

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. XIV.

LONDON :

A. S. ROUSE, 15, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1897.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
“ Be it Known ”	1
“ Good ‘ Anti-Infidel ’ Tracts ”	11
Do You Love the Lord ?	13
Thoughts on the Lord’s Table and Supper	21
Answers to Correspondents—	
27, 54, 109, 135, 165, 192, 220, 249, 277, 308, 330	
Three Great Things	29
A Cake not Turned	39
Can God be Known ?	44
The Deceitfulness of Sin	49
The Double Cleansing	57
Ephesians vi. 18 Analysed	64
Christ and Happiness	66
Election	70
The Lovingkindnesses of the Lord	85
The Things that God Uses	95
Is all Well ?	100
Nimrod and Jabez	104
The Winning Side	113
A Glorious Sight	117
What Wait I For ?	124
The Only Way of Approach	128
An Eventful Journey	141
Four Negative Facts	148
Slothfulness is Wickedness	160
Fragments	164, 273
Peace	169
Boldness in the Day of Judgment	179

	PAGE
Enoch's Walk and Testimony	184
" I Must Work "	189
The Risen Christ	197
Archippus	210
The Gospel in Isaiah	214
On Evangelizing	219
Encouragement and Warning	225
The Seeking Shepherd	233
God's Facts and Man's Feelings	237
The Tale-Bearer	241
Encouragement for Difficult Times	245
Hindrances to Assurance of Salvation	253
A Bride for Christ	260
Think on These Things	274
Dependence	276
Doubting Castle	281
The Land of the Blue Sky	285
Sanctification in Three Aspects	293
God Loved and Gave	303
Things that Differ	309
The Holiest	313
Ruling or Grinding	321
" That Day "	327
 POETRY—	
A Song on a Sunless Day	69
Blessed be His Name	178
" Let us not be Weary "	213
" To-day "	329

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

“BE IT KNOWN.”

*Outline of an Address given at Lucca, Jamaica,
September 13th, 1896.*

THE other day I went into a shop to make a purchase, and laid half a crown upon the counter for payment. Before putting the coin into his till the shopkeeper rang it upon his desk to see if it was sterling money. By this means he was able to distinguish a good coin from a counterfeit.

In like manner there is a way of distinguishing the true gospel of God from the so-called gospel with which so many seem to be content. God's gospel has the sterling ring of divine certainty. It does not say, “Sinner, believe in Christ, and you may *hope* to be saved,” nor “Believe in Christ, and you shall *feel* saved”; nor are there any “ifs” or “may bes” about it. Hence, when Paul the apostle faces the men of Antioch, in Acts xiii., we find the gospel message ringing from his lips with no uncertain sound. “Be it *known* unto you,” he cries in verse 38. He does not say, “Here is something you may hope for, or feel,” but, as it were, “Here is something for you to be *sure* of, to *know* with absolute certainty.”

It is with the desire that every one of you

should possess this blessed assurance that I call attention to the words of the apostle in Acts xiii. Two important things are brought before us in verses 38 and 39.

(1) How to get forgiven.

(2) How to know it.

The first of these is certainly of supreme interest to those who feel the burden of their sins. The question is, Are *you* one of them? How often we find people a hundred times more concerned about their ailments and their troubles of one sort and another than about their *sins*!

Pause a moment and consider your position, if still unsaved. Above your head hangs a mountain of wrath that you cannot appease. Beneath your feet burns a flaming hell that you cannot quench. Behind you lies a guilty past that you cannot undo, and before you a black future that you cannot avert.

What has brought you into such a terrible position? Your SINS. Then for you the greatest of all questions is, "How may I get my sins forgiven?"

In answer to this question the apostle points straight upward. Without even so much as referring to the sinner's efforts, prayers, resolutions, etc., he speaks of a Man who sits yonder upon the throne of God. Once He was at Calvary bearing the load of judgment that sinners deserve. He shed His precious blood to atone for their sins, and did a mighty work, in virtue of which forgiveness is offered free to the vilest. Exalted

now to the right hand of power, He is the Fountain-head of blessing to all who will trust Him. Listen to the glad words as they drop from the apostle's lips, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

Is not this enough? Can you not rest your weary soul upon this pillow?

Perhaps you say, "Yes, I know that it is only by trusting in Christ that forgiveness is to be had, and I am sure I trust in Him, and yet I cannot say for certain that *I* am forgiven."

Let me ask you then to pay careful attention to the simple statement of the thirty-ninth verse.

Whose statement is it? It is the word of the God of truth Himself.

Whom does the statement concern? See for yourself; it speaks of "all that believe."

What is the statement? That all who believe "ARE JUSTIFIED from all things."

What conclusion are we to draw from this statement? None other than this — that the moment anyone comes in simple faith to the Lord Jesus, that one *is justified* there and then upon the spot. So if you are one of the "*all that believe*," you are one whom God declares to be justified from all things. Do you believe it?

Perhaps you reply, "It seems like taking too much credit to one's self to speak with such assurance on these matters."

How so? Let us suppose that typhoid fever is raging in the town where you live. One after

another falls a victim to it, and you are amongst those stricken. You call in a skilful physician, and place yourself under his care. He visits you, prescribes for you, and in every way does his best for you. At length, thanks to his able treatment, you are on the road to recovery, and soon you are quite well. One day I meet you in the street and enquire after your health.

"Thank you," you reply, "I am quite well."

"Indeed!" I exclaim. "But it was not long ago that I heard you were down with typhoid fever. It seems like taking too much credit to yourself to be so sure of your recovery."

What would you think of a speech like that?

"Why," you would say, "it is the very opposite. Thank God, I can say I am quite well; but in saying so I am giving all the credit to the doctor whose skilful treatment has brought me safely through."

In just the same way the believing sinner who takes his stand upon Acts xiii. 39, and says, "I am justified," is not guilty of presumption, since he gives all the credit to the One who has saved him.

"Well, sir," said an aged man to me one day, "if only I had as much faith as some people I might be able to talk like that."

This man was making a very common mistake. He thought that his assurance depended upon the amount of his faith. But the important question is not "How much faith have you?" but "On whom does your faith rest?"

I might have implicit confidence in a sheet of paper to carry me across the Atlantic, but my faith is of no avail, because it rests upon an unworthy object. On the other hand, I might have misgivings as to the ability of a powerful ocean steamer to perform the voyage. If, however, I do but venture on board, I find that my faith, feeble though it be, is of the right kind, because the object on which it rests is worthy.

In the same way one may have the strongest faith, and yet perish eternally, if that faith rests upon one's own perseverance, or efforts, or goodness. On the other hand, the feeblest faith that rests on Christ alone places one within the golden circle of "*all that believe*," and enables one to say, "I am justified."

Thus salvation is not dependent upon the quantity or strength of our faith. Many of you may have heard the story of the Irish boy, Mike, who was on a ship that was wrecked. By some means or other he managed to reach a high rock, and scrambling up its sides he sat on the top till he was rescued by a boat.

Some time after a gentleman was talking to Mike about his adventure. "Were you not afraid," he asked, "when you found yourself on that rock? Did you not tremble when you saw the waves dashing against it, and heard the tempest raging on every side?"

"Och, yer honour, is it thrimblin' yer spakin' of?" replied Mike, in his Irish brogue. "Many's

the time that I thrimbled on the rock, but *the rock never thrimbled once.*"

Mark those last five words: "The rock never trembled once." Take comfort from them. If by a living faith in Christ you have been set upon the eternal Rock of Ages be sure of this, be your faith great or small, the Rock will never tremble. You may tremble upon it a thousand times a day, but *it* will never tremble.

If Mike had sat upon that rock calm and serene, without a qualm or fear, he would have been *no safer* than he was. His safety depended not upon the strength of his faith, but upon the stability of the rock.

So with you. If your confidence were twenty-fold greater than it is, it would not and could not make you one whit more safe, so long as you are *on the Rock*. And were it to be even less than it is, your safety would be just as assured.

It is the Rock (Christ and His finished work) that ensures your safety; and it is *what God says* in Acts xiii. 39, about those on the Rock, that can give you the *certainty* of it.

I was trying to explain this to a lady whom I was visiting in the city of Birmingham.

"It is all very true, sir," was her reply, "and sometimes I feel sure of my salvation, but at other times my soul seems filled with doubts. One day I am on the mountain-top singing with joy, and the next day down in the valley of despair. With such a changeful experience I do not see

how I can have that constant assurance of which you speak."

This lady's words express a difficulty that is felt by many. They trust in the Lord Jesus and His precious blood, and then turn their eyes inward and seek for evidence of their salvation in their own experience. Finding it so changeful they get disheartened, and the devil takes advantage of their condition to keep them in continual suspense.

A simple illustration may serve to help such.

In the summer of 1894 a friend of mine and myself were holding tent meetings in a little Canadian town on the shores of Lake Huron. Each evening, when the meeting was over, we took our towels and went down to the lake for a swim.

One night the lake was very rough, and huge waves came rolling in upon the beach. Some distance away was the lighthouse at the entrance to the harbour. While swimming towards it a great wave lifted me high upon its crest, and gave me a full view of the clear, red light. The next moment I found myself down in the deep hollow between two waves, and the lighthouse was nowhere to be seen. Again a huge billow caught me, and as it raised me upon its bosom the light once more burst upon my view, only to be lost sight of, as before, as soon as the wave had passed.

This continued for some time. But now I

have a question to ask: How many times do you think that lighthouse went up and down?

"Why," you say, "what a foolish question! It was not the lighthouse, but YOU that went up and down. The lighthouse did not move once."

Need I stop to point out the application of this incident to your case? The lighthouse is like the finished work of Christ upon which your salvation depends. Sometimes you have a full view of it, and you feel that you can read your title clear to heaven. At other times your soul is enwrapped with mist and darkness, and tossed up and down by waves of doubt. But never forget that whatever your experience, whether cloudy or bright, the work of Christ remains unchangeably the same, and that at all times God sees you in all the value of that work. You may feel depressed and disheartened, but that does not alter your standing before God, nor lessen the value of the work which secures your safety.

Another reason why many fail to get assurance is that they become occupied with their own feelings instead of God's word.

When staying in the town of Carmarthen I was asked to visit a man dying of dropsy. His swollen features were a sight that I shall never forget. He seemed hardly conscious, but bending low at his side I whispered in his ear the words of our verses, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

"Are you one of those who believe on the Lord Jesus and are justified from all things?" I asked.

At first he made no answer, but as I repeated the question he raised himself upon his elbows, and in a tone of deep concern he said—

"There's no man in Carmarthen that trusts Him more than I do, and yet I cannot say I am justified."

"How is that?" I enquired. "Because I don't feel as I should like to feel," was his reply.

"But, my good man," I said, "suppose you could feel all that you wanted, and you build your assurance upon that, it would only be *full assurance of feeling*. Now God speaks of *full assurance of faith*, and that you may have this moment by disregarding your feelings and resting in simple faith upon what God says."

I trust by this time it is clear to you all that one's own feelings are worth absolutely nothing as an evidence of salvation, and that you can say in the words of the hymn—

"Upon the word I stand,
That cannot die.
Christ seals it in my hand,
He cannot lie :
The word that faileth never,
Abiding ever."

Have feelings no place whatever, then? Yes, indeed, happy feelings, though no proof of one's salvation, are a consequence of it.

A shop-girl employed in one of our large cities has a mother, whom she loves devotedly, away in the country. One day tidings reach her that her mother is seriously ill, in fact, not likely to live

long. Immediately she is plunged into the deepest grief, and her red, swollen eyes show to all whom she meets how great is her sorrow.

The next day, however, a telegram arrives for her. With eager haste she tears it open. Imagine her relief when she reads these words: "Mother much better; doctor says quite out of danger."

Her heart, which had been feeling as heavy as lead, is now as light as a feather, and the look of gloom upon her face is chased away by smiles of gladness. When she returns to the shop everyone notices the change. "Why, Jane," says someone, "what has come over you now?"

"Oh," she replies, "mother is ever so much better."

"How do you know that?" enquires the other.

Now what does Jane reply? Does she say, "I know it, because I feel so happy"? No, indeed; that would be the height of foolishness. She holds out the telegram and says, "*This* is how I know it."

Has she no happy feelings then? To be sure she has; but they are the result of believing the telegram. Faith came first, then happy feelings.

So it is in the matter of assurance. First of all there must be the childlike faith that says, "I know I am justified, because God says so." Then as a result there will surely be a feeling of happiness. To reverse the order is to put the cart before the horse, and to court uncertainty and doubt.

May *you*, dear friend, possess settled assurance, now and henceforward, by simply trusting God's statement about you.

H. P. B.

“GOOD ‘ANTI-INFIDEL’ TRACTS.”

SEVERAL months ago an earnest Christian enquired of us where he might obtain some good “anti-infidel” tracts. He was about to depart to the woods of northern Minnesota for the winter, and was desirous of taking with him a supply of suitable literature to distribute among the infidels he was sure to encounter there.

We told him we thought the best anti-infidel tracts were good *gospel* tracts. He doubted this at first, but the following account of a Socinian’s conversion convinced him.

At an anniversary in Paris some years ago a gentleman rose and related the case of a Socinian who had read, unmoved, many books of controversy concerning the Deity of the Lord Jesus, and other kindred doctrines of the Christian faith, while himself living in darkness and sin. In this state of mind he was one day presented with a little tract entitled *The Best Friend*, which simply told of Jesus. There was not a word of controversy in it. “Ah,” thought he, as he read the little paper, “this is just the friend for me.” Laying the tract on the table he fell on his knees, and confessing his guilt and errors, was converted to God on the spot.

“And now I would say,” concluded the gentle-

man, "*I am that man.*" He afterwards became one of the most devoted servants of Christ in France.

Let "fishers of men" stick to the gospel. Souls are never won to Christ by clever arguments. Facts of science and events of history do not form a basis of our faith. God gives us faith to credit what He Himself has written. (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.)

The word of God needs no corroboration. Its every book bespeaks a heavenly origin; every chapter challenges candid contradiction; every verse commands our credence, and every word confirms our confidence.

Its Author's *omnipresence* is reflected in its revelations. *Omniscience* shines from its prophetic pages. The impress of *omnipotence* is stamped upon the entire Book from Genesis to Revelation. "The word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isa. xl. 8.)

Why with armour-plate sheathe Gibraltar? Why prohibit or forbid the draining of old ocean? Why shield the sun or screen the stars from heathen darts and slings? And why waste time and energy in vindicating with the "carnal" weapon of human argument that which vindicates itself? We do not read of Paul delivering "anti-infidel" lectures. He met the "wisdom of the wise" at cultured Corinth with the "preaching of the cross." (Read 1 Cor. i. 18-31.)

Let Christians aim at consciences and hearts. Leave *heads* for pedagogues and politicians.

C. K.

DO YOU LOVE THE LORD ?

A Word to the Young Believer.

A CERTAIN king, who had long ruled over his country wisely and humanely, became, without reason, the object of hatred to every class of his subjects. They rose in rebellion, drove him from his throne, and set him, with one or two of his followers and a little food, adrift in an open boat on the wide sea. The king had just time to whisper a few words to his queen before the rebels had got him into their power. He told her she must go into obscurity, and there, unknown, watch how affairs went; look after his interests during his absence; and that as soon as he could he would send for her, hoping to be able afterwards to return with her, crush his foes, and re-establish his authority.

Now let us follow the fortunes of the little boat. Nature is kinder by far than the rude hand of man. Gentle waves and winds carry the little bark across the seas.

By-and-by they come in sight of land. Before them more distinctly grows the outline of the shore, and as they draw near they behold a magnificent country. There were broad, stately rivers flowing into capacious natural harbours, and

towering mountains, whose tops, clad in eternal snow, glittered like burnished silver beneath the rays of the great orb of day.

They glide presently into a fine harbour. To their unbounded astonishment the place is thick with people. Untold thousands are assembled on the shore. As the rejected king steps on land they set up mighty huzzas, cheer after cheer rend the sky, which are vociferously renewed as the great officer of state steps forward and places upon the brow of the rejected monarch the glittering crown of that fairer and better country.

Amidst the utmost enthusiasm they conduct him to the throne, where there file past him, doing him glad homage, bronzed warriors, the heroes of a hundred fights; statesmen who have grown grey in the service of their country; the great and noble of that land.

The king seizes his first opportunity, and sends to his queen a long account of the reception he had received, of the country over which he had been so wonderfully called to rule, adding that the same reception that met him awaited her.

Now TWO GREAT FACTS would greatly affect the queen.

First, *her husband was rejected wrongfully by his own country.*

Second, *he was accepted in the brighter and better country.*

The more she loved her husband, the more

DO YOU LOVE THE LORD ?

15

these *two great facts* would influence her. The only reason that could reconcile her to stay in the land that had rejected its king would be this: that in remaining she might care for his interests during his absence. But all the while she would ardently long for the moment when he would place her beside him on the throne of that fairer and better country. She would love the people of that land. Her heart would go out to it, because she loved her husband better than all beside.

Dear young Christian, do you read my little parable and the lesson that it teaches? I had known for many years the TWO GREAT FACTS I have sought to emphasize, viz. the Lord is rejected from this earth and accepted in glory. I had heard preachers use their double adjectives, talking about an "earth-rejected, heaven-accepted, glory-crowned, quickly-coming Saviour." I never dreamt of disputing their statements. I gave them a hearty credence, but they meant little then to my soul. And I dare say very many of my readers are in the same position to-day. And why? *Because they so little love the Lord.* There lies the secret of the whole matter.

The Lord cares greatly for the affections of your heart, young believer.

Look at that man. Thousands flock to hear him. His words thrill and stir his hearers to

the last degree. He is a great orator, and speaks with the tongues of men and angels. Yet God says he is no better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Why? *Because love is lacking.* Nothing makes up for love.

Look again. See that man. He prophesies, he understands all mysteries, he has all knowledge. Hundreds sit at his feet and drink in the words of the great teacher. No question puzzles him. Nay, more, he is a man of mighty faith. Difficulties—like great mountains—vanish before him. Yet that great man, whose words are treasured, and whose company is eagerly sought, *is nothing.* It does not say he *knows* nothing, and can *do* nothing, but that he *is* nothing. He is an absolute *nobody* to God. Why? *He lacks love.*

Look again. Was man ever so compassionate and philanthropic? See! He gives all his goods to feed the poor; nay, further, he feels it his duty to hold to his principles, though it lead him to the martyr's stake, and he perish in the faggot-flame lit by the hand of fanaticism. Yet his self-denial and surrender and constancy profit him absolutely nothing. Why? Love, that powerful, potent influence, that divine quality, is wanting. All goes for nothing if that be absent.

Look again. See that highly gifted Ephesian assembly. The Spirit of God says, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience." Yet to the Thessalonian assembly—the fruit of a

three-week visit, young in the faith—the apostle could gladly call to mind their “work of *faith*, and labour of LOVE, and patience of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Ah! *the spring* was present in one and not in the other. Intelligence, gift, outward order, seeming faithfulness, could not bridge the awful chasm there existed between Ephesus and Thessalonica as regards their spiritual state.

Sadly does the Lord say of the Ephesian assembly, “Nevertheless I have . . . against thee, because thou hast left **THY FIRST LOVE**. Remember therefore *from whence thou art fallen*, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Nothing made up for lack of love. Though all might seemingly be perfect, yet the waning of love meant the solemn setting aside of that assembly from its high position of being an exponent of the truth in all its freshness and purity. It is as if the fair bride had fallen from the Bridegroom’s side to the level and coldness of the world.

Dear young Christian, I ask you again, Do you love the Lord ?

In the light of your affection for Him remember this world absolutely rejected Him. When He came, full of grace and truth—the revealer of the Father, the dispenser of blessings

at every step, the long-promised Messiah—all united in rejecting Him.

No eye, unless illuminated by the Spirit's light, saw any beauty in Him, or discerned in the feeblest degree the moral excellencies of His Person. All united in rejecting Him, from high priest to soldier rabble, from Roman governor to mocking thief; the great, the noble, the gifted, the philanthropic, banded with the base and cruel and vile to cast out of this earth the only Man who was here solely for God's glory. Apart from the Spirit's gracious operation not one single heart beat in sympathy with Jesus. He was the Man of sorrows, the grief-acquainted One. The fox had its lair, the bird its nest in the forest tree, but the Son of man—the Man of Psalm viii.—had nowhere to lay His head.

And finally on the cross the world got rid of and rejected Him. And in that rejection the world has absolutely and irrevocably proved that there is nothing in man for God, that he is a moral wreck, without one spring that can be touched for God.

Can we, then, young believer, care for its pleasures, take part in its politics, and seek to get on in it? We may be prospered in this life, but we are here only and altogether in the interests of our absent Lord. And *affection* would not have it otherwise. Have *you* recognised this great fact yet, and does it affect your life? The blessed

Lord says of His own, "They are *not* of the world, *even* as I am not of the world."

Well, if the death of the Lord Jesus has closed the door for ever upon this world for us, how gladly do our hearts turn to the glory, and see the One who died for us, and who has won our hearts, as the accepted of God, as the Lord of glory, as the administrator of all good for man! How gladly can we look upon His face, in which shines all the glory of God, and know that the measure of His acceptance is ours; that we stand before God in all the worth and acceptability of a risen Christ, soon to be made absolutely good to us by God, when we shall be "conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren."

Oh, dear young believer, can we afford to go through this world in a lazy, slipshod, careless, easy fashion, little caring for the interests of our absent Lord? It is a marvellous privilege—in this world of self-seeking, money-loving, and pleasure-hunting—to be identified with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For if that death has closed the door for us upon everything of this world, be it coarse or refined, be it rude or intellectual, it has, blessed be God, opened the door for us into that new world—the Father's world, whose sky never knows a cloud, whose day never knows a close, where sorrow and death are absent, where chill and disappointment are never known. And we

are to live in the light of that world even now, and can by love, drawn by the Spirit's power, enter its domain and enjoy these affections which flow between the Father and Son; in short, enjoy eternal life.

It was in the sense of this that the apostle Paul could say in a Roman prison, with the shadows of the evening of life closing in upon him, with the gleam of the executioner's axe before his eyes, "*To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"

He lived for Christ here: His interests alone kept him in this world, and when the moment of his departure came it was absolute unalloyed gain, for it was to be **WITH CHRIST**.

But he awaits with us that moment when the Lord shall come for His people, and when we shall rise to meet Him in bodies of glory like His, *conformed* to His blessed image, like Him and for ever with Him.

Young Christian, I press upon you my question again, Do you love the Lord? And do these **TWO GREAT FACTS** affect you every moment here? Are you living alone for His interests? And does your heart know, while sharing His rejection, the communion of the Father's house even now, cheered by the near prospect of being there, with Him, and like Him for ever?

May it be **HIMSELF** that is ever before our hearts! For His name's sake. Amen.

A. J. P.

THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S TABLE AND SUPPER.

THERE is no privilege more precious to the Christian than the Supper of the Lord. It is there the blessed Master tells us all His love—a love which stayed not until it had accomplished our redemption and secured for us a place with Himself for ever.

God's glory was, of course, the first thought in the Saviour's mind in going to the cross. In atonement there was that which affected God's glory, and also had to say to our sins—propitiation and substitution—the Godward and manward side of atonement.

The Lord having gone through the deep waters of Gethsemane, and the infinitely deeper waters of Golgotha, where He was made sin, and forsaken of God—the Lord, I say, having gone through all this, would have us surround Himself at His own table, and remember Him in those circumstances. And what more sacred, more sanctifying, and more blessed?

It is not great intelligence that is needed—that may exist with great orthodoxy of expression and coldness of heart—but *affection* that cares enough for the Lord to do what will give Him pleasure,

22 THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S TABLE.

and which delights to linger around the scene of His unparalleled woes, and think of Him there—
and there for us.

In the first three gospels we have the institution of this blessed Supper. It will be well to have before our eyes the Saviour's words as they occur in the gospels.

Matt. xxvi. 26: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many *for the remission of sins.*"

Mark xiv. 22: "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the new testament, *which is shed for many.*"

Luke xxii. 19: "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, *This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.* Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, *which is shed for you.*"

These three scriptures set forth the original institution of the Lord's Supper, and we cannot improve on the original, nor does any further

THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S TABLE. 23

revelation at all weaken or set aside what was originally given. It was instituted for the Church, and not for Israel. It is found in the gospels because it was instituted by our Lord before He suffered; and it was given again by revelation to the apostle Paul, to guard our minds against the evil thought that it was nailed to the cross with the ordinances of Judaism. (Col. ii. 14.)

In 1 Cor. x. 16 we read: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Chapter xi. 24: "Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: *this do in remembrance of Me* This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, *in remembrance of Me.* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

Precious thought! We assemble around the table on which are placed the emblems of His death, and learn in His own words that it was for us He died—His body given, and His blood shed for us.

Just as the Israelites could sit on Jordan's bank and look into those waters and see the twelve stones erected there in memorial of the fact that it was into those depths the ark of God had gone (precious type of Christ), in order that they might be brought up out of them and into the promised

24 THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S TABLE.

land; even so we, at the table of the Lord, contemplate Him in death, and think of the awful billows of judgment which passed over His soul, that we might be saved therefrom and brought home to God.

Yes, gracious Lord, Thou didst say, "This is My body, which is broken for you—this cup is the new testament in My blood which is shed for you"—and, Lord, we would not forget it. Every first day of the week, as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we would remember it was for us; that we had a place in Thy heart of love, and that Thy death was for us—*even for us*.

"Do this," said our Lord, "in remembrance of Me." What more soul-stirring? Such an appeal reaches our innermost being, awakening the affections, and leading us to exclaim, "Yes, Lord, we delight to remember Thee!"

It is not the domain of great intelligence, nor of mere exactness of expression, as we have already said, but of divine affection on the Lord's part, and of responsive affection on ours. Cold orthodoxy is an intrusion here, and mere intellectuality in the things of God an extinguisher to the heart's affections. These can only produce spiritual death, and stop the overflowings of praise and worship to God and the Lamb.

Sweet is the thought that in the death of our Lord we are linked up with the glory of God; for that which met the claims of that glory

THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S TABLE. 25

has also met our need and secured our salvation. Praise His ever blessed name!

In a world that hated Him we show forth His death till He come. His death, for God, closed the history of man (John xii. 31), as did His resurrection begin that new creation in which God will rest with infinite delight for ever. (Col. i. 18; Rev. iii. 14.)

And it is "till He come." We remember the anguish of Calvary in the light of His coming and glory. Wonderful place and privilege for the people of God!

Nothing could produce praise and worship to God like the heart's remembrance of the Lord in death. Without effort the soul rises in worship of God.

It is within the holiest above we worship. Our title to enter is shown in Heb. x. 5-18; the nature of our worship stated in John iv. 23, 24; and the object of our worship—God and the Lamb. The Holy Spirit, given to us, leads up to it, for He is our power for worship, as well as our power in service. (John iv. 14; vii. 37-39.)

It is not that we carry our sins into the holiest—that were impossible; they were put away at Calvary—but the remembrance of Calvary, and that our sins *have* been put away, will never leave us; and the recollection of that scene of woe and death, *and all for us*, will but lead us to praise our God for ever.

26 THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S TABLE.

We shall never lose sight of the fact that we have been sinners, and that we are brands plucked from the everlasting burnings. Within the holiest we are reminded of it. We enter by the blood of Christ. He who bare our sins is there. He who will for ever bear the marks of His passion is there,—our great High Priest. The throne sprinkled with the blood is there: and God, who has been glorified thereby, sits thereon. Within the holiest, we worship and adore.

Schools of opinion, introduced at the Lord's table, are destructive of a proper remembrance of our Lord, and of real hearty praise to God. They lead to self-occupation, and destroy simplicity. The farther we get from them the freer and fuller will our praise be.

In a future day, when the saints are in glory, and around the throne set in heaven (Rev. v.), they will see in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain. (Rev. v. 6.) What is this but Calvary remembered? A sight of the Lamb as it had been slain—the remembrance of Calvary—is that which touches the heart, and it awakes to worship God and the Lamb.

The seals, as they are broken, speak, no doubt, of judgment for this poor world; but the praise and worship of the living creatures, the elders (the glorified saints), the angels, and of all creation, is for heaven. For creation itself shall be set free from the bondage of corruption, through the death of Christ, and praise will be the blessed consequence.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

7

Even now, while passing through the scene of the Lord's rejection, it is the privilege, the highest privilege, of the saints to worship God the Father and the Lamb. At the same time their hearts should be filled with *God's philanthropy* towards ruined man, whom they seek, by His grace, to lead to the Saviour.

“And they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals: because Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made them to our God kings and priests: and they shall reign over the earth.” (Rev. v. 9, 10, New Trans.)

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. A. J.—Titus iii. 5.—There are but two passages in which the word “regeneration” is found—here, and in Matthew xix. 28, the latter speaking of the kingdom yet to come. For us the word signifies the passing from the state we were in as men “in the flesh” into the new state and position of one “in Christ.” New birth is of course involved in this, but does not go so far. In addition to this new status there is the gift of the Holy Ghost, Who indwells the believer, and by

Whose power we live in the realization and enjoyment of those unseen and eternal things which constitute our proper portion. The "good works" of verse 14 are honest trades; not so in verse 14 of chapter ii. In your remarks as to these we entirely concur.

R. R.—Genesis ii. 17.—The word *death* is used in a double sense. There is moral and physical death, and both came in by sin. When Adam sinned the first resulted immediately, and the sentence of the second passed upon him to be carried out in due course. His being a living soul has nothing to say to this. By the breath of the Almighty he became a living soul, and he was thus distinguished from the lower creation. His fall did not do away with this important distinction, nor did it reduce Adam, the sinner, to a level with the beasts of the field, whose existence ends with physical death.

J. D.—If a careful comparison be made of the passages in the gospels which speak of the Lord's Supper we believe it will be found that Judas, the betrayer, did not partake of it, though sharing in the supper of the Passover. As to there being elders in the Church to-day, no doubt there are godly men possessing the qualifications insisted on in 1 Timothy iii., who exercise oversight among God's people without being officially appointed to that position. Indeed, in the ruined state of the Church of God it might well be asked, "Who are they who have authority to appoint, and from whom did they receive

As to recognition in heaven, 1 Thessalonians ii. 19, together with Matthew xvii. 3, might help you to a right conclusion.

THREE GREAT THINGS.

“It is finished.”—JOHN xix. 30.

“It is written.”—LUKE iv. 4.

“It is I.”—JOHN vi. 20.

SAFE! Sure!! Satisfied!!! Such is the happy condition of the soul that has learnt the lessons taught by the three sentences that stand at the head of this paper.

Short as the sentences are, and uttered long ago, they are full of deepest meaning, and fraught with richest blessing for those who have ears to hear.

When a soul enters into the truth conveyed by the first sentence, that soul is eternally SAFE, as safe as the blood of Christ can make it.

In going further, and learning the meaning of the second sentence, one can joyfully exclaim, “I am now SURE of my salvation. Not only are my sins gone, but my doubts and fears have vanished too.”

But the one who reaches the stage marked by the third sentence can say, “Not only am I safe beyond a doubt, but my heart is filled and SATISFIED beyond the power of tongue to tell!”

In short we have in these three scriptures:—

- (i.) “The way of salvation.” (Acts xvi. 17.)
- (ii.) “The knowledge of salvation.” (Luke i. 77.)
- (iii.) “The joy of salvation.” (Ps. li. 12.)

I. "IT IS FINISHED." This first sentence brings before us *the way of salvation* through the finished work of the blessed Saviour. Few words would be needed to explain this if people had a deeper realization of the holiness of God and the blackness of their sins. But, alas! many seem to feel the burden of their sins no more than they would the weight of a feather. The cares of life, the daily trials and troubles, the aches and pains, seem to weigh far more heavily upon them than the load of their guilt. Hence they apprehend but feebly the necessity of a great work having to be done before they could be forgiven and saved.

They imagine that a few earnest prayers, accompanied by sincere repentance, is all that is required. But sin is too great a matter to be cancelled so. A torrent of tears may extinguish the flame of a candle, but not the flame of God's wrath against sin.

See that child standing at his mother's side. He has been disobedient, and his mother is scolding him. But while she speaks the tears start to the little fellow's eyes, and he sobs, "Mother, I am sorry; please forgive me."

At once she stoops and kisses him, and says, "All right, my boy, I'll forgive you; never mind."

Do you think that God can forgive a sinner as that mother forgives her child? Never! Before

THREE GREAT THINGS.

31

He could print the kiss of forgiveness upon the brow of a single sinner, a mighty work must be done to show His abhorrence of sin, to vindicate Him from the charge of having tolerated it in His universe, and to meet all his claims with regard to it.

The zealous religionist realizes somewhat of this, and devotes his life to works and observances by which he hopes to satisfy God.

Others, knowing that such a task must prove fruitless in the end, give a place to the Saviour in the work of their salvation, but yet attempt to share in the work themselves. "Christ," say they, "has done His part, and we must do ours. We must strive to live pure lives, and hope that His merits will atone for our shortcomings."

It is not till we realize that we have not an atom of power either to save, or help to save ourselves, that we can understand the joy and relief brought to the soul by the blessed news that the work is already finished. Still further joy results when the soul appropriates that finished work, and learns the value that *God* attaches to it. Such a one has moved off the shifting sand of his own doings on to the firm foundation of the mighty work that is sufficient to uphold the glory of God.

In short, *he rests where God rests*, and he is as SAFE as if he were in heaven already. Relying

upon the finished work of Jesus he can triumphantly sing—

“ I stand upon His merit,
I know no safer stand ;
Not e'en where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land.”

Perhaps, however, there may be one among my readers who replies, “ I *do* trust in the merits of that finished work, and I *have* come to Jesus as a wretched sinner, with no hope but in Him, yet I cannot say that I am *quite certain* of my salvation. Sometimes I feel happy in the assurance of God's love ; at other times my soul is filled with doubts and misgivings.”

If such are your words, it will help you if we turn to the second of the three sentences :—

II. “ IT IS WRITTEN.” I think we shall find that in these words lies the key to the *knowledge of salvation*. But first let me ask you, From whence do you think your doubts and misgivings come ? From above or from beneath ?

“ I suppose from beneath. It must be Satan who puts them into my heart.”

You are right in thinking that *God* would never lead you to doubt His love, or have misgivings as to your security, after you have come to His Son for salvation. It is Satan who assails your soul with these fears. His object is to keep our hearts from enjoying the love of Christ, and he uses various means for this

purpose. With some it may be the charms of *the world*, or the observances of *religion without Christ*. But *you* have learned the hollowness of such things, so he assails you with doubts. The question is, How can you meet these assaults ?

Turn to Luke iv. for a moment. Here we find the blessed Saviour Himself enduring the assaults of the evil one. He might have defeated His foe by one omnipotent word, but He had taken the lowly place of an obedient man, and hence He repels Satan's attacks in a way that may well serve as an example for us. Three times over the devil sought to overthrow Him with his temptations, and three times the Saviour defeated him with the words, "*It is written.*" Mark this well, *the words of God were the resource of the Dependent One. He referred to what the Scriptures said of Him.*

Later on He declared that the Scriptures *testified of Him* (John v. 39), and again and again He used them as His resource in His conflict with evil men.

Now what I am anxious that you should understand is, that the Scriptures *testify of you* as well as of Christ. If He could point to *what is written* about Him, so can you !

Many a sweet passage might be quoted which bears direct witness to every believer that he is saved, and it is by receiving the witness of these

precious scriptures that the fears and doubts are cleared away.

Shall I quote one or two of these passages? If I do so, I will ask you to remember that they refer to *you*, and to every real believer in Jesus.

Here is one:—

“By Him all that believe *are justified* from all things.” (Acts xiii. 39.)

Here is another:—

“He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*.” (John iii. 36.)

Yet one more:—

“Ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth. . . . *Ye are saved*. . . . God for Christ’s sake *hath forgiven you*.” (Eph. i. 13; ii. 5; iv. 32.)

Many more passages might be mentioned, but these are enough to show that the Scriptures put an unfailing weapon into the hands of the harassed believer.

Next time the devil tries to persuade you to doubt your security, dear fellow-believer in Christ, turn to one of these passages and say, “Satan, *it is written!*” and for the comfort of your own soul remember—

(1) *What is written?* That “all who believe ARE justified, saved, and forgiven.”

(2) *Who wrote it?* The living God that cannot lie.

(3) *Where is it written?* Not in our hearts or in our experience, but on the pages of Scripture.

(4) *Why is it written?* That we might have the full assurance of salvation, and not be tossed about with every change of feeling.

John Bunyan wrote of Doubting Castle, and it is to be feared that many good pilgrims to the better land are lodged in its gloomy dungeons without knowing of anything brighter to be enjoyed on earth. But, as a friend remarked to me one day, "Certainty Square is a much pleasanter place to live in than Doubting Castle." And let me beseech you, dear fellow-pilgrim, to make the move at once. Pay no attention to the voice of your frames and feelings, but unlock the door of your dungeon with the key of *faith in what is written about you*, and breathe the sweet air of assurance and peace!

"If only I could do so," exclaims one of my readers, "I should consider myself the happiest Christian on earth. Surely no heart could wish for more than that."

You will be surprised, then, to be told that full assurance is but the start of a Christian life. It is but the opening of the door into a scene where blessing upon blessing in endless range appears before us. May God give you a glimpse of the wonderful joy which is our portion even now, while we turn to the last of our three passages.

III. "IT IS I." In these words, the Saviour presents *Himself* to us for the joy and satisfaction of our hearts. We have not merely His finished

work for our security, and the written Word of God for our assurance, but the living, risen Saviour Himself to be the object of our hearts. And, oh, how His attractiveness can charm, and how His love can flood with heavenly sunshine, these hearts of ours!

Sweet as it is to have the blessings, it is infinitely sweeter to be acquainted with the Blessor. Great as are the gifts He bestows, the Giver Himself transcends them all.

It is when *He* becomes precious to us that we learn with joy that His reason for removing our sins and bidding our fears begone was that He might have our hearts for His own dwelling-place, and that *He* might find happiness in the possession of us.

A simple incident which came under my notice may serve to illustrate what I mean.

During the summer of 1894 I was staying at a farmhouse far away in the backwoods of Canada. My kind host took me one morning to show me some land on which he had started a great fire to clear away the bush.

“You seem to be burning some valuable wood,” I remarked.

“The land is of more value than the trees,” he replied; “I have no use for the lumber.”

“What are you going to do with the land?” I enquired.

“When it is thoroughly cleared I expect to grow fruit on it, and to build myself a house on one part.”

Anyone can see that my good friend the farmer had a further object in view than the mere clearing of his land. In the same way, dear reader, if the Lord Jesus has cleared your conscience of sins, and swept the doubts and fears from your soul, *it is with a further purpose*. Like the Canadian backwoodsman, He has a dwelling-place for Himself in view, and He wants to produce fruit for Himself in your heart.

He does this, not so much by reminding you of the great things He has done for you, as by presenting Himself to you in such a way as to win the affections of your soul. In John vi., after displaying His power, He goes up into a mountain alone, typifying, no doubt, His present position in glory. His people are left to combat with adverse elements, and they are sore dismayed. Who can tell how cheered and delighted they must have been to hear that well-known voice saying, "*It is I,*" and to behold, not relief, but the Person who was everything to them ?

Many know Him as the One who can relieve their need and help them in their day of trouble, but to know Him *in His own circle* is more than this.

Let us suppose that in a certain town there is a poor old man whose age and infirmities quite prevent him from earning a livelihood. He is in a starving condition, when a kind gentleman, hearing of his sad case, visits him, and makes him the promise of ten shillings a week. As

regularly as the weeks come round the kind benefactor enters the humble cottage with his gift. He talks to the poor man, and cheers and comforts him, and proves himself a noble friend indeed.

Years pass in this way, and the old man gets more and more acquainted with his kind visitor. He can relate with unfeigned gratitude how he has been relieved and succoured by his generosity. But all this time *he has never once become acquainted with the gentleman in his own circle.* He has never visited his mansion, nor watched him at his occupation. He knows his benefactor as the one who has brought sunshine into *his* life, but he knows little or nothing of his benefactor's own life at his own home.

Does not this illustrate the point where many Christians stop? They know the Lord Jesus as the Saviour who has died for them and brought blessing to their souls, but they hardly know Him at all *in His own circle*, nor enter into His present occupations.

I cannot speak of this as one who knows much about it, but I can speak of it as one who desires to know more. My prayer is that every reader of these lines may have the *peace* of knowing that all that was against him has gone for ever in the cross of Christ, and the *joy* of knowing Christ Himself as He is to be known. H. P. B.

FALMOUTH, JAMAICA,
December, 1896.

A CAKE NOT TURNED.

“Now the just shall live by faith : but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”—HEBREWS x. 38, 39.

“Ephraim is a cake not turned.”—HOSEA vii. 8.

SO then a man may draw back. Yes, and a true Christian may draw back to a certain point, though when speaking of such the apostle is careful to say that “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

These Hebrews were drawing back, or at least were in danger of doing so. When first converted they were bitterly persecuted, their property was plundered, and they themselves were made a public spectacle. In this, however, they rejoiced, knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance. But as time went on they quailed, and some of them forsook the assembling of themselves together. They began to lose sight of the Invisible and of invisible things, and to return to that which could be seen and handled. In the exact measure in which a Christian does that, he ceases to live by faith. Therefore the apostle warns and encourages them. He tells them of their need of patience ; speaks to them of the coming of the Lord and of the just *living* by faith.

And we too have to live the life of faith. It is indeed the only life a believer should live, and if he is not so living he is walking as a man, and not as a Christian at all. Be he in sickness or in health, in the full tide of earthly prosperity or in the shallows of misfortune, the possessor of ten thousand a year or without a penny in the world that he can call his own, it is all the same; circumstances make no difference, for the life of faith is common to all believers.

