a very backward sort of movement, and one which you would have been spared had the matter been thought of earlier.

J. C. 1 CORINTHIANS xv. 29.—We hardly think your interpretation of this passage can be sustained. Read again the answer to A. S., in our September issue. We fear that you have not yet read it aright, possibly through a lack of clearness in the way we expressed ourselves.

J. B.—The baptism named in the various passages you quote is Christian baptism, though set, no doubt, in different connections. There is “one baptism,” not many. That of John Baptist was another thing altogether, as a glance at Acts xix. 4, 5 will show. So is the baptism of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians xii. 13. Beware of those of whom you speak, and give earnest heed to 1 John iv. 1.

B. T.—We feel hardly able to answer your question so fully as it deserves; but an admirable tract on “Likeness and Image,” from the very able pen of Mr. J. N. Darby, may be had of the publisher of this magazine.

E. B.—You ask us to explain the difference between “being born again and being saved.” They are altogether different ideas. When one is born again light breaks in upon the soul, and it receives, by divine communication, a new life and nature. You may ask, Is not the individual saved then? If you mean by that, Would he go to heaven were he to die suddenly, or be “caught up” were the Lord to come? we answer, Most assuredly he would, for all is certain on God’s side, and we know that whatsoever He doeth it shall be for ever. But salvation, *in the full Christian sense of the word*, means more than that. “Beware,” says a well-known writer, “of contracted views of salvation. Beware that you do not confound it with souls being quickened, or even brought into joy. Salvation supposes not this only, but a great deal more. There is hardly any phraseology that tends to more injury of souls in these matters than so loose a way of talking of salvation. People say of someone, ‘The man has not got anything like settled peace with God; perhaps he hardly knows his sins forgiven; but, at least, he is a saved soul.’ Here is an instance of what is so reprehensible, for this is precisely what salvation does *not* mean. I maintain that salvation signifies that deliverance for the believer which is the full consequence of the mighty work of Christ, apprehended not, of course, necessarily according to all its depth in God’s eyes, but, at any rate, applied to the soul in the power of the Holy Ghost.” These words are worth weighing.

