

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

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

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

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

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE OF 895 B.C.

LONG, long ago, in the brave days of old, King Mesha reigned over the land of Moab. The palmy days of that once-powerful kingdom were past, and though still retaining its independence to a large extent, it had to pay a considerable yearly tribute to the neighbouring monarch who reigned in Samaria.

But in the days of Mesha, Moab determined to assert its complete independence of Israel. Why should the fields of Ar, and the verdant hillsides of Kir, be robbed every year of a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams to satisfy the shadowy and irksome claim of a foreign power? (2 Kings iii. 4).

So "the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel." The insurrection was serious. It would be no child's play to meet the marshalled ranks of Moab in battle. What should Jehoram do? There was the powerful and prosperous country of Judah to the south. Its sovereign was an ally of his father's: surely he might reckon on his help. Then beyond the Salt Sea lay the mountains of Seir, the home of the fierce warriors of Edom. With their king, too, he would ally himself.

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“So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom.” Diplomacy had succeeded, and the triple alliance became an accomplished fact.

It was an alliance, however, that, from *God's* point of view, was utterly wrong. But He is able to overrule the mistakes of men and use them for the instruction of others, as we shall find in this story.

The three allied kings represent three classes to whom God has something serious to say. Jehoram, the king of Israel, stands before us as *a false professor of religion*. When he ascended the throne the worship of Jehovah had been well-nigh displaced by that of Baal, and hundreds of Baalite priests had been introduced into the land by the wicked Queen Jezebel.

But Jehoram was not the idolatrous man that his father Ahab had been, for “he put away the image of Baal” (2 Kings iii. 2). This was right, and promising. Alas! however, the very next thing we read of him is that “he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam . . . he departed not therefrom.” Outwardly Jehoram had taken a right step. He departed from that which was publicly and notoriously idolatrous, but in secret he hugged his sins, and departed not therefrom.

No one ever becomes a saint of God by merely giving up that which is outwardly wrong. You cannot change winter into summer by breaking

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off the icicles and melting the snow. Nor can you turn coal into marble by painting it white.

Does anyone imagine that he is all right because he has left off his bad ways, turned his back on godless companions, and frequents a place of worship instead of questionable places of pleasure? Reformation is not conversion. "Ye must be born again" are words that are as true to-day as when they first fell upon the Pharisee's ear. Profession of religion without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is a delusion and a snare.

The second of the three kings, Jehoshaphat, was truly a saint of God. But in our story he appears as a *backsliding saint*, who had declined from communion with God, and had come down to the level of a mere worldling.

To King Jehoram he said, "I am as thou art." Is that the language of one who realises that the Lord has saved him and has put a vast difference between him and others? Would Enoch, who "walked with God," have spoken thus, or Paul? No; it was the speech of a backslider. Jehoram could not climb to where Jehoshaphat stood, so Jehoshaphat came down to Jehoram's level.

How came it, do you think, that Jehoshaphat was thus in a state of spiritual declension? Let us trace the steps that led to it.

In the days of the wicked King Ahab, Jehoshaphat made a treaty of peace with him (1 Kings

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xxii. 44). You may think that a very small thing, but a fragment of thistledown shows which way the wind is blowing. In this compact with Ahab lay the beginning of Jehoshaphat's spiritual decline. The first step out of the right path never appears to be very wrong. It often seems plausible enough, but it is certain that if the first step is not taken, a second never will be.

Now *God* had undertaken to keep the realm in peace for Jehoshaphat. He caused the surrounding nations to stand in fear of Him, "so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat" (2 Chron. xvii. 10). Secure in such protection, what need was there of a special compact with Ahab? Was not God sufficient?

Not content with this, he entered into still closer relationship with Ahab. He "joined affinity" with that wicked king (2 Chron. xviii. 1). This was his second wrong step. God has called His children to be separate from the unclean thing. He would have the line of separation between His people and the people of the world clear and distinct. The devil is constantly trying to obliterate it. If he cannot persuade the child of God to plunge into open worldliness and sin, he tries to get him to live as near the line as possible, so as to be able to join hands with the world sometimes. The heart that is loyal to Christ will say, "I want to be entirely separate

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from the world and its ways, just as truly as Jesus was when He was here." But, alas! many of the Lord's dear people are not as loyal as they might be. They live on the border-land and "join affinity" sometimes with the enemies of their Lord.

It was an alliance that left its mark on Jehoshaphat. The next thing is that "*he went down.*" Significant words! He was now distinctly on the down grade. To such an extent did he come under Ahab's influence that he was "*persuaded*" by him to join in an enterprise against Syria. Fancy a child of God, instead of looking to *Him* for guidance, allowing himself to be "persuaded" by a worldling!

Then he says to Ahab: "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and we will be with thee." Ah! now we understand how Jehoshaphat could say those words so glibly to Jehoram! He had said them, years before, to Ahab. What a sad sight as the Lord looked down from heaven and saw Jehoshaphat, who had begun so well and walked in the right way, now on a level with the most notorious worldling of the day!

There may be some who do not agree with what I have said. Perhaps *you* say, "I don't see any harm in a Christian mixing with the world in its pleasures and pursuits so long as he does not allow himself to be led into sin. I think a Christian can go anywhere and yet be consistent."

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Let me tell you a little story. A party of friends were going down a coal mine to watch the diggers at their work. One of them, a young lady, appeared in a dainty white gown. Her companions remonstrated with her for dressing so unsuitably, but she appealed to the old miner who was to act as guide to the party.

"Cannot I wear a white dress down into the mine?" she asked.

"Yes, miss," replied the old man. "There is nothing to keep you from wearing a white frock down there, but there will be a good deal to keep you from wearing one back."

There is nothing to prevent the Christian from wearing his white garments when he seeks the fellowship of the world, but there is a good deal to prevent him from wearing white garments afterwards. He will be soiled and defiled by the company he has kept.

This we see in Jehoshaphat's case. In 2 Chronicles xvii. his garments are beautifully white and clean. In the last chapter they are soiled and spotted through his association with Ahab.

Nor are the baneful results of this "affinity" confined to Jehoshaphat himself. It led to a marriage between Jehoshaphat's son and Ahab's daughter (2 Kings viii. 18). The evil consequences of the father's act were seen in the conduct of the son. And the whole kingdom suffered, for the daughter of Ahab was the

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notorious Athaliah, who subsequently murdered all the royal princes of Judah except Joash, and usurped the throne.

One would have thought that past experience would have taught Jehoshaphat a lesson. But when Ahab died we find him allying himself with his son Ahaziah, "who did very wickedly" (2 Chron. xx. 35). We are not to suppose that he joined him in his wicked acts. On the contrary, it was for an ordinary mercantile enterprise that the association was formed. "He joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish." There was nothing wrong in building ships, or in sending them to Tarshish. The evil lay in the association of a man of God with a worldling. The devil's aim is achieved if he can bring about such a union, even for a good purpose.

But God does not forget His poor backsliding children. We see how He intervened to save Jehoshaphat from the snare. He blew upon the undertaking, and the ships were broken up. Why? Because they were built for an unlawful purpose? No. Eliezer is sent to tell the king the reason: "*Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah the Lord hath broken thy works.*" It was the unhallowed union that called forth the Lord's discipline.

Let this be marked and weighed by any Christian who contemplates any kind of partnership with worldlings, whether it be in marriage or in

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business; or whether it be in joining some club or society for prudential reasons, or going into worldly company for the sake of pleasure or social position. Such a course will bring the one who embarks upon it under the chastening hand of God. The one who marries a worldling may expect a lifetime of sorrow. Whatever form the association of Christians with the people of the world may take, it is an unholy union. Leanness of soul and the withholding of God's blessing is the price that must be paid for it.

Some years ago there was an earthquake in Japan, near the coast. An old man, who had been through many earthquakes, looked towards the sea and saw a huge wave, thirty or forty feet high, rise up in the air and recede from the land. Experience taught him what that meant. But would the people in the neighbouring village believe that their homes would all be destroyed by the wave when it returned? Would they not laugh at him if he warned them?

In a moment he had decided what to do. With all speed he ran to the high ground where the rice-shocks were, and set them on fire. When the villagers saw the fields burning, they rushed out, and were about to stone the old man for destroying their food.

"But look!" he cried, and looking back towards the village they saw it submerged by the waves. No warning would have brought them out to the

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hill beyond the danger, but the old man had saved them from death by his action.

Something of this kind sometimes happens to a Christian. God burns up his rice-field. He destroys his prosperity, spoils his work, upsets his plans, takes away the things that he has set his heart upon. Why? In order to rescue him from a false position, and from all the snares which result from an unholy association.

Of the king of Edom little need be said. We take him as a sample of an ordinary man of the world who does not pretend to be anything else.

These three kings, then, started forth upon their punitive expedition: Jehoram, the false professor; Jehoshaphat, the backsliding saint; and the king of Edom, a man who made no profession at all.

For seven days they marched across the desert, and in that short time it became evident that all three lacked one thing. "There was no water." Without water a further advance was impossible. It was the one thing needful for a journey through the wilderness. It stands, in a word, for *satisfaction*, and neither of these three kings had it.

Neither have any of us if we belong to either of the classes which the three kings represent.

Unconverted professor, *you* have no real satisfaction in the profession that you make. You are a stranger to true joy of soul and rest of

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heart. These things belong to a region of which you know nothing.

And you, poor backsliding child of God, do not need to be told that *you* have no satisfaction. Once you knew what it was to be led beside the still waters, and to lie down in the green pastures of communion with God. But all that is a mere memory, and though outwardly you may seem happy and light-hearted, yet you are conscious of a void within. You have forsaken the fountain of living waters and hewed out for yourself a cistern, a broken cistern that can hold no water.

And you, unconverted reader, who, like the king of Edom, make no profession at all, do not claim to possess this joy and satisfaction of which the gospel speaks. You would not deny that you have "no water." You may find a good deal of pleasure in the world, but there is no lasting joy to be found there. Only Christ can satisfy, and Him you do not know.

The need of these three kings set them inquiring for water, and their inquiries result in Elisha, a servant of the true God, being called to tell them how they may obtain it.

Notice two saints of God stand in that company. Jehoshaphat the king and Elisha the prophet. Which of the twain was used by the Lord to deliver the waterless armies and to supply their need? Not Jehoshaphat; not the saint who had joined affinity with the world,

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but the one who had kept in the narrow path of obedience.

It is important to see this, because Christians sometimes defend their association with the world on account of the good that they hope to be able to do. A young man joins a football club, and excuses his action under the plea that he hopes to have opportunities of influencing his fellow-members of the club for good. A Christian young woman gets engaged to an unconverted man, and says she hopes to be able to win his soul for the Lord. Christians fling themselves into the whirl of worldly society, giving as their reason for doing so that they hope to impart to it a healthier moral tone. The same sort of excuse is given for Christians mixing in politics.

All such pleas are mere evasions. They are nothing but excuses for disobedience, and their hollowness is exposed in the story of the triple alliance of long ago, by the simple fact that in the time of need Jehoshaphat had no power to help his associates. It was through Elisha that succour came. And it is the faithful, separate, unworldly Christian whom the Lord uses as a channel of blessing to those around him.