But this life of faith has two sides—the earthward and the heavenward, as we may style them for want of better terms. Let this be borne in mind or we shall be like Ephraim—a cake not turned—one-sided men, blind to every side of things save that at which we look.

Now the earthward side of the life of faith is a life of daily dependence upon God; of daily wants spread out before the throne of grace; of ever-varying exercises that bring the soul into close dealings with the living God. Rich experiences issue from all this. We learn experimentally how good and great is the One with whom we have to do; how ample His resources; and how wise and strong His hand. We prove also the priestly grace of Christ, that He effectually succours the tempted, tenderly sympathizes with the sorrowing, and is able to save to the uttermost, no matter how great the difficulty or fierce the foe that must be faced. By

these things men live; by them the heart is subdued and its holiest affections nourished, strengthened, and developed. Had Israel passed at once from Egypt to Canaan, how little would they have known of their Almighty Deliverer. But the wilderness taught them that God was able to turn bitter waters sweet; able to make the flinty rock yield crystal streams; able to give them bread from heaven to eat; and, though infinitely great, disdained not to think of the clothes they wore and the shoes with which they were shod. Above all they learned that God is faithful, His love unchanging, that His counsel stands fast, and the thoughts of His heart endure to all generations.

If we despise this side of the life of faith, and think the heavenward side — of which we shall speak presently — the only side worthy of our thought, we shall suffer irreparable loss, and be as a cake not turned. Besides, a rude awakening possibly awaits us if we so dream. For should the Lord tarry, we shall be forced to feel that we have not yet done with the wilderness, and though we may taste the joys of *Home*, and in spirit dwell within its much-loved precincts, yet we are not actually there, but in circumstances where we cannot stand, save as we are supported by divine resources. But you are conscious perhaps of all this now. You are very sensible of being in a shifting scene. Death and decay on all around you see. Earthly

props give way. Dear and tender ties dissolve, and you are dismayed as you think of what future days may bring. Remember, then, O Christian, that *the just shall live by faith*. The point of the passage, as here used, lies in the word *live*. Let your heart lay hold of the living God. You shall endure as you see Him, who is Invisible. Draw near to Him. Pour out your desires before Him. His ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear, nor His arm shortened, that it cannot save. Do not limit God. He did wonders in days of old, and He doeth wonders still. Trust Him, though the day be dark and cloudy. He will never fail the trusting heart.

But there is the heavenward side of the life of faith, and if any are keenly alive to the earthward side and fail to lay hold of the other, they too will be like a cake not turned. For the life of faith of which we have spoken is not peculiar to the Christian era. There have been saints of God in all ages who have lived by faith, as Hebrews xi. plainly shows. Noble souls of whom the world was not worthy! And they too looked beyond the day in which they lived, though it cannot be said that their hopes were identical with ours. Now the resurrection and ascension into glory of our Lord Jesus Christ has opened the way for us into that world where He lives for evermore, and the things belonging to that scene of life and glory should fill the vision of our souls even now. In the faith of them we are to

walk. "Heavenly things" they are called in John iii.; "things which are above" in Col. iii.; "things which are not seen" in 2 Cor. iv.; "things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" in 1 Cor. ii.

Nor let anyone think that what we are talking about is something vague and visionary. Should any think so, let them read the latter part of 1 Corinthians ii. In that important passage we are told that these glorious things, long hid from the eyes of men, are now revealed; that they are declared unto us in words chosen by the Holy Ghost; and, inasmuch as they are beyond the natural powers to comprehend, the Spirit is given to the believer, that he might know and enjoy them here on earth. How is it then that so many do not know them? Is it not because they do not pursue them with purpose of heart? For though the Spirit be given to lead us into the enjoyment of these things, we cannot be so led if the things of earth engross our minds. Now the just shall live by faith. Christian, are you seeking the things which are above? You may be trusting God for every demand of the wilderness journey. So far as such things go your heart abides in peace. But is your eye on the unseen? Are you growing in acquaintance with the things of that world where the earth-rejected Saviour now is? The Spirit is here to lead you upward. Are you willing to be led, or are you content with being a cake not turned?

CAN GOD BE KNOWN?

A MORE important enquiry cannot be made. When one thinks of what that God must be by whom all that is seen is professedly made, and to whom man is presumably responsible—a God infinitely powerful and holy, and who takes unquestionable interest in His creatures, it is clearly a profoundly solemn matter that such a question should be answered aright.

But where can that answer be found?

Shall we turn to creation, to the material universe around us, and, by the aid of telescope and microscope, sweep the heavens or analyse the blade of grass?

This has been done with astonishing and convincing results to the unbiassed mind. Difficulties are, doubtless, found; and science, still in its infancy and daily learning errors in its own too hasty conclusions, is prone to magnify those difficulties, and to shut out from creation the idea of a Creator's hand.

Nevertheless, by strange coincidence, fresh evidences are constantly accruing which go far to convince even the unwilling scientist of the presence of a Designer's hand. Stones cry out! Nature speaks!

Creation should, indeed, speak, and its voice be heard. What is invisible in the Creator

should be and is seen, and seen clearly, being understood by the things that are made—even His eternal power and Godhead—not, indeed, His grace, or truth, or love, but infinite power and design, so much so that people are left thus without excuse. (See Romans i. 20.) Creation declares the power of God. It does not reveal what He is in Himself—His nature—but to any, except those wilfully blind, it is evidence sufficient of the existence of a Creator-God!

Still the knowledge of the *existence* of God is not the same as the knowledge of God Himself; and it is the latter that is our enquiry.

But just at this point a sadly interesting element must be introduced. How is it that God should be unknown to His creature man? The fact that He is unknown implies the presence of sin. A moral distance has been placed between God and man—a cloud, a film has darkened our spiritual vision—a spring of enmity has poisoned our affections, and has warped and vitiated our mind and judgment. Man has lost by sin his knowledge of God. He is fallen. This is sad indeed, but the admission of it goes far to help the honest enquirer out of his difficulty.

How, then, is this moral distance to be bridged? How can man possibly reach to God? Creation with its complex wonders cannot help him. The wisdom of the world is only speculation, leaving the hapless student in the cloudland of uncertainty.

The mind of man, in its grandest flight, carries him no further than supposition, whilst his affections plunge him into the horrors of idolatry. God is still unknown, and man hopelessly lost! Despair may lead its victim to say, "*There is no God,*" and seek to quiet his restless mind and guilty conscience by such an opiate. But still the cry of man is, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" (Job xxiii. 3.) For, after all, the poor needy creature longs for a knowledge of his Creator, and man must find out God.

What, then, is necessary? How alone can this knowledge be obtained? *By revelation.* It is essential, if man is to know God, that God should reveal Himself. He must, in pity, penetrate the cloud and make Himself known, not now in power, but in grace and truth.

This, blessed be His name, He has deigned to do—He has given a revelation of Himself.

But this revelation is not public. It is not for the outward eye or ear. It does not catch the senses. There has been, and there will be, many an expression of His wrath and of His favour, many a momentary display of His hand in mercy or in judgment; but this revelation is distinct from anything of that kind. We read that "the righteousness of God is from faith to faith." (Rom. i. 17.) It is a personal revelation of what He is to faith in the blessed recipient. Revelation necessitates faith, just as faith responds to revelation. The two are co-relative.

Now we reach our point: *God is known to faith.* The believer possesses this inestimable boon—he knows God. Wonderful grace, indeed! That which neither creation nor the wisdom of this world can bestow is the portion of the man who believes.

Hence Paul says, “*I know whom I have believed.*” (2 Tim. i. 12.) Faith and the knowledge of God went together—he knew God.

But what is the ground of this wonderful knowledge? It is in *redemption.* This transcends creation. It tells of love as creation speaks of power, it wins as the other overwhelms, it unveils a Heart as the other displays a Hand.

“God is love,” the proof being in the gift of His only-begotten Son. Amazing gift, unthought of and unwhispered by creation—a gift unsought by man, and, alas! how coldly spurned, too. The Son declared the Father, so that now God might be known as Father. The Son died to meet the judgment due to the sin that had created the distance, and alienated men from God. Now, the judgment borne and redemption completed in His death and resurrection, the barrier is removed; and God can righteously reveal Himself as a Saviour-God and as Father to all who, by His grace, believe on the Son. Hence that welcome word, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” (John xvii. 3.)

And this, again, leads to the closest possible intimacy of communion—"My Father will love Him, and We will come unto Him, and make Our abode with Him." (John xiv. 23.) Thus God may be known, and may become the spring of unutterable and holy delight. "God my exceeding joy" is an Old Testament expression (Psalm xliii. 4), whilst "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation," is the gladsome language of the New. (Rom. v. 11.) Thus God is made known by the gospel. It is the revelation to us of what He is. But the rejection of the gospel is the refusal of this wondrous light; and that, again, means the judgment of the refuser. *Vengeance must fall on them who know not God.* (See 2 Thess. i. 8.) If, then, God cannot be known, it would be unrighteous that such should suffer vengeance; but if, conversely, He can, and may, and should be known, then it is but righteous that the despiser of His grace should receive the eternal award of his unbelief.

Eternal life goes along with the knowledge of the Father and the Son; everlasting destruction is the doom of him who "knows not God, and obeys not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and let us remember that "everlasting destruction" is a destruction that is lasting ever! It knows no end.

May the reader see to it that he has the knowledge of God, as revealed to us in the gospel of His Son.

J. W. S.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

A Word on Smoking.

THERE is a remarkable point underlying these words. The passage especially referred to is Hebrews iii. 13. But there are two corresponding passages; one in Romans vii. 11, "Sin found its opportunity by means of the commandment, and slew me." It is curious how sin seems almost personified in this subject from Rom. vii. 7-25. We also read of the deceitfulness of riches in Matt. xiii. 22, which choke the Word.

There is a solemn truth in the words, "Hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." At first the sin is refused. But the temptation is played with. The sin then comes again. It is committed: the tender conscience reproaches. But the conscience is not obeyed. Alas! it is often thus that the gentle voice of the Holy Ghost is drowned by the clamours of the lust. Then gradually the conscience becomes hardened. Things once forbidden are allowed, first only in private. The evil one gets a further victory. Then publicity is not shunned. The sin has become the master. It has acquired dominion. How one recalls the nations of Canaan. Some of them were utterly destroyed by the Israelites, some driven out, and some kept under tribute. Those not expelled but kept under tribute

afterwards gained the upper hand. This is the history of all sins.

A deeper truth now is brought forward. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." It can be quickly grasped how riches may become a cause of sin, and deceive the weak saint. How often riches have spoiled or corrupted faith: and even the possession of a little money, not held in faith, will speedily corrupt that simple confidence in Jehovah-Jireh which should ever characterize the believer.

The writer will give now, for clearness sake, the history of a peculiar sin of his own. For in his case the thing was sin when judged in the light of that saying, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

After conversion the question of smoking came very soon before his conscience. Conscience for a time was obeyed, and the tobacco was expelled. But when he saw a Christian smoking, older than himself, his conscience was eased a bit, but did not yet allow it altogether.* Then mission work was taken up; conscience was disobeyed, and smoking missionaries were

* The writer was converted, and at Oxford was thought to be a holy man. An earnest friend brought some men over from Cambridge, who were Christian men, to see him as a brother Christian. The men came up seeking a happy few minutes. But he long remembers what a chill there was when found smoking. This ought to have been a voice from God. But fleshly lusts are strong. For them we will often disobey the Holy Spirit and grieve Him, continually pleading some excuse.

followed. But God let him know the bondage of this habit, which always was felt to be antagonistic to the soul's progress, though the flesh liked it.

He had a well-remembered dream one night, and always believed it of God. An evil being, horribly ugly, came to him. He tried to get away but could not, and the ill-favoured one emptied the nicotine of a pipe on his arm to stain it. This humbled him, but though he tried to give it up, he could not then. It is a solemn thing to give way to sin. Worldlings would say that it was the result of indigestion. Then God used indigestion to teach him a lesson.

Now, we do not forget that every creation of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be partaken of with thanksgiving; nor that whilst John came neither eating nor drinking, the Son of man, because He drank wine, was called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. Nor are we under law. We remember, too, that we can take no pledge, because being dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, the Christian is not subject to ordinances such as "Taste not, touch not, handle not." But these words are meant for encouragement to those who have a conscience about smoking, and who may have passed through similar experiences.

And so the writer continued for years, never free or happy because a slave to a fleshly lust.

In course of time God graciously brought him to see the truth of God more clearly, and enabled him to seek a more intimate fellowship with Christ, by separating himself from that which was of man. The truth of the Head directing on earth was found. But grace was not yet given or sought diligently enough to give up the habit. Conscience again being under more exercise, he took counsel with others. Godly men said that they put their foot down, and gave it up for ever. This the writer then pronounced legalism, so ready was he to abuse Scripture to yield to lust! Comfort was found in seeing smoking brethren. Resolve was made to give it up as a habit, but occasionally to enjoy one's liberty. Besides, too, said something or someone to his soul, "Are we not to be all things to all men?" Cannot we win people by going down to their level in harmless things? Cannot we make some point of contact with men? If his eye had been truly single, he should have said that we must not make use of a text to cover an indulgence of a thing which we know to be a weakness. For it was found that not only did one smoke to try and be all things to all men, but one smoked to satisfy a personal gratification.

Now, it is true that we do get an opening in a way to souls by uniting with them in their things. Unfortunately the opening is in the wrong direction, for it is in such way that they will hail you as one of themselves. Hence the avenue to the

conscience is closed and another door is opened. If we wish to really benefit souls we must show that we are not one of themselves, for our joys lie apart from them. Most probably the secret spring of all this kind of indulgences is that Christ is not enough to fill the heart. In these last few hours before the Lord's return we need to be more than ever careful as to our walk. The writer, being one of the Lord's servants, would desire to take sides with God against himself before his brethren, in order that he may be a help to others who may have had a difficulty in knowing how to meet this particular case. One is quickly liable to be hardened by the deceitfulness of a thing which cannot be taken in faith, to the glory of God, whatever it may be. Yet if we are to be men of power, the flesh can be countenanced in no respect, and there can be no place dark. All must be light in the servant of God who desires association with God in His work. For it must ever be remembered that the secret of success is to realize that the work is God's and not ours. It is distinctly God's. God breaks down walls. God opens doors, and we can walk in. We are fellow-workers with God. God gives life. We are to unloose fetters and bondages. May God teach the writer and others to ALWAYS bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be made manifest in our mortal bodies.

"LESS THAN THE LEAST."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. K.—No two conversions are precisely alike in every feature. No two leaves exactly resemble each other, no two blades of grass, no two faces; and so is it with the work of God in souls. Some are aroused by the thunders of eternal judgment, others by the still small voice of mercy; some by the thought of the Lord's coming being near, and of their unreadiness for it; others by the amazing love of God as shown in the gift of His only-begotten Son. There is, therefore, no just cause for distress because your experience runs counter to that of some others. But self-occupation is the bane of many. It is easy then for Satan to suggest that they are only "intellectual believers," that they are not among "the elect," are "only hypocrites," and that their conversion was no conversion at all, but only an emotional affair, destined to be as short-lived as a flower that blooms in the morning and dies away at night. And how shall these distressing suggestions be met? Not by saying, "I know I was converted at such and such a time," but by being able to say, "Well, I know God loves me, a poor sinner, for He says so in His Word; and I know it was because He loved me that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for me; and I do believe that love, and rest my soul on the perfect work of the Lord Jesus which He did on the cross for sinners." Let people reason as they may, they must come back to that. We affectionately urge you, dear friend, to take that ground. Look away from self and from your experiences, of whatever kind they be. Look off

unto Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God. It is He of whom it is said, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.) We shall be glad to hear from you again if you care to write.

S. B.—Hebrews iii. 12.—"An evil heart of unbelief" is hardly the same thing as "the flesh." The believer is never warned not to allow "the flesh" to be in him, though there are plenty of warnings in the Scriptures against allowing it to act. "The flesh" is in us all, and will surely show itself if we walk not in the Spirit. With Israel this "evil heart of unbelief" constantly showed itself, notably so in their refusing the testimony of Caleb and Joshua, and receiving the evil report of the ten, as shown in Numbers xiii., xiv. For this they were led about the wilderness forty years, till all that unbelieving generation had passed away. Against a similar evil the Hebrew Christians are here placed upon their guard; and we need also to watch.

A READER OF "SIMPLE TESTIMONY."—Exodus xii. —The paschal lamb was indeed a type of the Lord Jesus. (See 1 Corinthians v. 7.) "Roast with fire" speaks of that Blessed One bearing the holy judgment of God against sin upon the cross; "unleavened bread," of the holiness that should characterize those who partake of the Christian feast; while "bitter herbs" remind us of what will surely be produced in the soul when it is remembered that it was for our sins the Saviour had thus to suffer. Referring now to your question as to whether there will be instrumental music in heaven, we must candidly confess our ignorance, and say we do not know.

A. B. D. N.—In such matters each should act according to his own measure of faith. No one can make his faith a rule for another, and if any attempt to walk according to another's faith, they will assuredly come to grief sooner or later. On the other hand, we have known Christian persons so anxious to lay by money for their relatives when they die that they hardly permitted themselves to do one generous deed all their life. Indeed, we may go further, and say that in their anxiety to save they closed their eyes to many Christian claims. This is a melancholy sight. For Christianity is open-handed, kind, generous, and finds pleasure in helping to make others happy.

W. M. G.—Matthew xxiv. 34.—The word "generation" is here used in a moral sense. For example: Were anyone speaking of the false prophets of Jeremiah's day, who said "Peace, peace," when there was none, and of whom he so bitterly complains in chapter viii. of his book, the speaker might justly say that this generation had not yet passed away, for many around us are doing exactly what they did. It is in that sense that the word is used in Matthew xxiv.

T. T.—There is no difference between remission of sins and forgiveness of sins; the terms mean exactly the same thing.

A. J. B.—The question of singing hymns by a mixed company is a very difficult one. In most congregations there are Christian people, and these sing. Others, not saved, no doubt join in the singing, and if you wished to prevent them it could not be easily done. Remember, too, that the scruples you feel may not be shared in by every preacher of the gospel.

C. C.—Many thanks for your note and its enclosure, which shall be devoted to the purpose you name.

THE DOUBLE CLEANSING.

“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”—JOHN xix. 34.

A KIND friend sent us the other day a copy of *The Christian*. Looking through it, some comments on Numbers xix. caught our eye. The drift of them was to show how easily a believer might become defiled, and his fellowship with God be interrupted, through contact with men dead in sins, listening to their polluting speech or reading books containing their thoughts. All very true, of course. But when we came to the remedy—the means by which defilement thus contracted was to be removed—we shook our head and said to ourselves, “*That won't do.*”

It is but fair that we should give the writer's words, so here they are:—

“For this reason we should perpetually seek fresh cleansing in the precious blood of Christ. He is represented in this heifer without spot, slain in its prime, whose ashes were mingled in running water to testify their perpetual efficacy and freshness. If the ashes of a heifer availed for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse our consciences! Ask perpetually for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, that you may have access with confidence into the Most Holy Place.”

Now we venture to inquire, in no unkindly spirit, whether anywhere in Scripture the believer is encouraged and admonished to “perpetually

seek fresh cleansing in the precious blood of Christ"? Secondly, whether the defilement from which he undoubtedly needs to be cleansed is not dealt with in some other way? I know that what is stated in *The Christian* is taught and commonly believed in many evangelical circles. But is it true? is it scriptural?

No doubt some zealous soul will be ready to defend at once the doctrine we impugn. "You are somewhat rash, good sir," says he, "and, if I mistake not, have overlooked 1 John i. 7, which with your permission I will quote:

"'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

"Please mark the verb. It is neither in the past nor future tense. It neither says *has* cleansed nor *will* cleanse, but *cleanseth*. Surely no one can deny the meaning of this to be that the blood goes on cleansing, moment by moment."

"My dear friend, that is the very thing we do deny, and declare that in your saying so you miss the point of the passage altogether."

He seems surprised, and we continue:—

"Suppose you had in your hand a phial containing liquid that looked like water.

"'What have you in that bottle?' say I.

"'Benzoline.'

"'Indeed! I never heard of that article before. Pray what is its use?'

"'It cleanses grease-spots from all sorts of fabrics without injury to the material.'

THE DOUBLE CLEANSING.

“Do you wish me to understand that the benzoline is actually and perpetually cleansing away grease-spots moment by moment? I take that to be your meaning. Mark the verb! You do not say that it *hath* cleansed, nor that it *will* cleanse, but that it *cleanses*.”

Amazed at our dulness, he replies, “No, I am simply stating what benzoline does, without reference to time at all.”

“Exactly! and if you will allow me to say so, it is the same with the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, in 1 John i. It cleanseth from all or every sin—the point being *what it does*, without reference to when it does it.”

A glance at the passage and its context will confirm this view.

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

You observe that the passage speaks of darkness and light, of a man walking either in one or the other—not, *How* does he walk? but, *Where* does he walk? Mind that.

Look at yonder street. The sun is shining on one side, not on the other. See those two men. One walks on the sunny and the other on the shady side of the street. They may walk well, or with a slouching, slovenly gait; but I am not speaking of *how* they walk, but *where*. So there

are two classes—believers and unbelievers. The latter walk in darkness, the former in the light. These may not always walk according to it, but that is where they walk.

How can I walk in the light—that is, in the full revelation of what God is in His unsullied holiness and love? The light of that revelation shows me how unfit I am, in myself, to be in it—for light makes everything manifest, and it therefore manifests *me* in my sin and wretchedness. The answer is found in this blessed statement:

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“Ah! then,” I say, “If the blood cleanseth from every sin, I see now how it is that a Christian walks in the light!”

But that is a very different thing from saying that the blood of Jesus is cleansing us perpetually. That would be to deny the perfect cleansing of the believer accomplished once for all. The great truth of Hebrews x. 14 is quite lost by this system of doctrine, and the precious blood of Christ reduced, as to its power to cleanse the conscience, to the level of the blood of bulls and of goats.

We are expressly told in Hebrews x. 2 that

“The worshippers ONCE purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”

But it was not possible that the blood shed on Jewish altars should take away sins and perfectly

cleanse the conscience. Could it have done so, the sacrifices would have ceased to be offered. Their repetition showed their inefficacy, and kept the sins of the people ever in remembrance. In striking contrast to all this the blood of Christ, when its value is known, completely purges the conscience, and by it we are perfected for ever. This perfection never ceases, and therefore the blood is never reapplied. So the teaching of the Spirit in Hebrews x. is as contrary to that of the paper we are examining as light differs from darkness, or truth from error.

Does someone say, "But should the believer sin, is he to take no notice of it, nor suffer his conscience to be the least uneasy?"

Assuredly not. Only the remedy for his failure does not lie in his seeking to be washed afresh in the precious blood of Christ; and, indeed, Numbers xix. should have taught our commentator this. For when that deeply instructive chapter treats of the actual cleansing of the defiled man, it speaks of his being sprinkled with the *water* of purification, and not with blood at all, though the blood be the basis of everything. When the Lord washed the defiled feet of His disciples He poured *water* into the basin, not blood; and as often as the priests went in to accomplish their service they washed both hands and feet in the brazen laver filled with *water*.

Now with the water of purification the ashes of the burnt heifer were mingled. When slain, its blood had been sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle of the congregation. *It was not sprinkled again, much less every time anyone had to be cleansed.* Water was used then, not blood. Surely this is significant.

So far as guilt goes, the believer is for ever clear. The one sacrifice for sins, offered once for all, has met every possible question. Our sins and iniquities God will remember no more. He Himself says so, and believing His testimony our conscience is at rest. But if we sin, or in any way contract defilement, our communion with God is interrupted. Nor can it be renewed till the sin is confessed and the defilement washed away. The failing one must submit himself to the cleansing action of the water of the Word. The Word of God becomes living and operative in his soul. He sees and feels how bitter a thing it is to sin against God, whose love—deep, causeless, and unchanging—has been shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. And he further sees and feels that his sin brought unutterable woe upon the Saviour, for the ashes of the heifer are mingled with the running water. He seeks afresh the face of God his Father, and in true repentance confesses his sin to Him. He does not ask to be cleansed afresh in the blood of Christ, for he knows that

he is ever before God in all its abiding efficacy, and the remembrance of such infinite grace serves to make his grief the greater. But he confesses all, and the Holy Spirit leads him to rest upon the precious assurance that

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—1 JOHN i. 9.

Assured afresh of that love, which through the intercession of Christ he never doubted even in the hour of his deepest sorrow, the believer—humbled, but cheered—pursues his way with renewed confidence. He has learnt more of his own weakness, and of the grace of God which imputes nothing, but which is, nevertheless, too holy to suffer him to think lightly of sin.

• Out of the pierced side of Christ came forth blood and water. Alas! many dear Christians, sheltered by the blood, no doubt, know but little of its abiding value. As to their conscience, they stand where a pious Jew stood whose sins obliged a constant recurrence to fresh sacrifices. They “ask perpetually for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” which they would never do did they but see the meaning of those words in Hebrews x. 14:

“By one offering He hath PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified.”

And if they know but little of the value of the blood, still less is known about the water. May the Holy Spirit teach us more of both!

EPHESIANS VI. 18 ANALYSED.

“Praying { always
with all prayer
and supplication
in the Spirit,

And Watching { thereunto
with all perseverance
and supplication
for all saints.”

THIS verse is in brief simply “*praying and watching*” — two actions of the utmost possible importance for the Christian as he seeks to enjoy his place of blessing in the “heavenlies.” But, lest praying should degenerate into a form, and watching into a sentiment, and in order to secure a healthy and spiritual exercise of soul, he is to pray *always*, or (as in the New Translation) “at all seasons.” He is to be a man of prayer, habitually, continuously prayerful, praying at stated moments indeed, but praying always. He is to pray with *all prayer*, not a measured quantity or a fixed form. He must urge every plea and employ every motive. His whole soul must be in exercise. He must leave nothing untold.

And to this is added *supplication*. He is to be in earnest, importunate, as a starving man begging for bread, or as one whose need is overwhelming; he can take no denial. He feels the power

of the enemy; he knows what is at stake; he wrestles; he pleads; he is in an agony of intercession. Again, he is to pray *in the Spirit*. He is therefore in Christian liberty, in power, in holy boldness, in gratitude, in intelligence. He fears no final defeat. He is with God, and God is with him.

Further, he is to "*watch thereunto*," or (as in the New Translation) "to this very thing." He must expect to receive at God's hand; his eye must be open; he must be vigilant, observant, on the constant outlook for result. If a child should ask a father for bread, he anticipates a kindly answer to that "very thing."

He is to watch with *all perseverance*! Two mighty words when flung together. How few persevere! Saul failed in it and lost his kingdom! It is the great test in Hebrews; and now the Christian must watch with all perseverance. The word in this form is used only here. My soul, persevere in thy watching! "He that waiteth on his Master shall be honoured." God values confidence. He is to watch with *supplication*, or enduring constancy; he is to be unwearied; he must not lose sight of his object; his grip must be one of unrelaxed tenacity as he contemplates the great purpose in view. It is the good of "*all saints*." That is his field of labour! He must embrace the whole Church of God in his earnest praying and watching.

He may know but a few scores or hundreds of the saints; he may be associated with but a handful of them; but his affections and spiritual interests are to envelope all saints. "If one member suffer, all suffer; if one be honoured, all rejoice." Such exercise expands and gladdens the heart! How superabundant the wording of our verse! May we pray and watch far better.

"To wait on God no time is lost,
Wait on!"

J. W. S.

CHRIST AND HAPPINESS;

OR,

EIGHTEENPENCE A WEEK.

IN a very small stone-built, stone-floored, one-roomed cottage, with bed curtained off, three chairs and a small table, sits a saint of God.

And I say "sits" advisedly, for his asthma is so bad that he cannot lie down for days and nights together.

He is alone, and "does for himself." On a small shelf stand his teapot, plate, loaf, and, as long as it lasts, his butter.

He has few underclothes, but coat, waistcoat, and trousers. The wind is north-east and piercing, the land snow-covered, and the ground frozen.

There is a small fire in the grate, and on the table in front of him his Bible and Sankey's

hymn-book lie open. There is also an ordinary round magnifying-glass, which, with the spectacles that rest upon his nose, enables him to read and, as he says, to “ponder” over the Word of God.

His income is 3s. a week, half of which goes in rent, and upon the other 1s. 6d. he maintains life.

He is seventy-eight years old, white-haired, quiet, speaks slowly and softly, and looks supremely happy.

For fifteen or twenty years God spoke to him about his sins, and he was troubled, but drank frequently to drown his conscience, for he well knew the consequences of dying in his then state.

About fifteen years ago, having a little money, he called a cab. On his wife asking him where he was going—“To hell,” he said, and bade the coachman drive him there. For three days he was lost, and his mind is a blank as to what took place; but at the end of that time he found himself in his own room, and on his own bed. The goodness of God in preserving him and keeping him out of hell broke as light on his guilty soul; and when the scripture, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” came before him, he wept like a child. Deep contrition followed. But he knew not forgiveness until walking on Stockwell Green, and crying to God about his sins, the Lord Jesus Christ seemed to come and walk by his

side and said to him, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven."

His mates were soon told of the change, the consequent scoffings cheerfully borne, and in broken health he left London.

His wife and two children preceded him to heaven, and now he is absolutely alone, but so happy, that his fear is that he should disturb his neighbours by his bursts of singing night and day!

For long no one has seen him but an occasional Christian. His 1s. 6d. gives him a little tea, with bread and sometimes butter twice a day. Such are his bodily comforts. But year in and year out he is rejoicing in his Saviour and finding Him enough. "I have all things, and abound," is the tenor of his conversation. Want is never mentioned. The inability to afford a fire in the very cold weather has been a trial, but complaint there is none. Rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and increasing acquaintance with Him, mark the man. The constant thought, that each evening notes a day's march nearer home, keeps this happy pilgrim of faith above all that might be thought painful.

What an answer to the infidel! What a lesson for many a saint of God! What living power in the precious Saviour to keep His own—though in almost absolute isolation, with but eighteen-pence a week to live upon—in perfect and unclouded happiness!

E. C.

S.

A SONG ON A SUNLESS DAY.

THE day was sunless ; near its close,
 Grey mists along the valley rolled.
 The grass was flowerless, and the wind
 Blew bleakly o'er the barren wold.

 A missel-thrush trilled on a branch,
 The loftiest of a tall, tall tree
 (A patch of blue, just overhead,
 'Twixt clouds which parted, I could see).

 He sang for very joy of life—
 Note after note fell clear and sweet ;
 A crystal shower of melody,
 Like welcome rain in summer heat.

 I stood unnoticed and entranced.
 He cared not for the barren ground,
 The rising mists, the wintry blast,
 The leaflessness of all around.

 How *canst* thou sing on such a day ?
 The question from my heart upflew.
 The answer dropped with star-bright note—
 "*Mine eye is on that bit of blue.*"

 Sweet bird ! My thoughts ran into tears—
 Glad April drops ! I know that long
 Within my soul I shall retain
 The music of thy wordless song.

 My thoughts ran also into prayer,
 To soar, like thee, on sunless days,
 With steady, trustful, upward look—
 To chant a cheerful hymn of praise,

 Which, falling on some saddened ear,
 Might prove celestial melody,
 Awakening from the silent heart
 Responsive notes in harmony.

* * *

ELECTION.

THIS subject has exercised the minds of both saint and sinner from time immemorial, and the reason is perhaps that underneath it lie the following questions: How far is man a free agent? To what extent does God's choice deprive man of any choice of his own? How can God's sovereignty be reconciled with man's responsibility?

Before referring further to any of these questions it may be said at the outset that there is little doubt that nearly all the difficulty upon this subject arises from the fact that persons either wilfully persist in not looking at the truth in all its aspects, or are incapable of doing so. Instead of accepting all the statements in God's Word, they often make the vain attempt to harmonize them; and because this does not succeed very well, they end by accepting just those portions that seem to accord most

WITH THEIR OWN IDEAS

or religious training. Let us remember it is not our work to try to harmonize the various parts of divine revelation. We cannot make the thought of God's eternal existence harmonize with our finite minds, for to us everything must have some origin and some beginning; but all

believers accept it, and this is what one should do with all revealed truth. For Scripture does not elaborate a *system* of doctrine. It is not like a child's puzzle cut into fragments, which will exactly fit in, and presented to us to put together. Neither should we come to Scripture to support our pet theories. If so, one fastens upon those portions which we think favour them, and leave equally valuable truth unnoticed.

The following remarks of one whose sound judgment can scarcely be questioned are worthy of most careful consideration:—

“The author feels it impossible to avow too distinctly that it is an invariable rule with him to endeavour to give to every portion of the Word of God its full and proper force, without considering what scheme it favours, or whose system it is likely to advance. Of this he is sure, that there is not a decided Calvinist or Arminian in the world *who equally approves of the whole of Scripture*, and who, if he had been in the company of Paul whilst he was writing his epistles, would not have recommended him to alter one or other of his expressions.”

The same writer adds:—

“The truth is not in the middle, and not in one extreme, *but in both extremes*. Sometimes I am a high Calvinist, at other times a low Arminian, so that if extremes will please you, I am your man; only remember, it is not *one* extreme we are to go to, but *both* extremes.”

These remarks well deserve attention, as they apply to other equally important matters of controversy beside the one in view at that time.

It cannot be expected in a short article to go very fully into the subject of election; for the sake of brevity we will consider it under two heads.

1. Whom does it concern ?

2. How may I know that I am one of the elect ?

Let it be said at the outset that the doctrine of reprobation—if by that is meant that to some there is no offer of mercy, but by an immutable decree they are excluded from any possibility of salvation—is not found in Scripture. Such teaching is merely the deduction of the human reason. We have no right to say that because some are elected to be saved, *therefore* others must be lost, and whatever they may do

THEY CANNOT ALTER IT.

Romans ix. may seem to favour such a doctrine ; but a closer examination reveals just the opposite. Pharaoh is mentioned. But who ever had more offers of mercy or more longsuffering shown him than Pharaoh ?

But an error of an opposite character must be noticed. It has been said that individuals are not elected. It is put somewhat in this form : All who are saved in this dispensation are elected to belong to the Church ; but the individuals themselves were not elected, their salvation depended solely upon their own choice. This is like saying that the British Parliament is elected, but

the members who compose it were not elected. Besides, such a doctrine would deny the foreknowledge of God, a truth plainly taught in Scripture. (See Rom. viii. 29; 1 Peter i. 2—in both cases referring to individuals.) It also confounds election with predestination: two distinct things. God's choice of us is one thing, what He chose us for quite another.

Having sought to clear the ground a little, and to show on the one hand that no person in the wide world is excluded from the mercy of God—for “God so loved the *world*,” and He is “no respecter of persons”—and on the other that individuals are certainly the subjects of God's choice, let us seek to answer the first question:

“WHOM DOES ELECTION CONCERN?”

And we must begin in a negative way by saying it does not concern *sinner*s as such. An unconverted person has not to trouble himself with the question whether he is one of the elect. What concerns him is “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Search the Bible through from cover to cover, and you will not find the sinner anywhere told to discover if he is one of the elect. If we take the Epistle to the Romans, where the gospel is more fully unfolded, doctrinally, than anywhere else, no mention will be found of election until we come to chapter viii. All are brought in guilty before God—there

is no difference—and the righteousness of God is unto *all*. Who are the elect spoken of in chapter viii. then? Those who, having read chapter iii., and learnt they have no righteousness of their own, have accepted righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. The question for the sinner is not, Has he discovered his election? but, Has he discovered his sinfulness?

Election concerns only the children of God. When an individual has received forgiveness of sins and has peace with God, he then makes such discoveries of his true state by nature that he sees unless God had chosen him he never would have chosen God; and he never could have had one spark of love to God if God in sovereign grace had not loved him first. And as his own fickleness and coldness in course of time become more and more apparent, he is filled with adoring wonder and gratitude to think of the One who, well knowing beforehand all that he would be, chose him before the foundation of the world, and he can truly say—

“Chosen not for good in me.”

Those who quarrel with election leave out two very important facts. One, man's condition—dead in sins; the other, the consequence of the first, that unless God had chosen, none would have been saved. It may be asked by some, “Wherein then is man's responsibility?” To which it may

be replied that man is responsible for the sins he commits. The expression "dead in sins" does not describe the whole of man's condition, and therefore must not be taken in an unqualified way. Man in himself is not "dead in sins," but living in them. This explains one difference between Romans and Ephesians. In Romans man is treated as a responsible creature; he has sinned, and is therefore subject to the judgment of God. In Ephesians God, so to speak, looks to see if there is any pulsation of man's heart towards Himself, and finds none. And it is from that point of view, and from that alone, that man is "dead in sins." And if that is so, must not God begin? If this is man's condition as to his state Godward, can everything depend, as some people would have us believe, upon man's choice and man's will?

HAS MAN THEN NO CHOICE?

He has a choice; but, alas! now that he is under Satan's power, only in opposition to God's. Once, ere evil had entered the scene, while yet man was innocent, his choice was free, but he chose to disobey God; and if that was his choice in innocence, how can it be otherwise as a sinner—"dead in sins"? Nominally man is a free agent, and has a free will, but actually he is a slave of Satan. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."

(2 Cor. iv. 4.) But it is necessary for us to emphasize the fact that all this does not do away with man's responsibility. Scripture is very clear that every man is responsible for his sins. No doubt his responsibility is increased if he refuses the gospel, but that is not the sole ground on which he will be judged. "For as many as have *sinned* without law shall also perish without law : and as many as have *sinned* in the law shall be judged by the law." (Rom. ii. 12.) "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works.*" (Rev. xx. 12.) The gospel is not preached to make people responsible, but to meet their responsibility, which already exists, whether they have heard the gospel or not.

As to preaching the gospel, the doctrine of

ELECTION PLACES NO LIMITATION

whatever upon this. Indeed, it may be said to be foreign to the very nature of the gospel. In the end of the Epistle to the Romans (chap. xvi. 25), the apostle speaks of two things—the gospel and the mystery. He clearly makes a distinction between them, and we ought to do the same. It is the confounding things that differ that leads to so much confusion. As to the gospel, the Saviour said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature," whereas

the mystery gives believers light as to the purpose of God. If we grasp the distinction between the gospel and the mystery, it will enable us to put things in their right places.

2. How may I know that I am one of the elect? Certainly not by being able to penetrate into

THE DECREES OF THE ALMIGHTY.

If any reading these lines think that God has a book in which from all eternity the names of the elect have been inscribed, and that at some particular moment before they die they will receive a special revelation as to whether their names are included, they never made a greater mistake. Some have been presumptuous enough to say, "It matters not what we do—we are amongst the elect," while others have never been able to satisfy themselves on the point, because they have been given up to useless and unprofitable self-examination.

Well, God has not told us the names of His elect, but He has described them. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, *hath God chosen*, and things which are

not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Cor. i. 26–29.) These are God's elect. Are we content to be what God chooses—foolish, weak, base, despised, nothing at all, the very opposite to what the world esteems, and to have Christ as our all, who, of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption? If so, we are amongst the elect.

Or take that beautiful passage in Luke iv. 18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Does this describe what our need was, and have we found that Christ has met it all? Then we may be quite sure we are God's elect.

The experience of all of them is alike in one respect; they see nothing in themselves but vileness, but

THEY SEE BEAUTY IN JESUS.

They are quite conscious of not having anything of their own to recommend them to God, but have learnt that they are accepted in the Beloved; only sinners in themselves, but have found everything they want in a God-provided Saviour and a God-accepted sacrifice.

Their language is—

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.”

But there is another way in which we ought to know we are *the elect*, and that is by our own progress in divine things. And it is important to see that it is with our practical state that election is mainly connected in Scripture, thus contradicting the assertion, sometimes made, that the doctrine of election leads to loose practice. Space forbids us to do little more than quote the passages.

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*” (Eph. i. 4.) The words in italics have a present application. How blessed to be practically in the truth of it.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them.” (Eph. ii. 10.)

IF WE ARE GOD’S ELECT,

we see here also we are His workmanship, and that when He chose us before the foundation of the world, it was in view of being characterized by good works. Jesus Christ went about doing good,

and we are to be like Him. That appears to be the force of "created in Christ Jesus."

"Put on therefore, as the *elect of God*, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." (Col. iii. 12.)

"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." (1 Thess. i. 4.) How did the apostle know it? By their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, as well as by the fact that the gospel came unto them in power. (1 Thess. i. 4.)

1 Peter i. 2 and 2 Peter i. 10 are also examples of the same truth; we make our calling and election sure when we are characterized by "virtue [moral courage], knowledge, temperance," and so on.

We see then how Scripture looks at the elect, not as the mere subjects of a fixed fate, but as those who are partakers of the divine nature, and living exponents of it. They have

TAKEN THE SINNER'S PLACE

to begin with—accepting God's estimate of *them*; and they rest wholly upon Christ's work for salvation—accepting God's estimate of *it*. That is the first thing, and in the next place they seek to walk even as Christ walked.

It need cause us no surprise that the principle of election is found throughout the whole of Scripture. God is sovereign, and He works all things after the counsel of His own will. We

read of the "elect angels." (1 Timothy v. 21.) Israel is spoken of as God's elect. (Isa. lxxv. 9, 22.) So are His people in this present dispensation. (Titus i. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Timothy ii. 10.) And after the Church is taken God will still have His elect. (Mark xiii. 20.) And the term is used even in regard to Christ Himself, of course viewed as man. (Isa. xlii. 1; 1 Peter ii. 6.) It is seen in the preservation of Noah; in the call of Abraham; in the appointment of Aaron to the priesthood (Num. xvi., xvii.), and of the Levites to their service; in David, one chosen out of the people; in the selection of a place where God should put His name; and in the seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal. If we come to New Testament times, we read in John xiii. 18 the words of the Lord, "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen"; and again in chap. xv. 16, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." So that to deny election would be to

TEAR THE BIBLE TO FRAGMENTS,

and strip God of His prerogative. It is a sad indication indeed when man is allowed a choice, but God allowed none.