If a man is in a ditch and you want to help him out, you will never do so by getting in yourself. That would only make two that need help, instead of one. The way to help is to plant your feet firmly on the bank, and see that you do not

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slip in yourself, and *then* you may be of some use to the one who needs a helping hand.

Jehoshaphat had slidden down into the ditch himself, and had lost all power to help either himself or others. Elisha had kept upon the bank, and he was the one that was able to help.

See how he is introduced in the story. "Here is Elisha," says one, "*which poured water on the hands of Elijah.*" That simply means that he had served Elijah, but the mention of *water* in this connection suggests the thought that the man who could find water for others is the one who could, first of all, find water for his master. He who serves Christ is the one who can best serve men. If in secret devotion to our rejected Lord we minister to *His* refreshment and satisfaction, He will use us as vessels to carry the water to others. The springing well of worship (John iv.) goes with the flowing rivers of testimony and service (John vii.).

Perhaps, reader, you feel more like one of the three kings than like Elisha. That is, you feel the need of getting water for yourself, instead of talking about ministering it to others. Let me, then, briefly point out how the kings got the water that they wanted.

First of all, they were to *make the valley full of ditches*. They were to prepare to receive the water, and the place of preparation was the valley, the low place. And if *you* want the

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water, whether you be a sham professor like Jehoram, a backslider like Jehoshaphat, or a mere worldling like the king of Edom, you will have to prepare to receive it by going down into the valley of self-judgment and repentance.

In the Gospels we find pharisaical professors of religion called to repentance.

In the Revelation, backsliding Christians are bidden to repent.

In the Acts, the worldlings of Athens and all men everywhere are summoned to repentance.

When you get down in the valley, reader, the water will come. It came to the three kings. With it there came *victory*. The men who had the water won the battle. And then they were distinctly enjoined, amongst other things, to *stop all the wells of water* in the enemy's country. They were to countenance no other source of supply. So with the Christian. His joy and satisfaction come from above, and if he is to be kept happy and rejoicing he must refuse every worldly source. Worldly joy and heavenly joy are incompatible. Thank God, if we have "water" from heaven, we can afford to stop up the wells of earth.

Whole-hearted separation unto the Lord, the secret of true satisfaction, of victory over the foe, and of power to serve others: these are the lessons to be learnt from the story of the triple alliance of long ago.

H. P. B.

CARE.

“Dost Thou not care?”—The cry of the human heart.

“He careth for you”—The divine answer.

CARE: a little word of only four letters, and yet at times how heavily it weighs upon us. Everybody is more or less affected by it. There is probably nothing on the face of the earth more common than care. Go where you will, you find it. It has a habit of creeping in everywhere. It will sometimes present itself on the most festive occasions, and has been known even to cast its shadow over a marriage scene. Almost every day is marked by it; the day of death even is not always exempt, as though care were the first thing we carry and the last thing we lay down.

Neither is care any respecter of persons. It is seen in the merchant's face; it furrows the cheek of the widow; it sits upon the forehead of the great; it dogs the steps and hovers around the beds of kings. Men of all classes and conditions are its victims. It seems as all-pervading and penetrating as the atmosphere. As well attempt to exclude the air as to exclude care.

And yet although everybody is more or less familiar with care, so few know what to do with it or how to meet it, except by very often meeting it half-way. Men have a thousand and one ways of trying to be free from it. Some think if they

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can only obtain enough wealth, this will do; others, if they can have enough pleasure; some try occupation; while many attempt to forget there is such a thing as care; and not a few try to banish it with drink or some form of sin.

None of these, however, are successful, for they all lose sight of the cause. Care has a cause. And unless we find out what the cause is and deal with that, we are never likely to be successful in our struggle with what it has produced.

The cause of all care is sin. If sin did not exist in this world, care could not. Sin has introduced an element into man's soul which never ought to be there, and which is the prolific source of all care. That element is distrust of God. Man is alienated from his Maker, has lost the sense of His care and goodness and protection, and the baneful consequence is CARE, with all its gloom, unhappiness, and unrest.

But we wish to speak about the cure. Thank God, there is a cure for care. It is no quack remedy, nor is it a modern invention. There are many such for all sorts of diseases, but this is old and well-tried. And it is the 'One who knows all about care, and all about *your* care, that prescribes it for you.

It is indeed a cure-all. Perhaps, dear reader, you think there is no cure this side of the grave for your particular care. But God's cure can reach the disease in its worst forms and to its

furthest limits, even though in your case it is like some malignant cancer eating into your very vitals. And what is the cure for care? To state it briefly, it all lies just in one sentence—"He careth for you."

Now this is just what the human heart does not know. It does not know it any more than Martha knew it when she said to Christ, "Dost Thou not care?"

Have you ever read that wonderful story recorded in Luke x. about the man who fell among thieves, who, after taking away all he possessed, left him half dead by the roadside? And there comes along at last a Samaritan who ministers succour, and brings him to a place of shelter, and takes care of him, even to the extent of making provision for the future. The words (addressed to the host) that fall upon the astonished ears of the erewhile benighted traveller are these: "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee."

The story illustrates more than how we are to obtain forgiveness and peace. To obtain these, of course, is the first requisite. If we are refusing to recognise our sin and our need of Christ and His work, if we disregard all the offers of pardon God makes in the name of His beloved Son, if we think that by our own efforts and goodness we are going to merit heaven and have no need

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of a substitute to bear the penalty of sin, then freedom from care can never be ours in the true sense of the word, for the simple reason that out of Christ you can never know what God can be to you. And it is just what God is to the one who obeys Him, and therefore trusts wholly in Christ, that enables the believer to rise above all care. What could the man by the roadside, half dead, do for his own deliverance? What could the priest and Levite, the representatives of the law, do for him? Nothing. But One comes upon the scene who is ready to do everything. His hands are full, and He is willing to use it all for the benefit of a stranger. Have you ever met this One? He is to be met with. The man by the roadside might have borne his fate with stolid indifference, and succumbed at last without a murmur. Ah, but he never would have known how much another could care for him. And so to-day there are those who assume an attitude of indifference both in regard to their own need and the future; they try to shut the eyes of their soul to both, and they may in a measure succeed, but they miss one thing—they never can know what God is waiting to be to them, how much and how well He can care for them.

But are there not many who have believed in Christ who are still far from enjoying all that there is for them as set forth in the story before us? They have not discovered the cure for care.

And this brings us back for a moment to the exclamation that broke from the lips of Martha.

“Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?” This is the cry that seems to burst from the heart of one sensible of being wronged. And is not this more or less the cry of every human heart, though not uttered with all the distinctness with which Martha uttered it—“Dost Thou not care?” Oh, how often the uplifted eyes and heart have spoken this to God, even if the words never escaped the lips. Yes, man has lost the sense of God’s care, and thinks there is no one to look after the world. Nurses there may be to look after babies, and parents to provide for children, and policemen for general protection; but as to the deepest concerns of life, grown men and women are left to themselves. How often this is thought, though perhaps we scarcely confess it. And yet man cannot be truly happy under such conditions, and was never intended to be. And so the cry of Martha—“Dost Thou not care?”—really voices the feeling of the world. Man cries out for somebody to care for him.

And in the light of this fact the story Christ tells assumes a meaning wonderful and grand in the extreme. For does it not tell us there is One who cares? Is not the whole story of the Good Samaritan just an answer to this touching appeal of Martha’s? And if she had

heard those words in the inn, "Take care of him," and had known that Christ was willing to do for her all the Samaritan had done, and more, could she have spoken as she did? Could the man in the inn have said to his benefactor, "Dost thou not care?"

But there is another point in connection with Martha's utterance. She felt her loneliness. "Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve *alone*?" Alone and uncared for was what she felt at that moment. And hers is not an isolated case. The same thing is felt deep down in the innermost recesses of every human spirit, until the truth is known that God cares. It is just this feeling of loneliness and neglect that is the fruitful source of all care. Yet Christ's parable meets both. Who could be more lonely and uncared for than the man who fell among thieves? They stripped him, they wounded him, they *left* him. Especially when others came near, and having looked on him, passed by on the *other side*. And yet who could be less alone or better cared for afterwards? He was left in charge of the host, and the host was commanded that nothing should be lacking. "Take care of him, and *whatsoever* thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." And if you, my reader, are feeling alone and uncared for, in addition to the above we would remind you of one verse of Scripture that meets both

conditions: "Casting all your care upon *Him*"—this meets the loneliness; "for He careth for you"—this meets the case.

Martha was careful and troubled about many things. She was doing her best, but she was not at rest. She represents that large class who, while they desire to please God and to serve Him, have not learned how great a pleasure it is for Him to serve them, and that His service to them must precede theirs to Him. The difference between Martha and Mary was mainly the difference between the man by the roadside and the man in the inn. It is a striking fact that although the wounded man had received so much kindness, and was to receive more, he is not asked by his benefactor to do one single thing. The lesson surely is that God wishes us first of all to become acquainted with His grace, and learn what a pleasure it is to Him to befriend us. And it is in finding out that we have such a Friend that we become relieved of our care.

The man was not left *alone* from the moment he was found by the roadside. He was brought to an inn and left in charge of the host, with the expectation of seeing his friend again. "Never alone and always cared for," describes his happy experience; and may it be ours, too, henceforth, until the Lord comes.

R. E.

TRYING TO REALISE.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is.”—1 JOHN iii. 1, 2.

WE do not print this text with the intention of giving an exposition of it. We quote it, almost at random, as one of a score about which numbers of persons wistfully say, “I wish I realised that the things of which these scriptures speak were true of me.” The beauty and grandeur of the truth is seen ; they envy any who are in the enjoyment of it, and fervently pray and wait for similar experience ; but the things themselves seem afar off, high up the mountain-side, far beyond their reach, though they hope one day to call them their very own.

Such persons believe, too, that nothing can be true of them unless it be first realised, and the measure of their realisation is to them the measure of the blessing which grace confers. But this is a subtle fallacy, impoverishing the soul, filling it with anxious and unsatisfied desires, and keeping not a few in long and bitter bondage.

Am I speaking to one of these? My dear friend, do you not see that the first step on the road to realisation is simple faith? By simple

faith I mean our receiving into the heart, as divinely true, whatever God in His Word says about us, however wonderful it may be—believing it without a doubt because He says it, and, *at first*, for no other reason.

It ought not to be difficult to do this. The words and promises of God may surely be believed, for it is impossible that God should say what He does not mean. And if of some men it can be said, "*Their word is their bond*," how much more does such a saying hold good when God is in question? For "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19).

Look again at our head-text; read it slowly, thoughtfully. Is it not true—true of you if you are a believer in Jesus? "Ah," you say, "but I don't realise it." That may be, but does the truth of it depend on your realisation? Have we not fallen into a little confusion of thought when we suppose that anything can be realised that is not already true of us in fact? A thing does not become true when we realise it. It must be true before; and if it be not true, our endeavour to realise it is only grasping a shadow or chasing after a will-o'-the-wisp that eludes and mocks us at every turn.