Perhaps the history of Judas affords us some light upon the subject of God's foreknowledge and man's free will. Our blessed Lord, in His

prayer to the Father, recorded in John xvii., refers to him thus, "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." It is remarkable that neither here, nor in chap. xiii., where he is referred to several times, is Judas once mentioned by name (*i.e.*, by the Lord). This is very significant; for does it not show that Judas was under no necessity to betray his Master? There was no "fixed fate" which rendered it absolutely impossible for him to escape from perpetrating that deed. And yet, on the other hand, it is perfectly clear that the Lord knew beforehand that he would do it. (John vi. 70, 71; xiii. 11.) Here then we have two distinct lines. We cannot see the exact point where they meet; the only thing for us to do is, instead of rejecting either, to accept both. If we look merely at the circumstances, it is very easy to see why Judas betrayed his Master. He was bent on gaining some advantage for himself; he would use even his Master to attain his object; and he thus placed himself in Satan's way, and was used for ends he perhaps never dreamt of when he began. Judas was a thief, and had the bag.

IT WAS MONEY HE WANTED;

and probably that, more than anything else, made him ready to listen to Satan's suggestion. There was the devil behind it all. It was he that put it

into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him. But, alas! Judas was ready.

Before closing, perhaps a simple illustration may help to elucidate our subject. Take, for instance, the main road from London to Oxford. If you were travelling to Oxford, it would be to you the Oxford road, whereas to another going in the opposite direction the very same road would be the London road. What should we think of two travellers meeting and being unable to agree as to which road it was? The simple solution of the difficulty would be to turn their faces in the same direction, whether towards Oxford or towards London, and they would agree at once. Is not this the case with the Calvinist and Arminian? They are often on the same road, but they have their faces in opposite directions; let them turn and look together, and there will no longer be disagreement. Only let us remember the truth is not in looking *one way*, but in looking *both ways*.

Who that starts from the divine side does not ere long find that man is treated by God, not as a mere machine, but as a rational and responsible being? And who that commences from the other extreme is not sooner or later forced to the conclusion that such is man's condition, so completely under Satan's control, that unless God acted in sovereign grace, man would never be saved at all? "Ye must be born again"; and it would be the

height of folly to think that anyone could accomplish this of himself.

But to return for a moment to our illustration. Just as no stranger

TRAVELLING BY ROAD TO OXFORD

could tell at what point it ceased to be the Oxford road and became the London road, and *vice versa*, so it is impossible for any finite mind to determine at what point man's side ends and God's side begins. Is it not enough to know that both exist?

In conclusion, have we not all been conscious, in the matter of our salvation, of a superior power, both for good and evil, acting upon us? Must we not, in thinking of man as a free agent and having a free choice, remember also how largely this is rendered abortive by the fact of his being under the power of Satan? Can any of us say the reason we have been saved, and others left unsaved, is because of any superior goodness in us?

Rather, must we not each exclaim, "Why, me, Lord, why me?"

If we weigh these considerations impartially, shall we not be forced to the conclusion that large room is left for the activities of sovereign grace and the necessity of election?

R. E.

THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

Read ISAIAH lxiii.

THE commencement of this chapter describes how God will deliver His people Israel from their enemies. Edom seems specially referred to here, because, though closely allied, they had ever been the inveterate enemies of the Israelites. Even when the latter were crossing the wilderness they refused them a passage through their country (see Num. xx.), and ever afterwards took every opportunity to do them hurt. For these reasons they seemed specially marked out for divine judgment. On the other hand, the Israelites were admonished not to attack the Edomites. In this we see an illustration of our own position. As Christians we are to be content to be hated, persecuted, and

OVERRIDDEN BY THE WORLD

without murmuring and without retaliation. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. xii. 19.)

It will help us to carry out this divine principle if we remember that as in the case of Edom

XIV.

E

86 THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

judgment ere long will overtake the world that is now so opposed to us. A Christian woman was subject to much ill-treatment from her husband, who was a drunkard. One night he was out late drinking with his boon companions, and the men began talking about their wives and their varied qualities. This particular man boasted that he would take them to his house, make his wife get up and prepare them a hot supper, and he laid a wager that she would do it without losing her temper. Accordingly they repaired to the house. It was late, the wife was

IN BED AND ASLEEP,

but she immediately obeyed the summons, and did everything that was required of her without a murmur. Surprise being expressed that she did not resent such brutal treatment, she said, "Alas! poor man, this is all the heaven he will ever know, and as long as I am with him I like to make it as comfortable for him as possible."

It is striking what a sudden break occurs in the chapter at verse 7. It is like the sunshine breaking out in the midst of storm-clouds. "I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord." God's love and God's wrath are often brought together in Scripture. In John iii. 35, 36 we have an instance. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see

THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD. 87

life; but the wrath of God abideth on Him.” “The Father loveth the Son,” and the one who believes on the Son shares in the love; but he that believeth not the Son—the One who has come and spoken of the Father—the wrath of God abideth on him. The New Testament unfolds

THE AMAZING TRUTH

that God the Son has become incarnate. His testimony has been given on earth, through human lips, by a human voice, and it is now set forth in human language. The question is, Do you as an individual believe Him? The Lord Jesus Himself says—it is His last word to the world—“If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the *word* that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” (John xii. 47, 48.) In time past God spake by the prophets and by angels, to us He has spoken by the Son. “If the word

SPOKEN BY ANGELS

was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we *neglect* so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?” (Heb. ii. 2, 3.)

88 THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

Can you afford to lose this great salvation? Do not think this is only for the criminal and the abandoned. You need it as much as they. For God has said, *all* have sinned and come short of His glory. If you have committed one sin, however small, that sin needs atoning for. The ground of judgment at last is according to works. You may be better than others, but that will avail you nought in the day of the grand assize. If there is one single thing against you, that will be sufficient to exclude you from heaven. "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." With sin upon you, if only a speck, you cannot enter heaven, and you would not be happy if you could. There is only one other place—

THE LAKE OF FIRE.

But, thank God, there is opportunity of escape from such a terrible doom. You cannot atone for your sins; but are you willing that God Himself should provide the atonement? He has found a way in which He can *righteously* save you. To meet your need at the expense of His justice would be impossible; on the other hand, to uphold His justice by punishing you would mean your utter destruction. How can the case be met? Nothing short of what

THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD. 89

will meet His claim can meet your need. Can He, who alone can estimate the dishonour done to His holy name by sin, provide that which will satisfy Himself without inflicting any penalty upon the sinner? Blessed be His name, the question has been answered, and the answer is found in the

PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: *for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*” (Lev. xvii. 11.) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Peter i. 18, 19.) Oh! my readers, have you found refuge here? Here is where you must begin if ever you are to “mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.” Your life is forfeited through sin. “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” “The wages of sin is death.” How vain then are the works when life is forfeited. Nothing short of a perfect life given up in our stead can meet the case, and we have it in that One “as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” On this ground Abel stood (in figure) and was accounted righteous. By this means Israel was sheltered in Egypt when all the firstborn of the Egyptians

90 THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

were slain, and now the blood of Christ has been given that sinners might not come into judgment, but pass out of death into life.

Let us then beseech you to trust in the all-atonement merits of the Blood. God has said, "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls." To neglect it is to inflict

THE GREATEST INJURY

upon yourself; it is with your own hand to set your seal to your own eternal ruin. The other day we witnessed a shipwreck. Every effort was being made by those on land to get four men off the ill-fated vessel by means of the life-saving apparatus. After watching the operations for some time we were compelled to leave; when we returned all the men had been saved. They knew their danger and gladly escaped from it. Your danger, if still out of Christ, is just as real, only your fate will be indescribably more awful should you remain as you are. What would you have thought if these men had taken

NOT THE SLIGHTEST NOTICE

of the efforts of those on shore to save them? The crowds on shore are deeply anxious, but the men on board are quite unconcerned; the rocket is fired, but they do not attempt to clutch the line; absolute indifference renders every attempt to save them utterly futile. Would anyone but themselves be to blame if they perished? If,

THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD. 91

however, you can say, "I see my danger, and accept God's provision," then you will begin to know something of the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.

Is it not a wonderful word, "the *lovingkindnesses* of the Lord"? To have a God watching over us, always loving and always kind. Not only kindness, but lovingkindness; and not merely lovingkindness on a particular occasion, but repeated again and again—*lovingkindnesses*. Who would not desire a life full of them? Well, this is within the reach of all the children of God; but it is to be feared that very few of us enter into it as we might. The reason of this is no doubt due to

TWO GREAT HINDRANCES.

One, that we do not see the true nature of God's love; the other, that we are apt to look for our portion here, and to measure God's love by what He gives or withholds of temporal good.

1. The true nature of God's love is seen in this: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans v. 8.) Unless we grasp the full meaning of these words we are always measuring God's love more or less by ourselves. We would not say, perhaps, in so many words that God loves us because of what we are; and yet is there not a danger of our measuring God's love

92 THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

by what *we* think He will do for us? In other words, we look at God's love

FROM OUR STANDPOINT

instead of His, and we measure Him by ourselves. We always require a motive for loving others (until divine love takes complete possession of us), and because we can find very little motive in ourselves—even at our best—why God should love us, we measure His love accordingly. The fact is, God requires no motive—He is love. It is His very nature to love, and the verse quoted above proves it: “While we were yet sinners.” What was there in us to love or to lead God to do anything for us but give us our desert, which was the lake of fire? Yet He gave Christ for us. God does not ask us in this verse to commend ourselves to Him, and say that then He will do something for us (though that is the way it is often read to-day), but while we were still provoking Him to His face Christ died for us. When we were

DOING OUR WORST

God gave us His best. Now we see the true nature of divine love. It can act from itself: it is its own motive. And, moreover, not only is divine love seen acting when there was nothing to call it forth, except for its own satisfaction, *but it is displayed to its fullest limit.* “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten

THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD. 93

Son." "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God not only gave, but He gave to the utmost bound—He gave Christ. The choicest and best gift was reserved for rebels. One has said that in a time of great anxiety of soul, ere he had found a solid resting-place, and had realized his acceptance in the Beloved, one morning, the first thing on waking, he heard the words as if

WHISPERED BY A VOICE,

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) Here again we get the true nature of love. It would not have been seen in our loving God, because there is everything in Him to call forth love; it is seen in God loving us, because there was nothing in us but what would call forth His just displeasure, and so He sent His Son a propitiation, that instead of His displeasure we might know His eternal pleasure in us for Christ's sake.

2. Here then, in the fact that God requires no motive to love us, *except what He finds in Himself*, is the true resting-place of the heart. And if through His grace we have reached it, may we avoid the second error alluded to, of gauging God's love by what He gives or withholds of temporal good. Let us never forget the warning contained in these words, "He gave them their

94 THE LOVINGKINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

request, but sent leanness into their soul." Let us remember, that unto us are given exceeding great and precious promises whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The desire to have (which is lust) has brought in all the corruption in the world. The exceeding great and precious promises reveal to us the One who is our portion for ever. We are made acquainted with the divine nature, and we grow in it. And in doing so we shall know something of "the lovingkindnesses of the Lord."

A further help will be in our learning to expect little as to the things of this life, and then we shall be more grateful for what we do get. Let us learn to think lightly of mere earthly prosperity, for as a rule God gives it to those who have

NOTHING BEYOND;

it is therefore no mark of His favour in this dispensation.

And do not let us forget to count up the evidences of His lovingkindnesses. If only we are on the look-out for them, and really walking in faith, we shall be surprised how many they are. So many look on the dark side, and like Jacob are ready to say, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Rather let us be like Abraham, who, when he was on his way to offer up Isaac, could say, "I and the lad

will go yonder and *worship*, and come again to you.”

It was said of a great minister who had engaged his country in many wars, and won many splendid victories, though at vast expense, that he only

LOOKED AT THE TROPHIES,

whereas his treasurer only looked at the bill. Who cannot imagine the different effect upon the two men?—the one was joyous and elated, the other gloomy and depressed. It will be the same with us as Christians, according to the point of view from which we regard things. Happy for us if we are “keeping ourselves in the love of God,” and setting our mind upon things above, so as to be able to say, “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us.”

R. E.

THE THINGS THAT GOD USES.

THE seventeenth chapter of 1 Samuel, giving the account of David meeting Goliath, is one of the most familiar portions of the Word. Old and young have alike been charmed as they read and re-read this simple narrative. That truth is stranger than fiction is amply illustrated here. No doubt our readers have gathered many

precious lessons from this chapter, for it is full enough of spiritual truth. They have read how this young Bethlehemite met the leader of the enemies of God and overcame him in the Valley of Elah. They have seen in this a beautiful picture of that greater Bethlehemite—the One who also went down into the Valley of Death, bruising Satan's head, and delivering them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

But we wish in connection with this story to bring David before our readers in a different aspect—that of an ordinary servant of the Lord—one whom God uses to accomplish His ends.

We believe there is an encouraging lesson here for those servants of the Lord who are young in years and experience, as well as a timely word for those who are older.

At this time God's people were in a sad plight. Morning and evening for forty days the giant leader of the Philistines had defied the armies of Israel, and none dared answer him. "They were dismayed and greatly afraid." Where were the old warriors of Israel now? Old and young were alike terror-stricken. "And *all* the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid." But is there not one, who, strong in faith, and fired by zeal for God, will meet Goliath? Yes, a stripling, the youngest of his father's house, hears this cursing Philistine

challenging the armies of God. Little did he think, as he carried some provisions to his elder brothers in the camp, what God was going to do by him. Hitherto he had been kept in the background. A mere shepherd lad, his life had been uneventful enough. But now the *latent faith*, which had shown itself when he slew the lion and the bear, begins to fire his soul. That faith linked David with omnipotence, and who was Goliath when God was in the question? A mere lad, with God on His side, is more than a match for a regiment of giants, and it was no presumption for him to say to Saul, "Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

But the anger of David's eldest brother was kindled against him, and he said, "Why camest thou down hither? . . . I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou are come down that thou mightest see the battle." However, David was not to be discouraged by trifles. God was leading him on, and soon he was brought face to face with the king. Then David tells how God had delivered him from the lion and the bear, and expresses his confidence that God will also deliver him from this Philistine. His simple faith captivates Saul, who bids him "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

But now, if David is to go and fight, he must at least fight as did the veterans. So "Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an

helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, *and he essayed* [or hesitated] *to go; for he had not proved it.* And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. *And David put them off him."*

What a lesson lies hidden here! God does not fashion all His servants in the same mould, neither does He expect them to fight in the same way. This is the mistake that the so-called theological colleges make. Let us beware lest we fall into a similar error. The sword and the shield might do for some men. They would not do for David. He had had no experience with them, and he found them a positive hindrance. But David was not inexperienced for all that. He was at *home* with the sling and stone. He had practised with them many a day in the wilderness, and no doubt he could aim to a nicety. It was a strange weapon with which to meet a giant, but that was David's way of fighting, and *God used just what David had.* The sequel is well known. God used the stripling with his sling and stone to smite the hosts of the Philistines, and to win a great victory that day for Israel.

Now God is using just such unlikely means to-day, and a Sovereign God has a right to use such instruments as please Him. It may be

THE THINGS THAT GOD USES.

99

His pleasure to use you in His service. If such be the case, do not seek to exercise your gift with another for your model. Let not the young imitate those who are further on. I speak, of course, as to method, not manner of life. You may be a stone in the rough, while another may be very polished. You may have one way of reaching souls, he another. You may be at home with the sling and the stone, he with the sword and the coat of mail. In this case use your own weapons, and let him use his. Use what you have proved, and do not be entrapped and hindered by Saul's armour. Put it off as David did. Be natural. Go unfettered. Go free. Take your sling and stone. Use them in the name of the Lord, counting on Him to bless them, and He will. Your methods may cause some to open their eyes. What if they do? You are the Lord's servant, not man's. It would be well, too, if the eyes of some were opened, for, alas! many of the Lord's people are fast asleep. Your path may not be strewn with roses. You may be charged with presumption as David was. You may be told your methods are not ideal. Never mind. "Let no man despise thy youth." Keep your eye on the Lord. Use what God has given you, in His name and strength, and the sling and the stone will yet be used to make many a giant of evil lick the dust.

H. G.

IS ALL WELL?

CROSSING from New York to Jamaica recently many of the passengers were unable to sleep because of the incessant rolling of the vessel. As we lay awake in our berths hour after hour we heard the look-out man answering as the hour and half-hour bells were rung:

“ALL’S WELL. LIGHT BURNING BRIGHT.”

Christian, we too are journeying across the ocean of life. Let me ask you a question. Is all well with you? It was a comfort as the winds howled, and the waves tossed the steamer from side to side like a cork upon the water, to hear the cheery voice of the look-out every thirty minutes assuring us that all was well, and that the warning head-lights burnt brightly.

There are perils at sea, and wise indeed was the unceasing care and watchfulness of the look-out man.

The Christian has perils as great as the mariner, indeed greater, for they are *soul* perils. Satan is a watchful foe. Once he brought the wind about the house of Job’s sons and daughters as they feasted together, and all perished in its overthrow. Satan to-day would bring the wind of

IS ALL WELL?

101

his opposition about our souls, and we need constant watchfulness.

A wicked, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world, like the waves of the sea, would swamp the testimony of the Christian, either by persecution or seduction.

Peter once left the boat to walk on the water. So long as his eye was fixed on Jesus he was superior to the yielding element his foot was firmly planted upon. But he looked at *the waves*, and immediately began to sink. It was as easy to walk on rough water as smooth. To do *either* required the eye on Christ.

So with us. With the eye on Christ we are superior to all opposition and trial. As we look forward, as darkness settles over the wild, watery waste of this world, can we say—

ALL'S WELL?

Thank God, the Christian has resources for the darkest day. Whatever the circumstances may be, with the eye on Christ, and the Holy Ghost within ungrieved, all is divinely well. The believer can go on through this scene of decay, disappointment, and death, like the Master, without a single ruffle. Things may go badly in the Church and world, things ecclesiastical and things political may arise of the most disquieting nature. No matter, the believer's mind is stayed upon God. He may be tossed by the wave, the wind

may blow like a hurricane ; his heart is garrisoned with the very peace of heaven—the peace of God—which cannot be disturbed.

“LIGHT BURNING BRIGHT.”

Can you say this ? Is all well with *you*, Christian reader ? Will any of your ways not bear the scrutiny of God’s eye, or of His Word ? Will you be found ashamed at His coming ? See to it that your light—the light of testimony—burns brightly, the testimony of life and lip. Hold forth the word of life by your ways and words. The darker the day the more need for it. The more universal the sloth the more reason for vigilance. Oh, to be zealous for God’s glory in a godless world !

At last the vigilance of the look-out man came to an end. The steamer, after the icy blasts of the north and its rude seas, steamed into the zephyr breezes and smooth seas of the tropics. As we landed everyone was enchanted. The rippleless sea, the beautiful land, with its bright sun and blue sky, like fairyland, charmed the most prosaic.

As we landed, however, we were *searched*. The Custom-house officials demanded the keys of our baggage, and all our private belongings had to be examined.

So, friend, after we have finished our rough voyage of life we shall land on shores brighter

and more enchanting than those of earth. *But we must be searched.* “*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*” How solemn! How it should affect our lives now! Not to be searched, surely, as to our fitness for glory. The *work* of Christ has settled all that, apart from our practice altogether. “*If any man’s work abide . . . he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*” Thank God, our *persons* shall never come into judgment. We shall have bodies of glory like Christ in that day. But we shall have our luggage examined; in other words, our life—the *whole* of our history, before and after conversion—gone into, in all its motives and secret working. Everything done with a single eye to Christ’s glory shall receive reward. Our *persons* shall never be judged; our *work* will—our *lives*. It may be a man’s work will be burned, until the searching fire of God’s judgment leaves nothing at all. He suffers loss, yet the man shall be saved. “*Yet so as by fire*” are the solemn words of Scripture.

May the little incidents of the voyage speak to all our hearts, giving us more dependence on God, more watchfulness over self, more desire to be found here for Christ and His glory only, so that in that day much shall be found to His praise, and our reward will but add to the glory of the Giver.

A. J. P.

NIMROD AND JABEZ.

THE earlier chapters of the First Book of Chronicles, like some other portions of the Word of God, might seem to the superficial reader a dry and monotonous record of names and genealogies. It is well, however, to remember that *all* Scripture is designed for our profit, whether for warning, instruction, or admonition. (Rom. xv. 4; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 16.)

No careful student can fail to note the marvellous accuracy and extraordinary minuteness of detail with which the inspired writers speak of the nations, tribes, and families of a bygone age. And in the careful enumeration even of households and individuals, may we not see the infinite condescension of a Saviour-God, who stoops to take cognizance of the names and doings of His creatures, and to whom the history of every one of us is known?

Unlike the writings of men, God's book calls things by their right names. There is no attempt to hide, or palliate, or gloss over the sins of those of whom it speaks. On the other hand, blessed be His name, it has ever been God's gracious way to stamp with His approval those who have been true to His testimony in every age.

The Scriptures abound with illustrations of

this. For example, in chapter i. of this book we are introduced to "Nimrod," of whom it is said, "He began to be mighty upon the earth." (v. 10.) Elsewhere we learn that he was "a mighty hunter before the Lord," and the founder of the Babylonish monarchy. (Gen. x. 9, 10.)

The Spirit's brief but pointed description of Nimrod in 1 Chronicles is significant enough: "He began to be mighty *upon the earth.*" He had evidently acquired great fame as a hunter, so that his name became a proverb among the ancients. Not satisfied with this, he aspired to greater things, and eventually founded a kingdom, built cities, and established himself as a mighty man upon the earth. No act of faith is recorded of him. His career was brilliant as far as earth goes. At first a simple hunter in the fields, then a mighty hunter before the Lord, afterwards a powerful potentate with almost universal sway; and then his history closes *in darkness!*

Christian reader, has it been *your* ambition to be "great upon the earth"? Are you straining every nerve in the pursuit of wealth, honour, power, position, or distinction of some sort? We live in a self-seeking, money-loving, and pleasure-hunting age, and need a word of warning lest the world, the flesh, and the devil should find in us an easy prey. Ill indeed does it become those who are saints and heavenly citizens by birth and destiny to be chasing after the

fleeting vanities of earth. Let the solemn and deeply-touching words of Phil. iii. 18, 19, sink down into your heart—"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are *the enemies of the cross of Christ . . . who mind earthly things.*"

It would seem as if Nimrod, in his earlier days, had acknowledged God in some sort; for we read of him as a "mighty hunter *before the Lord.*" If so, he soon threw off all restraint, and in company with others sought to perpetuate his name and fame as a "mighty one upon the earth" by building a tower that would reach up to heaven. (Genesis xi.) Frustrated in this by divine interposition, it was doubtless here, on the plains of Shinar, that he laid the foundation of the famous city of Babylon, which afterwards played such an important part in the history of the nations. But on the spot where once this queen of cities stood there is now but a heap of desolate ruins. Alas for human greatness! "Lay not up for yourselves treasures *on the earth . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" (Matt. vi. 19-21.)

In chapter iv. 9, 10, "a man of another sort" is brought before us, one singularly approved of God, whose brief but deeply-suggestive history we may now consider.

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren." A bright, cheering testimony this,

borne to a man whose history began in sorrow. And so did yours and mine, dear fellow-Christian. We can easily recall the time when, as poor vile sinners, we were crushed under the load of guilt and misery. It was a dark night of sorrow for us; but "joy came in the morning." So with the mother of Jabez. Her sorrow was doubtless soon turned into joy as she beheld those traits in her boy which afterwards marked him off as "more honourable than his brethren."

"And Jabez called on the God of Israel." He was a man of prayer. Could this be said of us? Are we often on our knees before God in secret? Do we mourn that iniquity abounds, that the love of many is waxing cold, and that poor infatuated sinners are posting on to the lake of fire? Let us remember that a man of *prayer* is a man of *power*. (Ezra viii. 21-23; Neh. i., ii. 1-8; Dan. ix. 20, 23; Col. iv. 12.)

Moreover, Jabez was a man with a definite purpose. "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me." A man who could "call on the God of Israel" would soon learn that if he was to be a true witness for Jehovah he must first, as an individual, be "blest indeed." So with us: if we are to be indeed effective servants in God's vineyard, or the great harvest field. (1 Sam. xvi. 11-13, xvii. 15; Acts vii. 29, 30; Gal. i. 15-19.)

God had said to the children of Israel, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." (Joshua i. 3, 4.) Hence the prayer of Jabez, "Enlarge my coast," was exactly in the line of God's promise and pleasure. In like manner we who belong to a far higher dispensation should earnestly endeavour to understand and to enjoy those things which have been freely given to us of God—things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, but which God has revealed in the Word by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

"And God granted him that which he requested." It could not be otherwise. God must be God. "He cannot deny Himself." O beloved, why are we so slow to learn this? If the faith of Jabez could thus lay hold upon God in the dim twilight of type and shadow, what of us who live in the full blaze of the gospel, wherein God is fully revealed in the person of His Son—redemption seen to be an accomplished fact, the cloudless favour of God the Father resting upon us, and His glory our hope? Surely we may say, The lines have

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 109

fallen to us in pleasant places; ours is a goodly heritage. (Psalm xvi. 6.) Be it ours, dear fellow-believer, to turn from everything that would detain our spirits in the place where our Lord has been rejected. Let the "Nimrods" of the earth pursue their empty pleasures, build their cities, establish their name and fame, and become "mighty upon the earth." Rather may we, like Jabez, seek to be blest indeed, having our coasts enlarged, and being kept in the Shepherd's hand, be thus preserved from all that would be unsuited to our heavenly calling.

G. F. E.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LERWICK.—We believe that all the saints who have died from Abel onward will share in that glorious resurrection which shall take place at our Lord's return. They are a part of the great harvest of which He Himself is the first-fruits. If any ask our authority for saying so, we quote at once 1 Corinthians xv. 20-23, and 1 Thessalonians iv. 16. This is called the *first* resurrection, and blessed and holy is he who hath part in it. But bear in mind that the first resurrection is not complete when the Lord returns for His own. It extends to the beginning of the millennium, and is shared in by those who lay down their lives for "the witness of Jesus and for the word of God" after the Church period is closed. Revelation xx. 4 is as plain as possible as to this. And those who suffer even unto death during the

110 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

hour of the triumph of the Antichrist—they too shall live and reign with Christ in His millennial kingdom. It is but one resurrection, though in different parts. It is of one order. It is after the likeness of Christ's own resurrection. Now "*the rest of the dead,*" spoken of in Revelation xx. 5, are the unsaved dead. Theirs is a resurrection unto judgment, as John v. 29 tells us. It takes place *after* the millennium. They stand before the great white throne, and are judged and cast into the lake of fire. None have part in this resurrection but the unsaved of all ages. The details of all this are found in Revelation xx. 11-15.

D. M.—Mark xiii. 13.—It has been often remarked that salvation is spoken of in three senses in Scripture. The believer *is* saved, he *is being* saved, and he *shall be* saved. He *is* saved in that everything relating to his sins and guilt and his former state of death in trespasses and in sins is settled for ever. He *is being* saved in that he is one of the pilgrim band journeying towards the heavenly country, with difficulties and dangers in the road. And if he is sustained in the midst of these, and carried through them day by day, he owes it to the priestly support of Christ, who saves His people to the uttermost. He *shall be* saved, in that salvation in its full meaning goes beyond deliverance from guilt and condemnation, beyond deliverance from daily difficulties and dangers, and embraces the introduction of the believer into the blessings of the world to come. Now it is easy to understand how salvation in the latter sense might be set before suffering and persecuted saints as a stimulus and an encouragement to them to endure to the end.

Not in the least to make them doubt ; on the contrary, to strengthen their courage and to make them still more unflinching. It is in this way we understand the passage about which you enquire. The same principle applies to Hebrews iii. 6-14, only a word of warning is added.

As to 1 Corinthians x. 27, Paul tells the fickle and unstable Corinthians how he himself ran and fought, and made his calling and election sure. It was possible to be a preacher and yet be lost, as Judas Iscariot was ; possible to speak with the tongues of men and of angels and yet be nothing. Paul felt this for himself, and so ran and fought as to make it manifest that the Christian warfare was not a mere thing of words, at least to him. But are we to suppose that Paul had the least doubt as to what the issue would be ? We cannot, unless we are willing to tear out and cast into the fire a hundred passages of Holy Writ. It is truly surprising to see with what perseverance people will bring forward these texts to keep souls in a state of uncertainty about their ultimate salvation. At the same time they pass by, as though they saw them not, many an assuring passage that would comfort, settle, and establish them in the truth and grace of God. They seem to rejoice in being made miserable, and to take comfort in refusing the abundant comfort of the Scriptures. Such souls are greatly to be pitied. Nor will the explanation of hard texts help them much. They need to know the love of God, and the blessed and glorious results of Christ's death and resurrection. If these were known their doubts would vanish, and settled peace with God would be enjoyed. Then these

112 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

seemingly difficult verses would be seen in a totally different light. You will find many of them examined in a small pamphlet, called *Fallen from Grace*, and *Can a Sheep of Christ ever Perish?* Both can be had of our publishers post-free for 3d.

N.—Hebrews i. 9.—“The oil of gladness,” with which the Son is here said to be anointed, is of course a figurative expression, and refers, so we believe, to the joy that was His when in resurrection and ascension He reached the presence of God. (Compare Hebrews xii. 2; Psalm xlv. 7, 8; xxi. 6; xvi. 11.) His “fellows” or companions, we presume, are those called in chapter ii. 12, “My brethren.” Associated with Him, through infinite grace, yet is He above them; for in this, as in all else, He must have the pre-eminence.

S. A. J.—Galatians ii. 20.—The life the apostle lived in flesh was a life which had the Son of God as its object continually and always so. It was not a simple act of faith, once done and then done with, but faith, living, abiding, continuous.

J. H.—No paper that we could write on the subject of worship would be worth anything in comparison with one already written by Mr. Darby. The sixth edition of this priceless pamphlet is still on sale, and will be sent by our publisher post-free to any address for three stamps. It would be worth buying if it cost its weight in gold. Get it, get it at once, and at once read it. You will be richly repaid. The important questions you ask in relation to worship are fully answered in its pages. The title of the pamphlet is *On Worship*, by J. N. D.

THE WINNING SIDE.

ENGLISHMEN naturally like to be on the winning side, and, as every student of history knows, they will die fighting against fearful odds rather than surrender or be overcome.

It may seem to you, therefore, somewhat surprising that we should assert with confidence that the great majority of Englishmen will shortly have to suffer defeat at the hands of One whom, as a mass, they have treated with disdain. Though none of the great Powers may be strong enough to subdue England's stout hearts and strong arms, an unrecognized and unexpected Power will one day spread dismay among the serried ranks of her people.

To be brief, there is a great question to be yet settled between God and the vast majority of men. As of old, the challenge has gone forth, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Though you may never have given the question a serious thought, you must be a servant, no matter what your position or prospects. You may have sung with patriotic ardour,

"Britons never, *never* shall be slaves,"

but you are labouring under a strange delusion, for your life is spent in service under the leader of your choice.

You are either among the ranks of those who boast as their Captain the Lord Jesus Christ, or

you are enlisted under the banner of His pronounced foe, and *your* leader is *the devil*. Do you think this statement a little too strong? If so, let me give you a few reasons for making it. In the first place, Have you openly taken sides with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you acknowledge Him as your Lord and Leader, because He is your *Saviour*, and out of gratitude to Him as having been your Substitute, and as having borne the punishment due and payable to you for your sin? If not, remember that He said, "He that is not *with Me* is *against Me*." On whose side then are you? Do you find your delight in a life of pleasure, and forget ETERNITY and GOD? If so, you are a good servant of your master, though you may not be a fighting man; for you, and others with you, please him well by making the most of this life and forgetting that which is to come.

Perhaps you are one of those who sneer when the name of Jesus is mentioned in your hearing, or, if too well bred to do this, you in your heart of hearts despise the poor fanatic (as you think him) who makes so much of Him. If so, you too serve your master well, for you influence the faint-hearted, foolish friends of yours who would be Christians but for fear of your contempt.

Do you give your money to the cause of religion, and, combining your deeds of benevolence with a life of virtue, hope at last to

merit heaven? Then you form one of that mighty English battalion which the devil doubtless regards as the flower of his army. For do you not perceive, O foolish, good man, that you delight the heart of Satan and greatly strengthen his cause when you lessen the value, or altogether ignore the necessity, of the sacrificial and atoning work of Christ?

It is GOD'S HEAVEN that you desire to reach, and you can only reach it in *God's way*. What evident folly it is to ignore the proclamation of God Himself, who says, "Without shedding of blood is NO REMISSION," and who sent His Son to be the propitiation for sins. *You will never get to heaven if you ignore God and His appointed way*, no matter how honest you may be in your endeavour. If you shut your eyes you will not see the danger ahead, but blindness, whether wilful or thoughtless, will never *remove* danger. Why not face your future, then, and learn for your own satisfaction and good where your present course of life will end? If you deny the existence of hell and the eternal duration of punishment for sin, you may have great and learned men to quote in support of your opinion; but both these learned men and you will one day find that "great men are not always wise," and it shall be proved by *experience*—bitter and eternal—that God's Word is true, and that "the wicked shall go away into *everlasting* punishment."

Whether, then, you be indifferent, reckless, or religious, you will be wise to confess that God is just, and that you are a sinner; and then you will be ready for the unfolding of His plan of salvation, which is more worthy of acceptance than yours, and was devised for your eternal good.

Briefly and plainly I would assure you, with the overwhelming evidence of the Word of God, that you can only escape hell and reach heaven by confessing that you are a sinner deserving the just punishment of God; and then, turning to the cross of Calvary, see by faith that God's Lamb was there as your Substitute, and say, "He bare my sins in His own body on the tree."

Then God can and will bless you and blot out all your sins, because the death of Christ was His own provision for the salvation of the sinner—for *your* salvation.

If you prefer to serve Satan by doing your own will and choosing your own path, you can only expect and will certainly receive the sentence of eternal banishment from God, and eternal exile to the home—nay, not the *home*, but the abode—of the devil and his angels.

Surrender now, lay down your arms, and enlist under Him whose banner is love, and who will most assuredly prevail over all His foes, and reward His faithful followers.

"For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

W. B. W.

A GLORIOUS SIGHT.

HAVE you ever stood, good reader, upon the edge of the sea when everything as far as the eye could reach has been enveloped in a damp fog? The waves were beating sullenly on the beach, and hardly a living figure could be discerned to break the dull monotony of the scene. How your spirits were damped by such a sight, and you gladly turned away and sought some more congenial spot.

Suppose yourself standing on a lofty mountain crag. The sunshine sheds its beauteous light on the vast expanse around and below, while the forest, the moorland, the cattle, and the distant group of peaceful cottages, all seem instinct with life and beauty. The spirits are uplifted; the brain is refreshed, and you can hardly refrain from expressing your joy in an outburst of song.

Speaking naturally, a gloomy prospect depresses; a joyful, happy one cheers and enlivens.

Now, what is true in the natural sphere is much more true in the spiritual.

Christian reader, where are your eyes resting? What do they behold? Many look on the world around. Oh, the troubles, the difficulties, the temptations are so great! They are always bemoaning the roughness of the way. They are

always striving to keep their hearts from being attracted by what they see around them in Vanity Fair. Oh, friend, this is a dismal piece of business! We do not wonder that you are such a woe-begone, unhappy Christian.

Others look upon a view which is still more repulsive; it is *the evil within*. And this is indeed a sight to make one shudder. Evil seems to break out on every hand. At the best of moments pride and self-esteem seem to be uppermost. In the meetings, during private prayer, while engaged in some little act of service, they find this terrible thing called "the flesh" breaking through all restraint and defiling everything. It is at such a time that they utter the fearful wail of Romans vii.: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But, dear reader, whether you are looking at the world and fighting despairingly against it, or are looking within and are overwhelmed with the evil there, I want to tell you to-day that these are not the sights God would have you gaze upon. These are like the gloomy view of which we spoke; but God tells you in His Word of a glorious, magnificent sight on which He bids you rest your eyes. (Read Heb. xii. 2.)

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

Ah! here is a view which has no damp fogs, no heavy clouds, to mar its beauty. For JESUS

our Lord dwells in a heavenly scene where all is bright. He has passed out of the sorrow and the suffering of earth, and out of the terrible darkness of Calvary. Now He dwells in a land that is fairer than day, in the blessed light of His Father's presence. This is the sight, this is the Person, He bids you behold.

Would you like to know what kind of Person He is? He is never changed. His character and His love and grace are the same now as they were when He was upon earth. In His circumstances and His appearance there is a very great change. Here He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; here His *visage* (or *face*) was so marred more than any man; but now the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in His *blessed face*. But His *moral glory* is ever changeless; therefore we read in Heb. xiii. 8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

In the pages of the Holy Word we shall find what He was in grace to His people of old.

(1) HIS RESTORING GRACE.

There was one who had sinned. Brave, impetuous Peter, who had such love for the Lord, but who had utterly broken down. Thrice he had denied his Lord with oaths and curses. This, too, at the time of His greatest sorrow, when He was about to express the depth of His love by dying.

It was an awful fall. But "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter."

Oh, that look! so full of pitying love and gentle reproach. It pierced him through and through; it broke him down. The bold look fled from his face, the light died out of his eyes, tears filled them, as he left the place in bitter repentance.

Oh, brethren, do we not SIN? We should not; but, alas! how often we do. Even now some who read this book may have evil on their conscience. Turn to Him as Peter did; you will catch the look which melted Peter, which, while making you hate the sin, will draw you all the more closely to Himself, for He is the same to-day as ever.

(2) HIS LOVING SYMPATHY.

Death had paid his unwelcome and unexpected visit to the little town of Bethany, and had blighted one of the peaceful, happy homes there. Lazarus, the beloved brother of Martha and Mary, had already lain four days in the tomb, and his sisters are overwhelmed with sorrow. But the Lord approaches. See how Mary, when she is informed that He has come, hastens to Him and falls at His feet, while her very heart seems to burst with the cry, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

He sees the weeping form, He hears the

agonizing cry ; but has He no word of sympathy ? No, not a word. But how true it is that actions speak louder than words ; and the wonderful record is handed down to us—"JESUS WEPT." He did not chide her sorrow, but in loving sympathy He mingled His tears with hers. "Jesus wept"—only two words, the shortest verse in the Bible ; but what a mighty gap it would make if this little verse were omitted. And sorrowing, suffering ones now can rejoice to know that the heart that wept with Mary is still beating up yonder with the same tender compassion for His people to-day.

(3) HIS SUSTAINING POWER.

A man stands before a crowded audience. His faithfulness to his Master has brought him into fearful peril. False witnesses have trumped up charges against him, and he has to answer before the leading assembly of the Jewish nation. But he does not flinch. Boldly this solitary man charges their guilt, in the rejection of Christ, right home to this religious assembly. His words cut like knives. All the malice of their hearts rises up against this man ; the devil backing them up. They will soon make that villainous tongue cease its prating ! He shall pay for his boldness with his life. Roughly they drag him outside the city, as they did his Master before him, and he is to lay down his life for his Lord. Does he shrink

from the prospect? Nay, indeed, a holy light shines upon his face; heavenly joy is depicted in every feature. For the heavens had opened; the glory and the Glorified One were displayed before his upward gaze. The raging of the multitude, the cries of his enemies, the falling of the stones upon his poor mangled body, were as nothing compared with the sight he had just seen. The effect of it was to produce the same spirit as the blessed Lord Himself manifested. With his last breath he prays for his murderers, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

It is easy to apply this illustration to ourselves, but we hardly dare to do it; for any little suffering or reproach we have endured seems so utterly insignificant compared with this grand triumph of faith. Yet, unless we get the same sustaining power that was accorded to Stephen, we cannot bear a little bit of suffering for Christ. Ah, this is what will give us courage to confess His name in the workshop, or the office, or wherever our employment may take us. This is what will enable us to bear the sneer, the laugh, and the cold shoulder, which we shall be sure to get. The sight of this blessed risen Man will make bold the most cowardly heart.

These three illustrations are what may be called extreme cases. A terrible fall; an overwhelming sorrow; a martyr's death. So, however great may be our need, we need never fear that we have

got beyond where His grace can reach us. And remember, the restoring grace, the loving sympathy, the sustaining power, are all at our disposal to-day. As you read in the gospel about all the ways of our Saviour, bear the word in your mind, and draw upon its sweetness—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

"Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him?
Is not thine a raptured heart?
Chief among ten thousand own Him,
Gladly choose the better part.

"What has stript the seeming beauty
From the idols of the earth?
Not the sense of right or duty,
But the sight of peerless worth.

"Not the crushing of those idols,
With its bitter void and smart,
But the beaming of His beauty,
The unveiling of His heart.

"'Tis that look that melted Peter,
'Tis that face that Stephen saw,
'Tis that heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw—

"Draw and win and fill completely,
Till the cup o'erflow the brim:
What have we to do with idols,
Who have companied with Him?"

S. H. P.

WHAT WAIT I FOR?

THIS is a searching question for the heart; but it is oftentimes a most salutary one, inasmuch as we may constantly detect ourselves in an attitude of waiting for things which, when they come, prove not to be worth waiting for.

The human heart is very much like the poor lame man at the gate of the temple in Acts iii. He was looking at every passer-by "expecting to receive something," and the heart will ever be looking out for some relief, some comfort, or some enjoyment in passing circumstances. It may, ever and anon, be found sitting by the side of some creature-stream, vainly expecting that some refreshment will flow along its channel.