You have been, I dare say, at a meeting for

TRYING TO REALISE.

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prayer and heard some fervent soul plead earnestly for the conversion of others. Perhaps he has expressed himself something like this: "O God, be pleased to open the eyes of sinful men; convict them of sin; show them their great danger, and help them to realise their lost and ruined condition in Thy sight." To such a prayer we say, Amen. But please observe what we have been praying for. We have asked that unsaved ones may realise what is actually true of them, whether they realise it or not. They *are* lost and ruined—they do not become so when our prayers are answered and the consciousness of it breaks upon them in all its solemn reality.

Again, think of a little child attracted by the music in the street. The minstrels move away, first to one place and then to another, followed by the child. Presently the spell of the music is broken; the little child grows weary and turns towards home. But she cannot find her way, she is bewildered, and sitting down on a doorstep, begins to cry bitterly and to call for mother. She is a lost child. Yes, but the little mite was as much a lost child when last listening to the music as she is now. The fact of her realising that she is lost does not make her so.

Look once more at our head-text. How beautifully the apostle speaks of our being the children of God; he speaks of it not as unfolding the truth doctrinally, but as one amazed at the manner

of the Father's love. That love has brought us—once in darkness and death—into the near and dear place and relationship of children. What manner of love must that be? And lest our poor slow hearts should hesitate to believe this love because of its greatness, the apostle adds: "Beloved, *now* are we the children of God." Nor is this all; for when Christ appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Now this is very wonderful. But suppose the wonderfulness of it all comes home for the first time to some feeble, yet believing, heart, hitherto groping his way among the shadows. So far his experience has hardly been beyond that of the publican, when he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But now he sees with intense delight that instead of standing afar off, scarcely daring to lift his eyes to heaven, he can, as a believer in Jesus, take the place of a dear child, *for he is one*. I venture to ask whether he became God's child when the light of this sweet truth shined upon him, or was he one before, even from the first moment that he received Christ as his Saviour?

And this reminds me of what one well-known servant of Christ once said to another still better known: "I have been trying," said he, referring to his ministry, "to get the saints across Jordan." "You will never succeed," was the quiet reply, "*for they are across already.*"

You may wonder what "across Jordan" means.

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The crossing of Jordan by the tribes of Israel under Joshua is a figure of our death and resurrection with Christ. In the Colossian epistle this is how the saints are viewed. They have died and are risen with Christ—*they are never called to die*. Of course it is of the utmost importance that we should understand what death and resurrection with Christ means, and that we should take this place in the faith of our souls. No doubt this is what was meant by “getting the saints across Jordan.” But it is of moment to see that we *are* across as identified with Christ, and because we are across we should prayerfully desire to hold that wonderful truth in faith and in the power of the Spirit, so that it may become substance in our souls, colouring and influencing our lives. But never let us doubt the fact, though we may have but feebly realised it, but rather because it is a fact, press forward to its full realisation.

This matter of realisation is no little thing in its place. An inmate of a workhouse might unexpectedly find himself master of a fortune. The will under which he inherits the estate is unimpeachable, and the title deeds have come into his possession. But if he is content to be poor, and has neither energy nor desire to avail himself of the wealth that undoubtedly is his, he becomes an object of wonder and pity to others. No one can dispute the ownership—all is his; but so far

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as present practical enjoyment goes, he might as well have been without it.

By all means let us seek to realise everything that is ours in Christ. But the first step towards that goal is to mix with faith the sure testimony of God that all is ours. Faith, not realisation, is the first essential link in the chain.

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Z.—The matter about which you write is one for your own individual faith and conscience before God. 1 Timothy v. 8 is very clear, and the means you name may be justly called “providing for one’s own,” though the bearing of the passage is on the needs of to-day rather than those of to-morrow. Let us be careful, however, that such provision neither takes us off the ground of faith nor makes us unmindful of other responsibilities. It need not, but there is the danger, and hence the warning of 1 Timothy vi. 17–19.

L.—John i. 9.—In the New Translation of J. N. Darby the passage runs thus: “The true light was that which, coming into the world, lightens every man.” This helps to make its meaning plain? Christ, of course, is the true light, and He, coming into the world, is light to every man—not to the Jews only. He “lightens,” *not* enlightens, for that would be the inward effect produced, but He, the true light, sheds His light upon every man, no matter who he be. The light which shines in Christ, which indeed He Himself is, like the sun in the heavens, is light for every

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fallen child of Adam. There is no other, unless it be the light which creation gives to those on whom the light of Christ has never shined.

A. H.—Colossians iii. 16.—“The Word of Christ” is a phrase singularly appropriate to an epistle where the glories of Christ are beautifully and strikingly unfolded. The Colossian believers were in danger of being beguiled from Christ by the enticing words of “philosophy and vain deceit.” Accordingly Christ in all His fulness is set before them to recover and to safeguard. Hence the Word is “*the Word of Christ.*” It is so called because it is that which richly sets Him forth; and it was to dwell in them in no poor and scanty measure. This is most lovely and in perfect agreement with the whole tenor of the epistle.

H. P.—It might be well for you again to express your desire to partake of the Supper of the Lord as a privilege in which you, in common with all other believers, are entitled to share. You might also seriously ask yourself whether there is anything in your conduct and demeanour that causes others to be slow in giving effect to your fervent wish. If there is nothing, then we cannot account for the long delay. It is a serious thing to deny anyone who belongs to Christ the joy of remembering the Lord in the breaking of bread without grave and sufficient reasons. Those with whom you have to do are doubtless fully alive to that, so we can only counsel you to be still patient, still to make the matter a subject of prayer, and assuredly God will clear every difficulty out of the way. Count on Him for this, and you will not count in vain.

A. M.—1 John iii. 9.—Is it not evident from the

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context that precedes and follows that the apostle is speaking of two families—the family of God and that of the devil? “The devil sinneth from the beginning,” such is *his* character. “For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” That was *His* character, and such the result of His appearing and work here below. The deduction drawn from this is that “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” Everyone lives according to his nature. Now the one born of God is endowed with a nature which in its moral features is according to God. In that nature he lives. He does not practise sin, he cannot, because he is born of God. But in speaking thus, John looks at him in the abstract—what he is as thus born of God—and does not occupy himself with modifications or with particular cases of unfaithfulness. If we do not see this we shall never understand the epistle, but be constantly perplexed. For in point of fact the believer is not without sin: “in many things we all offend,” as we are told in James iii. 2. But this is not how John views us. For him there are but two families. *Sin* characterises the one and *righteousness* the other, but all is most abstract. Seeing this, the difficulty vanishes and all is plain.

H. C.—Baptism has to do with our profession of Christ. The Lord’s Supper is a deeper thing, and “the bread which we break” is not only a symbol of the body of Christ once given for us, but also of that mystical body of which we believers are members. Baptism precedes the sharing in the Supper, and we can hardly suppose that in the early days of Christianity any unbaptised person partook of it. Ought it not to be so still?

SOMETHING ABOUT SALVATION.

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself.”—EXOD. xix. 4.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

1 PETER iii. 18.

WE notice in some quarters a growing disposition to look upon salvation as a process and not as a distinct and definite deliverance wrought out for the believer once for all. What I mean is this: It is affirmed that no one is entitled to speak of himself as a saved man—the farthest he can go is to say that he is *being* saved. We have been amazed to see sober Christian men take this ground who should have known better. Now we do not deny that salvation may be looked upon as a process, and very properly so, but, unless we are grievously mistaken, that is not the only nor, indeed, the chief aspect of it. There is another in which it is viewed as perfect and complete, *not a process, but an accomplished fact*, in which the soul rejoices even as the Israelites rejoiced when they sang their grand song of salvation on the shores of the Red Sea (Exod. xv.).

If we go to the Book of Exodus to find figures of this great salvation, we do not go there to find the doctrine. We have been long persuaded that

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to build doctrines even on undoubted types is to open the door to all sorts of mental vagaries eagerly embraced by unreflecting and imaginative minds. The Old Testament may furnish shadows of good things to come, but the substance must be sought for in the New.

In Exodus xii.—do you happen to know that chapter, good reader?—God is seen in the character of a Judge. “I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.” Now judgment is said to be “His strange work.” Why, then, should He, whose very name is Love, ever have to set His hand to it? The answer is easy, though it should make us serious. It is our sins—yours and mine—our failure to fulfil our responsibilities, it is this that obliges Him to be a Judge. If we were innocent, and sin nowhere to be found all the world over, there would be nothing to call for judgment. But if He be a Judge, He is a just one. There is no unrighteousness with God. He holds the scales with an even hand. There can be no miscarriage of justice, as is sometimes the case in earthly courts, no condemnation of the innocent. Every man’s case is safe with God, even that of the most hardened sinner. He shall have—he may be sure of it—an impartial trial, and the verdict will be just in every word and syllable. Still, who can face that ordeal without misgiving? Who can contemplate it and not cry out, “Woe is me! for I am undone”?

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Now mark this: From the plagues of Egypt the Israelites had been hitherto exempt. God covered them with His wing. No swarms of flies invaded their homes, no murrain slew their cattle, no storms of hail, mingled with fire, devastated their fields, and light was in their dwellings when thick darkness was everywhere else. It was not to be so now. "One plague more" was coming upon Egypt different from all the rest, and from this plague the children of Israel should not be sheltered by the direct power of God as in times past. Death—the wages of sin—would enter every home: the firstborn must die or the lamb be slain in the firstborn's stead.

All this, no doubt, gave rise to anxious inquiries. Why does not our God shield us as in bygone days? Why must the lamb be killed and its blood sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of our houses? Why must the token of death be there? These interrogations at first may have found no answer. But in time the meaning of it all would become plain. They had to learn that there was no difference between man and man, be he of Egypt or of Israel, for all have sinned: that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," and that "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." In learning these lessons the story of their father Abraham would be remembered, when he and Isaac went together to the top of Mount Moriah, and the

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ram caught in the thicket was slain in Isaac's place. And so the mist rolled away, and *substitution*—that glorious rock on which the Christian builds—stood out before their eyes in outline clear and sharp.

I need not pursue this further. Those for whom I write know well that "there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and that if God made a difference in that night it was not based on personal worth. The difference lay in the fact that one was sheltered by the sprinkled blood and the other was not. Perfectly sheltered they were, they could not be more so, for the blood being there God had pledged His word that when He saw the blood He would pass over. No room for doubt or fear. If God be faithful to His promise, their immunity from judgment was certain. So now, if the believer is delivered from all dread of judgment, it is because Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. He has paid the penalty that we might be free from it. *And free from it we are.* This freedom is an integral part of our salvation, *not a process, but an accomplished fact.*

Let us not pass lightly over this. Alas! superficiality is our common bane, against which we do well to watch. And the story itself sets up a guard. For though the sprinkled blood was the sole and sufficient ground of safety on that

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judgment night, the sheltered people were enjoined to eat the flesh of the lamb roast with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. This suggests deep and solemn work in heart and conscience. It is Christ, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, Christ wounded, bruised, smitten, forsaken of God, on whom the sheltered soul feeds, turning in horror from the sins which cost his Saviour so much anguish to put away, turning from them in true repentance and unfeigned sorrow.