It is amazing to think of the trifles on which nature will at times fix its expectant gaze—a change of circumstances, a change of scene, change of air, a journey, a visit, a letter, a book—anything, in short, is sufficient to raise expectation in a poor heart which is not finding its centre, its spring, its *all*, in Christ.

Hence the practical importance of frequently turning sharp round upon the heart with the question, "What wait I for?" Doubtless the true answer to this inquiry would, at times, furnish the most advanced Christian with matter for deep humiliation and self-judgment before the Lord.

In Psalm xxxix. 6 we have the three great types of character, as set forth in the "vain show," "vain disquietude," and "heaping up." These types may sometimes be found combined, but very often they have a distinct development.

There are many whose life is one "vain show," whether in their personal character, their commercial position, their political or religious profession. There is nothing solid about them, nothing real, nothing true. The glitter is the most shallow gilding possible. There is nothing deep, nothing intrinsic. All is surface work—all the merest flash and smoke.

Then, again, we find another class, whose life is one continued scene of "vain disquietude." You will never find them at ease, never satisfied, never happy. There is always some terrible thing coming, some catastrophe in the distance, the bare anticipation of which keeps them in a constant fever of anxiety. They are troubled about property, about friends, about trade, about children, about servants. Though placed in circumstances which thousands of their fellow-creatures would deem most enviable, they seem to be in a perpetual fret. They harass themselves in reference to troubles that may never come, difficulties they may never encounter, sorrows they may never live to see. Instead of remembering the blessings of the past, and rejoicing in the mercies of the present, they are

anticipating the trials of the future. In a word, "*they are disquieted in vain.*"

Finally, you will meet another class, quite different from either of the preceding ones—keen, shrewd, industrious, money-making people—people who would live where others would starve. There is not much "vain show" about them. They are too solid, and life is too practical a reality for anything of that sort. Neither can you say there is much disquietude about them. Theirs is an easy-going, quiet, plodding spirit, or an active, enterprising, speculating turn of mind. "They heap up, and know not who shall gather."

But, reader, remember, on all three alike the Spirit has stamped "VANITY." Yes, "all," without any exception, "under the sun," has been pronounced by One who knew it by experience and wrote it by inspiration, "vanity and vexation of spirit." Turn where you will, "*under the sun,*" and you will not find aught on which the heart can rest. You must rise on the steady and vigorous pinion of faith to the regions "above the sun," in order to find "a better and an enduring substance." The One who sits at the right hand of God has said, "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love Me to inherit *substance*; and I will fill their treasures." (Prov. viii. 20, 21.) None but Jesus can give "substance," none but He can "fill," none but

He can "satisfy." There is that in Christ's perfect work which meets the deepest need of conscience, and there is that in His glorious Person which can satisfy the most earnest longings of the heart. The one who has found Christ on the cross, and Christ on the throne, has found all he can possibly need for time or eternity.

Well, therefore, might the psalmist, having challenged his heart with the question, "What wait I for?" reply, "My hope is *in Thee*." No "vain show," no "vain disquietude," no "heaping up" for him. He had found an object in God worth waiting for; and therefore turning away his eye from all beside, he says, "My hope is in Thee."

This, my beloved reader, is the only true, peaceful, and happy position. The soul that leans on, looks to, and waits for Jesus will never be disappointed. Such a one possesses an exhaustless fund of present enjoyment in fellowship with Christ, while at the same time he is cheered by "that blessed hope" that when this present scene, with all its "vain show," its "vain disquietude," and its vain resources, shall have passed away, he shall be with Jesus where He is, to behold His glory, to bask in the light of His countenance, and to be conformed to His image for ever.

May we then be much in the habit of

challenging our earth-bound, creature-seeking hearts with the searching inquiry, "*What wait I for?*" Am I waiting for some change of circumstances, or "for the Son from heaven"? Can I look up to Jesus, and, with a full and an honest heart say, "Lord, my hope is *in Thee*"?

May our hearts be more thoroughly separated from this present evil world, and all that pertains thereto, by the power of communion with those things that are unseen and eternal. C. H. M.

THE ONLY WAY OF APPROACH.

IT is an immense thing to be well grounded in the truth that we can only draw nigh to God and be fitted for His presence through *the death of Christ*. This great fact comes out very forcibly at the outset of man's history after the fall, and is confirmed by all Scripture.

When Eve and Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened. Sin had entered through the serpent's lie, and they found themselves unfit for the presence of the Lord God. Immediately they sought a remedy. "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (Gen. iii. 7.) It was a device of their own hearts, deceived by the serpent and by sin. But the presence of the Lord God in the garden

THE ONLY WAY OF APPROACH. 129

immediately discovered its worthlessness. The moment they heard His voice, they hid themselves from His presence, and thus manifested their mistrust of their own remedy. In answer to His searching question, "Where art thou?" Adam replied, "*I* heard Thy voice in the garden, and *I* was afraid, because *I* was naked; and *I* hid myself." (Gen. iii. 10.)

Let us pause for a moment, and apply what we learn here to men to-day—descendants of fallen Adam. History repeats itself. Morally naked in our sins, the moment we realize this to be our state, it is as natural to seek a remedy of our own as it is to breathe. Immediately a man feels that he is not fit for God's presence, he seeks to make himself so. A vast deal of the religious doings of men is based upon this very thing. Fig-leaf religions, so to speak, abound. Men sew together their morality, good works, alms-deeds, religion, etc., and hope thereby to commend themselves to God, and to be all right in the end. But when the Lord's voice is heard in the soul, we mistrust at once our own vain remedies. Fear and dread fill our hearts. There is the sense of our unfitness to meet Him—all our religiousness notwithstanding—and we would fain hide ourselves from Him. It is the history of thousands upon thousands.

Questioned by the Lord God, Adam sought to put the blame of his state on Him, and Eve on

the serpent. The Lord pronounced solemn judgment on all three: enmity, multiplied sorrow, toil on an accursed earth, and death were the portion of sinners henceforth. How terrible indeed the fall of man!

But in the midst of this sorrowful scene a ray of light shines. Adam called his wife's name Eve (at the very moment when sin and death had entered), because she was the mother of all *living*. Is it not the evidence of divinely-given faith, bestowed in infinite grace, at that deeply solemn moment?

And then we get God's remedy. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Man's fig-leaf remedy was utterly worthless; nothing that man could do for himself could possibly avail. But the Lord God Himself intervened, and made coats of skin, and clothed them. It was wholly His work. The instruction in it for our souls is unmistakably plain. Skins are taken from animals after death. Hence the clothing of our first parent, implies the great principle which runs throughout Scripture, that the death of a divinely-approved sacrifice must take place before a sinner can be clothed and fitted for the presence of God. To this end Christ must die. He *has died*, and glorified God as to sin, and on the ground of His death God Himself clothes us. It is not by works of

righteousness which we have done (Titus iii. 5), but Christ having died, God's righteousness is now revealed. He is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.) As a righteous God, He clears us of all our guilt, accounts us just, and makes us His righteousness in Christ. (2 Cor. v. 21.) It is His own work from beginning to end.

Driven forth from the garden, there was no way back either for Adam or for his posterity. The cherubims and flashing sword guarded the way of the tree of life in the earthly paradise. But God in grace has spoken of another paradise, a *heavenly* one in glory, the title to which is Christ's death. The *earthly* paradise is lost, the *heavenly* one is open to all believers. But fallen man, regardless of the judgment of God on the one hand, and the grace of God on the other, vainly seeks to make a *worldly* one here. It is utter folly, for sin and death reign, and all is irretrievably marred.

Two sons being born to Adam and Eve outside the earthly paradise, in process of time they came to offer unto the Lord. Now Abel, the younger, a keeper of sheep, recognized the governmental judgment of God, and by faith brought of the firstlings of the flock and the fat. And the Lord had respect both to him and to his offering. (Genesis iv. 4.) But Cain, regardless of the Lord's ways, and insensible to His claims, followed

the devices of his own heart, and brought of the fruit of the ground, which was under the curse. To him and to his offering the Lord had no respect. "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

Now the same principle comes out here very distinctly. The only ground of approach to God is *by death*. A well-known preacher, in the presence of high personages, taught that Cain was rejected because he brought of the fruit of the ground instead of the fruit of the trees! We see clearly exemplified in the preacher himself the truth that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. His doctrine was that if Cain had brought *his best* to God he would have been accepted, and that if men to-day brought their best to God, they would be saved. What an utter denial of the truth of God! All Scripture testifies that on the ground of death alone can man stand before or draw nigh to God. In type, figure, shadow, offering, sacrifice, this great truth is found everywhere from Genesis to Malachi, while in the New Testament the one offering of God's Holy Lamb—the death and blood-shedding of Jesus, the great Antitype of all—is ever to the front.

The great value of Abel's offering was that by it Abel confessed his own life to be forfeited as a sinner, and therefore the need of the death of another, in order that he might be accepted of

God. This Cain failed to apprehend, and hence his rejection. Angry, he nurtured his anger till he murdered his brother, and lied to God to cover his evil act. Thus he showed himself a slave of Satan, who is a liar and murderer from the beginning. Driven out as a fugitive and vagabond on the earth, he went forth from the presence of the Lord, and began to form that world which has been developing to this day. His descendants, by the introduction of music and the arts, sought to make a *worldly* paradise here, so to speak, but without God. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain," is a solemn word for those who live in and follow the world to-day. (Jude 2.) As long as we remain *unconverted*, we belong to a world at enmity with God, which has murdered Christ, the true Abel, and is more or less full of lying. Like Cain, we are fugitives from the Lord's presence, vagabonds or wanderers in our sins. In this state, surrounded with all the embellishments, inventions, and handiwork, etc., of men, we love to live for ourselves, without God. We love darkness rather than light, and seek, in short (but in vain), to form a *worldly* paradise here according to our own pleasing. The end of it all is death, and the eternal judgment of God.

How blessed, in contrast with this sad picture, to find that God has another Man before Him. This is prefigured in the closing verses of Gen. iv.

Abel being slain, and Cain having gone his own way, God gave Adam and Eve another son. And she called his name Seth. "For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." (*vv.* 25, 26.) Both Abel and Seth prefigure our Lord Jesus Christ. Abel's death sets forth the death of Christ, whom men with wicked hands crucified and slew, while Seth exhibits Christ as the Man appointed in the eternal counsel of God, who lives beyond death, and in whom all the ways of God centre. It is worthy of notice that after God again speaks of Adam being created in His likeness, and blessed by Him, it is added, his son was begotten in his own likeness, after his image, and his name called Seth (appointed). (Chap. v. 3.)

Happy for us if, clothed with Christ and accepted on the ground of His offering, we look outside this sad Cain-world by which we are surrounded, and onward to the bright day that is approaching, when God will fulfil all His promises in the true Seth, Christ, the appointed One, His risen and glorified Son! May our hearts be occupied with Him, that we may thus keep ourselves unspotted from the world, till we share His glory in that coming day. E. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANXIOUS TO LEARN.—Be on your guard against the use of pious phrases that you have never weighed, and which you would find it hard to explain were you called upon to do so. If others use them, let them; but do you wait awhile and be satisfied to say what you have to say in words of your own choosing. We are more and more persuaded that the phrases with which our vocabulary of late years has been enriched are being mouthed by many who know but little of their meaning. A friend of ours was talking to one the other day, who made his boast that he was “in another Man.” On being asked what he meant by being “in another Man,” he placed a piece of paper between the leaves of his Bible, and closing the book said, “I am in Christ, as that paper is in my Bible,” a reply which plainly showed that he had yet to learn what Scripture means when it speaks of our being “*In Christ.*” Now that is what we deprecate—the flippant use of terms that are not understood. Had we the ear of our younger brethren we would earnestly, affectionately, and solemnly warn them against trafficking in phrases which, however just and true, are not like current coins, which have the same value no matter whose the hand that holds them. We have listened in sorrow and amazement to certain babes in Christ using expressions and giving utterance to sentiments that only belong to ripened Christian experience. We do not charge

them with insincerity, but their inexperience has been imposed upon, and in their childish credulity they have believed that ability to talk of a matter is the same thing as knowing it in deed and in truth. It is a sore evil from which we need pray to be delivered.

In your letter you observe, "I thought I had learned the end of the first man, and would never be disappointed in myself again." I wonder what you mean by "the end of the first man." So far as we remember, "*the first man*" is a term only found in 1 Corinthians xv., and is used in contrast with "*the second Man*"—the Lord out of heaven. Do you mean that you thought you had learned that "our *old man* is crucified with Him," according to Romans vi. 6? That is, indeed, blessedly true. We have died with Christ, and thus our *moral links* with the first man Adam—the head of the fallen family—have been severed in that death. We say *our moral links* to distinguish these from what is natural and physical. The latter, of course, remain—a remark almost too absurd to make. Our being Christians does not do away with natural affection, nor deprive us of our limbs. These link us with the first man still, though what Christianity brings, and what it introduces us into, will affect our whole being. Keeping this reservation in mind, we can truly say it is good to gaze upon the dying Saviour, and see in His death not only the putting away of all our sins for ever, but the ending of our history as Adam's children. It is a blessed sight, but a solemn one; and if we can rejoice in so great a deliverance, it is not without holy grief that to accomplish it the Saviour had to

undergo so much. But you did not suppose, did you, that in seeing this you had got rid of "the flesh"? The flesh is still in us, though we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us. We are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh, but the flesh is there, and the only way not to fulfil its desires is to walk in the Spirit. (Galatians v. 16.) True Christian liberty is connected with this line of truth.

Taking up now your other expression, "*I thought I would never be disappointed in myself again,*" what do you mean by that? Certainly, if you believe that in you—that is, in your flesh—dwells no good thing, you will not look for good where no good dwells. Perhaps you thought that nothing of your old self would ever be seen again; that your will would always accept cheerfully whatever arose in your path, and that you would never wish things to be different from what they are. Happy, indeed, were it so! But this subjection of spirit, this brokenness of will, this meek acceptance of whatever comes, is a state in which the Christian grows as he takes the yoke of Christ and learns of Him. Now, I beseech you, look away from yourself. Think of the cloudless favour of God in which you stand; think of your place in Christ, as being of His order; think of the divine relationships in which you have been set; think of the amazing fact that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Rejoice in the freedom wherewith Christ sets us free, and, turning your back upon that world which only gave your Lord and Saviour a cross and a crown of thorns, seek the things of that new and brighter sphere where Christ Himself is gone.

138 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Then the light of that glory which shines in the face of Jesus Christ shall fill your soul, and self will be forgotten.

TWO SISTERS.—Your kind note came safely to hand, and its enclosures were sent off at once. Very many thanks.

A. J.—The glad tidings of the kingdom first preached by John Baptist, and afterwards by the Lord Himself, relate to the kingdom which shall yet be established on earth in power and glory, according to Daniel ii. 44. The glad tidings of the grace of God unfold richer things than those relating to the kingdom. They speak of heavenly blessings, of those immense privileges conferred on believers now, and in which the riches of God's grace are so conspicuously displayed.

Your second question is answered in 2 Thess. ii., which distinctly tells us that those who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, shall fall under strong delusion, and believe a lie. This solemn passage, in our judgment, excludes from all hope of salvation those who, when the Lord returns, shall be found among the rejecters of His gospel.

In reference to the third point. Others, besides Jews, will be saved through the great tribulation. The white-robed multitude of Rev. vii. 9, so large that no man could number it, embraces people of all nations, kindreds, and tongues. It is a *Gentile* company.

ECILA.—Acts v.—We really cannot say whether Ananias and Sapphira were converted or not. Scripture is silent on the point, and any opinion would be

mere conjecture, possessing no value whatever. They may have been. If any object and say, "Surely no converted person could ever sin as they did," we answer, "Alas! there is no sin into which a truly converted soul may not fall if he cease to watch and pray." We have long regarded them as solemn examples of what we find in 1 John v. 16, "There is a sin unto death," referring, of course, to the death of the body.

As to 1 Peter iv. 17, 18, let us remember that Christians, though they be born again and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, are subject to the wise and holy discipline of God their Father. Hence in chapter i. 17 it is said, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." If then God, who loves us perfectly, and whose children, through grace, we are, takes cognizance of our ways, and in His holy love does not pass over *our* sins lightly, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous with difficulty holds on his way in view of all the difficulties that oppose him at every step, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Such seems the drift of the passage.

A BABE IN CHRIST.—John xii. 32.—We do not understand this verse to mean that everybody will be drawn to Christ in some way or other. Rather that He in His death and resurrection becomes the centre of all God's ways. Whatever the circle of blessing, He is the centre, the One to whom all are drawn.

HEBREWS XI. 27 can hardly refer to Exodus ii. 15. May not the words embrace both what goes before and

follows after? He forsook Egypt, gave up all that it had to offer, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and relinquished the prizes his high position might have secured him. By faith he did this, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible, nor feared the anger of the king. In the power of the same faith he afterwards forsook Egypt altogether, turned his back upon it, and went forth with the chosen people to go to the land into which God had promised to bring them—a land flowing with milk and honey.

REVELATION IV. 6.—The following extract may help you as to this: "The living creatures resemble in part the seraphim whom Isaiah saw above the throne of the Lord (Isaiah vi. 1-3); and in part the living creatures of Ezekiel's vision, where the same emblems of the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle appear. (Ezekiel i.) They are '*in the midst* of the throne,' as well as round about it, seeming to show that they are rather symbols of God's ways in providence and judgment than separate beings. They are full of eyes, before and behind, around and within, indicating perfect knowledge and intelligence. In their wings we see the rapidity with which His purposes are carried out, while they are the unwearied proclaimers of that holiness which marks all His ways."

LERWICK.—2 Cor. v. 10.—We doubt not that at the judgment-seat of Christ we shall see and understand how great the grace that has been shown us *all* our earthly life, and from how many dangers His powerful hand delivered us even in our unconverted years. Whatever disclosures are made there, they will but magnify the grace of God, and fill our hearts with wonder and praise.

AN EVENTFUL JOURNEY.

LUKE x. 30-37.

HOW IT BEGAN.

THE traveller whose experiences are to occupy us was living in Jerusalem, the city of God, and it was from thence he made his eventful journey to Jericho, the city of the curse. "City of Palm Trees" it had been proudly called in days of yore; but its wickedness had made it the object of divine judgment in Joshua's day, and ever since then it had been marked, in the record of inspiration, as under the curse of God.

At the same time we see no reason to doubt that its citizens pursued the ordinary occupations and pleasures of life; neither do we suppose that its fields were less fruitful or its skies less sunny than those of Zion, which Jehovah had chosen for His habitation.

Its terrible sentence, neither revoked nor forgotten, was not written on its walls, but linked with its long, sad history, and recorded in the pages of Holy Writ.

It is very evident that our traveller one day said farewell to his friends, and got himself outside the walls of Zion on to the Jericho road. Was he tired of Jerusalem associations, and the

shadow of the Sanctuary? Was it the distant prospect of Jericho that enchanted his soul, or the conversation of one of its citizens? Was it urgent business that took him there, or the claims of friendship—perhaps a love affair? Was it the first trip of the kind he had ever made in his life, or the very last time he meant to risk the dangers of the road? Was he acting on the advice, or against the entreaties of his friends? We are not told, and it is well the history should be silent as to the motives, while recording the fact that *something* influenced him to leave Jerusalem for the city of the plain; for this makes its lesson applicable to *all* who leave the pious associations of early days to seek their own interest in the world.

He may have contemplated only the shortest stay, merely a taste of Jericho life, leaving ample time to be back for temple worship on the Sabbath. Many a simple soul has done as much. The distant view, the gaiety and the laughter, the rush of business or the whirl of pleasure, has fired the imagination and captivated the heart. They intended only to taste, to enjoy themselves, excuse themselves, and return; but some misfortune, not by any means included in the original programme, has upset their calculations and left them helpless by the roadside, very far from the golden city, spiritual joys but a memory, and the pleasures of sin a fugitive phantom.

AN EVENTFUL JOURNEY.

143

HOW IT HAPPENED.

In any case the man in the parable fared worse than he had hoped when he started on the downward road. Soon after he left the strong fortress of Zion, or ever he could call the Jericho pleasures his own, he fell amongst thieves; and not only did the rascals relieve him of all the Jerusalem goods which he carried with him, but they robbed him of his honour, his health, and half of his life. Afterwards, when all he could call his own was his wounds, his helplessness, and his need, *they left him*—those robbers—on the Jericho road.

And now, lest you should think the picture is painted darker than the reality, I will paint it darker still, and tell you that even then there is no exaggeration in its terrible significance. I will suppose that the wretched victim *liked* his murderers; that he laughed at their jokes, and enjoyed their sword-thrusts; that he wished they would strike him again, and fondly embraced the most cruel of them all. What! Has the man lost his reason as well as his wealth? You may think so, but I call him very sane and serious in comparison with certain men who love the sins that ruin them; who long for the devil's fiery darts, and embrace the vices that are hurrying them to hell. Reader, whose is the greater folly? What about the dangerous haunts and doubtful friendships which your soul loveth,

although you well know all their sad consequence? Are they indeed so lovely, those foul robbers of your soul, that you treat them with such friendship; that you welcome their cruel wounds; that you relish their poison, because it is sweet?

HOW IT WAS ACCOUNTED FOR.

So far as I see, all these terrible afflictions followed *one* false step. They were not the cumulative consequence of many such excursions. One journey, with his face toward the city of the curse and his back turned to the city of God, cost you man his health, his wealth, and his hopes. Can you measure the consequence of *one* sin? And, oh, reader, *is it worth while?*

Robbed, ruined, helpless, and half dead, we yet discover one point in his favour. We have every reason to believe that he realized his condition. After the first fruitless attempts to raise himself he must have given up all hope of continuing his journey unaided, and anxiously looked around for help.

And in this particular his case was infinitely more hopeful than that of hundreds to-day. Their case also is desperate, but they do not know it. The worse they become, the better they imagine themselves to be. Boasting themselves to be rich and increased with goods, they do not know that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. For such, indeed, really nothing can be done until they recognize their need.

I am very sure there are two men who will never trust the doctor to cure them: the man who does not believe he is ill, and the man who does not wish to be well. And this certainty assures me that there never can be faith in Christ without repentance. There can be no faith in the Saviour until a man feels himself lost and longs to be saved, not only from the punishment, but from the power of sin. The trouble with many is that they do not want to be saved from the commission, but only from the consequence of sin.

Priest and Levite verify the traveller's state, but they do not relieve him. The law can discover the complaint, but cannot cure it. Its precept, "This *do*," brings little encouragement to a helpless man. It was not religion he needed, but a Saviour.

HOW HE WAS HELPED.

But another comes that way. One despised—even hated—unexpected and undesired. A Samaritan, as he journeyed, came—not by chance—where he was. How wondrous kind his dealing with the sufferer, who had no claim on his care!

Who tells the story? Jesus, the despised Saviour. God became man's neighbour, but still unloved! Yet with what holy delicacy He veils His claims behind the figure of a Samaritan stranger. He who had journeyed and come where the sinner lay in his need, He who saw, as only He *could* see, the desperate state of sin's

victim, and then out of the wealth and greatness of His own love *had compassion*, and instead of turning away with loathing, went to him and ministered to his need.

We are not told that the wounded man tried to make out there was nothing the matter with him, or that, in any case, he was no worse than his neighbours; nor do we find him speaking about doing his best, or asking the Samaritan to come again at a more convenient season.

It is just here that our story fails to fit the idea of some well-meaning people. Instead of the words, "set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him," they have a various reading to the effect that the Samaritan "set him on his own legs [and a pair of crutches], and directed him to an inn, and warned him to take care of himself." I am bound to say, however, that this reading is supported by no ancient MSS., but solely by the fears of those who think the Authorized Version too good to be true!

HOW IT TURNED OUT.

That was a day of great changes for our traveller. He set out full of nature's energy and the good things of this world. In a moment he found himself helpless, dying, and poor. Yet again he is journeying, but in Another's strength, at Another's cost, and in Another's company—never more to tread the weary roadway alone, never more to face its hidden perils in his unaided

strength. He is borne along with the arms of love around him, and his very wounds, though no miracle has healed them, are a constant means of proving his Saviour's care.

So also with the Christian as he passes along life's highway; he no longer journeys alone, or boasts of his independence. Through sunshine and storm, over moorland and hill, in crowded streets or solitary paths, he leans on his Beloved; and knowing Him as mighty to save, and able to keep from falling, his heart ever sings through life's changing scenes:—

His love is my story, His love is my song,
To mansions in glory He bears me along.
His mercies restore me,
His banner is o'er me,
His rest is before me,
He rests in His love—His love is my song.

HOW IT ENDED.

And then that little money transaction with the innkeeper. He only left two pence, though making himself responsible for the whole, as if to show that his return would be soon and sure. Though we cannot say the two pence were all he had with him, we do know that Christ has put *all that He had or was down here* in the Spirit's care, for the comfort and keeping of His redeemed. Shall we call John xiv. 26 one of the pence, and 1 Peter ii. 21 the other—His *words* and His *example*—left for our consolation and guidance?

S. E. McN.

FOUR NEGATIVE FACTS.

Read ROMANS iii. 22-27.

FACTS are stern things to deal with, especially when they are *God's* facts. There are numberless *theories* afloat, and men have their *opinions* about a thousand things; but when facts are in question, we have no option but to bow to them.

1. Now I want to call your attention to four great facts, found in the Epistle to the Romans. The first of them is,

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.

I suppose this is one of the hardest truths that a man has to learn. We are so apt to compare ourselves with others, and to think, because we do not swear, and lie, and cheat, and get drunk as they do, that therefore there *is* a difference in God's sight between us and them.

A servant of the Lord was having a talk with a young man one day. "Oh!" said the young man, "I believe that all are sinners, but I don't believe that all are the same."

"Well," replied the Christian, "we have only one authority to appeal to. Take your Bible and turn to Romans iii. 22. Read the latter part of the verse, 'There is NO difference.' That is what *God* says." "I never saw that before," said the young man. Ah! but it *was* there, though

he had never seen it; and it *is* there, though you may never have believed it.

“What!” says someone, “do you mean to tell me that there is no difference between me and that miserable wretch who does nothing but sin?”

It is not *I* who tell you so, it is God.

HE SAYS, “THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.”

No difference between the besotted drunkard and the most religious man on earth. No difference between the respectable, refined lady who rides in her gilded carriage, and the coarse tramp that limps along without a scrap of leather to cover his aching feet. There is *no* difference.

Perhaps you tell me that this is rather too much for you to believe. “Yes,” you say, “I know I am a sinner, but I don’t feel that I am so bad as some people; that man, for instance, who was hung the other day for murder.” I dare say you do not feel so bad as he, but this is not a thing that you *can* feel. It is a thing about which you must believe God. *He* says, “There is no difference”; that is, *as to guilt* there is no difference.

I grant you that in other respects there is a great difference among men. There is a difference as to social position. There is a difference as to outward appearance. There is a difference as to character and disposition: one may be amiable and kind, and another selfish and mean; but as to being guilty before God, there is *no difference*.

You have read the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke xv., have you not? The moment that he crossed the threshold of the house, with his pockets full of money, and a good coat upon his back, he was as really guilty, and as truly a sinner, as when he sat groaning by the pig-troughs in his rags and wretchedness. When amongst the swine, he was more degraded, but not more guilty, than when he left his father's home. His sin was more evident, but not more real.

Now, it may be quite true that *you* have not wandered so far in the paths of sin as he did, but as to being *in* those paths, "there is no difference." You may not have plunged into such wild excesses of sin as some, but the difference is

ONLY ONE OF DEGREE.

In God's sight *you* and *they* are alike; "there is no difference." If a man were only to commit one sin, he would be a guilty sinner as much as the man who had lived all his life in sin. There would be no difference.

Suppose you had an orchard with two crab-apple trees in it. The fruit of both trees is bitter and sour, and utterly worthless. Does it make any difference if one tree has got five hundred apples on it, and the other only one? Of course not, both are bad. The one tree is as good-for-nothing as the other. There is no difference. It is just the same with you.

Perhaps you think this is very hard, but it

is true. You may not see how it can be right, but God does not ask your opinion as to whether it should be so or not. You and I, sinful and fallen as we are, cannot understand the awfulness of *one* sin. We could never feel that everybody is the same in God's sight. But God declares that it is so. *He says it*, and there the matter ends. That is the first great fact that I press upon you.

2. We come now to the second fact, and that is, that if guilty, godless rebels like you and me are to be saved it must be in a way that leaves no room for boasting. (Read verse 27.) Look for a moment at the vast crowds of unconverted men and women. The hand of God writes above their heads the words, "No difference." Then look at the great company of the redeemed, those who have passed from death unto life. The hand of God writes two words above *their* heads. What are they? "No boasting."

If you and I, dear Christian friend, have been saved, it puts no feather in our caps. If our sins have been washed away, it is no credit to us. It is the

FREE GRACE OF GOD

that has cleared us from the load of our guilt. And, my unsaved reader, there is grace for you also.

Read the twenty-fourth verse of our chapter, and see how sweetly it follows the sweeping,

soul-convicting sentence of the twenty-third. "There is no difference," says the apostle, "for all have sinned and come short," and then he begins at once to talk about the grace of God that freely justifies. (v. 24.) No matter how deeply we have sinned, there is grace, free grace for us.

"Grace there is thy every debt to pay,
Grace to put thy every sin away."

Do you understand the meaning of the word "grace"? Many have an idea that it is a kind of mysterious influence, producing comfortable feelings in the heart. But it is nothing of the sort. I remember once taking up a Webster's dictionary to find out the meaning of grace, and I discovered a lovely explanation of the word. It was this: "Grace is free, spontaneous favour to the undeserving." That is just what it is.

You and I are undeserving. We are guilty, godless, good-for-nothing sinners, with no claim upon God for anything save an everlasting frown; but in the love of His heart He shows free, spontaneous *favour* to us. He offers to justify us freely from our sins. He reveals Himself as the Justifier of

THE UNGODLY.

Oh, how I love that name of the blessed God! "Him that justifieth the ungodly." Read the golden words yourself. (Rom. iv. 5.) Are you an ungodly sinner? Then you are one whom God can justify! It is not merely

that He *pardons* the ungodly, but He *justifies* them. That is, He not only takes away the *penalty* of our sins, but He takes away the *guilt* of the sins; He clears us of every charge. And He does this for the *ungodly*. Does it not altogether pass our comprehension? We could understand a court of law justifying a man who is proved to be innocent, but who ever heard of such a thing as justifying a man proved guilty? The court might *pardon* him, but to justify him would be impossible. Yet that is what God does for ungodly sinners.

But how is it possible for Him to do so? If such an action on the part of a judge would be unrighteous, how can it be righteous for God to do it? That is a question that all the wisdom of the world could not answer. But Scripture answers it, and answers it fully. Read the latter half of verse 24. There is the key to the difficulty. It is the blessed

WORK OF REDEMPTION

that Jesus has done that has made it possible for God to righteously save and justify us.

“God could not pass the sinner by ;
His sin demands that he must die ;
But *in the cross of Christ we see*
How God can save us righteously.”

If it were not for the cross, God could never have had such a sweet name as the Justifier of the ungodly. But the blessed Saviour knew that

His Father's heart of love was longing to bless us, so in infinite mercy He shed His precious blood to atone for sin. How I long that every reader should see that Christ—His peerless Person and His finished work—is the keynote of all our blessing; and that because of what He has done God can now speak of justifying the ungodly—justifying them freely, justifying them by His grace, and at the same time be perfectly righteous in doing so. Yes, the judgment of God against sin has been borne by His own Son at Calvary, and, as a result of that, God can and does now proclaim Himself to be just and the Justifier. Mark these words, “*just* and the *Justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus.” That is what verse 26 says. Not only is God a Justifier, but He is *just* at the same time.

Just and the Justifier of whom? Mark this, “of him which believeth in Jesus.” Would you like to be justified? Then all you have to do is to BELIEVE IN JESUS.

Do you want to get salvation? Then trust in the One who has finished the work of salvation for you. The only way to get the blessing is “through faith in His blood.”

“Oh!” says someone, “it is all very well for you to say ‘Believe in Jesus,’ but that is just what I can't understand. It may seem simple and easy to you, but it does not seem simple and easy to me.” Let me try to make it clear then.

Suppose I come into your room on a cold winter's day. I take off my overcoat, and I hang it upon that peg. That is "believing." I believe in the peg. I trust to the peg to bear the weight of my coat. That is like trusting in Jesus. Take your soul and hang it upon Him, just as I would hang my coat upon the peg. Say:—

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

"Oh!" you say, "but it all seems so mysterious to me. I can't understand it a bit." Just go to the Lord Jesus and say:—

"Jesus, although I do not understand,
In simple faith now I put forth my hand."

That is all it is. Just put out your hand! Look up and say, "O Saviour of the lost! I want to be saved. Thou hast died for sinners, and Thou dost bid sinners come to Thee, so I come. I am helpless, sinful, and unworthy, but I come to Thee. I put out my hand to take Thy free gift. I trust in Thee."

And what will be the result if you *do* trust in Jesus thus? Let the Bible itself answer that question. It says, "By Him all that believe"—*i.e.*, all that trust, all that just hang their souls upon Him—"are justified from all things."

My reader, have I succeeded in making clear to you the way of salvation? Do you see that it was planned by the heart of God, and carried out through the cross of Christ, and that now all we

have to do is to receive the blessing that is so freely provided for us? Surely there is no room for the smallest bit of boasting on our part. All that we can do is to stand and gasp out our astonishment at the fulness and freeness of salvation; and while thankfully making it our own, there can be no boasting, for *Jesus did it all*.

3. We must now pass on to our third great fact from the Epistle to the Romans. (Read chap. viii. 1.) We have seen that there can be no boasting *from* those who believe in Jesus, and here we find that there can be no condemnation *for* them, because they are *in Him*. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*." Dear fellow-Christian, do you understand what it is to be

"IN CHRIST"?

I want you just to fix your gaze upon the blessed Saviour while I try to make it clear to you.

Gaze upon Him first as He hangs upon the cross. See Him wounded for *your* transgressions, and bruised for *your* iniquities. Behold Him burdened with the load of your guilt, and bearing the judgment that you deserve, and shedding His precious blood to redeem your soul. Ask the question: "*Why* was He there? *Why* did He bleed and die upon the tree?" A mighty echo from Calvary brings the answer—He was there *for you*.

But now look up. See that same Jesus, the

Jesus of Gethsemane, the Jesus of Calvary. He is now the throne-seated, glory-crowned Lord! The bright crown of heaven adorns the brow that was pierced with thorns. Suffering, sorrow, condemnation, and death are things of the past for Him. And, dear Christian friend, as you look up, let His own blessed word assure you that you are *in Him*. Do you see? *He was for you* on Calvary, and now *you are in Him* in heaven. He took *your* place upon the cross. He gives you *His* place in the glory.

And, of course, since you are in Christ, and since there is no condemnation for Him, there can be none for you. How unspeakably sweet! You and I, the moment we trust in the Saviour, are placed *in Him*, in Christ Jesus; and we are told in God's own book that there is no condemnation for us.

How delightful it is to find ourselves placed up there in Him, far beyond the reach of judgment and condemnation! Those who have travelled in mountainous regions know how charming it is to stand upon the mountain-top, with the sun shining above one's head, and the birds singing all round, and to look down upon the storm that is raging in the valley beneath. The rain is pouring down, the thunder is crashing and the lightning flashing, but the man on the mountain-top is above it all. He looks *down* upon the storm. And can we not, from our position in

Christ, *look down* upon the storm that bowed His blessed head? We sometimes sing:—

“The tempest’s awful voice was heard,
O Christ! it broke on Thee;
Thy open bosom was my ward,
It bore the storm for me.”

The storm that would have hurled us into an everlasting hell spent all its strength on Him; but, thank God, that storm is hushed for ever now. Jesus has risen triumphant out of it. He has left judgment and condemnation behind Him, and has taken His seat upon the throne; and God tells us that we who believe on Him are *in Him*, as clear of condemnation as He is! Praise God for those words, “No condemnation.”

“‘No condemnation,’ O my soul,
'Tis God that speaks the word;
Perfect in comeliness art thou
In Christ, the Risen Lord.”

4. Let us now look very briefly at the fourth great fact. We find it in the last two verses of Romans viii. What a lovely chapter Romans viii. is! It begins with “no condemnation,” and it ends with “no separation.” We have seen that

As to our guilt, there is “No difference.”
As to the way of salvation, there is “No boasting.”
As to our standing in Christ, there is “No condemnation.”

And now we read that as to the love of God, there is “no separation.” Not only have we been saved, and put in Christ out of the reach of condemnation, but we are told that the love of God rests upon us in unclouded and everlasting fulness.

FOUR NEGATIVE FACTS.

159

What a grand thing it is to be loved, is it not? I know of nothing more forlorn and miserable than a man with nobody to love him. Thank God for the mighty love wherewith He loves us, the love that nothing can separate us from.

Says the apostle, "I am persuaded." This is a grand persuasion! If I were asked, "What persuasion do you belong to?" I could reply that I am of Paul's persuasion.

"What is that?" you ask. "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But suppose we fail, shall we not be separated from God's love? No, a thousand times no! It says, "neither things present, NOR THINGS TO COME." Mark those words, "nor things to come." That means that no future failures, or sin, can separate the Christian from the love of God. It is not that God does not take notice of our failures. He does, and His hand may be upon us on account of them; for He cannot tolerate sin in His people. But He never withdraws His love. God will always love us, in spite of everything.

Let me persuade you to bathe in the ocean of God's love; swim about in its blessed depths; and look up and thank God that it is both infinite and everlasting.

H. P. B.

SLOTHFULNESS IS WICKEDNESS.

THE Proverbs abound with references to the slothful or the sluggard. It is interesting to note the connection between the sluggard of Proverbs and the slothful servant of Matthew xxv. 26. Slothfulness in the Church of God has been its ruin, for whilst men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. Had they been watchful this would not have taken place.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This encourages us to think that it may be useful to note some of the works of the slothful man.

He is bid to watch the busy ant making preparation for an evil day. (Proverbs vi. 6.) Many a saint fails in the day of testing because when the summer time gave him opportunities of learning he did not prepare for the winter, *i.e.*, troublous times. Slothfulness means slackness. When servants sleep the fire goes out in the kitchen. When saints get slack love grows cold, spiritual darkness comes in, then poverty ensues. There is a dearth of the living bread. No one knows how or where to find the Manna. The Word of God becomes precious. How often in

the Pergamos and Thyatira period of the Church's history this sad state occurred. Owing to this slackness Rome regained power in Bohemia, and, humanly speaking, the Reformation was postponed a hundred years. In the time of testing men and countries fail, and there is no getting back what has been lost, for poverty has come like an armed man.

In Proverbs x. 5 the slothful man sleeps in harvest. Surely this is now the harvest time. Many souls are to be brought in: many to be built in and up. Alas! how many saints are excusing themselves with the words, "There is a lion in the streets." (Proverbs xxvi. 13.) Of course the devil goes about like a roaring lion. But slothful men are wicked, and will give you the worst lie, *i.e.*, a perverted truth. We are to be watchful, and we can meet this lion in Christ's strength. (1 Peter v. 8, 9.) Many a one shrinks from outdoor preaching, tract-giving, or speaking to others about their souls, because of this dreaded lion, whose head has been crushed by the Lord.

Sometimes the slothful man will tell you that he will be slain in the streets. Yes! but has not the Lord said that we are not to fear those who can kill the body, but can do no more? The fear of man worketh a snare. Many have failed in their testimony because of the fear of man. Alas! how often we come under the charge of this slothful man of Proverbs xxii. 13. We

have been frightened of a man's look or manner. We have been afraid of toil, and had a thousand comfortable excuses for shrinking from a cross, or an effort for the Lord, and have well deserved the name of slothful to be pasted on our hats. We are to set our faces like a flint. We are not to tremble before men. We alone have the means of doing them lasting good. How often have we regarded the wind and the clouds, and forgotten that he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap, and he that observeth the wind shall not sow!

Moreover, the sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold. (Proverbs xx. 4.) Often is the excuse made that nothing can be done because there is such spiritual death and coldness. Beware, O saint! The Lord may answer you with the words, "Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed." Whilst we have dreaded the cold, others have worked on patiently, and have been much blest in winning souls. Surely many have excused themselves, saying that it is no use to plough amongst the heathen because of the cold, *i.e.*, spiritual death. What is the result? It is this: that Protestant and Roman Catholic Christendom have a harvest of many imperfectly begotten children everywhere. But where are the gathered ones?

The slothful man prays, but he never looks for an answer to his prayers. He desires, but has nothing. (Proverbs xiii. 3.) He does not watch

SLOTHFULNESS IS WICKEDNESS. 163

unto prayer with thanksgiving. (Colossians iv. 2.) He searches the Scriptures at times, but he never makes use of what he learns or hears. He is like the man of Matthew xiii. 15. His way, therefore, becomes a hedge of thorns, and he is speechless before the Lord. (Proverbs xv. 19.) He will not take his hand out of his bosom to see that it is leprous, as did Moses (Proverbs xix. 24), and will not even take the trouble to put on the wedding garment. Hence he is cast into a deep sleep (Proverbs xix. 15), for he sleeps like those who sleep in 1 Thessalonians v. 6, and is not watchful for the return of the Lord. He is as one of the foolish virgins. The door will be shut on him ere he awakes from his deadly sleep.

Remember, dear saint of God, that drowsiness clothes a man with rags. He knows not that he is naked before God. He may be trusting to his own rags, for he is sunk in moral death and cannot see that his own righteousness is filthy rags. (Isaiah lxiv. 6; Proverbs xx. 13.) How many need the admonition not to love sleep! Often the lazy saint lingers in bed in the mornings, which, in these busy days, are the only times for being satisfied with bread. Excuses are conjured up to avoid rising at an early hour to be with God! How often have saints thus suffered from spiritual poverty! Time is not given to feed on the Manna, and to procure it

164 SLOTHFULNESS IS WICKEDNESS.

by searching through the Word—a desert to the soul till quickened by God.

The sad complaint is often made that, exhort or warn as we will, the sluggard is as wise in his own conceit as seven men that can render a reason. (Proverbs xxvi. 14.) He never can be got out of his bed, *i.e.*, his state of spiritual death. He turns round in it. How clear it is that the slothful man is a wicked man! In Matthew xxv. the slothful servant refuses to labour. In Proverbs xxi. 25, “The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.” The Lord takes all excuses out of his mouth, and rightly appoints his portion in outer darkness.

If these words fall into the hands of some drowsy saint, surely the Lord would say, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” (Ephesians v. 14.) But if they are read by any yet in slothful sleep, ignorant of their terrible doom, may the Holy Spirit use His own Word, in this writing, to awaken and convert the soul, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

LESS THAN THE LEAST.

FRAGMENT. — “I will tell you what has been very strongly impressed on my soul during the last few months—that it is not so much *working* for God, as *living in the secret of His presence*, which most glorifies Him. If we do live before Him, and with Him, we shall work and shall speak; but then half the effort and half the words will bring forth a thousand-fold larger harvest of result, because all will come with the Spirit’s power and unction and presence.”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANON and H. M. M.—“The first man,” named in 1 Corinthians xv. 47, refers to Adam, the head of the human family, *and to him alone*. “The Second Man,” as we are told, is the Lord out of heaven. These two are heads of distinct races, or families, distinguished by the terms earthy and heavenly, and to the latter every believer belongs.

But it is no part of our mission to explain in these columns the phrases of others who are quite able to explain them for themselves. The particular expression about which you write, “*The end of the first man,*” is one we studiously avoid, unless we have abundant opportunity to guard our words and make our meaning plain. You object to the hackneyed and absolute way in which it is used by many. No wonder! But it is important to see that man’s moral history reached its climax and its close in the cross of Christ. In successive ages, from Eden to the Incarnation, man had been tested in different ways, and every fresh test only brought the evil of his heart more fully to light. When the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, came into the world—not to condemn, but to save—men said, “This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him.” And kill Him they did. In crucifying the Lord of glory human wickedness reached its utmost height. Higher it could

not go. There was neither need nor possibility of testing men further, for what was before the eye of God at the Flood was now nakedly manifest. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." If men are to be dealt with in eternal blessing, *man after that order must go*; there must be a new creation. Thank God, this is what the gospel reveals. Christ, the Second Man, is the head of a new order of men, a new family, a new race, spiritual and heavenly. He, not Adam innocent, is the One to whose image we are predestined to be conformed.

But on the side of the body we still bear the image of the earthy, and everything of nature remains, and has God's sanction. Woe be to him who despises it! We speak not now of sinful nature, but human nature, which, alas! has not altogether escaped the effects of sin. Let not this be confounded with what has been set aside by the solemn judgment of God at the cross. The relationships of life and the affections suited to them, in which men, as men, stand, all these abide, and over them Christianity sheds her benign influence so far as the Christian is concerned. Nor are we at liberty to ignore the intellectual and physical sides of human nature as though any attention given to these was "to set up the first man," as some, in their simplicity and confusion of thought, suppose and say. If a boy of ten is converted he needs none the less to go to school; his mental faculties call for exercise and development, and he requires judicious training to fit him for the battle of life. No doubt, as years roll by, the Christian youth and young man will have to remember that success in life is not the goal of the

Christian's hopes, and that, in the things of God, rich intellectual endowments are nothing without the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He will need to be reminded that the Lord has been rejected here, and that life, eternal life, is found in that sphere of glory where Christ lives, and where the heart of the believer, led by the Spirit, may find its home even now. The Lord grant that we may all remember it! But we have to be on our guard against being one-sided, for one-sided truth often works as much mischief as positive error, and sometimes more.

NELLIE.—The Lord Jesus values the remembrance of His saints, and the Supper which He instituted the same night in which He was betrayed is to be shared in by all His own. If, then, you know your sins forgiven, and can indeed cry "Abba, Father," it is your privilege to be at His Supper. We are there alone on the ground of pure grace. The same grace that has saved us and washed us from our sins in the precious blood of Christ gives us our place at the Lord's Supper. We have no other title than that which grace gives. It is quite right for you to be exercised as to your daily life and want of likeness to Christ; but were you all you so earnestly wish to be, that, in itself, would give you no better title to share in the Supper of the Lord. No doubt you are learning by experience something of your own weakness, and of the incurable badness of "the flesh." Bad it is, and ever will be. But this shows how absolutely our salvation is due to the great grace of God. A little book, called *Victory over Sin; or, the Secret of a Holy Life*, we think might

168 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

help you. It can be had of our publisher for one penny. Get it and read it prayerfully. We shall be so glad to hear from you again.

W. P. E.—We cannot understand how anyone can think that the blood of atonement is, actually and literally, sprinkled on and before the throne in heaven. Such a materialistic idea receives no sanction or support from Holy Scripture. We are quite sure, too, that the hymn writers, whose lines you quote, never intended their words to be taken other than figuratively. In interpreting the types of the law, it is necessary to bear in mind that they are only the shadow of good things to come, and *not the very image*. (Hebrews x. 1.) The forgetfulness of this has led some minds astray.

LERWICK.—1 Corinthians vii. 39.—We should carefully distinguish between “*in the Lord*” and “*of the Lord*.” The terms are not identical, nor do they always go together. A marriage is “*in the Lord*” when both parties confess His name, but even in so serious a matter a mistake may be made; and while it cannot be denied that the marriage is “*in the Lord*,” it cannot be affirmed that it is “*of the Lord*.” Where religious differences exist the individuals concerned may well pause, for how “*can two walk together, except they be agreed?*” (Amos iii. 3.) We have known unhappy and disastrous consequences result from such unions. Surely, in a matter of this kind, it is of the very last importance to know the mind of God, and to be jealous lest our own will blind our eyes to His.

PEACE.

IN FOUR PHASES.

I AM going to speak of peace in four phases or aspects. And to help our memory let us notice that each aspect begins with "p."

I. Peace *procured*. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20.)

II. Peace *preached*. "Preaching peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all." (Acts x. 36.)

III. Peace *possessed*. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.)

IV. Peace *perpetuated*. "He is our peace." (Eph. ii. 14.)

I. PEACE PROCURED.—Jesus has made peace. Sinners need not set about to make their peace with God. All has been done. A friend of mine once visited a dying man in Lancashire. While there a "Bible woman" called. "Has he made his peace with God?" she asked. "No," replied my friend; "it is too late now for that." "But," said she, "there is hope even at the eleventh hour." "I know that," said my friend, "but it is too late now for him to make his peace with God. Jesus, by His sufferings and death, made peace eighteen hundred years ago." She did not like such doctrine, so she left. The dying man

was soon in the happy enjoyment of the peace the Saviour once procured for him.

Peace has *been* procured. "Having made peace." *You* need not seek to make it, anxious sinner. Jesus made it. He made the world beneath your feet. You could not make a world. And though you lived and laboured, worried and wept ten thousand lives away, you could not contribute one iota towards making that which has been already made—peace with God.

Towards the close of the War of the Rebellion a great many southern soldiers saw their cause was waning. So they left the south and came north to join the Union forces. But they came in such numbers that it was necessary to issue a proclamation stating that no more deserting southern soldiers would be received. One poor fellow, who knew nothing of this, deserted and came north. He was taken for a spy at once and his life threatened. What to do he did not know. He could not return south, for there they would hang him as a traitor. In his dilemma he took to the woods. Here for three long months he lived like a bear on nuts and berries. At last he could endure it no longer, and a fearful resolve took hold of him. He concealed himself, musket in hand, in a clump of bushes by the wayside. Presently a traveller appeared on horseback. Pointing his gun straight at the man's heart, he called out, "Halt! your money

or your life." The gentleman looked upon the highwayman. His strange appearance touched him. His hair was matted. His cheeks were hollow with starvation, and his eyes were sunken in their sockets. "Why," he kindly asked, "do you threaten my life for a little gold?" Affected by the sound of a tender human voice, the soldier wept like a child. His story was soon told. "And," he concluded, "I wanted your money to help me to see my wife and darling child." The traveller smiled. Why? To mock him? Nay! he had good news for that starving and sorrowing soldier. "Why," said he, "*the war is over*. Peace was declared a month ago, and you might have been home enjoying that peace with the loved ones."

Weary, worried soul, I have good news for *you*. Peace is made.

"No wrath God's heart retaineth."

Won't you just believe it? Leave the dark and dreary woods of unbelief *to-day*. Enjoy the peace once made for sinners. Come and walk in the sunshine of that peace towards God's home of love and glory.

The fugitive soldier believed the news he heard, and left the woods for *home*. He might have said, "I don't believe you," and returned to the woods to die beside some tree of the forest. If *you* do not believe the gospel of peace you must perish, and

that *for ever*. Or he might have said, "It cannot be true that peace is made. I must go to Richmond and Washington, and do what I can to bring about a settlement." Would not the gentleman on horseback have said, "The man is mad. He is surely some escaped lunatic"? And you are morally mad to think of making peace by prayer and penance, works and human merit. "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

II. PEACE PREACHED.—God is "preaching *peace* by Jesus Christ." He is not preaching judgment now. Judgment awaits the finally impenitent; wrath is coming. "Give them warning from Me," His charge to His servants. He warns, and when awakened sinners ask, "What shall I *do*?" He tells of something *done*—peace made. Thus He preaches peace.

It is marvellous preaching. People sometimes ask, "Have you ever heard the Rev. Dr. Silver-tongue? He is simply grand. His gestures are all so graceful and absolutely perfect in the most minute detail. His diction is beautiful, and the intonations of his voice are those of the most studied eloquence and accomplished oratory. His enunciation is the very standard of accuracy. It is a treat to hear him." I ask you, sinner, "Have you ever heard *God* preaching peace by Jesus Christ?" Oh! it is the sweetest preaching ever heard by mortal ears. It is charming, and God

means it so. I know that careless worldlings stop their ears. Like the deaf adder, they will not listen and be charmed. But smitten sinners hear and are entranced. All the golden harps of heaven could not make music half so sweet to the ears of a sin-sick soul. Oh! "Hear, and *your* soul shall live."

And it is "peace by *Jesus Christ*." It is not peace by baptism, nor peace by joining the Church, nor peace by sacraments and ceremonies, works, prayers, penance, nor any or all of the thousand and one things which men are ready enough to substitute for Christ.

Neither is it peace by Moses. "Moses," as of old, "hath in every city them that preach him." "This do and thou shalt live" is the sum and substance of their doleful discourse. And their hearers fail to "do," and *die*.

God did once preach by Moses, but it was not "peace." He preached by Moses death and judgment with a voice of thunder that shook the very earth. And sinners could only cry in terror, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

How does God preach "peace by Jesus Christ"? He points you to Him. "Behold the Lamb of God!" He is not now upon the cross, but on the throne. See His wounds — the nail-prints and the spear-mark. Behold His brow adorned with radiant crowns! He is "the Prince of peace."

Trust Him as your Saviour *now*, and peace is yours. This brings us to another phase of peace.

III. PEACE POSSESSED.—Sinners who believe enjoy the peace that Jesus made. “We *have* peace with God.” Those who simply *trust* are the happy possessors of peace. “Being justified by faith, we have peace.”

I know the unsaved have a sort of peace. “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.” (Luke xi. 21.) Who is the “strong man armed”? Satan. Who are “his goods”? The unconverted—*you*, if in your sins. Your state and sins do not concern you. The thought of death does not alarm you in the least; the judgment has no terrors to your mind. You are “in peace,” but oh! it is the peace the devil gives his own. He has them sound asleep and unconcerned, and means to keep them so.

Sinner, your peace is like the awful calm that reigns before the storm. In the Western States they often have what are called cyclones. A death-like stillness precedes the advent of the storm. Soon it bursts in all its frightful fury, and sweeps everything before its track. The calm is followed by calamity.

Your peace, sleeping sinner, will be broken some day just like that. God’s storm of wrath is coming. You will wake up then *too late!* May God shake you from your slumbers *now*.

No tongue can tell the blessedness of peace with God. At night I calmly lay my weary head upon my pillow. If my heart at midnight

stops its throbbings, all is well. Ere friends find my poor cold body I shall be with Christ. The once-dreaded thunderbolt has lost its terrors for me. Should God direct one at my heart, producing instant death, my spirit would ascend to glory ere the flash had disappeared and the thunder's echo died away. My sins are gone for ever in the death of Christ. In Him, risen from the dead, I stand perfectly justified and accepted before God. Knowing this, though all unworthy, I have peace with God. You have heard of that officer of the British Army. In an engagement his lower jaw was shot away and his jugular vein torn open. He was dying. Motioning for a pen and paper (for he could not speak), he wrote in the tremors of death, "I have peace, peace like a river." His pen dropped from his stiffening fingers, he fell back in his seat and was gone—"to be with Christ." Would, sinner, you had peace with God to-day! You may die before to-morrow.

Let me tell you of another soldier's death—a private this time. (God saves from every class.) On the field of Waterloo he lay, his life's blood ebbing fast. Just before he breathed his last he was heard repeating John xiv. 27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Soon his spirit went to be with Him whose words

he knew so well—the One who made the peace for him at Calvary.

The world can offer nothing for a dying hour. Even now we sing—

“ Filled with this sweet peace for ever,
On we go through strife and care,
Till we find that peace around us,
In the Lamb's high glory there.”

The world with its “pleasures of sin” and its sham religion has nothing to compare with this.

The peace possessed by simple faith is never broken ; it can never be disturbed. This is peace in its fourth aspect.

IV. PEACE PERPETUATED. Christ is the believer's peace, and He never changes. “Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” *We* change, we fail, and sometimes fall. Still we sing—

“ My love is oft-times low,
My joy still ebbs and flows,
But peace with God remains the same,
No change my Saviour knows.”

Frames and feelings are not peace. They vary like the vane upon the steeple. I shall have them till I find myself in glory. Peace is different. Let me illustrate.

I owe a debt that I cannot possibly pay. My creditor demands his money. A kind friend pays the debt. He calls and tells me what is done. I believe his word and thank him. As he

leaves he hands me the receipt, signed by the man to whom I owed the money. I am happy now. That is "feeling." But I know my debt is paid because my friend has told me so, and should I say, "I must have dreamed. It cannot be that my debts are paid"? I just take out that precious paper—the receipt. It is enough; the man is satisfied; so am I.

The risen Christ is our receipt. The dark, condemning list of our unnumbered sins has been blotted out for ever. Our debts are paid. The price was Jesus' "precious blood." "Christ died for our sins." God tells us so, and He raised up Jesus from the dead. By that He showed that He was satisfied. So I look to Christ in glory. "He is my peace," I say. Is He yours? Can you say, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"? Then peace is yours.

"The peace *of* God" is another thing. You must walk dependent and obedient to have *that*. "Peace of *heart*" it might be called.

"Peace *with* God" does *not* depend upon ourselves at all. It is peace of *conscience*. The *dying* Saviour made it; the *living* Saviour is it.

"Our conscience has peace that can never fail,
'Tis the Lamb on high on the throne."

I have done. May false peace be disturbed in sham professors and the unconcerned. May true peace be enjoyed by those who feel their need and guilt. God bless His Word. Amen.

C. K.

BLESSED BE HIS NAME.

I HAVE a Friend, whose faithful love
 Is more than all the world to me ;
 'T is higher than the heights above,
 And deeper than the sounding sea.

So old, so new,
 So strong, so true ;
 Before the earth received its frame
 He loved me—Blessed be His name !

He held the highest place above,
 Adored by all the sons of flame,
 Yet such His self-denying love,
 He laid aside His crown, and came
 To seek the lost ;
 And at the cost
 Of heavenly rank and earthly fame
 He sought me—Blessed be His name !

It was a lonely path He trod,
 From every human soul apart ;
 Known only to Himself and God
 Was all the grief that filled His heart :
 Yet from the track
 He turned not back,
 Till where I lay in want and shame
 He found me—Blessed be His name !

Long as I live my song shall tell
 The wonders of His dying love ;
 And when at last I rise to dwell
 In the bright home prepared above,
 My joy shall be
 His face to see,
 And bowing there, with loud acclaim
 I'll praise Him—Blessed be His name !

Selected.

BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.”—1 JOHN iv. 17.

IT is a great pity that this verse was not better translated. Many simple souls, who know nothing about Greek, have been more or less misled as to its true meaning. The marginal reading is nearer the truth, “Herein is love with us made perfect,” instead of, “Herein is *our* love.” The real force of it is, “Herein *has* love been *perfected*.” But whose love? Thousands, self-occupied and conscious of the feebleness of their love to the Lord, suppose it to be theirs, and seek to increase and perfect it, so as to acquire the boldness of which the passage speaks. No wonder their souls remain in doubt and misery. If you read the preceding verse you will find it is God’s love, and the opening of verse 11 is a further development. Let us quote it:—

“And we have known and believed *the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*”

And then the apostle adds:—

“Herein has love been perfected, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.”

180 BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

We need to get to God's thoughts and to God's side of things, and away from ourselves. We have known *His* love; we have believed *His* love to us, says the apostle. God *is* love. And the soul that makes love his dwelling-place dwells in Him who is it, and He dwells also in him. How blessed a portion! And not only so, but love has its triumph. Love has been perfected. Whose love? *God's*. And wherein? That we, poor feeble believers, who are the objects of it, *may have boldness in the day of judgment.*

Many are familiar with this emphatic statement, but what a startling, soul-assuring fact for a poor trembling sinner, who has been writhing with a guilty conscience under the lash of the law, and trembling at the awful threats of judgment on the guilty and impenitent, who stumbles on it for the first time! It seems almost too good to be true. *It is true* for all that. And God put it there for us to believe and rejoice in. But it is one thing to read or to quote it, another *to believe it* and enjoy the peace and deliverance of soul that it aids to bring. "That *we may have boldness in the day of judgment.*" The writer well remembers singing with many more in early days in church—

"Bold shall I stand in that day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?"

No doctrine could be sounder, no truth more sure for the believer. But, alas! how many of

BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. 181

us sang the words without the slightest apprehension of the truth of them! It is true, blessedly true, that the believer will have boldness in the day of judgment. How could it be otherwise? Has not Christ Himself borne the judgment due to our sins? Did He bear part or the whole? Is His work complete? Is God satisfied with it? The glorified Saviour at His own right hand is His eternal witness to the fact that He is glorified in Him. Judgment is past for the believer. The Son of God Himself declared it:—

“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 judgment*; but is passed from death unto life.” (John v. 24.)

The chief of apostles confirms it in words which the Holy Ghost teaches:—

“There is therefore *now no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 1.)

The beloved one who leant on the bosom of his Master adds:—

“Herein has love been perfected with us, that we may have *boldness in the day of judgment*.”

In whose presence shall we stand in that solemn day? In the presence of Jesus, the Christ our Lord, the Son of God, our precious Saviour, who loved us even unto death, and gave Himself for us. As a Saviour we shall meet Him, before Him as our Saviour we shall stand

182 BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

in bodies like His own. As those who were justified on earth by His blood, and reconciled to God, we shall appear in His glorious presence with boldness, to give an account of ourselves, and to be rewarded according to our conduct and works.

Every criminal question is settled on earth for the Christian. Among those who died in their sins, and who will be judged before the great white throne, he will never be found. Judgment is beyond the believer already. Death, judgment, and the lake of fire for him have no terror. We shall have boldness in the day of judgment,

“Because as He is, so are we in this world.”
(1 John iv. 17.)

Wondrous words! A professing Christian was so startled when hearing them for the first time, at an out-door preaching in Scotland, that he went home to search his New Testament to see whether they were true. Such an unfolding of the love of God was beyond all his thoughts! Could it really be so? Yes, dear reader, there it stands, indelibly written in the eternal Word of God. *As He is!* not as He was, or will be, but *as He is, so are we* (all Christians) *in this world*. Has your soul entered into that? You are as clear of all judgment as He, the One who bore it. He faced it, bore it, left it behind, and sat down triumphant in highest glory as man. As He is, so are *we*. It is true, as we

BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. 183

have said, of all believers. It is not a question of one more than another. In His judgment at Calvary we were judged, all of us. Judgment was executed on Another in our stead. It is accounted of God as though we had actually borne it. Hence as He is *so are we*. When? Where? Now, "*in this world.*" Down here, amid all our weakness and failure, God would have us know that love has been perfected on our behalf, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, *because as He is, so are we in this world.* As He is now, and boldness in the day of judgment, when sinners shall tremble, is the blessed portion of *every one that believeth!*

And then the apostle adds:—

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us." (1 John iv. 18, 19.)

There is no fear in love. Where the sense of love is, fear is banished. Perfect love, and that is the nature of God's love, casts all fear out. A poor woman, anxious and exercised, was trying to love God perfectly to get rid of her fear. Being told she would never attain her desire until she arrived in heaven, she stared with surprise, being astounded to learn that it is the love of God which drives fear out! Set in His love, to know, realize, and enjoy it, fear is banished. Fear has torment, as thousands

184 ENOCH'S WALK AND TESTIMONY.

have proved. Love delivers from it, and torment ceases. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. Do you still fear? You lack the sense of His love, you are not made perfect in it; you do not enter into and enjoy the blessed portion that God has prepared for you. "We love Him, because He first loved us." It is evident the love begins on His side. Not a spark of love towards Him was ever found in a sinner's heart till kindled by the love of God. He is love, the source of it all; and if you would love Him you must know and realize His love to you. May He give to many to know its fulness, and to enjoy it now and evermore. E. H. C.

 ENOCH'S WALK AND TESTIMONY.

"Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."—GENESIS v. 24.

"Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."—HEBREWS xi. 5.

THE way this verb "to walk" is used in Scripture is very significant. It includes the whole range of conduct. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

Walking is a very matter-of-fact process, and there is a patient continuance about it which no other means of locomotion can equal. At the same time it puts us much on the level of our

ENOCH'S WALK AND TESTIMONY. 185

fellows, and give us a very practical experience of the circumstances of the way. Therefore I am interested to see that Enoch *walked* with God. I believe some would like to be in the same company, if riding or driving were permissible, who are hardly prepared to *walk* in the way.

But we do not read that Enoch waited for others to join him in that hallowed association. *He* walked with God, wherever others may have strayed. Yet some to-day would think it almost presumption to walk alone with God, without even one other to keep them company. Is this companionship sufficient for us; this communion enough for our hearts? Let us not too readily answer "Why, of course," without weighing what the answer involves. Friends and relations, teachers and guides, become very dear to us when the pathway crosses the lonely wastes where only God is present, and He near only to faith.

Walking *with* another will neither include hurrying before nor lagging behind. It means keeping line and keeping step. Enoch will have been often asking, "How does *God* stand in relation to this?"

Those who walk together are likely to be workers together; yet some who really wish to walk with God are often trying to work ahead of Him. Walking is a slow process, if a sure one, and the progress of God's work in a soul must take His time. Many Christians are lame

186 ENOCH'S WALK AND TESTIMONY.

from birth because their friends have tried to hurry the Spirit's working. Mephibosheth owed his fall and lameness to his nurse's well-intentioned haste.

Since two walked together, they were agreed. Not, of course, that God formed His thoughts and likings on Enoch's, but the contrary. Nothing is more entirely expressive of communion than this walking together.

We understand that every day, and always, Enoch walked with God; that he met no difficulty of the way alone. "The land whereon *thy feet have trodden* shall be thine inheritance." (Josh. xiv. 9.) "In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country," he took possession.

It is not that God walked with Enoch, but Enoch walked with God. Many would have God with them in a trial who are never concerned to be with Him about it. But we take possession of springs or wilderness if our feet have trodden there *with God*.

If he walked with God, it must have been where God walked. The Lord Jesus walked on the water, and Peter would walk there with Him. He saw how the Lord stood in relation to the waters, and he would occupy, with Him, the same position of superiority. "Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or

ENOCH'S WALK AND TESTIMONY. 187

life, even there also will thy servant be." (2 Sam. xv. 21.) Would that we knew more of it! But death comes before life; they never made mountain and valley their own until they crossed the Jordan.

Enoch walked by faith, and needed to if he would be with his Companion wherever He went. Otherwise he would soon have been sinking beneath the circumstances, instead of being superior to them.

Surely a man is formed by his company. Even a child, walking with his parents, will greet a companion he may meet in a different way than if walking alone. There is a notable difference in his manner, but it is easily explained. He is with his father.

There must have been a moral elevation about Enoch, as there will be about the reader, if he walks with God; a confidence also, and even a courage, begotten of that holy companionship. "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

And the testimony—that he pleased *God*. Was it enough for him? Was he content? There is a hunger *to be appreciated* in human nature, which is often overlooked. Yet it accounts for the greater part of our conduct. Long service amid weariness and trial, difficulty and danger, finds its motive and reward in someone's appreciation. The explorer would never

188 ENOCH'S WALK AND TESTIMONY.

brave the thousand dangers of the unknown for a merely private satisfaction; the scientist labours long and faithfully, but he looks for a reward in the gratitude of his fellows. We none of us live for ourselves, but who can say he lives only for God—content to serve unnoticed if he have but Enoch's testimony; looking with no envious eyes at those esteemed amongst men, since what they gain he does not want, if he have but the deep satisfaction now before his translation that he pleases *God*?

Enoch, a frail mortal like ourselves, pleased God. What profound truths are included in the words! The sinner's repentance and the saint's walk alike contribute to this high end—the pleasure of God.

In what was God pleased with Enoch? Was it in His *company*? Surely; for is not communion sweeter than service? The labour of our hands might be rendered by another, but neither man nor miracle can substitute our soul's affection. "He ordained twelve, that they should *be with Him*, and that He might send them forth." (Mark iii. 14.)

Neither was it in cloistered seclusion, or any extraordinary circumstances, that his pathway lay. It was in the most ordinary relationships of life that Enoch walked with God. "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." (Genesis v. 22.)

S. E. MCN.

“ I MUST WORK.”

“I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”—JOHN ix. 4.

THESSE words, uttered by the Master Himself, might well be sounded in the ears of every Christian in the land to awaken out of sleep and start to true activity.

Since He has left the earth and passed into the heavens the darkness of which He spoke has become more dense, and now it seems to the earnest watcher that the night at any moment might force away the flickering light that lingers till God's full time has come. Oh that we, who through His mighty work have found salvation, could catch the fervour He displayed, and feel the self-same great necessity that pressed upon His loving heart! Certain of us work because to labour fits our fancy best; and others, prompted by a sense of duty, engage themselves to do the Master's service; while yet another class are diligent, seeking for popularity.

With Him it was far otherwise—for whilst treading that lowly path as Son of man no other motive moved Him onward but a true devotion to the Father's will, and love all-conquering for the ruined sons of men.

Fix your eye then, reader, on that path He

trod and learn to follow in His blessed steps. For Him it led through shame and sorrow. At one time followed by the eager multitude, who sought for miracles and signs, anon He found Himself surrounded by a host of enemies, who lay in wait to catch Him as He taught; then came the bitter scorn and envy of the priests and Pharisees and the hatred of the people, who quickly turned from love to fear, and then to bitterest opposition.

Alone! Yes, all alone in the great world His hands had made—for even those few disciples He had chosen understood Him not. But did I say alone? Ah, no! He ever could look up and know the nearness of His Father's love, and that in all His sorrow brought a precious joy and peace.

But though the woes of which we speak were great, a greater stood beyond—the bitter cup that none but He could take, the bloody sweat, the crown of thorns, and then the anguish of the crucifixion. But see how low He went when He passed beneath God's awful judgment and into the dust of death. Well might the bystanders run to fetch relief as from His blessed heart there burst forth that piteous cry of "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Forsaken Me in all My utter desolation—I who have always done Thy will and sought to maintain Thy glory. Must I be made this wretched thing I hate—made *sin*—SIN—that awful sin which I have never known before, and

"I MUST WORK."

191

bear all this weight of judgment? Ah, yes! The deepest depth the blessed Saviour fathomed, and thus accomplished all the will of God.

Brothers and sisters, having this His wonderful example set right before us, what manner of persons ought we to be? Should we not feel laid heavily upon our hearts the fact that even as He came to do some special work, and rested not by night or day until its utmost end was reached, so we have had committed to our hands something to do for Him? Then let us to the work, not seeking to be great, but seeking to be true, and set our hands to that which lies nearest. Are there not poor sinners held fast in Satan's cruel grasp who might be set at liberty if we told them the message, and spake out plainly all that He has done for us? Or do we think to feed ourselves and leave them in their need to die? What will the Master say to this? Well done, good and faithful servants? or shall we hear Him ask, Why stood ye idle all the day long?

Think, brother—think of all that has been done for thee. Hast thou not been brought out of the darkness into marvellous light, plucked as a brand out of the burning, and thy sins and iniquities remembered no more against thee? Thine eyes, once blind, have now been made to see, and from thy lips, where once came cursing and bitterness, bursts forth a song of exultant joy.

Thou dost forget Him to whom thou owest all,

and live for self where He died to save. Oh! let it not be so, but hasten to His blessed feet and enquire His will for thee, and then come forth in strength obtained by waiting. Oh! to serve in tireless fervour like Himself, and rest not till the pilgrimage be finished and the labour done.

R. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S.B.—Yes, it is possible for God to use Satan as His instrument to further an end He may have in view. He did so in Job's case, and Paul speaks of his being buffeted by a messenger of Satan after he had been caught up to the third heaven. But we see no grounds for supposing that the conflict of which you speak proceeds from the same source. You seem to us not to be very clear about the righteousness of God in relation to your sins and guilt, and therefore think these torturing doubts have been let loose upon you because you have not loved and served God as you ought. These are the very lines on which Job's three friends went. They insinuated all sorts of evil things, and boldly said that these were the cause of Job's losses, troubles, and distress. But they greatly erred. Now, to love and serve God is the privilege of all Christians, but neither their salvation, nor the knowledge of it, is founded on anything of that sort. This is to fall away from grace. It was the blood on the lintel that sheltered the Israelites on the night of the Passover, and the gracious promise of God, "When I see the blood, I will pass over," made them quite sure their first-born would not be slain. It is the

same now. The blood of atonement has been shed, and every demand of divine righteousness was met by the Saviour's most perfect Sacrifice. On the other hand, the believer is declared to be justified from every condemning charge. (Romans viii. 33, 34.) We beseech you to rest on this divine testimony. It is a firm foundation. Look away from yourself. What comfort have you found from self-occupation? It is a miserable-making piece of business. But even this may do good, for out of the eater comes forth meat. If it makes you sick of self, and leads to enlarged thoughts of the grace of God, you may yet thank Him for this bit of experimental knowledge. Look off now to Christ, and rest on His work and word. Read the second article in the present number, "*Boldness in the Day of Judgment.*" We trust it may help you. It is the knowledge of God's love that casts out fear; nothing else will.

But though we speak thus, do not suppose that we make light of holiness of life. Very far from that. Without it there may be a great deal of knowledge, but there will be but little enjoyment of divine things, no matter what they are. There is all the difference in the world between knowledge and enjoyment. May it be yours to have them both!

With reference to 2 Peter iii. 16, we really cannot tell what things they were that the apostle found hard to understand in the epistles of his fellow-apostle Paul. It *may* have been the great truths connected with the Church, so hard to receive when the mind is imbued with Jewish thoughts.

ELIZABETH.—There are many things we might do with a perfectly clear conscience had we only ourselves

194 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

to consider. But others have to be considered. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." (1 Cor. x. 23.) The beloved apostle, animated by divine charity, thought more of edifying others than of his own personal gratification, even in things which could not be condemned. He refrained from lawful things lest his liberty should be a cause of stumbling to some who were weak in the faith. In short, he pleased not himself, but ever sought the spiritual good of others.

But whether it would be expedient for you to accept invitations to tea parties where the evening is spent in play, is a totally different matter. Paul's expediency led him to renounce things, not to take them up. But there is no sin in handling a cricket bat, playing tennis, or in riding a cycle, *though they are not without their hidden snares*. Into what company do they lead you? Do you find your love for your Bible chilled and your communion with God beclouded by these things? Do they encroach upon time that might be better spent? The society of worldly Christians is very prejudicial. If you would rather be with those whose conversation is about the Lord, and who find pleasure in the study of His Word, and you cannot find such, then seek by wise and loving words to influence others in that direction. God may use you in that way, and your example might be a great blessing. At all events keep a good conscience, and touch nothing that would defile it. At the same time avoid all airs of superiority, so distasteful in anybody, and particularly so in the young. Show by a bright and happy bearing that Christianity gives

both peace and pleasure such as earth can never yield. But you will need more counsel than we can give. Seek it from above and you will surely get it. Let me give you, in conclusion, Psalm xxxii. 8, 9, with Psalm xxv. 9, 12, 14. Write again. We shall be always glad to hear from you.

A CONSTANT READER asks (1) "What is it to be exercised about anything?" (2) "What is it to fear God?" (3) "What is it to love God?" In reply we say that the phrase refers to exercise of heart, conscience, mind, and, if God's things are in question, it always leads to blessing. It is the opposite of sluggishness and indifference. An exercised soul is a soul awake. It ponders what it hears. Truth has power over it. The mental faculties are all alive. Conscience is on the alert, in certain cases the affections of the heart may also be engaged, and things are examined in the light of God's Word and presence. (2) To fear God is to reverence Him, to heed His word, to obey Him, and to watch against anything that would grieve His Holy Spirit. It is the beginning of wisdom, and blessed is the man that fears always. There is a fear akin to terror that carries torment with it. This should never be found in the breast of a Christian. It is spoken of in 1 John iv. 18, and there we learn that God's perfect love, when known and believed, casts it out. We distinguish between right fear and that fear which hath torment. (3) To love God is to have the affections going out towards Him. No doubt there is love to God at the bottom of every Christian's heart. But love is an active principle, powerful, and moving mightily our inward being. It seeks to serve and please the One

who is loved, and it is self-forgetful. In this we should grow. But love never grows by being urged to grow. Its growth is spontaneous. Love begets love. "We love Him, because He first loved us."

You complain that your heart is "cold, dead, hard." Divine love will warm it, quicken it, and melt it as frozen streams by the warm breath of spring. Keep yourself in the love of God as the butterfly in the sun. His love is streaming all around you. Throw back the shutters and it will flood your heart with its golden light. Be like a little child, unquestioning and full of faith. God loves you, not alone as God, He loves you with a Father's love. Believe Him when He tells you so, and you will forget the littleness of your love in your wonderment at the greatness of His. Read Romans v. 5 together with 1 John iii. 1-3.

A. B.—We trust you will find your questions answered and difficulties met by the second paper of our present issue. If not, kindly write again.

J. C.—"*The Great Problem and its Solution*" will be published as a separate booklet. When ready it will be announced on the covers of this magazine.

R. G.—Your question requires a much fuller answer than we can give it in our replies for this month. We shall hope to keep it before us, and deal with the subject later on. There is no book that we are acquainted with that deals specially with the plagues of Egypt, and we must candidly confess we have not much light ourselves on their typical meaning. The editor of *The Christian Friend* has published an instructive book on the typical teachings of Exodus. He might help you more than we can. Write to him.

THE RISEN CHRIST.

“*THOU shalt be near unto me.*” These words expressed the heart of Joseph* towards his brethren. Yet their behaviour to him long years before does not strike one as exhibiting either greatness of mind or soul. “Blood is thicker than water,” they say, yet there must be a certain kindredness of spirit between relatives if great love is to exist. This was certainly lacking in the case before us.

Joseph, as a youth, had twice dreamed of his future eminence. This only aroused the jealousy of his narrow-minded brethren. Sent to them on a kindly errand by their father, they resolved to use the occasion to get rid of him. Twenty pieces of silver jingling in the pockets of ten men was the reward of their crime, and a many-coloured coat stained with blood was the stratagem by which they hoped to conceal it. As they saw the caravan of the Midianitish merchants passing out of sight, they thought to have seen the last of the one against whom they had sinned.

* In calling attention to Genesis xlv. as illustrating the Risen Christ, let it be clearly understood it is by way of *application*, and not of *interpretation*. J. N. D. has truly said there is but *one* interpretation, whilst there may be *many* applications.

But this was not to be. Their need, the raging famine, the knowledge of corn in Egypt, led them into the land of the Pharaohs, and so, by a chain of providential events, they were brought into the presence of Joseph again.

Then, step by step, their consciences were reached about their sin. They reaped what they had sown, and the work of repentance went on. At last Joseph made himself known, and, in telling them to make haste and bring his father to the fair land of Goshen, added touchingly: "*Thou shalt be near UNTO ME.*"

So it is, in a deeper and fuller way, with our risen Lord. "*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*" Matthew, who depicts for us the Messiah, the King, presenting Himself to His people, is the only evangelist who distinctly tells us that Jesus was betrayed by Judas for *thirty* pieces of silver. Mark says of the priests, they "*promised to give him money.*" And in putting Jesus on the cross they thought to have done with Him.

Israel's sons believed they had seen the last of Joseph when they sold him for *twenty* pieces of silver. When next they saw him it was as saviour (temporally) of the world—the administrator of the wealth of Pharaoh—the lord of all his house, and ruler throughout the land of Egypt.

So the world thought to have seen the last of

Jesus when He was sold for *thirty* pieces of silver and crucified. But it is far otherwise. Peter winds up his pentecostal sermon thus: "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST.*"

The first sight of Jesus that the eye of faith gets is in the place of power and glory—the Administrator of all God's goodness to man—everything committed to His hand, alike the Dispenser of grace and judgment.

Reader, I pause here. Have *you* so beheld Jesus? Is the blessing that has come to you linked up with a Man in glory—much more than a man, yet a true, real Man—the Sustainer of God's glory, the Administrator of everything divine? To have made His acquaintance thus is to start a new life altogether; not of self, but of Christ; not of disappointment and defeat, but of satisfaction and victory.

Joseph gave instructions: "*And ye shall*

TELL . . . OF ALL MY GLORY
in Egypt."

He committed such a task as that to his remorseful brethren—narrow-minded to the last, as their after-history proved. None other than a *Divine* Person—the Holy Ghost—is commissioned to tell *us* of the glories of Jesus, our risen Lord. By the Spirit's power we can see the face of Jesus, can gaze upon the glory

of the Lord. The children of Israel could not look on the *reflected* glory in the face of the great lawgiver. We are privileged and empowered to see the face of Him to whom the glory belongs, not, indeed, a *reflected* glory, but the whole glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Blessed, precious privilege! Moses *wist* not that the skin of his face shone. Our faces will not shine if we look into the looking-glass of self-occupation, but gazing on Jesus we shall be self-forgetful, "*changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" Would that it were more so!

Joseph next says to his brethren, "*Now thou art commanded, this do ye;*

TAKE YOU WAGONS

out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, AND COME."

Joseph not only desires his brethren to be near unto him, but he provides the means to bring them to himself. No toilsome march lay before Jacob in his feebleness and old age, no tedious journey for the little ones and their mothers. No; they were carried every step of the journey in the wagons. In other words, the *power* that carried them *to* Joseph came *from* Joseph.

There are two other examples of the same thing that readily come to mind. The camels that carried Rebekah *to* Isaac came *from* Isaac. The good Samaritan set the poor wounded man upon his *own* beast.

Does all this not teach us that the *power* by which we make the pilgrimage to our Joseph—our heavenly Isaac—comes from the place where He is? Did He not, consequent on His ascension, send us the Holy Ghost to indwell our bodies? It would be a great gain if we believed this simple, though deeply important fact, that ALL our power for life and journey comes from our risen Lord.

There would henceforth be no expecting from self. No; God has set aside "the first man" at the cross, and the Holy Ghost is too true to the One who sent Him ever to attach Himself in the smallest way to us, as men in the flesh. Now, do we believe this? Or is it only a fact to which we give a credence, more or less hearty, but which has not entered as a factor into our lives?

There are two ways of going towards heaven—drifting or journeying. Mark some Christians! They profess to be the Lord's. They are guilty of no outward irregularities, any more than a man sound asleep in a boat drifting down stream would be. You can discern no progress in the soul. The little life that remains seems

growing feebler and feebler. In short, they are drifting. If they are children of God, sure are we that He is too loving to let things go on like that for ever. He will upset their boat. If they will not listen to ministry, they may to circumstances—ill-health, bereavements, or poverty. “*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*”

But there are those who *journey*. They pursue their way with vigour. Their soul thrills with delight as they press on to the goal—HIMSELF. Yet their energy is not fleshly. It is of the Holy Ghost. In short, the power to *journey to* a risen Lord comes *from* a risen Lord. Young Christian, never, never forget this.

Next, Joseph says to his brethren, “*Also*

REGARD NOT YOUR STUFF.”

If the glories of our heavenly Joseph *filled* our souls, things here would not detain us. Our hearts are where our *treasure* is. I suppose the translators used the plain old-fashioned English word “*stuff*” in the usual way, but I cannot forbear imparting a tinge of irony to the word, “*Also regard not your stuff.*” For after all it is but “*stuff*” that our hearts get occupied with down here. There is more room for the heart in a *full* purse than in an *empty* one. Whether it be money or lands, lineage or accomplishments, the word comes home in cutting power to our souls, “*Also regard not your stuff.*”

When our souls get entangled in these things, we forget we are but stewards. The Jew, in giving one-tenth of his property to the Lord, counted the remaining nine-tenths his own. Not so the Christian. We are not our own, and all we have belongs to Him. Alas! *grace* works so feebly in our hearts that as a most general rule our actions in this respect are behind those of a godly Jew. It is a positive luxury to put *all* into His disposing hands. Then we are conscious of His love in providing for our every want, and in giving us the privilege of caring for His interests here.