Nor was that all. They ate the passover with loins girt, with sandalled feet, and with staff in hand—they ate it in haste. For if they were sheltered from the judgment their sins deserved, it was not that they might remain in Egypt with their burdens lightened and their lives no longer made bitter with hard bondage. God was going to bring them out of that cruel land. So it is written that Christ “gave Himself for our sins,” not alone to put those sins away, but “that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal. i. 4). Note that.

Following hard upon this comes the striking word, “*Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn*” (Exod. xiii. 2). The redeemed are sanctified unto God. It is to be greatly feared that we have not weighed these words enough. If God frees us from the yoke of Egypt, it is that He might possess us for Himself.

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We are wholly sanctified or set apart unto Him. "Ye are not your own," says Paul in 1 Corinthians vi. 19. We belong to another, even to Him who has bought us with a price and sealed us with His Spirit. Have we quietly looked that fact in the face? Do we acknowledge that we are wholly the Lord's? Great practical consequences ought to follow, of which we shall not now speak lest our thoughts be diverted from the fact and fixed on the results that issue from it. "Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn." This is not what is called progressive sanctification, of which there is plenty in Scripture, but the setting apart once for all of the forgiven one. If, then, deliverance from judgment is an integral part of our salvation, so also is sanctification in the absolute sense in which it is spoken of in 1 Corinthians vi. 11 and 1 Peter i. 2. *Not a process, but an accomplished fact.*

Nor is this sanctification a thing of mere terms having no force at all. Pharaoh is dealt with finally, and his overthrow is complete. It is beautiful to see how God espouses the cause of His redeemed and sanctified people, and completes their salvation entirely by His own hand. I say *completes* it, but if any have a better word let him use it. For it is evident that their salvation had two parts—first and the most serious, the satisfying of the just demands of God's throne in respect of sin by the slaying of the lamb, and the blood of sprinkling; secondly, the destruction of the

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enemy, so that the sheltered and sanctified ones might be entirely saved and placed beyond the sphere of his power. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, *ye shall see them again no more for ever . . .* Thus the Lord saved Israel" (Exod. xiv. 13, 30).

The death and resurrection of Christ, of which the open way of the Red Sea is a figure, places the believer on totally new ground. We take our place with Christ on the other side of His death and grave. It is thus that we are delivered from this present evil world. The waters of the Red Sea roll between us and the house of bondage. Now, set free from Egypt, we are brought to God. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, AND how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself" (Exod. xix. 4). It was for this end that Christ suffered. He died not only to deliver us from judgment and to set us apart to Himself and to take us out of the hand of the foe, but to bring us to God. *These are all constituent parts of our salvation.* Everything has been removed that stood between our souls and God. Washed, sanctified, and justified, the believer is brought to God without a stain on his conscience or a shadow to obscure the light of God's countenance—in other words, *he is saved.*

Whatever deliverances the children of Israel were the subjects of in their journey from Egypt

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to Canaan, they did not need to be delivered from Egypt any more. Their salvation was final and complete—*not a process, but an accomplished fact.*

Had they been asked whether they were saved or not, would there have been the least uncertainty in their reply? "*Thank God we are,*" would have been their joyous answer. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Is the Christian not entitled to say as much? We believe he is. He can and ought to say "Yes, thank God, *I am saved*—sheltered from my sins and their direful due; sanctified unto God, delivered out of Satan's hand whose slave I once was, I am saved and brought to God. His perfect love has cast out every vestige of fear from my heart, and now with Him I pursue my journey to the land flowing with milk and honey—the Canaan above." Reader, are you in the joy of God's salvation? Do you know the meaning of these three texts?—

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3).

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 3).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18).

WORK.

EVERY convert is designed by God to be a worker, and he should find out what his work is, and do it with diligence. Prayer is not work. Attending meetings and hearing sermons is not work. Reading the Bible is not work. These are necessary to make a worker wise and strong, but they are not work, any more than eating, drinking, and sleeping are. A man who never works becomes idle, selfish, useless, and often his health suffers. In like manner a Christian who only attends meetings, and reads his Bible now and then, will have little vigour or energy.

There are some spiritual maladies which the Bible and the hymn-book, and even prayer, may not cure. Let the invalid try a little exercise in the open air, go down the street with a handful of tracts, visit a poor neighbour, or carry a message of mercy to a lost soul, and he will find his faith and courage strengthened, and half his ills banished. If no one else is better for such service, the servant will be.

Work is neither the first nor the most important thing, but if you would be a strong, hearty Christian, you *must* work. Do something, or you will have neither power nor inclination to do anything; give, or you will soon have nothing to give; speak, or you will soon have nothing to

tell. There is some truth in the remark, "Hold forth, and that will help you to hold out."

Do you ever think what a needy place this world is, with its millions who know not God, its sins, its sorrows, and its doom? You must be very dull in eye and heart if you are not sometimes affected by the thought of the whole world lying in wickedness, and guilty before God. Saved yourself, have you no care for the lost? A candle lighted by the Lord, will you not light up another? Yourself in the gospel ship, are you passing with indifference those poor wretches perishing on the raft or in the waves? Will you save earthly store and treasure and never put forth a hand to save a priceless soul?

Young people are warm, active, and enthusiastic. In the work of the Lord they can find a splendid outlet for their energies. In a world where God has ever wrought since man's fall, where Christ laboured until He had finished the work which His Father gave Him to do, where the Holy Spirit is still working in and by the saints of God, where men of flaming zeal have spent their all of comfort, home, and life itself for Christ and souls—you, dear friend, have your place as a worker to-day. It is your turn to hear the call, "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard."

It is of the first importance that the worker should be *fit* for service. At the bench you pass over the blunt chisel and choose the sharp one

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leaving the other till you can restore its edge on the stone. Don't let the Lord have to pass you by like that. Fitness for service is by being in the power of the Holy Spirit, for God's work is always done by God, though He uses His people as instruments, and gives them His Holy Spirit to make them effective. If you are grieving the Spirit you are a blunt chisel, a bow unstrung, an instrument out of tune. Keep yourself, therefore, in spiritual health and tone.

Be right and be bright, or you will soon grow weary of Christian work, and even a trifling enterprise will prove too difficult for you; and then you will be like a horse turned out to grass because he is out of condition for use. Take time to be with God. It is there that the workman is fitted, supplied, and directed, his power is maintained, and blessing is assured.

"If I did not keep time sacred for being alone with God," said a worker, "in six months one of two things would happen—either I should become a mere machine, or else I should give up preaching and go back to the farm."

Next, take care that you go forth with the equipment of LOVE. How easy service is when love is the motive! Let grateful affection to Christ be the root from which the beautiful flower of your service springs.

Then love the objects of your service. How one's heart is touched by the overflowing love of

Paul to saints and sinners, Jews and Gentiles! In his tenderness he is exceeded by only One. It was love that made him labour more abundantly than others, and so he was best fitted to write that splendid chapter on love (1 Cor. xiii.), which every worker ought to read once a week.

Do you ask, What shall I do? If you are fit and ready, ask the Lord this question. He will show you your work. Perhaps there are some things you cannot do, such as teaching children; or there are other things which you cannot yet do well, but in which practice may make you useful, such as speaking at a street corner.

It was poor advice to give to a beginner in this service, "Don't preach till you have had more practice." You may lack courage to give away tracts in the street or in the train, but you should persevere in this work, because the very sense of fear will make you more dependent on the Lord. Trample down your weakness in His strength.

Hospital visiting is excellent work for sympathetic hearts. Cottage visitation is also useful. Go in company with Him who opens and no man shuts. He may open the door, then the ear, and then the heart. If this occurred but once in twenty calls, your labour would be well spent and richly rewarded.

If you love the little ones they will give you plenty to do. Take up one or two neglected boys or girls, win their confidence, and lead their

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hearts upward to the children's Saviour. Then there are many kind attentions which you may show to the sick and the poor around you. Have you the pen of a ready writer? If so, use it for the Lord. If not, you may acquire it by practice, and there are few better means of serving Christ and souls than letter-writing. A loving appeal to an unsaved acquaintance, a helpful correspondence with a believer in a lonely or difficult place, words of cheer and instruction to a young convert—these are of untold value, and experience leads me to hope that some of my youthful readers will adopt this service as their own special line.

In conclusion, do not attempt too many things. Do one or two things well. Stick tenaciously to any service you have received from the Lord. Leave results to Him. Let your service be a loving obedience to His wishes. "I would rather obey than work miracles," said Luther. Said another, "At the Lord's call I would undertake to govern half a dozen worlds, without Him I would not undertake to mind half a dozen sheep."

May it be said of you, beloved reader, as of Timothy, "He worketh the work of the Lord," and at that day from the hand of Christ "every man shall receive his own reward *according to his own labour*" (1 Cor. iii.).

J. N. B.

THE PEACE WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.

THERE is the authoritative command of God to His people not to be careful. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7). It is hardly necessary to explain that when God tells us to be careful for nothing, He does not mean we are to be careless. But He positively forbids us to be worried and anxious, and it becomes a sin, grieving to the Holy Spirit, when we are. This verse promises us that we may exchange all our care for His peace.

How, then, is the great blessing of this verse to become ours—the peace of God keeping our hearts and minds?

In the first place, we must accept it as a direct command from God not to be careful. And as soon as we find ourselves becoming anxious, we must say to ourselves, "This is dishonouring to God; I am disobeying Him; He has told me I am not to be careful." Sometimes this may seem easy, but the test lies in that word "nothing." There are some matters about which we think it the correct and proper thing to worry. But God says to us there is *nothing*. Can we believe Him?

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Nothing, in heaven or earth, in the Church or in the world, in your private life or business life, nothing as to yourself or anybody else, even your nearest and dearest; nothing as to the past, present, or future about which you are to worry. And yet we are so accustomed to do it that we live in a chronic state of worry, and have become so accustomed to the burden that sometimes we awake with a start to find how really anxious we are getting.

Instead of worrying we are told what we are to do. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Tell God all about it. Have you never found relief when you could tell a friend what you were passing through? Well, God invites you to make a friend of Him. He can be better than any earthly friend for many reasons. He is never weighted with care Himself, and our earthly friends often are. He is always at hand, and earthly friends cannot be; He is always ready to listen, and He can impart to us His own peace, which others cannot do. Moreover, we can tell to Him what we could not breathe into any human ear, for He says, "*In everything* by prayer," etc. The same God that made the mammoth and the mote will pay attention alike to our smallest, as well as our greatest, concerns.