Next we read:—

“JOSEPH . . . GAVE THEM PROVISION FOR
THE WAY.”

If all our power comes from a risen Lord, so does also our *food*. It is not a question of natural food, of course, but spiritual. Hence the inquiry, What shall we read? and very often the storm of the discussion rages around *the religious novel*. The question would be simply answered if we asked ourselves, Does this food come from our risen, glorious Joseph? Will it make me more heavenly? For our mental pabulum, in its assimilating process, brings with it results like to itself. We know what the cow has been feeding on when the butter is yellow. What comes *out* of a man is what has gone *into* him.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” We are characterized by what we feed on. It is not what we *mentally* acquire, but what we *spiritually* assimilate, that can be called food. For the latter the Spirit of God must be our Teacher, so that it is not merely the letter of the Word that engages our attention, but the life-giving *spirit* of the Word becomes food to our souls. Oh! what an abundance of rich food the Christian has. What heavenly pastures in the Scriptures! We can say with the shepherd-psalmist, “*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*” We know many often long to be more Christ-like. Let such remember character-building is a slow but sure process. We cannot expect to be like Him unless we are occupied with Him. If we are taken up with business, or frivolity, or light general reading, we shall become like to that we are occupied with. God’s laws are inexorable.

When Moses spoke face to face with Jehovah on Mount Sinai he *wist* not his face shone. When Samson fell asleep on the lap of Delilah, after divulging the secret of his Nazariteship, he *wist* not that his strength was departed.

But someone will exclaim, “We are bound to be occupied with business. Are we not told in Scripture to do whatsoever our hand findeth to do with all our might?”

Certainly. This is but God-honouring. *A lazy Christian is a disgrace to the coat he wears.*

But it is one thing to do our business heartily, and another to be so occupied with *it* that Christ is shut out, and instead of feeding on the bread that cometh down from heaven—HIMSELF—to be feeding on the dry husks of business. To start with, you should run your business as the Lord's steward, and for His glory *primarily*, not for your own profit. When this is the case the dull routine of business has a halo of glory around it, and commonplace actions are invested with a dignity, before which the crown and sceptre sink into utter insignificance.

But to return. Our food is *heavenly*, for it is Christ Himself. Our Lord, speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures, says of them: "*They are they which testify of ME.*" Types and symbols and shadows spoke so touchingly of Christ that the hearts of the two Emmaus-bound disciples *burned* within them whilst "*He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things CONCERNING HIMSELF.*" Yet their eyes were holden that they did not recognize the risen Lord. How must it be then with us when we know Him—our risen Joseph—when the types have given place to the glorious antitype—the symbol to the reality—the shadow to the substance—when the stars of a Jewish night have paled before the full-orbed splendour of that central sun of Christianity—Jesus, our Moses, our Aaron, our Melchisedec, the mighty Son of God, our great

High Priest, the Son over His own house, our Minister of the Sanctuary? Yet some exclaim, as did the Israelites concerning the manna which dropped from heaven morning by morning, "*Our souls loathe this light food.*" Who can measure the extent of their backsliding?

Next we read, "He gave each man

CHANGES OF RAIMENT."

The clothing, too, comes from heaven—heavenly clothing. The Christian is looked upon as having put off the old man and put on the new. Having put on the new, we are to be characterized by "*bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness.*"

This is a sample of the clothing provided for us from the risen Joseph. It takes all of Adam's race to bring out in their hideous repulsiveness the characteristics of the old man. But the Lord Jesus Christ expressed fully and completely in His own peerless person what man should be for God. He was *the Second Man—the Lord from heaven.*

And now the Church upon earth should be the expression of Christ—the Second Man. It is thus the privilege of each believer, as being a part of

the whole, to exhibit the graces of Christ—each in his measure to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

It is only as the Spirit of God engages our hearts with Christ in glory, that we shall be seen in these heavenly garments — only by being engaged with Christ where He *is*, that we can be like Him where He *was*.

The outward should be the index of the inward. When this is not so, we are leavened with Pharisaism—hypocrisy. The monk in his cowl and the nun in her black robes would fain persuade us that they had done with the world and its ambitions and lusts. Yet history judges them by their *actions*; and a more awful exposure than the judicial pen of the historian has made could not well be conceived. Let us be honest with God and ourselves.

For instance, the women are exhorted in Scripture to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but with good works. (1 Timothy ii. 10.) The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is to be theirs, which is, in the sight of God, of great price. (1 Peter iii. 4.)

This ornament of a meek and quiet spirit—this ornament of great price—is not to be bought across the jeweller's counter, but gained, as Mary found,

by sitting at His feet and learning of Him. Such ornaments suit us all.

A servant of the Lord said to me one day, "So-and-so is the best-dressed man in S——."

"How is that?" I enquired.

"He is clothed with humility," was the ready response.

Alas! we know these garments more by admiring them on others than in wearing them ourselves.

And now Joseph, in sending his brethren off, gives them a needed piece of advice: "See that ye

FALL NOT OUT BY THE WAY."

One would think with abundance of carrying capacity in the wagons, plenty of food and clothing, there would be no room for quarrelling, but that Joseph's grandeur and grace would prove the engrossing theme of their conversation, especially as every turn of the wagon-wheels brought them nearer and nearer to their brother. And has this no voice for us? Is not the Holy Ghost given to each believer alike? Are the Scriptures not the common heritage of all believers? Is not Christ in glory and His heavenly resources the undivided portion of all? To ask the questions is but to answer them.

And yet look abroad. Have we not fallen out by the way? The Church history of well-nigh nineteen centuries is too sad an evidence of this.

The clamour of voices, the clashing of shibboleths, have not died out yet.

Oh, let us in our measure be so occupied with Christ that the flesh may be kept in the place of judgment and death, our evil hearts not being allowed to act. It is only as we are occupied with Christ, and walking in the power of the Spirit, that we are in a state of *practical* deliverance. And an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory.

And, lastly, we read so touchingly of Jacob, that "*when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*"

Our journey to Christ in glory is an *impossibility* to nature. But when the young believer knows the mission, purpose, and power of the Holy Ghost, he reads the whole secret at a glance. Jacob's spirit revived when he saw the wagons. We, too, can go forward with confidence as we are conscious of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. Well-fed and well-clothed Christians we should be, pressing on in all this mighty energy of God till we see His face, and journeyings are no more. May God grant it increasingly for His name's sake. Amen.

A. J. P.

ARCHIPPUS.

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.”

COL. iv. 17.

AND who was Archippus? Why was he singled out and addressed specially by the apostle? Was this special address to his credit or to his discredit?

All we know about him is that he was connected with the church at Colosse, and that Paul could speak honourably of him as a fellow-soldier. (See Philemon ii.) That is all. He had received a service from the Lord, and he was a fellow-soldier of the apostle. There was thus a strong link between Archippus and Paul. They were fellow-servants and comrades-in-arms, having the same Master to obey and the same Captain to follow. Their hearts and hands were united. But, besides this interesting link, Archippus was under direct and special orders from the Lord. He had a ministry—a service—to fulfil. What this may have been we are not told. Was it the possession of “gift,” as bestowed upon him from an ascended Christ, such as evangelist, pastor, or teacher? or did it lie in the performance of some minor service for the saints at Colosse or elsewhere—as, for instance, “Sister Phœbe” was

recognised as a "servant of the church at Cenchrea," being entrusted with a special kind of service, and commissioned, apparently, to convey from Corinth to Rome the epistle written to that assembly? This was an important service faithfully accomplished, to the benefit not only of "all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints," but of myriads of others, also beloved of God. This we know. Thus Phoebe was a minister, and her ministry was highly honourable—though beautifully hidden—and Archippus, too, may have been equally honoured by a service of danger, for which only one who could be styled a "*fellow-soldier*" was truly fitted.

Courage was needed for the ministry of Christ in those early days. "Drawing-room-carpet" soldiers were of no use then! "Men who hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" were in demand, and were, thank God, forthcoming. That was the credential for the field in days when the fire burned, and the sword smote, and the lion raged!

Courage for the truth, courage for service, courage for Christ—that was the grand qualification at such a time.

Men of a different kind crept into Corinth, and did their best to undermine the God-given authority of the apostle in that church; but he spoke of coming thither, and of knowing "not the speech of them that were puffed up, but the

power, for," said he (and let us mark most carefully and diligently the fact) "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." What marks that kingdom is not speech, but power—and that ever and always, although the power may not be such as dazzles nature, or carries merely human applause.

Still, it is power and not talk, unction and not utterance, courage and not carnal prudence. Did Archippus, after all, lack this credential because the apostle enjoined him to take heed to the ministry? The exhortation is exquisite and full of encouragement. It is easy to be brave when there is no foe! But Archippus, and all such, had foes on every hand. "There were giants in those days" on both sides, and quarter was neither asked nor taken—at least in comparison. But Archippus was to fulfil the ministry. There might have been a temptation to accomplish three-fourths or nine-tenths of it, and leave the remainder. No, the service must be *fulfilled*. Hence the force of the exhortation. The chief honour lies in the finishing touch. That tells the master hand. And for Archippus to apply that touch would be his greatest good and highest honour.

Did he thus fulfil? We cannot say. But we do know of One who, reviewing His service of perfect and undeviating faithfulness, could truthfully say: "I have finished the work that Thou

"LET US NOT BE WEARY."

213

gavest Me to do." (John xvii. 4.) In Him all credentials for effective service centred and culminated. He needed no exhortation to fulfil His blessed and gracious service. The will of God was ever the delight of His heart, and His glory the one commanding object of His lonely life.

But He, the Son of God and Son of man, stands alone! We, His poor faltering servants, need often to be exhorted, like Archippus, to take heed to our ministry that we fulfil it.

May His grace enable us to do so.

J. W. S.

"LET US NOT BE WEARY."

GALATIANS vi. 9, 10.

"**H**E who works in the field of the world,
Must work with a faith sublime;
For the seed he sows must lie in the earth,
And wait for God's good time.

"But nevertheless the harvest is sure,
Though the sower the sheaves may not see;
For never a word was spoken for Him
But will ring through eternity."

Selected.

THE GOSPEL IN ISAIAH.

THE book of Isaiah is full of gospel truths, and for this reason he has been called the evangelical prophet. He was one of the many prophets who bore witness of Christ.

“To Him give all the prophets witness.” (Acts x. 43.)

They pointed to Christ; they said, Salvation is found in Christ, and in Christ alone; look to Him and be saved.

“Search ye out of the book of the Lord, and read,” is what the prophet Isaiah enjoins on us. (Isaiah xxxiv. 16.)

Thank God, we have the book of the Lord: a book straight from God, in which we can find the way of salvation. The Bible is that book. It behoves us to search it, and there we shall find, as plain as God can make it, the way of salvation. Let us together search the book of Isaiah, and may God bless our doing so to the good of our souls. He will; let us ask Him.

The first ray of light that we get is about ourselves. Phrenologists say, “Man, know thyself.” The only way to know ourselves through and through is to listen to what God says about us. We may safely trust His judgment, though it may clash with our own.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.” (Chap. liii. 6.)

All gone astray—every one to his own way—is the solemn word. All—every one. That is, you and I with all others, the moral and the immoral, the religious and profane, are included in the all and every one of this solemn verse. Do you believe it, reader?

But God goes deeper. Not only upon our outward ways does the light of God fall, but it penetrates to the hidden springs of our being, laying all bare. And the one thus exposed under the light of God cries out:

“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Chap. lxiv. 6.)

Here it is “we are all as an unclean thing.” We are corrupt in the springs of our being—a corrupt fountain and a corrupt tree—and, therefore, all that flows from that fountain or grows on that tree is corrupt also. Phrenology inflates man; this brings about an entire collapse, and leads to humbleness and repentance before God.

Reader, do you know what it is to collapse, and to cry from the depth of your being, “God be merciful to me a sinner”?

But notice: “and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” The light does solemn work. All that we thought meritorious, all that which we hoped would recommend us to God, and by which we trusted to escape hell and gain heaven, is said

to be "filthy rags." What can "filthy rags" do for a poor sinner who is steeped in sin and in danger of eternal judgment? Simply nothing.

Having searched us out, and revealed to us the uselessness of our own doings, the light moves in another direction. *It turns to Christ*; it reveals Him in the infiniteness of His love, dying in our room and stead. Says the prophet:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. . . . And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . For the transgression of my people was He stricken. . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin . . . He shall bear their iniquities. . . . He bare the sin of many." (Chap. liii. 5-12.)

Reader, if the light has detected you and shown you the corruptness of your ways, and the deeper corruption of your being, here is your only hope. "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good." The prophet points you to Him, dying as the sinner's substitute, the bearer of sin's heavy load, the endurer of God's wrath and judgment, the One "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) In fact, that One Himself says:

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." (Isaiah xlv. 22.)

If you look to Him in faith He will save you. You say, I have looked. Thank God, then, He has saved you, for He can never go back from His word. And more, "He that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life." (John vi. 47.)

The bitten Israelites looked to the brazen serpent, and lived; that serpent was a type of Christ made sin for us, and by His stripes we are healed. The dying thief and the Philippian jailor looked to and believed on Christ, and were saved.

Having looked to Him, it is your privilege to confess Him as yours, and that He is everything to you.

"One shall say, I am the Lord's." (Chap. xliv. 5.)

Blessed reality! The believer can say, "I am the Lord's." Divine certainty fills the heart, as we see Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour, knowing that it was He who went down into death for us, bore our sins, endured our judgment, and rose victorious. "Delivered" indeed He was "for our offences," but also "raised again for our justification." The blessed consequence for the one who has trusted Christ is, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) Being justified by God we have peace with Him.

But more:

“Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” (Chap. xlv. 24.)

We have exchanged our “filthy rags” for “God’s righteousness” in Christ, and our poor show of strength for His omnipotence. “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” Blessed exchange! and blessed fitness for the presence of God, too! It is as cleansed by the blood of Christ, and clothed with God’s righteousness, that we are fit for heaven.

Then comes the divine assurance that what God does He does for ever.

“My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished.” (Chap. li. 6.)

Blessed, soul-comforting fact! We must repeat those priceless words. We will quote the whole verse:

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: *but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished.*”

Yes; creation, God’s handiwork, may and will pass away, but the glorious results of the death of Christ shall abide for ever. Thank God for this. The salvation and righteousness of God are for ever. The cross has made good the one and the other. God is just in justifying, and His precious grace reigns through righteousness unto

eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. iii. 26 ; v. 21.) And shall we not rejoice ? Yes, in the Lord alway.

“ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” (Isaiah lxi. 10.)

“ Clad in this robe, how bright I shine !
Angels possess not such a dress ;
Angels have not a robe like mine—
Jesus the Lord’s my righteousness.”

If the living water is poured into our thirsty souls ; if our thirst is slaked, and our souls satisfied for ever, it is that they may flow out to the blessed God in praise and thanksgiving continually. Like Israel we can say, “ I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.” (Exodus xv. 1.) We begin the song of praise on earth ; we shall continue it, thank God, throughout the everlasting ages.

On earth the song begins,
In heaven more sweet and loud—
“ To Him that cleansed our sins
By His atoning blood ;
To Him,” we sing in joyful strain,
“ Be honour, power, and praise. Amen.”

E. A.

On Evangelizing.—“ I should be greatly grieved if brethren ceased to be an evangelizing set of Christians. Indeed they would fade in their own spiritual standing, and get probably sectarian, not in theory but in practice, because the enlarging principle of love would not be there. Thank God it is not yet so, but grace alone can maintain the testimony.”

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BETA.—John iii. 16.—No one is at liberty to deal with the truths of Scripture as a mason deals with stones from the quarry. Who authorizes us, or anybody else, to lift up hammer and chisel and work away until they are reduced to the size we think they ought to be? Such business may suit men bent on framing or maintaining a system of theology, but we trust you are not of that sort.

We have, therefore, no sympathy with one-sided theologians in their attempt to foist the word “elect” into this great, grand passage to make it square with their ideas. According to them it should read, “For God so loved the [elect] world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever [of the elect] believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Alas! what is man, that he should thus seek to mar the beauty of this most affecting verse, and limit the love even of God Himself!

Let the glorious words stand as the Lord uttered them, without addition or subtraction. They have been a well-spring of life to souls beyond number, and by God’s grace they will be so still.

We trust you will never hesitate to preach the love of God to perishing men without reserve. Preach it fearlessly. Preach it in all its depth and breadth and fulness. Tell them, with burning heart, that to save them from eternal ruin God gave His only begotten Son, and not alone to save, but to bless them with life everlasting.

It is said that more persons have been saved through John iii. 16 than by any other verse from

Genesis to Revelation. Experience shows that the Holy Ghost signally honours it. No wonder if Satan endeavours to enfeeble its force, and to blunt the edge of this mighty battle-axe.

We avow our conviction that when an evangelist feels that he can no longer preach to ruined men from John iii. 16 he will soon find out that he has ceased to be a soul-winner. Doctrine is good, and has its place and its work to do, but hearts are not broken by it, nor eyes filled with penitential tears. Love, the love of God, is the potent force to effect these blessed ends. *Blessed* ends, we say; at least they are reckoned so in heaven, for there is joy there over *one* repentant sinner.

Do we mean by this that the love of God to man should always be the theme of the evangelist? Nay, we go not so far as that. Let him reason with men of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, if that be his Master's bidding. But behind all such preaching is the love of God, for the servant is sent on this solemn errand that men may be aroused and may believe the gospel and be saved.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Here is our Lord's commission, and we envy not the heart that would narrow it. To every member of Adam's fallen family is the gospel sent. Where is the hand so daring as to tear out John iii. 16 from the glad tidings, and thus withhold from men this blessed revelation of God, and this most effectual refutation of the lie by which Eve was beguiled?

If you desire to serve God in the gospel of His Son, if you aspire to be a soul-winner and not a mere

preacher, then study well John iii. 16, and agonize in prayer for an understanding heart. "In every word of it," says a well-known writer, "there is a depth and mystery of meaning that God Himself alone can fathom. Tell me what it means *to perish*, and enable me to grasp the thought of a life that is eternal. Measure for me the abyss of man's wickedness and guilt during all the ages of his black and hateful history, that I may realize in some degree what that world is that God has loved; and then, pausing for a moment to try to teach a poor and selfish heart how such a world could be loved at all, hasten on to speak of love that gave the Son. And when you have enabled me to know this love which cannot be known, for it passeth knowledge, press on still and tell me of the sacrifice by which it has measured and proved itself—His Son, His only begotten Son. Make me to know in the fulness of knowledge Him who declared that the Father alone could know Him. And when you have achieved all this, I turn again to the words of Christ, and I read that it was God who so loved the world, and I crave to know who and what God is. I can rise to the thought of love, perhaps even to an evil world, and the conception of love giving up an only son is not beyond me; but when I come to know that it was *God* who loved, that *God* was the giver, and *God's* Son the gift, I stand as a wondering worshipper in the presence of the Infinite, and confess that such knowledge is too high for me."

We may and should distinguish between the love of pity and compassion, the love of relationship, and the love of complacency. The love of relationship

rests on those who are in relation to God as children to a Father. This is the prominent point in 1 John iii. 1, 2. Within that circle only His children stand. The love of complacency is bestowed on those who, like Enoch, walk with God. This is the subject of John xiv. 23. But the passage before us tells of the deep, tender, pitying, compassionate love of God to the world—love which, like the sun in the sky, shines for every creature under heaven.

Oh to be more under the power of it! Then will His word be in our heart as a burning fire shut up in our bones (Jeremiah xx. 9); our innermost parts shall be as wine that hath no vent. (Job xxxii. 18–20.) A divine restlessness shall take possession of us, a profound longing for the salvation of dying men. Then shall we be ready, if the will of God be so, to relinquish ease, comfort, and the dear company of those we love, and go to the dark places of the earth, to carry there the light of the love of God, or to stand in court, alley, and at the street-corner of our own city, and preach the gospel of peace. Alas! alas! our poor hearts are like dying embers on the hearth. May the Lord pity us and give us a great reviving.

In reference to your second question we believe the sinner in the Pharisee's house (Luke vii.) and the jailor at Philippi (Acts xvi.) were entitled to speak of themselves as saved. And from their day to ours every poor sinner believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved and should know it. At all events he is forgiven, justified from all things, sealed with the Holy Ghost, and numbered among God's children—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If such are not saved we should be interested in hearing who are.

Salvation in its full meaning is still to come, but we do not speak of it in that sense here.

D. M.—Mark xiii. 11.—We are no believers in written sermons ourselves, and think it infinitely better to rely on God to fill our mouth with fitting words in the delivery of His message. But this passage can hardly be said to have reference to public preaching. Its chief design is to encourage any who, for Christ's sake, may be brought before rulers, and to lead them to rely on the wisdom of the Holy Ghost in answering their adversaries, rather than on any arguments of their own prepared by much meditation. But were we to use it to discountenance all meditation on the part of those who preach, and to induce them to start upon their work without the least idea of what they were going to say, we should do wrong. (Read Ecclesiastes xii. 9, 10, together with 1 Timothy iv. 13-15.)

E. R.—Be assured that your letter shall be shown to no one. What you need is practical deliverance from the power of sin. We hope ere long to insert some articles on the subject, which we trust may be helpful. You make a very serious statement when you say that you cannot keep from sin. If it be positive acts of sin which you commit knowingly, and declare you cannot help it, then you do indeed confess that sin is your master, and you are its miserable slave. In your own strength you cannot overcome; but is the power of Christ, is the power of the Holy Ghost, not strong enough to free you from this hateful yoke? Write to our Publisher, whose address is on the outer cover, and ask him to send you by post a little book called *Victory over Sin*, and enclose in your letter three halfpenny stamps. We believe it will meet some of your difficulties. If it should not, then write again.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING.

(A WORD TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.)

THERE is nothing more distressing to one who loves the saints and rejoices in their spiritual prosperity than to see signs of soul-declension. It is sorrowful in the extreme to a true evangelist to witness those who have professed to be converted through his ministry wither away, as tender plants droop and die in a severe frost or for lack of the moisture of the rain of heaven. No wonder Paul sent Timothy to his Thessalonian converts to establish them and to comfort them, lest, as he tells us, "the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain." (1 Thess. iii. 5.)

At Corinth Apollos watered what Paul planted, and thus helped on the work. One was as necessary to the spiritual development of the Corinthians as the other. Everyone knows, who has the least acquaintance with vegetation, that no plants will grow, however favourable the circumstances, unless they be carefully watered. And this is especially so when they are young and tender.

Declension is the opposite of growth. Looking at decline from a natural standpoint, it is the

wasting away of that which was once strong, fair, or beautiful. How charming to behold a rose in the beauty of full bloom; but how different our feelings when we see it withered and dead.

We were staying with a friend during a very wet harvest season, when farmers were almost in despair about their crops. As we were walking together one day I said, "Would it not be better to let that meadow stand until you get dry weather to save it?" He replied, "You forget there is no standing still in nature. There is a moment when that grass is fully ripe and ready for the sickle. If allowed to stand it would decline in strength, and lose its feeding properties."

Many a time have I thought of the remark, and applied it to spiritual things. *There is no standing still in nature*; nor, dear young believer, is there any standing still in the Christian life. If we are not making progress, we are assuredly not standing still. Depend upon it, though we be unconscious of it, we are going back if not going forward. The Corinthians did not grow, and the Hebrews and Galatians declined, to Paul's great grief. How often have evangelists in our own day seen in their converts as great earnestness as Paul saw in the Galatians, and yet have lived, alas! to mourn over many of whom they had hoped better things.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING. 227

Paul's desire for the Colossians was that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, and so walk worthy of the Lord, and grow by the true knowledge of God.

We once asked a Christian, whom we had not seen for some years, if she had grown since we last met? The question seemed to search her, and she said nothing. We then asked how anyone would know if he had grown? Being left to answer the question ourselves, we said, "The true evidence of spiritual growth consists in a deeper knowledge of the badness of the flesh, and of our utter powerlessness to cope with it; at the same time there is a fuller, richer sense of God's grace. Moreover, there are things in which we saw no harm in former days, from which we would now shrink with horror. It was undoubtedly a distinct mark of progress in Job's history when he said, "Behold, I am vile." But when he exclaimed, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes," he had reached a point where all God's discipline tended to bring him. It was, morally, the end of himself, as we speak.

Often the young believer, when passing through deep exercise of this kind, wonders whether he can be a Christian. He feels the natural depravity of his own heart. He finds evil thoughts springing up perhaps in his quietest moments

and in the midst of his most holy exercises, and fears he cannot have been converted at all, or if converted that he is going back, or at least not making progress. This is not so. Two things go on together, namely, the learning of what *we are* and the learning of what God is as revealed in grace.

The more deeply we learn what we are as lost and utterly ruined in Adam, the more deeply we shall feel indebted to grace. And grace has taken the fullest knowledge of all the evil in us. It has been often said that though we have been sometimes disappointed in ourselves, God never is. He knew how badly we would turn out, yet His love changes not. If He loved us at our very worst and knew the worst about us, surely any fresh discovery of ourselves that He may allow us to make for our humiliation and profit is no surprise or disappointment to Him.

In the Song of Solomon the bride said, when looking at herself, "I am black as the tents of Kedar"—the dirtiest tents of all the Arabian tribes. But the bridegroom looked at her very differently. He said, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." The perfect comeliness of Christ is upon the youngest, feeblest believer. Therefore He can view us thus.

Take comfort, then, young believer. If at times you feel cast down because of what you see in yourself, remember that nothing can

change our relationship with God, or our place of perfect acceptance in the Beloved. God sees it necessary to put us through various experiences here to humble us, and to teach us not to trust in ourselves as Peter did when he self-confidently told the Lord, "Though all should deny Thee, yet will not I." Alas! the *I* bulked very big in Peter's eyes, and so the Lord, whilst praying for Peter lest his faith should fail, allowed him, as He has allowed many another, to get sifted, that he might learn not to trust in himself.

There are five steps to be noticed in Peter's downfall. First, he was self-confident; second, he slept when he ought to have been watching; third, he was active when he ought to have been passive; fourth, he followed afar off; fifth, he was found in worldly company. (See Mark xiv.)

Beware of *self-confidence*. It is the very bane of the Christian life. Never think well of yourself, and never say what you would not do. Many have found by sad experience that the very things they rashly said they would not do were the very things they did. Be careful also of judging or despising others. When tried and tested, turn to the Lord and say, "Lord, Thou knowest I have no power to keep myself, and if not kept by Thee I shall be sure to fail," and you will be surprised to learn how the Lord will support you and carry you through what otherwise might have been your moral ruin.

230 ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING.

Beware also of a sluggish spirit. When Peter was restored he was to strengthen his brethren. So we find him exhorting them to "be sober," as though he said, "Do not be light or frivolous, have yourself well under control." Be vigilant, that is, "Be watchful or wide awake." For "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." We do not know where the adversary will meet us, therefore we have no time for sleeping. "They that sleep sleep in the night." "Therefore let us not sleep as do others." "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

Beware of being active when you ought to be low at the Lord's feet, learning His mind. Peter drew his sword in the power of the flesh and not in communion with the Lord, and cut off a man's ear. Alas! many ears are cut off in this way. It was apparently in love for his Master he did it, but it was over-zealousness and in haste, and therefore not wise. If we were near the Lord we would not act without a word from Him. Do not for a moment think that in saying this we are speaking against your serving the Lord when He calls to it. Far from that. It is a most blessed privilege to do the very simplest thing for the Lord if He bids us do it.

Beware also of following afar off. When you are conscious in the least degree that something has come in between your heart and the Lord,

go to Him at once and tell Him all about it. If you are not near Him the springs of your love will soon dry up. You will become barren and sapless. You will have no joy yourself and nothing to give to others. Then you will be in danger of sinking to the world's level and seeking the world's company, which will only lead you farther and farther from Christ.

Oh! beware of worldly society. You will be sure to deny your Lord and Master if you willingly associate yourself with those from whom you ought to keep aloof. How can you profess to love the Lord and yet mix with those that crucified Him? It is a denial of the cross. "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, or love them that hate the Lord?" "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." The cross separates us from the world; all our connections with it are thereby broken, and we are now linked up in life with the One whom the world's leaders crucified between two thieves. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Should this paper meet the eye of one who has fallen into open sin and become a backslider, we would ask him to think of those words uttered

232 ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING.

by the loving Lord in view of Peter's downfall: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He is still the very same loving, tender-hearted Jesus. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He is ever our Advocate as well as our Priest. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Why should you continue in sin, and thus go further from the Lord and play into the hands of the devil? The Lord wants you back, and He will gladly welcome you if you return to Him, owning your departure and confessing your sin. He will forgive you freely and restore you to your former brightness. In your backsliding state you are a great stumbling-block to others. Oh! come back, and God will heal your backslidings and love you freely. He says to you as He said to Israel long ago, "*Return*, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for *I am merciful*, saith the Lord. . . . *Only acknowledge* thine iniquity." (Jeremiah iii. 12, 13.) Will you not heed His gracious voice and return to Him? Then will He restore to you the joy of His salvation, and you shall sing as in the old days. P. W.

"YOU never turn worldly men or women to the City of God by going half way with them to Vanity Fair."

THE SEEKING SHEPHERD.

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.”—LUKE xv. 4, 5.

MY dear reader, do you, in the lost sheep of these verses, recognize a picture of yourself? You have often perhaps said with your lips, “We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep,” but have you ever felt how true this is of you? You are lost, and unless found by Christ you will be lost to all eternity.

Do you feel this? Do you in heart and conscience know yourself a lost sheep? Jesus is seeking such. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

I want very much to bring before your soul the truth that Jesus is seeking *you*!

Whoever you are, or whatever your condition; whether you are careless or concerned, whether moral or depraved, whether you feel yourself so bad that you conclude that He can have nothing to do with you, or whether you think yourself so much better than others around you that you scarcely need His help, I want you to know that He in wondrous grace is seeking *YOU*.

Poor wanderer in the ways of sin, folly, unbelief, and danger, you little know what love follows you, what an eye traces your wayward steps, what an infinitely deep desire for your salvation throbs, may I say, within the breast of the Good Shepherd, who now follows up your steps in persevering grace to bring you to Himself.

It may be you are altogether careless about this, and can hardly forgive the intrusion on your privacy which has placed this little book in your hands. Will you be careless about it when you lie on your dying bed, and your hours are numbered? Will you think it not worth your attention when you feel that within a few hours you will have to appear before God? Will a word on this subject be an unwarrantable intrusion when the unknown future presents itself immediately before your view, and questions long put off force themselves upon your mind with irresistible power?

“ Soon as from earth I go,
What will become of me ? ”

Oh, let me urge the fact upon you *now* that He is seeking you. This little book is His message to you. He calls you, has called before; perhaps you remember calls which you have as yet taken no notice of; still He is waiting, has waited long. You use no earthly friend so ill.

Or it may be you are a very different person from the one I have been supposing. Perhaps you are a seeking soul, and saying in your heart, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him," and you have thought a great deal about your fruitless seeking till you are sad. Listen. *He* is seeking *you*. These anxious desires after Him are the fruit of His grace, and the effect of His seeking *you*. Do not think for one moment that you are the only willing party. Is not this a bit of the self-righteousness of our hearts, which allows us to think that we are more willing than He?

Oh, dear soul, if you only knew the deep desire of His heart toward you; if you only knew how His bowels yearn over you (Gen. xliii. 30); the longing of His heart to see in you the fruit of "the travail of His soul." Oh, with this paper in your hand believe that He loves you, believe that He seeks you, believe that *He died for you*, that He included *you* in that prayer to His Father when He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for *them also which shall believe on Me through their word.*" Depend upon it the love that led Him to die for you on the cross now leads Him to seek your needy soul, and it is a happy day when a seeking Saviour and a seeking sinner cross each other's path.

Do you still hesitate and say in your heart, "Can it be that He seeks me?" Turn to Luke xv.

and have His own word for it. You see your picture there. You freely own yourself to be the lost sheep, you know the sad story of all your wanderings; now look at the picture, "Doth He not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, *until He find it?*"

Can you then doubt the willingness of Jesus to receive you, or His desire to find you, when He has year after year sought you, day after day waited for you, time after time called you?

When you heard that sermon, and felt such a wish to be a Christian, whence came that wish? Not out of your own heart. Was not the Good Shepherd calling you? When you heard the bell toll the other day, and you were startled to hear that one you well knew had passed into eternity, serious thoughts crossed your mind, and you said in your heart, "O that I were saved." Who begat those thoughts? Was not the Good Shepherd seeking you then? When you received that letter from a Christian friend, in which you were entreated to come and taste a Saviour's love, who was it, think you, who was thus drawing you with silken cords? Ah! who was it? Think. The tract you found by the roadside, and which so pierced your conscience as you read it and brought your sins to remembrance, who sent that arrow to your heart? Was it not Jesus, who loves you, died to save you, and now seeks to win you to Himself?

GOD'S FACTS AND MAN'S FEELINGS. 237

But Jesus *keeps* as well as saves. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

Reader, where are you? On His shoulders?
or wandering in your sins? H. P.

GOD'S FACTS AND MAN'S FEELINGS.

CALLING at a house one day we met a man who, we had reason to believe, was somewhat concerned about the salvation of his soul. In answer to our inquiries as to how matters stood between him and God, he replied that he believed all that was said, but still he did not *feel* saved.

We might truly say that his case was only a sample of thousands in Christendom to-day, who, while professing to believe, have never believed on God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Perhaps this little book may fall into the hands of an anxious soul who, like the man we met the other day, is waiting to *feel* saved, and is sorely disappointed because the right kind of feelings are not possessed.

Let us in thought, dear friend, take a seat by your side, and with our Bible in hand point to

238 GOD'S FACTS AND MAN'S FEELINGS.

some of God's facts, and see how they and your feelings agree.

Let us first of all turn to Romans iii. 23 :

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Now there is a fact altogether and apart from your feelings: you are not asked to *feel* you have come short of God's glory as a sinner; whether you feel it or not, it is true. Do you believe it, and take your true place—that of a lost sinner—before God?

Now look at the following verse :

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation [or, mercy-seat] through faith in His blood.”

Here again it is not a question of your feelings. You may not feel that Christ is the One whom God hath set forth as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood; yet how do you know it? Because it is written here in the Word of God. Exactly so.

Are you then trusting Him, and have you faith in His blood? Well, then, let us turn to another passage, and there you will read what is said of all those who believe.

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things.” (Acts xiii. 39.)

GOD'S FACTS AND MAN'S FEELINGS. 239

Let us dwell for a moment upon that glorious fact: "*By Him all that believe.*" Does that include you? Are you one of the *all* that believe? Then if you are, as a natural consequence you *are* (not shall be) *justified from all things.*

But you do not feel justified? It is not a question of your *feelings*, but of God's *fact*. What would you think of a sailor in a storm who, after the anchor had been let go, and had firmly fastened itself to the bottom, went down into the hold of the vessel to ascertain whether or not the ship was safe from going on the rocks. Her safety depends not on what is *inside*, but on the anchor and cable *outside*. And your safety depends not on anything in yourself, but on Christ, and God's acceptance of His finished work; and the ground of assurance is not to be found in your feelings, but in God's sure and certain Word. Unbelief looks within and goes down into the bottom of the heart, and searches there in vain for some ground of assurance, while faith goes to God and rests upon what He says. One word from God's blessed Book is better than all our frames and feelings. "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*" Many have built their hopes upon their feelings, like the man who built his house upon the sand, which, when the winds blew and the rain beat upon it, fell, and great was its fall. But the wise man built his house upon the rock,

240 GOD'S FACTS AND MAN'S FEELINGS.

and neither wind, rain, nor flood could move it. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed." (Psalm cxxv. 1.)

In Romans iv. 3 we have the ground on which Abraham was justified. "He believed God," and therefore God reckoned it to him as righteousness. It was not written for his sake alone that faith was reckoned to him as righteousness, but for us also, to whom it shall be reckoned if we believe on the God that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Could you have a more glorious fact than that?

Let it be laid hold of in simple faith. Take God at His word, and settled assurance will be the result. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Look up to the throne of God, and behold sitting there the One who was once on the cross bearing the just judgment of God against sin. If He is there, the One who bare our sins in His own body on the tree, then our sins must be gone, for they are not with Him on the throne. Dismiss then your doubts and fears, and rejoice in the knowledge of an eternal salvation, and go forth with this testimony, "*We believe and are sure.*"

E. E. M.

THE TALE-BEARER.

SAD indeed is the character, work, and object of the tale-bearer. There is no one in the professing Church of God to be more shunned, or whose work is to be more abhorred. He is pre-eminently an evil-minded person, no matter what his religious pretensions; in fact, it is by his affected piety and use of borrowed pious expressions that he is able to accomplish his evil work the more successfully.

A tale-bearer has no respect for others, no regard for age, no care for the sorrows that his evil course may cause. Self, jealousy, a desire to edge to the front, to figure among men, these are the feelings that animate him; and if necessary he hesitates not to ruin others to build up a reputation for himself,—and all this under a pious garb and a pretended desire that the Lord should be glorified! And if perchance there is the danger of his course coming to light, falsehood is used to cover it up. A tale-bearer has but little conscience if any, and if he be a Christian at all the work in his soul has been so shallow that he has but very little sense of what sin is in the sight of God. These are some of the sad features of the tale-bearer's character.

The work of the tale-bearer is most detestable, and is in direct violation of the law of God.

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people: . . . I am the Lord.” (Lev. xix. 16.) In the sight of God the practice is an abomination, and forbidden and condemned by Him. No one that practises it can meet with His approval. If not exposed here, it will be revealed in the coming day.

A tale-bearer “goeth up and down.” Such is his practice, such is that in which his own heart lives and finds its pleasure, and of him it may be said, as of the woman in Prov. xxvii. 16, “Whoso hideth him hideth the wind.”

One of the chief parts of a tale-bearer’s work is that “he revealeth secrets.” He is the opposite of the “faithful spirit,” who “concealeth the matter.” (Prov. xi. 13.) Unfaithful to everyone but himself and his unholy character, no one is safe from his malicious tongue. He has a dozen questions to ask (and woe be to you if you have not a lock on your lips in his presence), but it is only to use the answers on a future occasion, garbled, coloured, and misapplied.

The most private conversations, drawn out by his incessant questionings, are treated as public property, and all is used in the most heartless manner when the occasion serves. A tale-bearer is callous, has no regard for others, and is destitute of those finer feelings that form so blessed a part of Christianity.

Not only is there the statement of what he

does, but there is the divine exhortation to have nothing to do with him. "He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets: *therefore meddle not with him that flattereth [or enticeth] with his lips.*" (Prov. xx. 19.)

This presents a very solemn side of the tale-bearer's character. Deceit is used to get out of the unwary things that can be used on a future occasion. Questions will be asked, suggestions made, and insinuations as to what others have said or done will not be wanting, and all coloured with the tale-bearer's own vile colouring, in order, as we have said, to lead the unsuspecting individual to utter something that can be used in the prosecution of his evil work.

Deceit is, indeed, one of the dark sides of the tale-bearer's character. Oh, how dark it is, and how detestable to God, who is light!

No wonder the Word of God says, "*Meddle not with him.*" If you neglect this divine exhortation you will smart for it for many a long day.

"The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." (Prov. xviii. 8.) This is repeated in chapter xxvi. 22, the repetition only serving to give it emphasis.

"They are as wounds," and "they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." To have everything dragged into public that has been drawn out by the flattering tongue of this detestable character, and spread abroad without feeling

or conscience, to return back to you distorted, coloured, and misapplied, this is what causes "wounds" of an abiding nature. "They go down into the innermost parts of the belly." What do? "*The words of a tale-bearer.*"

Then mark the effect of the work of this wretched person. "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." (Prov. xvi. 28.)

A tale-bearer is "a froward man" and "a whisperer." His object is to thrust in the wedge between "chief friends," so as to alienate them, and break up their holy intercourse.

Of necessity a tale-bearer is a mischief-maker, a professional "busybody in other men's matters." God has marked him off and stamped him with this brand, so that all should know him and shun him.

"Where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth." (Prov. xxvi. 20.) He is pre-eminently a mischief-maker. His character is detestable, his work loathsome, and his aim unworthy of one professing to be a Christian. His work is a direct violation of God's command, and he is worthy of being detested and shunned by all who have the slightest uprightness of spirit.

He is an object-lesson for all, and woe to the man who does not heed the lesson and escape his hands.

God's command is: "MEDDLE NOT WITH HIM."

E. A.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DIFFICULT
TIMES.

NEHEMIAH iv. 5, 6.

GOD always cares for those who put their trust in Him, and ever sustains in the circumstances He permits them to be in, no matter how difficult their path. The more the people of God care for His interests, the more Satan's opposition comes out; but it is especially *then* that God shows His care and encourages.

At the same time we do well to remember that it is only as their moral condition is right that they can be sustained and divinely led on. Scripture abounds in illustrations of this, and it is seen in a marked way in Nehemiah's day. We, too, in the present dispensation must be found upright in soul for the Spirit to lead us on in heavenly things. The state of ruin in Nehemiah's time for Israel was very much as now in the church. Nehemiah lived in a day of difficulty, departure, and weakness, and we know that what is written of Israel, or the Jews, is for our learning and encouragement. Israel had to do with God, and so have we, though of course He is revealed to us in a very different way.

Of the five post-captivity books three are prophetic, namely, Haggai, Zechariah, and

246 ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DIFFICULT TIMES.

Malachi, and two are historical, which are Ezra and Nehemiah.

Ezra gives the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem, and Nehemiah the city walls made good. It is remarkable to see how God graciously touched the hearts of Nehemiah and the king for the good of His people and city. When Nehemiah through the messengers heard of the afflictions of his brethren and the sorrowful state of Jerusalem he was deeply moved, and took his own share in it all. We read that he “sat down and *wept*, and *mourned* certain days, and *fasted*, and *prayed* before the God of heaven.” He turned to God as one whose habit was to do so (blessed habit!), in Whom alone he knew were all his resources, and God graciously gave him favour with the Gentile king, whose cup-bearer he was. God honoured him; he got his desire. “According to thy faith be it unto thee.”

When the Jews’ enemies, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, with others, heard that a special interest was being taken in the Jews and Jerusalem, we see from the divine account that they were indignant. They laughed Nehemiah to scorn. They were very wroth. They mocked, despised, sneered, and conspired to fight and hinder the work. But mark, Nehemiah turns to God in faith and prayer, and is encouraged. He said, “Our God shall fight for us.”

When Nehemiah sought the fellowship of his brethren in Israel’s behalf they needed much

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DIFFICULT TIMES. 247

ministry, so to speak, to get their moral condition right, so that God could help them in the work of restoring the walls of Jerusalem. We read that Nehemiah had even to rebuke them, the effect of which was that "they held their peace," were led to fear God, to act in righteousness, obedience, and dependence, and to separate from evil. When this improved state characterized them God in grace was with them for blessing, though not then in a public way. But Satan, who never really appears himself, now begins a special line of opposing tactics. First, a wile to decoy, then a threat to frighten, followed by further craft to mislead. Read part of the inspired brief history in support: "Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" Then the enemies say, "It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel. . . . Now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart."

Then when they tempted Nehemiah to go into the temple for safety he said, "Should such a

248 ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DIFFICULT TIMES.

man as I flee? And who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? *I will not go in.*" Nehemiah had divinely-given discernment, and through grace stood firm. In short, he *continued* as Ezra did in the temple building, and as Paul told Timothy to do, namely, "Take heed unto *thyself*, and unto the doctrine; *continue* in them: for in doing this *thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*" (1 Tim. iv. 16.)

We live in a day of declension, departure, and ruin, but we have instructions as to how to act therein suitably to God, bad as things are. "If a man therefore *purge himself* from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and *meet for the Master's use*, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Timothy ii. 21.)

May the Lord, in His rich grace, encourage us, and keep us separated from evil, and morally suitable for the Spirit to lead us on in heavenly things. May we increasingly care for His interests during the little while we await, in *remnant* character, the sure and blessed return of Him of whom we can truly say:

"Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,
Or offering shame and loss,
Thy path, uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the cross.

"We wonder at Thy lowly mind,
And fain would like Thee be,
And all our rest and pleasure find
In learning, Lord, of Thee."

J. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A CONSTANT READER asks "whether it is consistent with the gospel to tell sinners that Christ bore all their sins, and if they believe *that*, they are saved." We think not. Much as we shrink from making a man an offender for a word, and greatly as we dislike too critical a spirit, we may at least say that those who preach the gospel should earnestly see to it that it is the gospel that they do preach. Much of the confusion about which "A Constant Reader" writes is due to the preacher not discerning the difference between the propitiatory aspect of Christ's sacrifice and the substitutionary aspect of it. The latter is towards believers only, the former is world-wide. No one, therefore, is supported by Scripture in telling men indiscriminately that Christ bore all their sins on the cross if they only believe it. But he can justly declare to every creature that the way is open for all to return—that the blood is on the mercy-seat—yea, that perishing men are besought to return, and that in virtue of the blood God is just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus. And much more the preacher may say, but all this does not go so far as substitution.

T. W. L.—Acts xxii. 12–16.—Let us remember that no scripture is of any private interpretation. It must be understood and explained with due regard to what is taught in other portions of the sacred Word. Now the washing that cleanses from every sin and fits us for the skies is always attributed to

the precious blood of Christ. Please read 1 John i. 7, Revelation i. 5, Revelation v. 9, Revelation vii. 14, 1 Peter i. 19, Ephesians i. 7, and you will see that it is so, and to these passages a number of others might be added. What, then, is the meaning of Acts xxii. about which you inquire? In answering the question, we say, Let it be borne in mind that Saul was a Jew. His nation had been very guilty of rejecting and crucifying the Messiah. That awful crime lay at their door. Saul himself had bitterly persecuted the disciples of the Lord Jesus. He was a public ringleader in this dreadful work. But now the persecuted Jesus of Nazareth—the Saviour in glory—revealed Himself to His persecutor in His ineffable grace. Deep was Saul's distress. For three days he saw nothing, and neither ate nor drank. Then Ananias was sent to him with gracious words, and encouraged him to be baptized without delay in the name of the Lord Jesus, and thus wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. By thus acting he separated himself from the guilty nation of Israel; he quitted the ground on which he had stood, and to which his awful sins were attached; he condemned his past course, renounced everything connected with it, and enrolled himself among the followers of the Rejected One. Thus he washed away his sins. All this is easily understood, and is not to be confounded with that mighty, efficacious work of the Saviour on the cross, whereby the believer's sins are for ever put away from before the face of God.

C. B.—Galatians vi. 7, Hebrews xii. 17.—The first of these passages sets before us a deeply important

principle of universal application. "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap." If he sow barley, he shall reap barley; if he sow tares, he shall reap tares. We reap *that* we sow, and not something else. Therefore if a man sow to his flesh, of the flesh he shall reap corruption, because "the flesh" is corrupt, as chapter v. 19-21 plainly shows. But if he sow to the Spirit, and none but a Christian can do that, he shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. He shall get what the Spirit delights to give. As to the second passage, it refers to the blessing of Isaac. It had been said of old, "The elder shall serve the younger." The first place, in the wisdom and sovereignty of God, was given to the younger of Isaac's two sons. Rebekah failed to trust God to accomplish His purpose, and formed a scheme of her own, in which Jacob played his part. When Esau found that Jacob had received the blessing that according to nature should have been his, "he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry." But his father Isaac changed not his mind, and withdrew not the blessing he had given Jacob. He repented not of what he had done. Jacob had been blessed, and Esau's cries and tears could not reverse it. Moreover, in a moment of pressure Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob. For present relief he bartered away future blessing. Jacob's conduct is not to be justified. The planning and scheming arising from distrust entered into it. But Esau is not to be excused. His act was profane, and it is here held up as a warning lest we should follow his example. The other passages you will find explained in a small pamphlet called *Fallen from*

Grace, which you can easily get from the publisher of this magazine.

J. D.—2 Timothy i. 12–14.—Paul had committed unto the One whom he knew and believed all his eternal interests. For His sake he had suffered the loss of all things, and had borne afflictions, stripes, and imprisonment. But he was not ashamed. The glorious future shone brightly before the heart of the beloved apostle. All was sure and certain. What he had committed unto Him He was able to keep. As to Timothy, the “good thing” committed unto him, and which he was to keep, not in his own strength, but “by the Holy Ghost,” was, we presume, all that connected with the special ministry with which he had been entrusted. (See 1 Timothy i. 18, together with 2 Timothy i. 6, 8, 13.)

J. H.—We may connect with the rod of *Moses* the thought of power. By it he wrought the signs in Egypt. The waters of the Red Sea divided, so that the children of Israel passed over dryshod, and the rock gave forth its abundant streams, all by means of the rod of Moses. (Exodus xvii. 5, 6.) But *Aaron's* rod that budded speaks of priesthood and of priestly grace. In Christ we have both. He is our Deliverer from the Egypt-world, where we were slaves to sin and Satan; and it is He who sustains us, keeps us, and saves to the uttermost by His present priestly work. In the Epistle to the Hebrews this is most beautifully unfolded. There we see that effectual succour, gracious, tender sympathy, and perpetual salvation—all of which the saint needs as he journeys towards God's rest—are connected with the priesthood of Christ. This is *Aaron's* rod, not the rod of *Moses*.

HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

THERE are many hindrances to souls obtaining the assurance of salvation. We would call attention to four: Unbelief. Self-occupation. Misunderstanding. Worldliness.

I. *Unbelief.* Christendom is full of unbelief. The Bible, the Word of God, is made of none effect by the traditions of men. Human thoughts take the place of the plain, "Thus saith the Lord." No wonder souls get confused and lack assurance. It is one thing *to profess to believe* Scripture, it is another thing *to believe it* in very deed. Reader, if you lack assurance, read the Word, and believe what it says.

You may find scriptural thoughts more or less expressed in commentaries both old and new. If you follow them you *may* get a right thought, or you *may* get a wrong one; and wrong ones are sure to damage the soul. In the Word of God you have the truth. Read it with simplicity of heart, and believe what it says. Take God at His word. Get His thoughts out of it, and take heed that you do not introduce your own.

If you are a believer on His Son, rest unhesitatingly on the many simple and blessed

254 HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

statements of Scripture which tell you of the present and eternal salvation of *every one that believeth*. (John v. 24, x. 28; Rom. vi. 23; Titus iii. 5-7; Heb. v. 9, x. 10-14.) Not to take Him at His word is *unbelief*, and *without faith* it is impossible for any to please Him. (Heb. xi. 6.)

When God says that the believer's sins *are forgiven* (1 John ii. 12), He means what He says, and wants you to believe it. When He says that the believer *has eternal life*, He wants you to believe that also. And when He says the believer *is saved*, He wants you to be saved, to know that you are, and to go on your way rejoicing.

"*It is written*," was the unfailing weapon used by our blessed Lord in His conflict with the devil. And you will find that the Word of God is a sword with as keen an edge to-day as ever. The work of redemption is accomplished, God is glorified, and the believer is saved. Three well-known little sentences express it very simply. Jesus did it. God says it. I believe it. Do you?

II. *Self-occupation*. Thousands of believers are more or less self-occupied, and mostly to their own unhappiness. Well, to be plain, no one ever did, or ever will, get assurance of salvation through self-occupation. "Whosoever finds perfection in himself," would read very strangely

HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. 255

among the precious statements of the gospel of the grace of God. But, alas! how hard many find it to look away from self! And yet there can be no assurance so long as one is occupied with self instead of Christ.

The gospel is not a scheme for improving "our old man," but the presentation of a full, present, and eternal salvation by faith in a once crucified, but now glorified Saviour. If you are a believer, God's eye rests *on Him*, and not on you apart from Him. He was delivered for your offences, and raised for your justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) In Christ God has found His satisfaction and delight. You have been occupied with the wrong person in being occupied with yourself.

A poor woman, weeping, in deep distress of soul, said, "I am afraid *God will never accept me.*" "He never will," was the unexpected reply. The tears ceased to flow, and a look of blank astonishment stole over her face. "He never will," continued her visitor, "*but He has accepted Christ.* And if you believe on Him your sins are forgiven *for His name's sake*, and God has accepted you *in Him*. He has given *you* up long ago as hopeless. And if you take sides with Him against yourself, and give yourself up, and rest on His word, you are saved." Therein lies the difficulty. We do not like to let *self* go. It is so humbling to learn that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Rom. vii. 18), and to find all in another,

256 HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

even *in Christ*. But to enjoy assurance of salvation, we *must*.

III. *Misunderstanding*.—Another great hindrance to souls enjoying assurance of salvation is the misunderstanding of certain scriptures. The minds of many are trained in an unscriptural system of doctrine from infancy, and when faith springs up in the heart, through the operation of the Spirit of God (and He always, sooner or later, completes His own sure work), and they begin to value Scripture, they find some passages which speak positively of eternal salvation, and others which *seem to them* to contradict. The result is that many go on for weeks, months, and years in a state of more or less *uncertainty*. Instead of enjoying perfect peace, unclouded rest of soul, constant joy, and blessed liberty, through simple faith in Christ and His finished work, these priceless boons are more or less obscured through occupation with portions of the Word, indited by the Spirit of God with an express object, and intended to serve as warnings to mere professors, apostates, and careless souls.

Now, no two parts of God's word could possibly contradict each other, and nothing can weaken in the most infinitesimal degree the plain declarations of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, as to present and eternal forgiveness, the free gift of eternal life, and the eternal salvation of everyone that believeth. (Romans viii. 31–39; x. 6–11.)

HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. 257

Study the *positive* statements, tossed soul. Rest on them with the simple faith of a little child. Believe God, who cannot lie. (Titus i. 2.) And thus you will never be stumbled, or thrown back into doubt, fear, or uncertainty, by passages which may seem to you at first sight to raise a question as to your eternal security.

So long as you are self-occupied, and doubting the scores of passages which speak positively in one way or another of the believer's eternal salvation, you are really not in a state of soul to calmly weigh the passages which trouble you. But once you get grounded in the precious truth of *a present and eternal salvation* through the finished work of Christ, the accepted Man in glory, you will turn to these passages, and perceive that, whatever they mean, *they cannot touch that*. Impossible! And as you wait on God, He will give you light and understanding, and enable you to rightly divide these parts of the Word of truth, and to get His thoughts about them, instead of your own.* Assurance of salvation is the portion of the believer, and assurance of understanding should characterize him. (Col. ii. 2.) The lack of it throws us in upon ourselves, and then the assurance of salvation is not enjoyed.

* Many of these are explained in "*Fallen from Grace*," to be had at the office of this magazine.

258 HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

IV. *Worldliness*.—The world has a great hold on the human heart and mind. Even after a man has been born anew, and has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and received the forgiveness of sins, it is often used of Satan to keep the soul from the enjoyment of assurance of salvation and true Christian liberty. We are born in the midst of this system, brought up in it, and educated, more or less, according to its principles. In the first joy of forgiveness the soul is occupied with Christ as Saviour from the coming wrath, and rejoices in the precious blood as the title to eternal glory. But as time rolls on this joy often wanes, and the believer discovers that he is surrounded by a foreign element, which nevertheless has a measure of attraction for him, and from which he needs to be delivered by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now many who are the subjects of the gracious actions of the Spirit of God find themselves in difficult circumstances. The world is all around them, it constantly puts in its claims, and the flesh, if recognized for a moment, is ever ready to respond to them. Now, unless there is dependence on God for power to refuse and give up the world at all costs it will be yielded to, and a bad conscience will follow, and distress of soul. When this continues, instead of entering into the precious and establishing truth of God, whereby assurance and liberty are enjoyed, the soul

HINDRANCES TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. 259

becomes clouded, doubts and fears arise, and there is no true testimony for Him who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world, &c. (Gal. i. 4.) It has many phases, and Satan will use the form most attractive to us to allure our hearts and to keep us under its and his power. Thus the assurance of salvation is unknown, and there is no glory brought to the Lord by our walk and testimony.

Beware, dear reader, of these four and every other hindrance. God's desire is that you should enjoy the present assurance of salvation and freedom of soul in His blessed presence. But neither the one nor the other can be known where there is carelessness or indifference, or yielding to the flesh, whether it take the form of unbelief, self-occupation, misunderstanding, or worldliness. Christ's work is a perfect work. Christ in glory is God's testimony before all to the truth of it. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. The righteousness of God is now revealed, whereby He pardons, justifies, reconciles, and saves every poor self-judged sinner who believes His word. And God's salvation is eternal. The full assurance of it is the proper portion of each believer. We are saved to live to Him who died for us and rose again, till that bright moment when all His own shall share with Christ in glory the eternal fruits of His redemption work. E. H. C.

A BRIDE FOR CHRIST.

GENESIS xxiv.

IT is well to see what God is doing in connection with this world at the present time. Behind all the activities of man God is working out His own purpose, which is, to “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.” (Eph. i. 10.) This will be accomplished in the dispensation of the fulness of times. In the meanwhile God is gathering out of this world a company to form a Bride for Christ, to be His companion and co-heir. Nothing is more important than to see that God and men, as such, have different aims. Man’s thought is to make himself a name, and he uses the world to do it; God’s thought is to exalt Christ. Just as in the building of the tower of Babel, their thought was “let us make us a name”; but God does not allow it, He sets it on one side, and calls out Abraham; so He will one day set aside the course of this world and bring Christ upon the scene, the One He delights to honour. In this honour the Bride will share.

Having thus briefly set forth God’s thought for His Son, let us consider, first, the *call*;

secondly, the *preparation*; and, thirdly, the *reception* of the Bride.

I. The call. God calls men in various ways. He *commands* all men everywhere to repent, *because* He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness. He warns men of their danger. Man has his back to God, and is on the road to destruction. God calls to him to warn him. "Unto you, O men, I call; and My voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart." He calls to men to behold His goodness; the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. In the gospel God calls to men, "All like sheep have gone astray." Many live in utter forgetfulness of eternity. They eat, drink, sleep, scarcely remembering the One who bestows these bounties upon them. But God has thought of them. He gave up His own Son to die. What a loud call this is. It is a call of *mercy*. Rather than men should perish God has allowed Christ to suffer. It is a call of *tenderness*. God seeks to win men. It shows God is not against men; He has taken occasion by an infinite sacrifice to commend His love. It is a call of *entreaty*; God beseeches men to be reconciled. There is nothing now to hinder their forgiveness if they are willing to be forgiven. He persuades men by His servants, by pointing out the danger

of being lost, the awful consequences, and on the other hand the blessings of salvation. In these and other ways God calls men. Have you heard this call? Do not let the world, or sin, or the devil, hold you any longer if you have. There is nothing more awful than to trifle with the call of God.

See what a ready response Rebekah made. When she came to the well the servant ran to meet her and said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink." And then she volunteered to draw for the camels also.

How this reminds us of another scene. Jesus being wearied with His journey sat thus on the well. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink." There is the journey and the well, the woman coming out to draw, and the request for water. But here the parallel ends; there can be no comparison between the persons—at least between two. If there is a moral distance between the women, how infinitely greater between Abraham's servant and the Son of God. Again, there might have been some approximation between the servant and Rebekah; there was none between Christ and the woman of Samaria. And yet He says to her, "Give Me to drink."

Have we learnt that God wants us, not for what we are in ourselves, but for His own sake? That God calls the sinner not merely because of the sinner's need, but because of His own need, if we may be allowed to put it so. "Give ME to drink." Did the blessed Lord call to mind the words spoken long before to Rebekah by the servant, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher"? It would almost seem so, for the words are very similar, but more emphatic—"Give Me to drink." And had He before Him another Rebekah, one that He was going to win from all her shame and misery, to one day share with Him His own glory and joy? He did win her; she was satisfied too, and so was He. She gave Him to drink because she drank. Strange paradox! But so it is. We never give more to God than when we take what He offers. We give to Him when we accept from Him. His need—be it reverently said—is to give; our need is to receive.

Have *you* learnt this? Are you responding to God's call? He is calling to you now in the gospel. It is there He makes known His love in the gift of Christ. Rebekah responded, and said, "Drink, my lord," and she soon found she was repaid a hundredfold for that drink of water. Give your heart to God, and you will soon find He wants it only to satisfy it, that

He may satisfy it alway. "Give Me to drink." Can you refuse?

II. The preparation. Up to this point Rebekah was totally unaware of the servant's mission. She did not know what was about to happen, but the servant knew. And so God knows from the beginning what He will do, although the sinner is in perfect ignorance until God begins to work. What momentous issues are at stake when the call of God is heard and there is a response. The response of Rebekah was so hearty and so evidently of God that the servant did not long deliberate; but yet there was no haste. Souls are too often hurried into things for which they are not prepared. There is much in the proclamation of the gospel which may win from people a mere natural assent; and these are like the seed that fell upon stony ground—they fall away. "And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold."

What is this golden earring?—or jewel for the forehead, as the margin reads—and what are these bracelets? The jewel for the forehead speaks of the foreknowledge of God. He knows everything beforehand; He knows the end from the beginning. Afterwards, when the servant has informed

Laban and Bethuel of his errand, they say, "the thing proceedeth from the Lord"; so it is always. Just as the Lord sent the servant and brought Rebekah to the well, just as He put the right word into the mouth of one, and prompted the right reply to come from the other, so distinctly does He work to-day in the matter of the sinner's salvation. We cannot understand individuals who think that the matter of their salvation is *simply* and *solely* a question of *their choice*, and who do not see that but for circumstances over which they had no control, and for dealings which were quite outside their ordering, they would have still remained unconverted. Rather must we not say, "the thing proceedeth from the Lord," and bow our heads in thanksgiving and praise? In the servant placing this jewel for the forehead upon Rebekah, let us then see an illustration of our own case, which is abundantly verified by Scripture. In 1 Peter i. 2 we read: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"; and again in Ephesians i. 4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."

And now as to the bracelets. Do they not signify that Rebekah was claimed for another? They illustrate, therefore, what the purpose of God is in regard to ourselves. If God is forming a Bride for Christ, it must be suitable to Christ and worthy of Him. Thus we read: "He hath chosen us *in Him*," which means that as Christ

is, as Man, so are we ; and accordingly two things follow : We are predestinated unto sonship (it should be), and we are “accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians i. 5.) Sonship is that we shall be conformed to Christ’s image, that He may be the first-born among many brethren, or we could not be united to Him as His bride ; acceptance is that we are on the same footing as Christ, as Man, before God ; we are loved with the same love. It must necessarily be so, for we are “accepted *in the Beloved.*”

Here, then, are the two bracelets—sonship and acceptance. Each bracelet that was put upon Rebekah’s hands was *ten* shekels weight of gold. Ten is what reaches to the divine standard ; it is God’s part, what is according to Him, and gold is symbolical of the divine nature. We get the perfect answer to this in the truth of sonship and acceptance. What wonderful bracelets ! This is what God has taken us up for, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, fit to be the Bride of Christ.

But all this was dependent upon another thing—the death of Christ. And accordingly later on, when consent is obtained for the servant to take Rebekah, we read, “And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.” (*v.* 53.) This is all in perfect harmony with other parts of Scripture. It is specially mentioned that these things were given to Rebekah, while at the same

time it says, to her brother and to her mother were given precious things. In the counsels of God the Church has its own special place; but Israel and the nations, too, will have their own peculiar blessings. Silver speaks of redemption, and so we read—continuing the passage we have been considering in Ephesians—“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” We shall never forget that Christ had to shed His blood in order to obtain His Bride. In heaven it will win from us our loudest and sweetest note of praise. On the ground of His blood God can not only forgive our sins, so that He will never remember them any more, but He gives us a nearer place to Himself than man ever enjoyed before. So precious is the blood in God’s sight that it entitles us, in accordance with our heavenly calling, to the same place of nearness as Christ. “But now *in* Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made *nigh* by the blood of Christ.” (Chap. ii. 13.)

But there were also jewels of gold—these speak of divine righteousness. God must ever act in conformity with what He is. Nothing could possibly be in His presence that is unsuited to Him. Gold, as being the most precious and enduring of all metals, is for this reason selected as the symbol of divine righteousness. The boards which formed the framework of the tabernacle—God’s dwelling-place—were covered with this

material. They stood upon sockets of silver, and thus bore silent but convincing testimony to the place believers have in the presence of God in virtue of redemption, and also to their entire suitability for that presence. Accordingly, in 2 Cor. v. 21, we read, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Sin is what is contrary to God; that is what we were. Righteousness, as we have been showing, is what is according to God; that Christ ever was, and now we become so in Him, sin having received its judgment in the cross. How wonderful the two things—Christ made sin; we made the righteousness of God in Him!

Besides silver and gold there was raiment. Raiment in the East is often used as a mark of dignity and favour. If some royal ceremony is in progress the king will send the apparel in which some favoured guest is to be attired; and it has frequently gone ill with anyone who has failed to appear thus arrayed. A certain dress is a mark, too, of rank. We can thus understand the force of the father saying to his servants, in reference to the returned prodigal, "Bring forth the *best* robe and put it on him." On the one hand, it conferred honour and distinction upon the son; on the other, it made him meet to be at the table of his father.

Thus the Bride was prepared; and in it we see

a simple, yet beautiful illustration of New Testament truths. If the jewel for the forehead and the bracelets tell of God's foreknowledge of us and His purpose, the jewels of silver and gold, and the raiment, set forth with equal clearness how redemption has been accomplished, and how everything needed to fit us for such an exalted position is ours in Christ.

III. Having spoken of the call and preparation, it only remains to add a word or two about the reception. One thing, however, which was essential to the success of the servant's mission, must not be overlooked. Would Rebekah be willing to leave home and kindred and cross the desert to be with Isaac? The same question arises with ourselves in regard to Christ. Are we in affection and heart with Him where He is? Alas! too often we only think of going to be with Christ when we are called to leave this scene. How little we leave it now in the Spirit's power to join Him where He is in His heavenly glory. Detained by things here as Laban and his mother sought to detain Rebekah, we know little of what it is for Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith.

"Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten," they said. But the servant was persistent, "Hinder me not . . . send me away, that I may go to my master." These were his words, and they are re-echoed by the Holy Ghost to-day. May we be in concert with them, and from our

hearts may there come a response like that which came from the lips of Rebekah, when in answer to the question, "Wilt thou go with this man?" she said, "I will go."

"And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." This was a great deal to say, but it indicates the glorious destiny of the Church. Even now the principalities and powers in heavenly places learn in her the all-various wisdom of God. Our being one in the Father and the Son will lead the world to believe in Christ as the sent One of the Father; she will also be the depository of the glory of God, and the channel by which heavenly blessing will be communicated to the earth; and to God Himself will be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus unto the ages of the ages.

"And the servant took Rebekah, and went his way." He had secured a bride for Isaac, and in his company Rebekah set out to reach the one to whom henceforth she belonged. Her heart had been won, doubtless, by the story of Isaac's greatness and wealth, and she was already in possession of the rich gifts the servant had brought; but her thoughts were now chiefly about the one to whom all belonged, and whom she was so soon actually

to see. The servant would not be wearied of telling, nor she of hearing, of his greatness—how he was the only son, the beloved of the father, and that unto him Abraham had given all that he had; and the more Rebekah heard the more she would long to reach the journey's end. We cannot think she cast many lingering looks behind, or that she had any regrets; her heart was not in Mesopotamia, but in Canaan. Beloved Christian reader, where is your heart? A more entrancing story than ever Rebekah heard has been heard by you of One who died for you, that whether you wake or sleep you should live together with Him. It is borne witness of Him, too, that He is the Beloved of the Father, and that all things are His. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." (John iii. 35.) And again, "All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." (xvi. 15.) The Holy Ghost has come down to win you for this One. Are you listening to the story? And are you on the journey? We do not mean are you saved? But have you in heart left the scene, and are you enjoying the company of the Holy Ghost, as He leads you in spirit to where this true Isaac is? Would that the Lord might use these few words to awaken some from their lethargy.

But whatever may be our state, it is certain,

that however little in heart we may be with Him, His heart is with us; and soon He will come for us. "Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi." Not only was Rebekah thinking of him, but he was thinking of her.

There are two things mentioned in connection with Isaac which strikingly illustrate the present position of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi," it says, and it also adds, "Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide." The well of Lahai-roi means "the well of him that liveth and seeth me"; and in the margin the word meditate is "to pray." Together they tell us that the Lord Jesus, Christ as Man, waits in expectation of the time when God will give Him His Bride. Those for whom He died are now being gathered out of the world, but He still waits for the Church actually to be with Him. Do we ever think that He longs for the time when we shall have our place by His side? But, as Man, He waits God's time; His expectation is from Him. It is spoken of in Scripture as "the patience of Christ." He is conscious that God liveth and seeth Him, and He accordingly waits in dependence. At the appointed hour He will descend into the air, and we shall be caught up to meet Him.

What a meeting! We read Isaac "lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and

when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel." The wilderness journey was over, the desert path had come to a close, and Isaac was there waiting to receive her. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he loved her." Such was her reception, and such will be ours. How wonderful to think it will be any joy to Christ to have us there. The Father's house awaits the advent of the Bride.

"He and I together entering
Those great courts above;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love.

"Where no shade nor stain can enter,
Nor the gold be dim;
In that holiness unsullied,
I shall walk with Him.

"Meet companion then for Jesus,
From Him, for Him made;
Glory of God's grace for ever,
There in me displayed.

"He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, to be for ever with him;
His, that I am there."

R. E.

"A GOOD conscience before God is acquired by one thing alone, even by the blood-shedding and work of Christ. But the result of this is the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, and then a good conscience *against Satan* is only when the Spirit has not been grieved by anything done contrary to the light He has afforded me,"

J. N. D.

THINK ON THESE THINGS.

“Whatsoever things are true . . . noble . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

PHIL. iv. 8.

WHAT timely advice! How much have you or I profited by it? Let us use a crude illustration, showing how *unnatural* (I use the word advisedly) we are in divine things. You passed a sewer the other day. Didn't you hurry by it! It was most offensive, and you did not wish to pass by it again.

Shortly after you went into a lovely garden where there were all kinds of fragrant plants. How you were tempted to linger! You inhaled the perfume of this flower and that, and were most refreshed. You returned to them again and again, and left reluctantly.

Did we act in a similar way in divine things how little should we need this exhortation of the apostle. Very few of us have eyes to see in each other that which is *true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report*. Are we not more apt to be occupied with the failings and shortcomings of one another? We are more attracted by the sewer than the garden. Honestly, now, is not that often true? and, if so, how little have we drunk into the Spirit of Christ!

One, well known to many, has said that the

way to be truly happy is to be occupied wholly and always with good. How true it is. Surely that was so with our blessed Lord. The apostle, too, always commended what he could see of Christ in the saints before he corrected their mistakes, and this he did to their face.

Would that we were more on the look out for what there is of Christ in His own. How refreshed our hearts would be, for if they are His there is certainly something of Him to be seen somewhere, no matter how small it may be.

We do not for a moment believe in palliating evil. There is not much fear of that, unless it be the evil in ourselves, and then we are apt to be very sparing. But we are rather pressing the other side, for it is much overlooked.

A tradition comes down to us that once on the outskirts of Jerusalem lay a dead dog. A little knot of people were standing around it. One said, "Isn't he a miserable cur?" "Yes," replied another; "I would not even use his hide to wipe my sandals on." A third person passed by at the time, and hearing the conversation, said, "Don't you see what beautiful white teeth he has?" That is Jesus of Nazareth, they whispered, as the stranger went on his way. It is only a tradition, but the moral is a good one. If there was something beautiful in a dead dog, surely there is something far more so in one of the Lord's people. He can see it even if we cannot.

Let us ask Him to keep our eyes more open to those things worthy of praise in one another. He will do it by drawing us closer to Himself where He is. He will let us have a look at souls as it were through His eyes, and then whatsoever things are *true, noble, just, pure, lovely*, of good report, if there be *any* virtue, and if there be *any* praise, we shall be rejoiced to just THINK ON THESE THINGS. H. G.

DEPENDENCE.

“THERE is nothing in all this world more deeply blessed than to lead a life of habitual dependence upon God; to hang upon Him, moment by moment, to wait on Him and cling to Him for everything. To have all our springs in Him. It is the true secret of peace, and of holy independence of the creature. The soul that can really say, “*All* my springs are in Thee,” is lifted above all creature confidence, human hopes, and earthly expectations. It is not that God does not use the creature; but if we *lean* upon the creature instead of leaning upon Him, we shall very speedily get leanness and barrenness into our souls. There is a vast difference between God’s using the creature to bless us, and our leaning on the creature to the exclusion of Him. In the one case, we are blessed and He is glorified; in the other, we are disappointed and He is dishonoured.” C. H. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. G. T.—Colossians iii. 1.—In this epistle the Christian is viewed as dead and risen with Christ, and, as such, he is exhorted to set his mind on things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Baptism is indeed a figure of death, and some regard it also as a figure of resurrection. But it is open to doubt whether chapter ii. 12 really goes so far. Conceding that it is a figure of both, we must carefully remember that it is but a figure. Death and resurrection with Christ are great truths built into the soul by the Spirit of God, and not by the observance of any ordinance, though the ordinance may point to them.

H. T. H.—Romans x. 9.—It is quite true, as you say, that the blood of Jesus is the sole means of our justification before God, and the one who believes in Jesus is justified from all things. Of this there can be no doubt. Acts xiii. 38, 39 and Romans iii. 25, 26 are decisive. But we think you will find in the different passages which deal with the same subject, that stress is sometimes laid on one point and sometimes on another, according to the purpose immediately in view. In chapter iii. 25, 26, the Blood and the Lord Jesus Himself—these are the object of faith; while in chapter iv. 24 our faith is directed to the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. In chapter x., about which you write, much is made of the fact that *God* raised

Him up, and special importance is attached to the confession with the mouth of Jesus as Lord. These are not different ways of being saved, but the Holy Spirit, as we have said, is bringing into prominence that part of the truth most needed at the moment. Now in chapter x. the Apostle Paul has his own countrymen particularly before him, hence he insists on the necessity of confessing Jesus as Lord with the mouth—the very thing from which a Jew would naturally shrink. So to-day. If one believed the gospel, and yet held back from saying a word about it to anyone, the Holy Spirit, cognizant of this unworthy silence, would press upon the conscience the needs be of fearless confession with the mouth. Nor would the soul be at rest in the consciousness of present salvation till confession was made. Such are the ways of God. Should your mind not be clear, write again, and we promise an earlier answer than your present inquiry has received.

DESIROUS.—When the Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive for evermore and in heaven, is the Object of the heart, when we joy in Him and in His perfect love, when we desire above all things to grow in the knowledge of Him, then the things of earth lose their charm, and we judge them poor and insignificant and wholly unworthy of our pursuit. This is beautifully exemplified in Philippians iii., and this is life indeed. We thank God that your desires lie in that direction. They shall be abundantly satisfied, for He satisfieth the desire of every living thing. Whether your run on your cycle is incompatible with a life that has Christ as its one object, is not for us to say. We see

no reason why it should be, but different persons are differently affected by the same thing. A tender conscience is most precious, but a legal one has to be guarded against. Only take care that your cycle does not become your master. As a servant it has its uses, but if it encroaches on time that might be better spent, if it hinders your going to the meeting for prayer or for the study of the Word, if it leads you into company damaging to your soul, then *beware*.

R. W. writes to say that a brother in the Lord, known to him, "always prays within himself when he does not wish Satan to know, for if Satan hears he will always set himself to hinder." R. W. wants to know what we think about it. If there is the least weight in this argument then we had better never pray aloud at all. But Satan, though he be strong and crafty, is but a creature, and we are not aware that any scripture speaks of him as omnipresent, though we know he is the ruler of a vast system, having others subordinate to him, who under his direction may seek to carry out his nefarious designs wherever man is found. But his power is limited. For ourselves, we confess it never troubles us one bit whether Satan hears us when we pray or not. God is greater than the adversary. The Lord Jesus has triumphed over him, and under our feet shall he be bruised shortly. (Romans xvi. 10.)

In reference to R. W.'s query as to whether a Christian should insure his life as a provision for his family in the event of their surviving him, all we can say is, Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. To his own master he stands or

falls. We are not his judge, nor can we make our faith and practice a rule for another. If a husband and wife feel they can trust God for the future, and use the cost of the insurance premium in furthering the interests of Christ, happy are they! If others see and act otherwise, by all means let them do so. In either case the Lord may be before them, and at Christ's judgment seat they stand, not ours.

E. M. B.—We should be ever ready to do all the good we can, and thus follow the example of the Lord Jesus "who went about doing good." But concerts and bazaars are more than doubtful things, and we believe you were right in declining to promote either. Very often the most degrading expedients are resorted to in order to get money, and in every case it is the world that is sought to be pleased—that world which lieth in the wicked one—and Christians and worldlings join hands to accomplish what is called "a good end." All such proceedings seem to us dead against 2 Corinthians vi. 14–18. Suppose the help of a hospital were the object. Hospitals are great boons, and we may give to most of them in all good conscience and with a liberal hand. But then we do it individually, and act before God in the matter. Thus we preserve a conscience void of offence, which we could not do, speaking personally, were we to go in for concerts and bazaars. The more you keep free from all such entanglements the happier you will be. Be ready to do good unto all men, but shun the unequal yoke.

DOUBTING CASTLE.

MR. D. L. MOODY, in a recent paper in the *Boston Congregationalist*, tells us that in going from church to church all over the United States, he is "brought everywhere in contact with those who are reckoned, indeed, in the membership of some church; but they have no assurance of salvation." Whether those of whom Mr. Moody speaks are converted men or not is hard to say. For it is easy enough to be a member of a church (so-called) without knowing anything of the new birth or the forgiveness of sins. But this lamentable state of things is not confined to the United States of America. There are to be found everywhere numbers of converted souls who need deliverance from a state of doubt respecting their own salvation. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that so many of our religious guides declare that none of us can be sure about this very serious matter till we come to die—or after. One thing is certain—those who tell us so do not know that they themselves are saved. Very likely most of them are unconverted men, in which case of course they are not saved, and they think that everybody else is just the same. But what an

awful thing to be teachers of others and not saved ourselves!

We have before our mind's eye one who needs deliverance from this state of doubt. Depend upon it, dear friend, it is not the will of God that you should ever be uncertain as to your salvation. If I mistake not you feel pretty sure about it some days, and then you fall into darkness again and think yourself a great hypocrite, presumptuous, and self-deceived. Now there is a way out of that dark cell. It needs, however, on your side a simple, child-like faith that rests on the sure word of One who cannot lie. Apart from this there is no deliverance. In short, you need to know the gospel and *believe* it.

Ah! I see you look surprised, and you seriously assure me that you do believe the gospel, every word of it. No, dear friend, indeed you do not. You think you do, but you are grievously mistaken.

The gospel, or glad tidings—for such is the meaning of the word—is addressed to ruined men by the commandment of the everlasting God. It declares that God, against whom we have sinned, and to whom every one of us must give account, has Himself intervened on our behalf. It reveals the amazing fact that God is love, and points to the cross as the overwhelming proof of it. In virtue of that mighty sacrifice salvation is now preached to guilty sinners, not on condi-

tions hard to be fulfilled, but freely. As the air we breathe is free, as the rain from heaven is free, as the light of the sun is free, so is salvation free. It is a proffered gift, needing but the outstretched hand to take it and make it one's own. Only let a man stand in his place among those to whom the gospel is sent—the place of one utterly lost and undone—and let him believe the gospel, and he shall be saved then and there.

Nor need he or you remain in the least doubt about it. Read Acts xiii. 38, 39, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Here is a declaration of a glorious fact. But no fact, even if God were to write it across the face of the sky, would yield you the least relief if it be not received as a fact. Why should you remain a prisoner in Doubting Castle another hour, since the door of deliverance is open for you to pass out?

We might bring before you a hundred passages telling the same story, but we prefer to keep to this one. Read it again: “By Him all that believe ARE justified from all things.” We print the sixth word of that quotation in larger letters than the rest that it might strike your eye the more. Observe, the verb is in the present tense,

not the future. They ARE justified, not shall be. Here then is the statement of an actual fact, true at this moment. There can be no doubt or mistake about it, for it is clothed with all the authority of Holy Scripture, and it is in very truth the Word of God. If you turn from it and raise difficulties you will remain a prisoner in the gloomy cell of uncertainty by an act of your own unbelieving will. Be not so foolish, nor sin against God by calling Him a liar!

But you do not *feel*—ah, that mischievous word! or rather the mischievous use that is made of it. God speaks, and we cannot believe Him because of our not feeling as we should like. Alas! we treat God worse than we do our fellows. Suppose someone were ill in your house. The doctor tells you that he cannot say how it will go with the patient till the morrow, when the crisis will be reached. You anxiously wait for his coming in the morning, and as you let him out of the house you say, “Well, Doctor, what do you think?” “The crisis is past; he is better, and will soon be all right again,” says he. You unhesitatingly believe what the doctor tells you. You have confidence in his word, and a thousand happy feelings rush in and take possession of your heart. Cannot you show equal confidence in the plain and blessed words that our gracious God speaks? Is He to be less believed than poor, erring man?

THE LAND OF THE BLUE SKY ;

OR, DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN.

“O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—ROMANS vii. 24, 25.

WHEN the individual whose experience is so graphically described in Romans vii. exclaims, “O wretched man that I am !” he is not thinking so much of his sins as of his unhappy state. It is what he finds himself to be, rather than what he has done, that wrings from him this cry of anguish. How many earnest souls are passing through similar experiences. Earnest souls, I say ! some of whom think that so long as life lasts their cry for a deliverer must remain unanswered. But it is not so ; for Romans vi. and viii. speak of freedom—freedom from the law of sin and death.

We may settle it in our minds, then, that there is such a thing. But how to attain to it ? that is the question. Deliverance from the dominion of indwelling sin—that hateful principle of evil in our fallen nature which haughtily and mockingly asserts its sway in the face of frantic efforts to overcome it—this is what is wanted. No one knows the agony that results from these en-

deavours and defeats save the one who has experienced it ; for the soul keeps its distress to itself, and rarely speaks of it to another, and by a smooth exterior conceals the restless tossings that go on beneath the surface. Anyone can see that what we are now describing is something very different from the "life and peace" of Romans viii. When Stanley led his men across the dark continent of Africa, the road lay through a dense forest, the foliage of which completely hid the face of the sky. Long, weary months passed away ere the other side was reached ; but when at length they gained the open ground, and saw the blue heavens above their head and the golden sunshine streaming round them, they leaped and danced and shouted for joy. It is a similar transition when the soul passes from the bondage of Romans vii. into the freedom of chapter viii. Let us see, then, if we can discover the road that leads to the land of the blue sky—the land of light, sunshine, and of freedom.

There are four great experimental lessons in Romans vii. that must be learned before deliverance can be known.

1. In me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing. (*v.* 18.)

2. That I am utterly powerless either to reach the good the law requires, or to overcome the evil it forbids and which I hate. (*v.* 19.)