The prayer is to be with "supplication" and

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“thanksgiving.” We can go again and again to God about the same thing, and be as importunate as we like. At the same time do not let us omit to mingle our thanksgivings with it all, for while there may be much to ask Him to give and take away, yet, if sufficiently observant, we shall find many blessings to count, and very much demanding our praise. And this will bring us to the very verge of that marvellous blessing contained in the verse following. Here God does not promise to do what we ask, nor does He undertake to alter our circumstances; but something better is offered us, even His peace, that passeth all understanding, to keep our hearts and minds. God’s own peace, this becomes ours—a thing that has never been disturbed by anything that has happened, nor can be by anything that may yet happen. What shocks and rude alarms there have been since the earliest dawn of creation!—Satan’s fall, the first sin, the angels that left their own habitation, the fall of man, and yet through it all God’s peace remained unshaken. And He who could stand all this offers to “garrison” your heart and mind, that you may be able to meet all that shall come across your own little life. Yes, He offers nothing less to the trusting and thankful heart than His own peace. It is wonderful to think of such a peace being anywhere, when around us on every hand are the traces of care; but up there in the heart of God

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there is peace, and if it is wonderful that He has it, it is not less wonderful that He gives it. It can be imparted, and the blessed God is willing to impart it, so that poor troubled, burdened human hearts may be sharers of God's own prerogative.

Have we tasted this peace yet? Why should we not? Why should we allow unbelief to bar the door of our hearts, with care inside and this peace outside? Let us, in obedience to God, refuse to give care a place any longer—it is not the lawful tenant of our hearts—but telling God everything, admit His peace. Then our hearts and minds will be garrisoned; because care is sure to assault us again, and this may disturb us if we become occupied with the battering-ram, but it can never disturb God's peace. Instead of being occupied with the enemy at the gate, rather let us be occupied with Christ Jesus. For it says this peace “shall keep [or garrison] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is most important that we should be engaged with Him—for this reason, that our care not infrequently is the consequence of some failure on our own part, and consequently, sensitive, conscientious souls fix their eye upon their own delinquencies, and think they are disqualified from enjoying this peace of which we are speaking. Of course, if the believer has sinned, that sin must be confessed and communion restored. We could not for a

moment imagine the peace of God filling the heart of anyone who is pursuing a path of disobedience. But, on the other hand, it is to be noticed that in the verse before us it says nothing as to this peace becoming ours because of anything we have either done or not done. It is "through Christ Jesus." Let us think of Him. He is altogether pleasing to God. He was the Obedient One—obedient *unto* death, even the death of the cross; and nothing was ever more glorifying to God; and that Cross has, as it were, shut you out of God's sight altogether as to what you have done and what you are, and left only Christ in all His perfection between you and God. And so the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, reaches *us* through a perfect medium, and does not have to find its way through our imperfections, or possibly it would be turned back long before it came to our hearts at all. Christ Himself is the living link between your heart and God's.

By comparing what has been now said with what went before, it will be seen how we are advancing. Our first real deliverance from care is when we hear the words "Take care of him" (Luke x. 35), and know that they are meant for us.* Then we are to become possessed of a peace which passeth all understanding. But there is one step more, one statement in God's Word

* See an article on "Care" in January.

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which completes the subject, and seems to leave nothing unsaid. We refer to those words in 1 Peter v. 7, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." In this last clause is found the unfailing cure for all care.

Oh, my reader, has anyone else ever stood before you and said, "Give me your care"? Many have come, it may be, and asked for your friendship, or your society, or your entertainment, or for some benefit; but did any want your care? No; they would not like you to bring your care into their company. "Come with a bright face," they say; "make us happy with your sparkling wit and lively conversation." But here is One who asks for your company in order to relieve you of your care. He does not even say, "Cast your care away," but He invites you to cast it upon Him. Could anything be more calculated to touch us? And He says "all" your care. It is not even that He promises to help us to bear it. This word carries us infinitely beyond that. Often we try to bear our cares, and ask God, as it were, to carry us and our cares. We are like the man of Ganton, of whom we read that he was riding to market with a sack of flour. Suddenly he was filled with remorse at the weight his horse had to carry; so, without getting off, he lifted the sack upon his own back. Foolish man, to add to his own burden without lightening that of his horse! And are we any wiser when we keep the burden

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that we might cast upon God, and instead of riding to heaven without a featherweight of care, we go heavily laden?

Rather let us be like another man of whom we have heard. His wife had a little business, and she was at one time anxious and disturbed because it seemed likely that someone else in the same line was about to open a shop close by. "What would become of their trade?" "What a loss it would be to them!" were the thoughts that filled her mind and often found expression in conversation with her husband. He, however, remained calm. Why should he be otherwise? Had not God told him to be careful for nothing? But, seeing his wife's trouble, he said to her one day, "My dear, leave all the worrying to me." "There'll be none of it done then," was the reply.

"Casting all your care upon Him." Do you know the One who says this? In the same epistle there is a verse, which precedes the one we are considering, and must precede it, too, in our own experience. It is found in the third chapter of Peter's first epistle, verse 18: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." This deals with the *sin* question, which must be dealt with first, before the *care* question. But the question of care is not overlooked, for what we are invited to do when we are brought to God

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is to cast all our care upon Him. If God has laid your sins upon Christ, *you* may lay all your care upon God. And the reason is given why we may: "For He careth for you."

Here, then, is the answer to the unbelief that thinks God allows the world to drift on, and has left it to take care of itself. This is as untrue as every other lie of which Satan is the source. Those words, "He careth," that invitation to "cast all our care upon Him," come to us with the very stamp of truth. It would be fiendish to mock us with such words. Ah! mockery cannot coin such words as those. They tell their own tale, that behind them there is a heart we may well trust.

They are words, too, that appeal to all, for who does not know care? The other day, having to wait outside a West-end office, we had the opportunity of watching the faces of people in a crowded London thoroughfare. Hundreds passed us, amongst them different classes, and creeds, and nationalities; but in one respect they were all alike—there was more or less of care depicted in every countenance. Their cares were not alike, yet there was one remedy for all. How many know that they might have the peace of God, which passeth all understanding? How many could look up and say, "He careth for me"?

R. E.

THE SEALING AND FILLING OF THE SPIRIT.

(Being an answer to a letter of inquiry.)

YOU ask, dear brother, "What is your reading of Acts xix. 2?" and say, "Acts ii. 4 and Acts iv. 8 showed that Peter had more than one filling." Now you must clearly understand that I am no teacher, nor am I by any means well up in Scripture, but it is doubtless well for us to bear in mind that neither Old Testament saints, nor even the saints who were with the Lord when He was down here, were sealed or indwelt by the Holy Ghost. In fact, none were until Acts ii. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39). The Holy Spirit used to come "upon" Old Testament saints, and they prophesied. For instance, He came "upon" King Saul and he prophesied (1 Sam. x. 10, etc.), but He did not abide always with him or any other Old Testament saint. Even David said, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me"; but of course *we* could not pray thus, for our Lord has said, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may *abide* with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth . . . for He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you" (John xiv. 16, 17). Now this promise was fulfilled in Acts ii., when the Holy Ghost came down and baptised all believers into one

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body—the Church. All these believers had been Jews, but now they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit they were really and truly Christians. So at the present time all true believers are “sealed” or indwelt by the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 13), and are so added *to* the already baptised Body. There is no repetition of baptism of believers into the Body of Christ, and there is no withdrawal of the Spirit from one who is “sealed” or indwelt by Him. “And He shall abide with you for ever.” But He is *grieved* by what *man* may call “small” sins of any kind. May God deliver you and me from thus grieving Him! We don’t get, I think, any mention of Gentile believers “indwelt” by the Holy Ghost until Acts x. 44, 45, hence, I suppose, the ignorance of the saints at Ephesus, as shown in Acts xix. 2. With regard to Acts ii. 4 and Acts iv. 8, and your remark that these scriptures “showed that Peter had more than one filling,” I don’t think it should be put quite like that, as we must remember that the *normal state* of a Christian is *being “filled”* by the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 4); but it is much to be feared we are not, at times, in our normal condition, hence the admonition, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. v. 18).

Possibly it may be well to recapitulate a little. The Holy Ghost used to come “upon” Old Testament saints, also “upon” those saints who lived during our Lord’s sojourn on earth, and it

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was their privilege to be "filled," but they were not indwelt by Him. On the contrary, New Testament saints, *i.e.* since Pentecost, have been indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and it is our privilege to be "filled" by Him. The Holy Ghost also dwells in the Church corporately—the Church which is Christ's Body. So we are united to Him, our Head, in the glory, and also to each other down here, "for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v. 30), "and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5).

If these truths were known and acted upon by all Christians, dear brother, what a blessed state of things. There would be no more isms and no more divisions!

C. P. W. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. W.—John iii.—Although forgiveness of sins is not a subject specifically dealt with in the Gospel of John, yet it treats of truths that necessarily involve it. For example—the gift of the Holy Spirit. No one receives that gift until he is forgiven.

Do we understand you to mean that the lifting up of the Son of Man points to His resurrection and glorification at God's right hand in heaven? This cannot be, for in chapter xii. 33 we are expressly told that it refers to His death and the manner of it. The serpent lifted up by Moses is a type of Christ on the cross—the only hope for sinful men. Did the serpent-bitten in the wilderness look and live? It is even so now. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the

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wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

There is a tendency to limit the lifting up of the Son of Man to that aspect of it implied in Romans vi. 6. That our old man has been crucified with Him, and our status as children of fallen Adam brought to an end, is a blessed truth, no doubt. But surely it embraces more than that, or else *atonement* is excluded, and without atonement, how shall any receive the gift of eternal life? Before this can be conferred, the prior question of our sin and guilt must be set at rest. Any view not broad enough to include this seems to us too narrow. Now there are two things which are absolutely necessary if man is to be blessed. There must be a new birth and, above all, a sacrifice for sins which shall meet the righteous requirements of the Eternal Throne, so that God may not only justly forgive, but bestow eternal life according to His gracious and sovereign pleasure. The Son of Man *must* be lifted up, and we *must* be born again.

Therefore, though forgiveness of sins is not the specific end in view in John iii., but eternal life, yet the latter involves the former. When the father fell on the neck of his prodigal son and covered him with kisses he did not say, *My son, I forgive you*. There was no need. The best robe, the ring, the shoes, and the fatted calf, to say nothing of the manner of his welcome, all told him of forgiveness and of something immeasurably more.

As to Nicodemus, we think you are right in regarding him as one who was being attracted to Christ, but you go too far in saying that he was "in some measure

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in the light of Christianity." Indeed, in point of knowledge, he was ignorant of things which a master of Israel ought to have known. He stumbled at the Lord's words about the new birth, and like a man groping in the dark he anxiously asked, "How can these things be?" And yet we should suppose he had often read Ezekiel xxxvi., xxxvii. But it is clear that the Lord's teaching in the first part of John iii. does not go beyond *the kingdom* of God, to see and enter into which a man must be born again. A Jew should have known this. In the second part there is an advance. He speaks of heavenly things, of the love of God in giving His only-begotten Son, of eternal life, embracing as it does for us the relationships into which the believer is now brought in virtue of Christ's redemption work and the coming of the Holy Ghost. This no Jew could have known. Such things were not revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures—they are, thank God, in the New.