3. I learn to distinguish between my true self and sin that dwells in me. (*v.* 20.)

OR, DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN. 287

4. That deliverance must come from another, even Jesus Christ our Lord. (*v.* 25.)

Do not hastily conclude that you have learned even the first of these. It is often by a painful and humbling process that we are made to feel and own that there is no good in us as men in nature—not one atom. Mind you, we are not now speaking of what we have or have not done. As to that, the record may be good or bad enough. We speak of what *we are*, and experience leads to the conviction that in us, that is, in our flesh, there is no good whatever. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores” (Isaiah i.)—a gruesome picture!

When this is really learned we are never again disappointed or surprised at the evil we find in ourselves. We are past all that. It is true we often have to humble ourselves before God for allowing the evil to act; but that is quite another thing. A friend of ours was seeking to make this point plain, and used the following illustration. Suppose you have a man in your house whom you know to be a great thief. You go out one day and forget to lock up drawers and cupboards. On your return you find something gone. But you are neither surprised nor disappointed in the man, for you well knew his thievish propensities. You regret your want of

thought and watchfulness, no doubt; but you knew your man too well ever to expect him to be honest. So when we have learnt the incorrigible evil of "the flesh" we cease to look for any good from it, knowing that grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles.

The second lesson is only learnt after many hopeless struggles. Having been born again, we have a nature that loves the good and hates the evil. The law of God, which is holy, just, and good, is the standard we seek to reach. But the good it requires we find to be beyond us, and the evil it forbids we constantly do. Fresh resolutions follow each failure and fresh hopes. But these only lead to further mortifying disappointments, and we are made to feel that instead of our mastering "sin in the flesh" it masters us. We are in slavery, bound with intolerable chains, and every effort to shake ourselves free only makes it the more evident that we can never do so. *We have no strength.*

Here, reader, let me ask, Have you learnt these two lessons? Have you experimentally learnt them, so that deep down in your heart there is the conscious knowledge that in you—a child of Adam—good does not dwell? Pause, and ask yourself whether this is so. Do not answer hurriedly. And when satisfied as to that, ask the further question whether you are equally conscious that you have not, and never can have,

OR, DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN. 289

any strength at all to attain the good the holy law of God requires, or to keep yourself from every evil it forbids. Within and without bad, bad, bad, and strengthless into the bargain.

The third lesson is of a different sort. We learn to distinguish between our true selves and sin that dwells in us.

“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then *it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*” (vv. 15-17.)

“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, *it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*” (vv. 19-20.)

Thus twice over does the individual reach the same conclusion. Only let us carefully observe that the will, or the desire, is on the side of the good. Let that be carefully observed, I say. For, if not, a man may do evil with a high hand, and excuse himself by saying, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” The doctrine lends itself to no such wickedness. The help it offers is for those whose experiences it describes—souls that desire the good and hate the bad. These are called

upon to see that the true I is not the one that always inclines to evil. The true I is the one who delights in the law of God after the inward man. It hates the old, and fain would be free from it altogether.

The fourth lesson indicates the quarter from whence deliverance comes. Having learnt experimentally that the flesh—the old I—is only evil, that though born again, and having desires that spring from the new nature, there is an utter lack of power to fulfil them according to the perfection the law requires, we are led to see that the deliverance for which in our distress we cry is from Another, even Jesus Christ our Lord. *How* the deliverance is effected may not yet be seen, but it is certain that we no longer expect it from ourselves. This in itself is great gain. The soul having reached this stage is now ready to listen to another Voice. What, then, does that Voice say ?

1. That our sins shall never be imputed to us. They are forgiven, covered, hid from sight, buried at the bottom of the sea. Knowing this, we have peace with God, founded on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, we stand now in the favour of God, whose smile ever rests upon us, and we rejoice in hope of His glory. (Romans iv. 6, 8 ; v. 1, 2.)

2. That “sin in the flesh”—the very thing which caused such deep distress in chapter vii.—

OR, DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN. 291

has been condemned in the cross of Christ. Because it has been condemned and set aside there, the Christian is entitled to say, "*It is no more I.*" (Romans viii. 3.)

3. That we have died with Christ, and thus our life's history as of Adam's line has come to an end. In His death we have died to sin and the law in the sight of God, and are privileged, yea, are always bound to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans vi. 8-11.)

4. That we are not under law, but under grace. Law takes cognizance of every shortcoming and every deviation from the straight line, and fastens it as guilt upon the conscience. "*Do this and live*" is what the law says, and it curses if we come short of the doing of it. Not so grace. It recognizes all the evil, teaches us to abhor it, but imputes nothing. It superabounds over all our sin. Not at the expense of righteousness, but in virtue of it, of which the cross is witness. (Romans vi. 14; v. 21.)

5. That the Holy Spirit is given to the believer, so that he is no longer "in the flesh, but in the Spirit," even as he is no longer in Adam but "in Christ." And the Spirit is power, so that in walking after the Spirit the righteousness of the law, which the man in Romans vii. strove in vain to reach, is now fulfilled in him. Debtors to the flesh we no longer are, and we may

now, in the power which the Spirit gives, mortify the deeds of the body, and thus live, and live to God.

How easy it is for us to write all this and for the reader to read it. But to know these things as learnt in the school of God—this is what really profits.

And when thus learnt, and the soul is free from the bondage of Romans vii., it must not be thought that there will be no conflict afterwards. The flesh is ever antagonistic to the Spirit, as the Spirit is, and must be, to the flesh. Two armies are in the field. They are not always engaged in fierce fighting, but they are antagonists and are ever on the watch. So “the flesh” is in the Christian, though he be delivered from its dominion. Therefore he needs to watch and pray; and if he yields himself to the Spirit, and walks in those things to which the Spirit leads, he will not fulfil the desires of the flesh. On the contrary, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost shall be his happy portion. May God, in His great grace, lead us into the land of the blue sky, if not there already.

“FOR me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
 And I have died with Thee;
 Thou’rt risen: my bands are all untied;
 And now Thou liv’st in me.
 The Father’s face of radiant grace
 Shines now in light on me.”

SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

THERE are but few subjects to which so much attention has been called of late as that of sanctification. It is important, therefore, that its proper bearing should be seen.

It is a very common thing to hear people speak of waiting for, or of their having obtained, the "second blessing." The phrase may be well meant, but it is quite foreign to the language of Scripture. If by the second blessing people mean deliverance from the state of legal bondage described in Romans vii., it is all right; but let it be understood that such experience as the apostle describes there is not Christian experience, though it be the experience of many Christians. No person is properly in the experience of Christianity until Romans viii. is reached: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Instead of the flesh being the source or spring of thought and activity, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the new source and spring of my desires and activities.

Others again speak of having been purified from the last remains of sin, and therefore have obtained what is called the victory over evil. Such boast that they have not sinned for so long

294 SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

a time. This only shows to a truly spiritual mind that they who talk thus have but a feeble sense of what sin really is in God's sight.

Victory over sin as an indwelling power every believer ought to have, and will if he walk in the Spirit; but these profess to be clear of the presence of sin, and therefore claim to be wholly sanctified. They admit that at times they have evil thoughts, but these, they say, do not arise from within, but are rather the suggestions of an enemy from without.

No one who has ever learned himself in the presence of God would dare to make such statements. "The thought of foolishness is sin." "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Every thought that is not in union with the holy mind of God is sin. It is sinful to think independently of God.

There has been but One on earth whose every thought was in perfect communion with the mind of God—the Lord Himself. He was absolutely without sin, though tempted in all points like as we are, *sin apart*. He glorified God at all costs, and at the end of His pathway said what none other could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." In Him there was no proclivity to sin. He could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath *nothing in Me*." Every sugges-

SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS. 295

tion of evil was not only repugnant to, but was instantly repudiated by His holy mind. Just in the measure we are formed after Him by the Holy Ghost who dwells within us we shall be like Him.

That a very great deal of unrest of soul exists amongst believers generally no one with spiritual discernment can fail to see. The reason is that they are not really established in the simple elements of Christianity. Hence so few grow up to the stature of full-grown men in Christ. The majority seem to rest satisfied with simply knowing that their sins are forgiven, and so remain like the Corinthians, of whom Paul says, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

It is helpful and important to see that sanctification is presented in Scripture in three different aspects—Subjectively, Positionally, and Practically.

Subjective sanctification refers to the work of the Spirit of God in us, whereby we are marked out for God, and without which we could not see God's kingdom or enjoy divine things. Positional sanctification has reference to the work of Christ for us, by which we are cleared of all our guilt, and brought to God to enjoy all the blessedness into which Christ has entered as Man before God. Practical, or progressive, sanctification has reference to our growth and progress, and to the

296 SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

manner in which we conduct ourselves for Christ here.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT.

Man in his natural state is totally unfit for God's presence. The best specimen that nature can produce is as unfit for His presence as the worst profligate that ever lived. Both are alike "flesh." "The carnal mind is *enmity* [not simply an enemy] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii.) So that if even one right thought of God is to be produced in the soul of man he must be born anew (which is a completely new beginning in his history), as the Lord said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.)

The new birth is clearly a divine work in us. What a radical change it produces in the soul and in a person's thoughts altogether! We begin to have a sense of our sinfulness in God's sight, resulting in deep misery. This is both wholesome and necessary, however painful. Repentance toward God is wrought in us, which is always accompanied by deep sorrow for the past, and a sense of unfitness for God's presence.

SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS. 297

New birth of itself does not bring the soul into peace. Something more is needed if man is to be brought into peace and liberty. The blessed Son of God must die to remove the judgment that rested upon us. Sin must be dealt with, that God might be free in righteousness to bless us.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE WORK OF CHRIST.

In Hebrews x. the work of Christ is contrasted with the work of the priests under the old economy. In verses 11-18 it says, "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

The great contrast is very plain. The sanctuary was divided into the holy and the most holy places. The high priest entered into the most holy place only once every year, but not without

298 SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people. In the holy place the priests, the sons of Aaron, stood daily (they never sat down) repeating the same sacrifices, which never took away sins, but rather brought sins to remembrance. Under such a system, therefore, a purged conscience purified from the sense of guilt was a thing entirely unknown.

Now the believer in Christ has no more conscience of sins. His conscience is cleared from all sense of guilt, since by Christ's one offering his sins have all been put away from before God for ever. He, having finished the work of purification, has sat down on the right hand of God, which is the clear proof that His work is done, and done, be it said, to God's eternal satisfaction. There is consequently no more offering for sin. He will never die again. His blood is ever before God in all its own preciousness and infinite value, by virtue of which we who believe in Him are righteously and eternally forgiven and accepted before God.

The precious blood of Christ enables the believer to stand in the light of divine holiness without fear. What a title we have, and what liberty of approach into God's presence! "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off *are made nigh* by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition

SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS. 299

between us [Jew and Gentile]; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments . . . for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace. . . . For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father . . . in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." (Eph. ii. 13-15, 18; iii. 12.)

Our position before God in Christ never can be improved nor altered. We may not walk according to it, but that is another matter. The Corinthians did not walk well, and yet Paul did not unchristianize them. He addressed them as *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, though their ways were very unsanctified. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but *ye are sanctified*, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) At the same time he rebukes them most sharply for their carnality.

It may be thought that if our position is unalterable and not dependent upon our walk, it will lead to laxity or antinomianism. But no, it leads to the very opposite, when rightly understood and experimentally entered into. A person cannot be expected to fulfil the duties of a high position until placed in it. A prince is expected to walk according to the position in which the government of God has set him. If he fails to do so, the greater the shame upon him; but his

300 SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

failure does not change the relationship or dethrone him from his high position.

Perfect peace in God's presence cannot be known until we see where the work of Christ has set us. Every believer who is not in the liberty of accomplished redemption will be found either sanctimonious or legal. Sanctimonious people affect to be what they are not up to in their souls with God. A legal person is one who is under law and expecting something good from the flesh, and hence in total bondage, because the utter weakness and badness of the flesh has not been learnt. Such are not in the liberty of Christianity. They do not see that our history as of Adam is closed, and a new history begun in Christ risen from the dead and glorified. When the restless soul sees for the first time that everything which troubles him *internally* has been condemned and put away from God's sight, and that He expects nothing from man, because He has found all His satisfaction in Christ in glory, what peace and rest it gives, and what joy fills the heart! How it sets the soul at liberty as nothing else can! Christ is everything before God, and *ye are complete* in Him.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE TRUTH.

But a person might say, If this is so, where does the practical side come in, and where is there any room for progress? In John xvii. the Lord

SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS. 301

Jesus says to the Father, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." And adds, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

In these verses the Lord distinctly recognizes the fact that we are in the midst of a defiling world, and need constantly to be kept from the evil in it. He has gone up to heaven *for our sakes*. He has won that place for us. We belong to it, though we are not actually there yet. Our separation from this world must be according to what suits that heavenly position. The truth, when ministered to us by the Spirit, forms us according to what He is there, and leads us to judge all that is inconsistent with it in our walk and ways. His present ministry in heaven for us is all to this end. So Paul says, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. v.)

This does not mean that the old man is renewed or made better, as some suppose. In no wise. "Our old man IS CRUCIFIED with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) Sanctification is not an improvement of the old man: it is the growth and spiritual development of the

302 SANCTIFICATION IN THREE ASPECTS.

new man which is formed in the believer. We are regarded as having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new man, and hence should make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Upon believing the gospel of our salvation we receive the Holy Spirit. He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He brings to us heavenly joy. He gives us power to stand for Christ in testimony against the world. He is our only power for such service as will glorify God. He is the spring and power of all acceptable worship. If we walk in the Spirit He will enable us to rise superior to the evil both in ourselves and around us; but if we fail to do so, as the Corinthians did, the flesh will gain the upper hand, and our walk and testimony will be characterized by the greatest weakness, if not by complete failure. The Holy Spirit will be grieved, and instead of being in us as a comforting Spirit He will have to rebuke us for our fleshly ways.

May the Lord use what has been said for the real help, and at the same time for the deeper exercise, of both reader and writer; for "this is the will of God, even our sanctification." May we seek to be more lowly and more holy, and thus be in testimony for Christ here.

P. W.

GOD LOVED AND GAVE.

JOHN iii. 16.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON said—when he had grown old in the science of which he was so great a master—“I feel that I am like a little child playing with pebbles on the shores of a mighty ocean.”

This is the feeling that one has in attempting to speak or write upon John iii. 16. Like the mighty ocean, there are depths in it beyond all fathoming. Yet, thank God, we need not wait until we can fathom, or fully understand, before we believe and enjoy what He reveals. God has said it: that is enough for faith.

A little child was once asked what faith was. She answered, “It is believing what God says and asking no questions.”

God loved the world.

It will be well for a moment to inquire the condition of the world that God loved.

It was not an innocent, or a righteous, or holy world that He loved, but a world of sinners, guilty, rebellious, lost, and lying in the arms of the wicked one; a world which had renounced its allegiance to God and submitted itself to Satan, the great foe of God and man.

Under the sentence of death and judgment it lay because of sin, in danger of perishing for ever.

“God so loved the world.”

And why did He *so* love the world? What was the motive?

In man there was only wretchedness and woe. Alienated from the life of God, dead in sin, boasting of liberty while he was the veritable slave of Satan, and “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

The motive was in God Himself, for “God is love.” It is His nature; the essence of His glorious being. He loves because He is love, and a poor lost world, full of the misery of sin, becomes the object of His compassion.

It does not say that God so loved the elect, but God so loved the *world*—a world of sinners lost.

The sun that shines, the rain that falls, and the air we breathe, are for all alike; so is it with the love of God. Its beams fall upon a lost and ruined world. It comes in all its refreshing power upon a world parched and dried. It gushes forth from the mighty fountain of the heart of God, and is wide enough and deep enough to embrace all mankind.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”

He loved, not *we*.

He gave, not *we*.

We hated, but *He* so loved and gave.

He gave His only begotten Son.

Infinite love! Infinite gift!

In this way only could His love be adequately expressed, or find a righteous channel in which to flow. For "love is of God," and "God is light," as well as love.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.)

God in love took knowledge of our lost and guilty estate.

If He would save us He must furnish Himself with a righteous title for so doing.

How was this done, so that God's holiness might remain unsullied, and His nature, character, and attributes be kept in perfect harmony?

The answer is found in the death of God's Son. God's only begotten Son died as a sacrifice for sin; His precious blood was shed to meet the just claims of God and the need of ruined man. Thus it was that grace found a righteous channel wherein to flow, and grace now reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Who can fathom the awful abyss of man's sin and guilt? What dark and dreadful depths—depths which none but God can fathom.

Man was doomed to perish as far as he himself was concerned, for he could not save himself, even if he had desired; and, alas! he did not

so desire. If God had not intervened, his doom was irrevocably fixed.

Who can tell what it is to perish? Who can describe the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; the undying worm, the quenchless fire, the blackness of darkness for ever? These tell the awful tale of man's woe, and the portion of the lost in hell.

To perish for ever!

Oh, reader, think of that! If unsaved, flee, oh flee, from the wrath to come! If saved, awake to your privilege and responsibility to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the lost!

To save us from perishing, the Son of God gave Himself up to the unspeakable horrors of the death of the cross.

Man's sins and God's judgment on the sinner can only be measured by the cry of the forsaken Saviour on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" There we learn what the judgment of God on man for sin was, for such an infinite sacrifice was needed to deliver therefrom.

"O groundless deep! O love beyond degree!
The Offended dies to set the offender free!"

If God only could fathom the abyss of man's guilt, He only could fathom the depths of suffering endured by the Son of God on the cross to save us therefrom.

We were in death, but God would have us to

live. He would give us life beyond the reach of death, even eternal life in His own Son.

For us faith is the way.

“That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

God’s side is, that He loved and gave; ours is, to believe and live.

How all-embracing, too! *Whosoever.* Blessed word, which finds its application in every sin-burdened soul that flees to Christ, and trusts Him for life and salvation.

If God loved a world of sinners lost, and so loved that He gave His only begotten Son, He would have all to come in for the benefits of it. Christ died for all. God is a Saviour-God, “who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.” A provision has been made for all; “for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all.” (1 Tim. ii. 3–6.)

As another has said, *“An available Sacrifice for whosoever will.”*

Why perish when such is the case? Why be lost for ever when such a provision has been made?

Oh, could God have done more?

Beloved reader, are you to perish in hell for ever because of unbelief? or are you to be the happy possessor of eternal life through faith in Christ?

Oh, think of the unspeakable bliss that is wrapped up in those words, "shall not perish, but have eternal life."

Once more let it be sounded forth: "*That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*"

Let that word "whosoever" encircle you, dear reader. Be the happy possessor of eternal life, and all the infinite blessedness those words involve.

Then let praise unceasing flow up from your ransomed soul to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you.

"*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*" (John iii. 36.)

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ENQUIRER.—Matthew xii. 31.—Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost consists in imputing the miracles wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ to Satanic agency. The context shows this, for we must not separate the verse from those verses which immediately precede it. Let the whole passage be read from verse 22, and the meaning will be plain. Many sincere souls needlessly torture themselves with the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin. But those who tremble lest they should have been guilty of it are among the last persons upon earth to do anything of the kind. An article on this subject will be found in our August number of 1891, which we think is still to be had of our publisher.

THINGS THAT DIFFER.

PEACE with God and that peace which flows from communion with God are two very distinct things, as you, good reader, possibly know. But everyone has not that knowledge. Instead of being carefully distinguished, they are constantly confounded, and many a timid heart is thereby thrown into a state of perplexity and doubt.

It will assist our understanding if we remember that *peace with God* is connected with our clearance from sins and guilt. The only passage where the phrase is found is Romans v. 1, and anyone who reads the preceding context from chapter iii. 9 will see that what we say is true.

Now the awakened sinner is rightly troubled about his sins. He is conscious of being exposed in the sight of God in his true colours, and is ill at ease. Should he seek relief, as many do, in trying to lead a better life, he soon finds out that it is of no avail. He cannot conceal his moral nakedness beneath the fig-leaf covering sewn together with such anxious care. Great is his distress. At last, baffled, disappointed, and ready to give himself up for lost, he listens to the voice of God in the gospel. His eyes are directed to One "who His own self bare our sins in His own

body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) He sees that Christ died for the ungodly—for him, indeed. This is good news. He believes it, rejoices in it, and his soul is at rest. But this is not all. He beholds Christ risen from the dead, and goes on to understand that the place of favour and acceptance in which the risen Christ is set is the place He has won for us. He knows that no one can lay anything to his charge, since it is God who justifies; no one can condemn, since "Christ died, yea, rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." To crown it all, he is persuaded that nothing shall ever separate him from the love of Christ—nothing is able to separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans viii. 33-39.)

But every new-born soul has not learned all this, though it be revealed in the Scriptures for his faith to apprehend. Hence, when failure comes in, through unwatchfulness or some kindred cause, and he is cast down and distressed in mind on account of it, he is apt to think that *peace with God* is gone, if, indeed, he ever enjoyed it. "How," he asks, "can I have peace with God while my mind is so unhappy by reason of my sin?"

But is he not mixing up the two things of which we have spoken in the first few lines of the present paper? *Peace with God* has its basis,

most assuredly, in the blood of the cross. (Colossians i. 20.) There, and there only, is its foundation laid. In that sacrificial death he had no part save that which his sins gave him. And how many of his sins were imputed to the gracious Saviour when He went to the cross? All of them, we may surely say. Then, if *all* his sins were there, this sin into which he has fallen must have been among them; this sin which has darkened his soul and robbed him of joy and peace, *for this very sin* the Saviour suffered and died. Thus every question that could be ever raised in relation to his sins has been fully, completely, everlastingly settled by the blood of Christ's cross. Never can they be brought against him as guilt, for the eye of God rests, not on his sins, but on the precious blood that has put them for ever away.

Neither communion with God, nor the lack of it, serious as it is in its place, must be mixed up with the peace of which we have spoken. Our failures necessarily make us unhappy. We have grieved the Holy Spirit of God, whereby the believer is sealed, and our enjoyment of God's presence is gone. But the Holy Spirit, whom we have grieved, and who will graciously work in our souls to lead us again into the enjoyment of that which we have lost, would never lead us to doubt the abiding efficacy of the blood of the cross, and that blood is the foundation of peace.

Were our daily life as free from sin as that of the angels in heaven, it would add nothing to the value of the atoning blood. On the other hand, were our life the faultiest any Christian ever led, it would not take away from its worth. Knowing this, we never doubt our acceptance, much as we may mourn over our sins and failures as God's children.

We beseech you, reader, to remember that the Holy Spirit will never fill your mind with doubt as to your acceptance with God. We may be allowed to feel the bitterness of sin, even as the apostle Peter did when he wept bitterly for having denied his Lord. But we shall judge and humble ourselves before God all the more deeply if we hold fast the fact that the place where grace has set us is always ours. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. ii.) Nothing indeed is more fragile than the link of communion, and nothing is more lasting than the tie of relationship. The former may easily be broken, while the latter can never be dissolved. It is the confounding of these things that leads to so much spiritual distress, and hinders the soul's growth in the divine life.

THE HOLIEST.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”—HEBREWS x. 19-22.

IN the Jewish system of worship connected with the tabernacle, which the apostle refers to in Heb. ix. 1-10, God appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat within the veil which separated the holy from the most holy place. (Lev. xvi. 2.) The high priest alone was privileged to go into the holiest. This he did once a year (*v.* 34) with blood, which he sprinkled on the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat. (*v.* 15.) The priests served in the holy place. (Heb. ix. 7.) There was no access for them into the holiest. They never sat down, for their work was never finished, and sin was continually brought to remembrance in the sacrifices which were continually offered. What characterized the system was an unrent veil, and neither access to God nor rest for those who did the service.

Christianity is the contrast to all this. The Son Himself undertook to do the will of God. He took the body prepared for Him, and as man,

though eternally divine, He offered Himself by the Eternal Spirit spotless to God. The Offerer and the offering were accepted by God. Christ accomplished the will of God, finished His work, and obtained an eternal redemption. By that will "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Having offered one sacrifice for sins, He "for ever sat down on the right hand of God. . . For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Nothing remains to be done, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. All our sins are put away, to be remembered no more, and there never can be any imputation of sin to us who are sanctified and fitted for God's presence by Christ's accomplished work.

The veil of the tabernacle was a type of Christ's flesh (Exodus xxvi. 31), and in Judaism, as we have seen, God could not come out and reveal Himself, and the worshippers could not enter into the sanctuary of His presence.

Now Jesus was here in this world in flesh and blood, in holy humanity, beneath which His Godhead glory was hidden, except to the opened eye of faith. But He was alone in that state, and there could be no association between holy and unholy humanity. The incarnation could not make any link between a holy God and sinful man, and Christ became man 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. If the corn of wheat had not fallen into the ground and died, Christ must have abode alone; but, blessed be His name! He loved poor sinners, He loved us, He came to die in obedience to His Father's will, to be *alone* with our sins on the cross, and *alone* under the judgment of a holy God, that He might associate us with Himself in a new place beyond death, in resurrection life and glory.

What fallen man was in nature and will came out at the cross. He was at enmity with, and would not be reconciled to God. The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory. Then God condemned sin in the flesh. All that fallen man was in sin and enmity against God, and all that sin was in God's account, came under His eye when Christ was made sin and bore the judgment of God. Then the moral history of the first man, as seen in his descendants, came to an end in judgment. Man could no longer be under trial and probation after having rejected and crucified the Son of God.

The veil, as we see from Heb. x. 20, was a type of Christ's holy humanity, and the rending of the veil of the temple when Jesus died was typical of His death, not only as putting away sin, but as ending for ever before God the status of man in flesh and blood on earth. "The days

of His flesh" on earth ended for our blessed Lord in death, and He lives in the resurrection state, to return no more to the condition in flesh and blood into which He came by incarnation. Not that He ever gives up manhood, for He lives again as man in the glorified state in the power of life to which death could have nothing to say.

He was declared Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead; but that condition or order of life characterized by "flesh and blood," in which He was made sin for us, closed in His death, and never can be revived. His death thus ends for us our status of Adam's race.

We find the same truth set forth in 2 Cor. v. The apostle proves that all were dead by the fact that One died for all, and then adds that "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Having touched the subject of life in resurrection, he refers to the end of man after the flesh, and says, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

It is of all importance to understand this

aspect of the truth about Christ's death, for it shows that the rending of the veil not only signified the abolition of sin as before God, but the complete condemnation of man and close of his moral history. Not only so, but "the blood of Jesus" so infinitely glorified God in His nature and attributes, that He *now* can come out and fully reveal Himself in Him who shed it and who lives again. On the other hand, Jesus, who glorified God and obtained an eternal redemption, enters, after death, God's presence as man, carrying there in His own person all the value of the offering which so infinitely glorified God, put sin out of His sight, and is the ground for the putting it away out of the universe.

"The blood of Jesus" consequently gives to those who are sanctified by Christ's work boldness for entering the holiest, or the presence of God in the sanctuary, into which Christ has Himself entered. There is nothing now to bar our access, the veil being gone. But the blood must be connected with Him who shed it, in whom believers have life after a new order, and with whom, as the sanctified, they are associated. "For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Believers therefore occupy in the Epistle to the Hebrews the place held by Aaron's house or Aaron's sons.

In contrast to the Jewish system, which never

opened a way into God's presence, a new and living way has now been dedicated for us into the holiest by Christ Himself, who has entered in, and abides there for ever. The way is "*new*," because never before revealed; "*living*," because it is dedicated for us by the One who lives "a Great Priest over the house of God"; and "*through the veil*, that is to say, His flesh," because His death put away sin from before God, set aside and closed the state in which it was not possible for man to approach God, and be at home in His presence. The holiest and the holy place are now one, not a material place as of old, but the presence of God. To assert that the veil exists in Christianity is to deny Christ's death. Another has justly remarked, "For us the veil is rent, and that which rent the veil in order to admit us has likewise put away the sin which shut us out." This took place at the cross, but whilst the Jewish order remained souls remained practically in Judaism. Now that Judaism has passed away, and the full light of the Epistle to the Hebrews reveals the new and living way, how sorrowful and humbling it is to see souls still practically in the distance of Judaism, with but little knowledge of the consequences of the death of Christ or of their privileges, as a holy priesthood, to *draw near* and offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The moral force of the holiest is altogether lost, and the corruption of Christianity is shown by a return to material things. Everything of this nature answers in character to "the camp," and at the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the apostle exhorting the Hebrew Christians to go forth to Christ "without the camp, bearing His reproach." This is surely a privilege in a day like this, when a form of godliness with a denial of the power thereof is seen on every hand. But it is *His* reproach, and unless His rejection by man and the world is seen there will be no separation from that which links together the Church and the world, and denies the priestly character of God's saints and their liberty to draw nigh as worshippers into His holy presence.

The consecration of the priests in Exodus xxix. is referred to in Hebrews x. 22. The washing of Exodus xxix. was never repeated, and when Peter said to the Lord, as we find in John xiii., "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," the same truth comes before us in the Lord's answer. The one who is born again is "clean"—possessor of a holy nature—and he only needs to wash his feet, *i.e.*, the application of the Word, to cleanse him from any defilement which he may contract in passing through a world of sin. For the Christian there is neither re-application of the blood nor a repetition of the washing, though there is the washing of the feet

when defiled, and the practical cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and the perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.

Believers, therefore, are privileged to draw nigh in the full value of the death of Christ in its two aspects of expiation and cleansing, being purged from their guilt, perfected as to their consciences in the sense that there never can be for them any imputation of guilt, and purified by death from the old man; knowing too that the state and history of man in flesh was brought to an end at the cross. Thus all that is morally unsuited to the sanctuary of God is excluded.

May the Lord's beloved people be brought into the full apprehension of all that is comprised in the term "the holiest," and of the value of the death of Christ, by means of which we enter. The Spirit of God, I need hardly say, is the power by which we worship, but He does not occupy us with Himself. The Lord Jesus is the Minister of the true sanctuary, a great Priest over the house of God, and the One who Himself tunes our hearts aright, that we may worship God our Father in spirit and in truth, saying, "In the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto Thee."

J. S. O.

RULING OR GRINDING.

GOD'S ways may and do change, His principles never. It is by reading the Bible as a book of principles rather than of maxims that real intelligence is gained in the Word.

It is true that in the disposition of God's ways under the Jewish economy earthly prosperity attended those who lived a godly life in the fear of Jehovah. It is likewise true that those in *this* dispensation "that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

It is further true, as an abiding principle, apart from change of dispensation, that "bodily exercise is profitable for a little,* but piety is profitable for everything, having promise of life, of the present one, and of that to come." (N.T.) In other words, a godly life, apart from the testimony it brings with it—a testimony peculiar to this dispensation—is profitable, not merely in a future and spiritual sense, but in a present and temporal one.

For instance, the high principles and sterling integrity of the Quakers led to their prosperity in business. God blessed providentially their regard for their servants and surroundings. Now

* "That is, 'some small things,' rather than 'a little time.' It is in evident contrast with everything." (Note, N.T.)

a man who is converted in high life may, through his conversion, lose caste, position, and wealth; but a man converted in low life almost invariably gains.

In the same way godliness leads to health of mind and body. Timothy—with his weak stomach and “often infirmities,” abstemious almost to the point of legality—was likely to live longer than a besotted drunkard. The reader can pursue this line of thought almost *ad infinitum*.

It was so in the case of the blessed Lord. “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

So far as Scripture throws any light upon the early life of our Lord, we do not find the least sign of opposition on the part of men, or disfavour in the eyes of the world. Not till He began His public ministry do we read of opposition and hatred. It began at the start—“His own received Him not”; and ended in the wild cry of fanaticism, “We will not have this Man. . . . Away with Him,” and in a malefactor’s death.

His early life was divinely simple in its graciousness and naturalness. God and man marked with delight His physical and intellectual growth as a man. He “increased in wisdom and stature,” and favour rested upon Him from the throne of God to the village of Nazareth.

These remarks make plain, we trust, the two sides of Christian life—first, that of godly living,

which causes men to admire and trust, and by its very nature brings temporal as well as spiritual blessings in its wake; secondly, that of our testimony, which brings opposition deep and fierce in proportion to its purity and power.

Some may say, "What about that verse, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' "? Kindly mark the three characteristic and pivotal words in that verse—"IN CHRIST JESUS." That plainly involves in its very nature a testimony, even in life, that goes beyond the godliness of a Jew, and brings in our distinctive place as separate from the world, its rudiments, maxims, and ways, and leading to possible conflict at every turn.

A saint of God, with a bad report as to his *ways* from those without, has grave reason to judge himself. On the other hand, one whose *testimony* meets with favour from the world on all sides has likewise grave reason to judge himself. The salt of testimony is wanting—the distinctive *present* testimony.

Now let me point out that a saint's evil ways or unfaithfulness may bring him governmentally into the very same position that another may be brought into by his faithfulness to God.

Take a scriptural illustration, which suggests the title of this paper—Joseph *ruling* in prison, Samson *grinding* in prison. These two events

contain this very lesson for us in a very practical way.

Joseph is a young man, slave to a captain of Pharaoh's guard, whose wife again and again tempts him to sin. It is a fearful temptation; but he resists, and through faithfulness to God in the matter is thrust into prison. There God gives him favour in the eyes of all, and he rules as absolutely as the very governor of the gaol, save that he himself is a prisoner.

Poor Samson! a Nazarite! one whom God used mightily against his people's foes. How he is fallen! He lusts after a woman. No such motive actuates him as that which led him down to Timnath. Then he sought an occasion against the Philistines, but now his *heart* is ensnared, and with his secret—the secret of his Nazariteship—wormed out of him by her, he is captured by his foes, and those very eyes which lusted after a Philistine are put out by the Philistines. Weakened, disgraced, and cast into prison, he, who once was a terror to the Philistines, is seen grinding corn for them.

Joseph and Samson are both in the same circumstances—in prison; but how different—one ruling, the other grinding!

The thing that tempted them is what tempts us—not the actual gross sin, necessarily, but what it symbolizes, viz., worldliness. The New Testament distinctly and repeatedly makes use of the

fleshly sins of the Old Testament to warn us to steer clear of the *world* in all its ways, thereby showing very clearly how awful in God's sight is the giving up on the part of His people of their unworldly and heavenly character. Take one proof text: "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?*"

And remember, God may put one who shuns the distinctive testimony that belongs to a Christian into the very position that he seeks to avoid by his culpable cowardice. He might have got into it by his faithfulness as Joseph did, in which case God would have supported and honoured him. Instead of which, through his unfaithfulness he may have to learn in shame with Samson the lessons which God, who loves His own, must teach them.

There is no shadow of doubt about it that the roughest road to heaven is the easiest and the happiest if it be the way of God's appointing. Paul and Silas in the inner prison were happier by far than the man who had the key of their cell in his pocket.

No one passed through this world so supremely happy as the Man of Sorrows. Rejected *here*, He dwelt in *the Father's bosom*. What a place of untold joy!

And if our distinctive testimony—unworldliness and the like—bring upon us loss both socially

and in business, it is real and substantial and *actual* gain both now and for ever. A man who is wealthy and miserable is not so well off as the one who is poor and happy.

The blessed Lord's position before Pilate was immeasurably superior to that of the Roman judge.

Paul before Agrippa with chains on his wrists and ankles was immeasurably superior to the Jewish king.

The world did not think the Christians worthy to live any more than it did their Lord when they crucified Him ; but the Holy Ghost puts a true value upon them, as He did of some in earlier days, "*Of whom the world was not worthy.*" (Hebrews xi. 38.)

May God graciously enable us to live a pure and gracious life before the eyes of the world, and not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord with its reproach and contumely—on the one hand to be in favour, and on the other in daily reproach.

And then, when the day of power and glory and manifestation arrives, we shall reign with Him. May God grant it.

"Who suffer with Thee, Lord, below,
Shall reign with Thee above :
Then let it be our joy to know
This way of peace and love."

A. J. P.

“THAT DAY.”

IN 1 Timothy the Church of God is viewed as in order, and the instructions from the apostle Paul are suited to that state. In 2 Timothy the Church is regarded—as it *now* is—in ruins. We have many encouragements, as might be expected; for when love to the Lord gets cold, and hence to one another, and all seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ, one may get discouragement where it is least looked for.

Of all workers, next to our blessed Pattern, the Lord Jesus—who did always those things that pleased the Father, was among His disciples as one that served, and finally gave His life a ransom for many—comes that earnest follower Paul.

The believers throughout Asia, where his labours had been so greatly owned, had *all* forsaken him—not *one* stood by him. Well might his heart have sunk! Yet, no; he perhaps remembered what was recorded of the perfect Servant: “He shall not fail [faint], nor be discouraged.”

The words “That day,” used by him three times in different connections, may not be without cheer to some dear reader who seeks, in however feeble a measure, to serve Him—content with His approval.

The following are the passages :

1. He lets us into the secret of his own constancy.

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against *that day*." (i. 12.)

2. He stimulates Onesiphorus, whose service might be called small if compared with the apostle's. Yet doubtless Onesiphorus acted in the spirit of our Lord's words when He said, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me."

"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in *that day*: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well." (i. 16-18.)

3. He speaks of the result of his own faithfulness, and adds a word which includes believers of the present time.

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

The place of the believer in heaven depends entirely on the Saviour's work on the cross; but his place in the kingdom depends on the way he has redeemed the time on earth. Let us never forget it,

P. R.

TO-DAY !

TO-DAY ! it may be even so ;
 Ere fades away the light,
 Earth's grief-dimmed scenes may be exchanged
 For scenes of glory bright.
 Then let this gladsome prospect cheer
 Our hearts upon the way:
 The Lord hath promised soon to come,
 And He *may* come—to-day.

To-day ! oh, let the watchword ring
 And echo through the soul,
 That when He comes, our Saviour-Lord,
 To call the muster-roll,
 We may be waiting—all attent,
 His summons to obey,
 To be with Him 'mid endless joys,
 E'en though He come—to-day.

To-day ! and shall we hesitate
 Now to confess His name ?
 Refuse to bear, for Jesus' sake,
 The world's contempt and shame ?
 No ; surely would we rather be
 Seeking, without delay,
 To bring some wand'rer home to Him,
 For He *may* come—to-day.

To-day ! then let us not be found
 Courting this world's vain smile.
 Lord Jesus, keep us true to Thee
 During the "little while."
 Oh, suffer not our foolish hearts
 Away from Thee to stray,
 So that we may not be surprised
 If thou shouldst come—to-day.

M,

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LERWICK.—We know of no scripture that explicitly directs us to meet together weekly to study the Word of God. Anyone seriously demanding a specific passage for such a practice must be in a singular state of mind. Surely, if we love God's Word, we shall be glad of every opportunity to study it in company with others, and in doing so, to seek our own edification as well as theirs. But such meetings are not meetings of the assembly as such, even though everyone of the assembly were present.

There are no meetings more edifying in their way than Bible-readings, only they must be conducted in the fear of God—in a reverential spirit, and all who attend them should earnestly desire to hear the Lord's voice. "Speak, for Thy servant heareth" might well be the language of every heart; then profit will result. Had we the ear of beloved brethren who lead in Bible-readings, we would affectionately urge them to keep in view the edification of *all* who come. With what sincere sorrow have we heard young Christians say there was nothing in the Bible-reading for them. We do not mean that the young Christians should be thought of to the exclusion of others more advanced. Let the edification of *all* be aimed at; and for this much prayerfulness of spirit will be needed. Still, it should not be forgotten that a skilful gardener looks well after the young plants, a wise shepherd carefully considers the lambs, and every mother tenderly watches over her babe. Nothing is much more unedifying than for two brethren—better instructed

in the letter of Scripture than the rest—to keep a Bible-reading entirely up to their own level. Love edifies; and when God's people are fervently loved, their edification will be sought in every possible way. To this happy end the Bible-reading should largely contribute, and if it does not, the reason ought to be anxiously sought out.

W. B. D.—If we do not insert your letter you will not attribute it to any want of sympathy with the object you have in view. We are in full accord with every godly endeavour to awaken among God's people a more fervent interest in the blessed work of the gospel. We join with you in deploring the hardness and indifference with which we contemplate the broad road thronged with unsaved multitudes. Over such the Saviour wept. Our eyes, alas! are as dry as the Sahara desert, and we palliate our callousness by pleading the eternal purposes of God! But while mourning over this, and earnestly desiring a different state of things, we must remember that saints, as a whole, will never look on the unsaved with the eyes and feelings of an evangelist. Nor is it reasonable to expect it, for the simple reason that they are not all evangelists. An evangelist is keenly alive to the danger to which the unsaved are exposed. Death, judgment, and the lake of fire press upon his spirit as awful realities. He is deeply affected by the love of Christ and by that love which led God to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It is part of His gift—woven into the warp and woof of it—that He should be powerfully moved by these eternal things. Now ordinary

Christians believe it all, but they are not affected to the same degree. If an evangelist does not recognize this he will be impatient with others, and judge them to be indifferent, because their zeal is not so fervent as his. On the other hand, those whose gift and sympathy lie more in the direction of the saints are in danger of regarding an earnest evangelist as a very inconvenient man, whose ardour should be cooled on every occasion by every possible means. But the fact is, they do not understand him. They do not, nor can they, enter into his feelings. They know but little of the burning fire shut up in his bones, and how he groans and moans for the salvation of dying men. *They* think more of the divine purposes and the certainty of their fulfilment; *he* of the responsibility of men and of their awful doom if Christ be not received. But both serve the same Lord, only in different departments. *They* think more of placing the stones in the temple without sound of hammer, axe, or any tool of iron; *he* of blasting the rock, without which, let it be said, there would be no stones to build the temple with. (1 Kings vi. 7.) If all are near the Lord and filled with His mind, there will be no desire to reduce everything to one dead level. He gave unto every man his work. Why, then, should the stonemason find fault with the quarryman, or the quarryman with the mason? To his own master each servant stands or falls. The eye and the ear, the hand and the foot, are all members of one body, but they have not all the same office. Every one is necessary, and no member, however important his functions, can say to another, "I have no need of thee."