W. B. H.—Matt. xvi. 18, 19.—First of all remark that the Lord here speaks of two things—His Church and the Kingdom of Heaven. These are not to be confounded. The former Christ Himself builds. It is His workmanship alone; impossible, therefore, that evil should enter into it. The rock on which it should be built was the confession which Peter, taught of the Father, made, namely, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Church, as built by Christ Himself, is founded on that rock—the true character and glory of His person. In His Church Peter should be a stone, and against it the gates of Hades should not prevail.

The Kingdom of Heaven is another thing. Those

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who compose the Church may be said in a general way to have part in it as they shall reign in it by-and-by, but the Kingdom of Heaven is not the Church, and never will be. Into Heaven's kingdom upon earth—for such is the force of the term—evil things may enter, as we learn from the parables of Matthew xiii. Unto Peter then the keys of this kingdom were to be entrusted—a solemn charge—and accordingly we see in Acts how he takes the lead in the administration of it, and he was the first to open the door to the Gentiles in Acts x. Whatsoever he bound on earth, or loosed, in the faithful discharge of this trust should be ratified in heaven. But this binding and loosing was not confined to Peter. We read of it again in Matthew xviii. 18, and here it is referred to the Church, to the two or three gathered to My name, as the Lord says. The power to bind and loose rests with them. It is in relation to one guilty of personal trespass who refuses to hearken unto any entreaty and remonstrances. The man's sin was bound, so to speak, upon him, and he himself might also come under the direct discipline of God. For an example in point you may refer to James v. 14–16. Only let us carefully remember that this binding and loosing has no reference to *eternal* forgiveness and condemnation. What Peter could do in his sphere or the Church in hers has nothing to say to what God can do. A servant's act, if in agreement with his master's will, may receive a master's seal, but that is not saying that the servant can do what his master can. The servant's authority is limited to his own sphere and goes no further. Now eternal forgiveness rests with God alone. And we know that all believers are

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not only forgiven their sins, but they are also God's dear children, and from His love they shall never be separated. But this does not exempt them from God's holy government. As a Father He judges His children, and none of us are outside the circle where He has sway. 1 Peter i. 17 clearly shows this, and 1 Corinthians xi. 30-32 illustrates the same principle. See also 1 Corinthians v. 13, with 2 Corinthians ii. 6-10.

As to the spirits in prison about which you inquire, we must refer you to an article on the subject in our May issue of last year. It is plainly shown that it can have no reference to anything that took place between our Lord's death and resurrection. It would be singular indeed if the disobedient of Noah's day were singled out from the rest to hear the preaching of Christ, yet it is of these, and of these only, that the passage speaks.

A. B.—John iii. 16.—Ought we not carefully to distinguish between everlasting life and everlasting existence—the latter the portion of all men, the former the glorious privilege, through grace, of all believers on the Son of God? Are you not confounding these two conditions? There are men all around us who care nought for Christ, yet they live, and if they live in this world though they have not everlasting life in that they have not Christ, why should it not be so in other and eternal scenes?

ANONYMOUS.—We have received the little book you sent us, and notice those parts you have underlined. A general review of its teaching we cannot undertake to give, but if you will put your difficulties into definite questions, they shall be answered to the best of our ability.

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THE REVIVAL.

IT cannot be doubted that among Christians generally there is a growing belief that God is going more abundantly to show His saving power, and that in many places we may expect to see souls in unusual numbers brought to Christ. The work in Wales has enlarged this expectation and greatly quickened the desire that the cloud, so full of blessing, may spread itself all over the land. And, of course, all of us fervently hope that God will graciously work in the buildings in which we meet and in the circle in which we mostly move. It would distress us beyond measure were anyone to prophesy that showers of blessing would fall everywhere else, and these be left as dry as the parched places of the wilderness. The possibility of such a thing—*and it is possible*—ought deeply to affect our hearts. Now it is generally the case that any widespread blessing in the gospel is preceded by a revival in the souls of God's people, and this begins with a felt need of prayer, accompanied by a deep conviction of our serious shortcomings in this respect. United prayer there will be—there cannot be too much—but personal and private prayer with confession and humiliation before God takes precedence of that. And oh, how great is the need! Alas! where are we, and where have we been?

A brief moment spent on our knees in the morning and another when going to bed at night is the story most of us have to tell. And even then our prayers concern ourselves and our own things, and "all saints" and "all men" have but little or no place in them. Nor, indeed, shall we be in a condition to pray for others until our own hearts are right with God. If there be any cloud between Him and us, any sense of distance or estrangement, how is it possible for us to plead either for "all saints" or "all men"? Let each one get right with God first; let every idol be dethroned, every neglected obligation be fulfilled. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24). This should be our starting prayer. Mark the *me* and the *my*; it is all so very personal. And if God turns His search-light on, many an unclean thing may be found hid in "the inner part of the house" that will have to be brought out and cast away, as was the case in the day that Hezekiah cleansed the temple of the Lord (2 Chron. xxix. 16).

For we may be in the terrible condition described in the letter to the Church at Laodicea, and be altogether ignorant of it. Indeed, that is one of the most distressing features of her case, so full of warning to us. Wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked—such was her

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moral state, and yet she knew it not. What! May we be in such depths of misery and destitution and not be conscious of it? Indeed we may. Nor was this all, for her utter want of discernment went hand in hand with the proud assumption that she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing. Her judgment was utterly astray. We, too, may have gone further on that road than we suspect. For—I say it in all seriousness—we may have our Bible-readings, lectures, conferences, and favourite teachers after whom some run with more than questionable eagerness; we may view with complacent pride all these useful helps which make our spiritual environment so extremely comfortable, and leave, as we think, so little to be desired, and all the while be under the Laodicean delusion. I do not say that it is so, I only speak of the possibility. It is not what we hear or know and can talk about that counts, but *what we are*. Hence the need of praying the prayer of the psalmist: “Search *me*, O God, and know *my* heart: try *me*, and know *my* thoughts.” Let us not shrink from this, for the road to the heights of heavenly communion lies through the valley of humiliation and self-judgment. Oh that God would open our eyes! What a signal favour it would be! Humbling, *startling* perhaps, as the discovery is made that instead of wealth and growing prosperity we have nothing save naked-

ness and poverty in its extremest forms. But delivered from such a dream what untold blessing would result, which, beginning with ourselves, would extend in circles widening as they go.

Down on our faces before God we must get if there is to be any revival that shall touch us and those among whom we move. Do not let us tarry till others are ready to follow, for while we are tarrying, the wave of blessing may roll past and leave us beached high up upon the sand—a ship that shall never sail the seas again. It is a very individual thing. Search *me*, try *me*. We shall stir others when we ourselves are stirred, not before. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

Let us pray that the spirit of prayer may fall upon God's people everywhere, but while we look far out on the broad fields of Christendom, let us first expect our prayers to be answered in those with whom we are in constant touch. And let us pray for God to raise up among us men full of the Holy Ghost—men who live before God in secret, and who shall come forth from His holy place to speak to others. A ministry full of the Holy Ghost is one of the crying needs of the hour. It is not enough that the truth be preached. Orthodoxy without the power of the living God,

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whether in a cushioned pulpit or behind a desk of deal, is the deadeast of all dead things.

God is able to do anything; therefore we must not be discouraged, however hopeless things may look. Think of the prophet when he was set down in the valley which was full of dry bones. They were very many and very dry. Can these bones live? Only God knows. But at the divine command he prophesied, and there followed a shaking—bones came together, bone to his bone, and sinews and flesh came upon them, and skin covered them from above. No longer now a valley of dry bones, but of prostrate human forms which had no life. Again he prophesied, and then came the quickening breath, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an army exceeding great (Ezek. xxxvii.). God can do great things. He is the God of resurrection. No room, then, for despair. Only *let us get right with God*, and we shall see His powerful hand at work, not without. “And He did not many mighty works *there*, because of their unbelief.” “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Let that be written on our heart, not as words on a school-boy’s slate, but as with the point of a diamond on the face of a rock.

Yes; earnest, fervent, effectual, private prayer there must be. We must draw near to God with integrity of heart and ask Him to search us and cleanse us. The light of His presence will

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reveal the uncleanness of our garments, and many a strange god and many an adornment of the flesh may have to be buried under an oak, as when Jacob went back to Bethel (Gen. xxxv. 4). But how great will be the gain! Then with a clear conscience—nothing between us and the living God—we shall be free in spirit to intercede with Him for others, and He will give us the desire of our hearts.

With the incoming tide of spiritual power and blessing, how many things will be swept into the Dead Sea. Strife, pride, bitterness of spirit, cold, carping criticisms, sectarian preferences—I of Paul, I of Apollos—all will go down beneath the flood. The Holy Ghost does not foster these. Where such things prevail the praying spirit is far away. Death, darkness, and dearth are there, and with such the Holy Ghost has no part.

LETTERS TO AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

No. I.

I WAS deeply interested in your letter, and I am sending you a book* which I hope and pray may be used of the Lord to help you in your difficulties. Your case is not uncommon; indeed, I have met with many almost exactly similar, and the mistake is always the same. *It is looking within to find what can only be found in Christ.*

* *God's Way of Peace.* By E. Dennett. 3d.

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Instead, therefore, of seeking to ascertain whether you are in the kingdom or not, look away to Him, and ask yourself if you have a sufficient foundation to rest on before God in Him, and in His one sacrifice (Heb. x.), and whether He, in all His blessed perfection and acceptance, meets the mind of God. If so, *you can rest in Him*, not in yourself; in what He is, and not in what you can be. And never forget, dear brother, that He is a Saviour from self as well as from sin. Recollecting this, you will trust in Him *every moment* for needed strength and grace, and you will find that He is able to deliver you from your temptations, and to sustain you in His presence.

Never doubt that He is an all-sufficient Saviour, and that your joy, yea, all your need, is to be found in Him alone. You may have conflict similar to that in Romans vii. (as you will read in the little book I send) before you lose sight of yourself, and lose yourself in Christ, but that is the goal to which you must look.

Courage, then, dear brother. He is waiting upon you, and if you are not cleaving to anything unsuited to Him, He will undertake for you, and lead you into the enjoyment of His presence and love.

After you have prayerfully read the book I shall be glad to hear from you again, and to help you as the Lord may enable.

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No. II.

I am thankful to perceive that the Lord Himself is teaching you, and He will both continue to teach you and to lead you into the enjoyment of what He teaches, if you are content to leave yourself in His hands, *and allow nothing in heart, walk, or conduct which might grieve the Holy Spirit.* He ever desires our fullest blessing, and hence there is no hindrance on His side. Whenever, therefore, you are conscious of coldness or indifference, form the habit of getting into His presence, and of laying out your state before Him, and look to Him to come in, as, for example, in Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. Together with this, always remember two things: first, that the Lord never ministers truth to us except in relation to our spiritual state. There are many who want to build from top to bottom—to go on to Z before they have got through A, B, C. Secondly, never be in a hurry in spiritual things. It is good that a man should both hope and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the Lord. There is often a reason in our state for the Lord's delay to lead us into a fuller enjoyment. Wait, therefore, on Him and you will never be confounded. E. D.

“IF the eye, instead of resting on our sins and sorrows, could rest only on Christ, it would sweeten many a bitter cup, and enlighten many a gloomy hour.”

ECHOES FROM A GREAT WAR.

THE night of February 8th, 1904, will long be memorable in the annals of warfare as the night of the bold attack of the Japanese on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur.

In Russian circles there had been rumours for some days that war was imminent. To-morrow, perhaps, or the day after, they would sally forth and chase their contemptible enemies from the seas. But to-night there was peace, and they would go ashore for a long farewell. Were there not a dinner and a dance at Admiral Starck's in honour of his wife's birthday, to which many of the officers of both the navy and the army were invited? Batoufsky's Circus, too, famous throughout the Orient, was to perform, and various minor entertainments would cater for all classes. So on that night a large number of officers and men were off duty, and Port Arthur was a scene of gaiety and amusement. True, sounds of firing had been heard, and the revellers had paused a moment to inquire what they could mean. Had a fresh ship arrived from Europe, and was this a salute? But no; salutes were not fired in the middle of the night. Was it a surprise by the enemy? That was unlikely. Perhaps one of the ships was doing a little target practice on its own account. And thus they let the matter rest.

But what had really happened was this. Just

before midnight the Japanese had steamed swiftly and silently into range, discharged their terrible guns, and slipped away. Then after a brief interval they repeated the attack, and under cover of night had escaped, practically uninjured. In each case all was over in five minutes.

With the dawn, boats began to come ashore bringing news of the disaster, and when a crowd of officers and men, with beating hearts and haggard countenances, hurried on board, everywhere there were signs of the havoc that had been wrought. The two great ships, *Tsarevitch* and *Retvisan*, were half sunk, and a ghastly boat-load of dead bodies was being taken ashore for burial.

But why recall the awful story? To remind you, my reader, of a far greater event to which you and I are swiftly and silently travelling, an event of imperial magnitude, beside which the one I have related pales into insignificance. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James v. 8). How will He find you? I own I am anxious about your soul. You have been baptised; outwardly at least you have part in the communion of saints; you are a Sunday-school teacher, perhaps a mission worker; your friends believe you to be a Christian, but, you know, you are not converted, your heart is not right with God, you have never felt your need of Him, your sins have never troubled you, you

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have never ventured your all on the mighty sacrifice of Jesus: in spite of your religion you are far more unprepared than those Russians were. Let me warn you solemnly, pleadingly, of the danger of delay. What if you should be one day too late? Take heed, "lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping" (Mark xiii. 36), or revelling, or even working, but not ready.

During the days that followed, a careful watch was kept, and whenever a Japanese cruiser or torpedo-boat came in sight, the Russians prepared to avenge themselves. But their ships' anchors were of an old-fashioned type and took so long to weigh that the opportunity was lost. Naval experts are agreed that the anchors should have been left at the bottom, the cables slipped and moored to a buoy, and thus the delays would have been avoided.

One is irresistibly reminded of certain estimable people; they are amiable, pious, exemplary, but *stationary*. We do not find fault with their conduct, but it is a matter of regret that they are never ready for anything like aggressive work. Some old-fashioned anchor holds the good ship perpetually in one position. Covetousness is such an anchor. "My profession demands all my time and energies," says the aspiring student. "Business must be attended to," says the commercial man; and he makes the remark as

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seriously as though he were quoting Scripture. "There are the children," says the busy mother; "they must be educated and fitted to take their place in the world." All right enough, but behind these pleas, and almost unsuspected, is there not too often the striving for that sordid dust, the love of which is a root of all evil?

Pride is another of these old-fashioned anchors whereby the great enemy has rendered many a one well-nigh useless. Pride of birth, of position, of means, of education, or, worse than all because more subtle, spiritual pride. Does not our Lord include pride among the evil things that, coming from within, defile the man?

Prayerlessness is another heavy anchor. Of course I know all Christians pray, but it is to be feared we often do not get much beyond the prayer of Jabez, "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!" (1 Chron. iv. 10). We may well ask—How much do we know of labouring fervently in prayer?—of "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18)? Have you, my reader, ever consciously cried to God, like Jacob, from the depths of your soul, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless"—not yourself, perhaps, but your

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brother, sister, husband, wife, or child, and received the answer, "Thou hast had power with God, and hast prevailed"? "We will give ourselves continually to prayer" (Acts vi. 4), said the apostles in early days. An old Christian, long since gone to his rest, would say, if he heard the workmen pass to their daily toil before he had risen to pray, "These men shame me; my Master is worthy of better service than theirs." Alas! do not the words spoken to Israel by Isaiah come very closely home to us to-day? "There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that *stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee*" (Isa. lxiv. 7).

Neglect of the Word is another anchor that drags down as with an iron chain. People say they have no time, but they make time to read other books. Again, it is urged that the Bible is hard to understand, that any little devotional work helps more, and so on. It will not do; the Word is the true food of your soul, and you must learn how to read it. Your unfamiliarity with it is the cause of half your trouble; if you would read on patiently in humble dependence on the Spirit of God, you would soon begin to find profit from its holy pages, and insensibly you would grow thereby.

Fellow Christian, are you bound and chained by either of these old-fashioned anchors? They are so effectual that Satan has no need to invent new ones. Oh! let the anchor go, whatever it is

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Have you never read what the Lord said about Meroz? "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Judges v. 23). Did not your Lord die and rise again, that He might deliver you from all that would hold you in bondage? Do you not see what a wondrous privilege you are forfeiting? You are chained and bound, and yet you might come in the power of your victorious Lord to His help against the mighty.

But let us return to the story of the war and see if we may gather up yet one more lesson.

After a week or two the Japanese considered that their ships might be better employed than in cruising about near the entrance of the harbour to keep the Russians from coming out, and they conceived the project of so blocking its mouth that only the smallest vessels could pass in and out. They loaded five steamers heavily with stone ballast, and then, having explained to the men the extremely dangerous nature of the task, they asked for volunteers. Fourteen men were required for each, seventy in all. Would the men rise to the occasion, or would their courage fail under such a test? Two thousand names were given in, many of them, according to an old Japanese custom, written literally with their

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blood. I need not detail what followed; how on the night of February 23rd they worked their way in under a veritable hail of bullets, and, although not quite successful in their mission, owing to difficulties rendering it well-nigh impossible, they yet sank their steamers, and gained the boats, brought with them for the purpose, with only one killed and three wounded.

All honour to their courage and splendid loyalty!

To-day there are posts of special danger in the warfare which you and I profess to be engaged in. There are the squalid slums of our great cities, the fever-haunted lands of Africa, the superstition-cursed towns and villages of South America; there is India with its caste-bound millions, its famine and its plagues; there is China with its untold woes, its unnumbered groans; and we seem to hear the voice of the Lord saying again, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Are there not some who will answer, "Here am I; send me"? some who are ready to write, not their names, but His name with their own blood if need be? to say, as the greatest of all missionaries once said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish . . . the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24)? The Lord grant it may be even so.

L. R.

“SHE DID IT FOR MY BURIAL.”

Matt. xxvi. 12 ; Mark xiv. 3-9 ; John xii. 3-7.

THE odour of the spikenard sweet,
Poured forth upon His holy feet,
Expressed a woman's love and pain,
For whom she spent her earthly gain,
For whom she suffered loss.

And the three hundred pence and more
(Judas could count the money o'er)
Was valued by her single eye
Only for One about to die,
For He was all her gain.

But though indignant thoughts were raised,
God was her Judge—His sentence praised ;
Harsh words might fall upon her ear,
She heeded not, for He was near,
He undertook her cause.

The Son of God had won her heart ;
Mary had chosen that good part ;
She worshipped at His sacred feet ;
Her off'ring was an odour sweet
Acceptable to Him.

Her lips were mute, she did not seek
To justify her act, nor speak.
And though, since then, long years have fled,
And Mary is among the dead,
And Christ is on the throne,

Yet His enduring word is heard,
Which testified that others erred ;
And still the sentence is read o'er,
Which shall be said for evermore—
“She hath done what she could.”

S. C. M. A.

THE BOOK THAT LIVES.

"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever : for they are the rejoicing of my heart."—PSALM cxix. 111.

A LARGE proportion of human books are long ago dead, and even shrivelled like Egyptian mummies. Entomb them in your public libraries if you will, but henceforth they will stir no man's pulse and warm no man's heart. But this thrice-blessed Book of God, though it has been extant among men these many hundreds of years, is immortal in its life, unwithering in its strength. The dew of its youth is still upon it ; its speech still drops as the rain fresh from heaven ; its truths are overflowing founts of ever-fresh consolation. Never book spake like this Book ; its voice, being the voice of God, is powerful and full of majesty.

Jesus, the Sinner's Friend, walks in the avenues of Scripture as once He traversed the plains and hills of Palestine. You can see Him still, if you have opened eyes, in the ancient prophecies ; you can behold Him more clearly in the four gospels ; He opens and lays bare His inmost soul to you in the epistles, and makes you hear the footsteps of His approaching advent in the symbols of the Apocalypse. The living Christ is in the Book ; you behold His face almost in every page. The Christ of the Mount of Benediction speaks in it

still. The God who said "Let there be light" gives forth from its pages the same divine fiat; while the incorruptible truth, which saturated every line and syllable of it when first it was penned, abides therein in full force, and preserves it from the finger of decay. "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

It is the Word of God that is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. There must be life in it, for by it men are born again. As for believers, the Holy Spirit often sets the Word on a blaze while they are studying it. The letters were one time before us as mere letters; but the Holy Ghost suddenly came upon them, and they spake with tongues. The chapter is lowly as the bush at Horeb, but the Spirit descends upon it, and lo! it glows with celestial splendour! God appears in the words, so that we feel like Moses when he put off his shoes from off his feet, because the place whereon he stood was holy ground. It is true, the mass of readers understand not this, and look upon the Bible as a common book; but if they understand it not, at least let them allow the truthfulness of our assertion when we declare that, hundreds of times, we have surely felt the presence of God in the pages of Scripture as ever Elijah did when he heard the Lord speaking in a "still small voice,"

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Some go to the Word of God with the idea that they shall find historical information about the ancient ages ; and so they will, but that is not the object of the Word. Others look for facts upon geology, and great attempts have been made either to bring geology round to Scripture, or Scripture to geology. We may always rest assured that truth never contradicts itself ; but as nobody as yet can fully expound geology—for its facts have not yet been compressed into a satisfactory theory—we will wait till the philosophers settle their own private matters, being confident that when they find out the truth, it will be quite consistent with what God has revealed.

In the family of heaven the Bible is “the child’s own Book.” We no sooner know our Father than this dear writing comes to us as a love-letter from the far-off country, signed with our Father’s own hand, and perfumed with His tender love.

Here let me remind you of the delightful familiarity of Scripture in this respect, that *it speaks the language of men*. If God had written us a book in His own language we could not have comprehended it ; but the Lord, in His Word, often uses language which, though it be infallibly true in its meaning, is not after the knowledge of God, but according to the manner of man. I mean this, that the Word uses similes and analogies of

which we may say that they speak humanly, and not according to the absolute truth as God Himself sees it. As men conversing with babes use their broken speech, so doth the condescending Word. The Book is not written in the celestial tongue, but in the *patois* of this lowland country, condescending to men of low estate. It feeds us on bread broken down to our capacity, "food convenient for us." It speaks of God's arm, His hand, His finger, His wings, and even His feathers. Now all this is familiar picturing, to meet our childish capacities; for the Infinite One is not to be conceived of as though such similitudes were literal facts. It is an amazing instance of divine love, that He uses homely parables so that we may be helped to grasp sublime truths. Let us thank the Lord of the Word for this.

How tenderly Scripture comes down to our simplicity! Suppose the sacred volume had all been like the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, small would have been its service to the generality of mankind. But how simple are the gospels! How plain these words, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved"! How deliciously clear those parables about the lost piece of money, the stray sheep, and the prodigal son! Wherever the Word touches upon vital points, it is as bright as a sunbeam. Mysteries there are, and profound doctrines, deeps where leviathan can swim; but where it has to do with what concerns us for

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eternity, it is so plain that the babe in grace may safely wade in its refreshing streams. In the gospel narrative the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err. It is familiar talk; it is God's great mind brought down to our littleness, that it might lift us up to His greatness.

Who, then, that finds God's Word so dear and kind a friend would forget or neglect it? If any of you have despised it, what shall I say to you? If it were a dreary book, written within and without with curses and lamentations, whose every letter flashed with declarations of vengeance, I might see some reason why you should neglect it; but O precious, priceless companion, dear friend of all my sorrows, making my bed in my sickness, the light of my darkness, and the joy of my soul, how can I forget thee, how can I forsake thee?

Many books in my library are now behind and beneath me; I read them years ago with considerable pleasure; I have read them since with disappointment; I shall never read them again, for they are of no service to me. They were good in their way once, and so were the clothes I wore when I was ten years old, but I have outgrown them. I know more than these books know, and know wherein they are faulty. Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the Book widens and deepens with our years. It is true it cannot really grow, for it is perfect; but it does so to our apprehension. The deeper you

dig into Scripture, the more you find that it is a great mine of truth. The beginner learns four or five points of orthodoxy, and says, "I understand the gospel, I have grasped all the truth." Wait a bit, and when his soul grows and knows more of Christ, he will confess, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad; I have only begun to understand it."

If you open your heart to Scripture, Scripture will open its heart to you; for it has secrets which it does not tell to the casual reader, it has precious things of the everlasting hills which can only be discovered by miners who know how to dig and open the secret places, and penetrate great veins of everlasting riches. Give thyself up to the Bible, and the Bible will give itself up to thee. Be candid with it, and honest with thy soul, and the Scripture will take down its golden key, and open one door after another, and show to thy astonished gaze ingots of silver which thou couldst not weigh, and heaps of gold which thou couldst not measure. Happy is that man who, in talking with the Bible, tells it all his heart, and learns the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him.

I am always sorry to be on bad terms with the Bible, for then I must be on bad terms with God. Whenever my creed does not square with God's

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Word, I think it is time to mould my creed into another form. As for God's words, they must not be touched with hammer or axe. Oh, the chiselling, and cutting, and hammering in certain commentaries to make God's Bible orthodox and systematic! How much better to leave it alone! The Word is right, and we are wrong, wherein we agree not with it. The teachings of God's Word are infallible, and must be revered as such.

Oh for the Berean spirit back again, to "search the Scriptures" to see if these things be so! I would like to see a huge pile of all the books, good and bad, that were ever written by men—yes, prayer-books, sermons, hymn-books, and all—consumed in one flame, if the reading of those books should be keeping you away from reading the Bible. A ton weight of human literature is not worth an ounce of Scripture. One single drop of the essential tincture of the Word of God is better than a sea full of our commentings and sermonisings. We must live upon the pure, infallible Word of God if we are to become strong against error, and tenacious of truth. Brethren, may you be established in the faith, rooted, grounded, built up in it! But I know you cannot be except you search the Scriptures continually. God grant us to love the Word, and feed thereon, that we may live to the glory of God all our days! Amen.—*Extracted.*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. F.—In reply to your inquiry as to “the use of intoxicants *as beverages*,” we would earnestly implore every young Christian never to use them *as beverages* in any shape or form. Yield to no persuasion, however specious; be firm and say no, and stick to it. Your Bible tells you of men who once lived in the fear of God, but who, falling under the power of drink, had their after-lives stained with revolting sins. Be warned by their example. Remember that whiskey, wine, and other intoxicating drinks have wrecked many a Christian reputation, ended many a career of usefulness, closed the mouths of scores of preachers who once bore splendid testimony for Christ, plunged many a home into depths of misery, and brought reproach and dishonour on the holy name of the Lord Jesus. Even where the habit of drinking has not led to such bitter results, it has, in numberless cases, seriously impaired the influence of those who indulge it. And if we take a wider survey, there is abundant evidence that drink fosters impurity of life and unfaithfulness to the most sacred obligations, it incites to deeds of violence, fills our prisons, and brings many to the scaffold or to a suicide’s grave. “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause?” asks the wise man in the Book of Proverbs. “They that tarry long at the wine,” is his answer. It goes down smoothly, but it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder; it leads to unholy speeches and unholy companionship; and he warns us that the poor votary of drink is like a man lying down to sleep on the top of a mast, who,

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oblivious of his danger, may perish at any moment in the surging sea (Prov. xxiii. 29-35). If any say, But did not Paul counsel Timothy to use a little wine? Yes, *but not as a beverage*. And that very counsel was a witness to Timothy's abstemiousness. And then there were his "often infirmities," which few of us can plead. Strychnine, and every other poison, may have their uses, but no sane person thinks of taking them *as a beverage*. No, the thing is played with, a liking for it is created, it is yielded to, in time it is regarded as a necessity, and who can foretell what the end will be? Shun it, then, we say, dear young men and maidens, lest, catching you in its clutches, it makes you its abject slave and deprives you of every desire to escape from its degrading and loathsome yoke. In doing so you will both save yourself and set an excellent example to others.

L.—Heb. vii. 3.—Bear in mind that the subject here is the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ, which was to supersede that of Aaron, but which itself was never to be superseded. Even Abraham had given tithes to him, and Levi had, so to speak, in the person of his great ancestor, confessed the supremacy of the Melchisedec priesthood over that of the sons of Levi. Now Melchisedec was a figure of Christ, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." His priesthood gave place to no other. This does not mean that he had no earthly parentage, but that the Book of Genesis makes no mention of it. He is thus a singularly striking type of Christ, and it is easy to see how pertinent the quotation is. We hold, then,

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that Melchisedec was a man like any other, and that the writer of the Hebrews only refers to the fact of there being no record of either his birth or death.

ONE IN TROUBLE.—There is no sinful habit that the Holy Spirit cannot enable you to overcome if, in the hour of temptation, you look up to Him who is able to keep you from falling. No doubt frequent indulgence has weakened your moral power, but there is One who can give you strength if you humbly seek it. And then remember that power over sin is not found in constantly thinking of it. The Holy Spirit would occupy your thoughts with Christ and with His things, and when thus engaged the besetting sin has fewer points of attack. Secondly, the step you contemplate is, we judge, a wise one, but if in anything you need divine guidance, it is in such a matter. Finally, we see no need of your naming the subject to any other ; no good end would be served by it.

LEARNER.—Ps. i.—We look upon the first three verses of this psalm as giving us the secret of soul-prosperity, and if, in an absolute sense, they were only perfectly exemplified in the Lord Jesus when he was here on earth, yet they are intended to encourage all of us to follow on in the same happy and fruitful path. As to your second question, Acts xx. 7 shows the practice of the early Christians. On the first day of the week, as distinguished from the Sabbath, they came together to break bread. No legal rule is laid down, for the Breaking of Bread is not an obligation but a gracious privilege. If, then, their practice be not binding on us, it at least offers an example that we may justly follow.

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A READER OF *S. T.*—We have not read for a long time any lines so full of truth and heart-experience as those you have kindly sent us. But inattention to the rules that govern poetical compositions precludes us from giving them a place in our pages. This we sincerely regret.

R. G.—We hardly suppose that special places of distinction in the coming kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will cease when that kingdom shall be given up to God, even the Father, according to 1 Corinthians xv. 24. If Scripture is silent on the subject we had better not say much. Your second question shall be dealt with in a second paper—possibly next month.

ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—Your questions had a partial answer in the paper of last month on "The Sealing and Filling of the Spirit," so that any further remarks need be but brief. The Holy Spirit is given to us individually when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, in proof of which we cite Acts x. 43, 44 and Ephesians i. 13. If the Samaritans in Acts viii. 14, 17 are an exception to this rule, there were reasons for it which only show the wisdom and goodness of God. Bitter jealousy and enmity existed between the Jews and Samaritans, springing out of their religious rivalry. *Therefore*, though the latter had received the gospel, they should not receive the great gift of the Spirit apart from Jerusalem. On the other hand, Jerusalem should be obliged to confess that Samaria had received the Word of God and should get the gift of the Spirit through their fellowship. Thus God would teach both Jews and

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Samaritans that they were not independent of each other, but were one in Christ. As to Acts xix. 1-7, these "certain disciples" had only received the teaching of John the Baptist; the gospel of forgiveness of sins, as in Acts x. 43, or "the gospel of your salvation," as it is called in Ephesians i. 13, they had not known. This Paul preached unto them, and subsequently they were baptised with Christian baptism and received the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of the apostle's hands. The imposition of hands in this case was to the intent that Paul's apostleship, which his adversaries called in question, should have this divine seal and so silence his traducers. It was not the ordinary way the Spirit was received—this was by "the hearing of faith," and not by laying on of hands (Gal. iii. 2).

J. H.—James i. 13; 2 Chron. xviii. 21, 22.—In James we are simply told that God is not the Author of wickedness. He never tempts men to commit sin; they are drawn away by their own evil desires. The case in 2 Chronicles is quite different. It is a question of God's righteous government. The unholy alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat should not succeed. Four hundred prophets, led by Zedekiah, might promise with one voice a glorious victory over Ramoth Gilead, but Micaiah, the one true servant of God, told another story. In intensely dramatic language he describes how Ahab was being lured to his own destruction. His warning was disregarded, and this led up to the fulfilment of the solemn sentence against Ahab of 1 Kings xx. 19. The cruel murder of Naboth was avenged. All this is an exhibition of God's governmental ways, and a totally different thing from James i. 13.

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SIGNS OF A REVIVAL.

THE signs of a revival, whether in an individual soul, in an assembly, or in a neighbourhood, will be found to be substantially the same. A revival of true, vital godliness in the souls of believers, or an increased number of conversions, is the work of God's Spirit. Strictly speaking, He is the only Revivalist. To apply the term to any of the servants of Christ is a mistake. Hence the signs and fruits of a genuine revival must be in accordance with truth and holiness, for He is "the Spirit of truth" and "the Holy Spirit." All that is contrary thereto must be attributed to man's faultiness in the details of the work.

1. The first sign or indication of a reviving of the Lord's work in the neighbourhood we believe to be *a fresh quickening of His own people in that place*. Like the fire that has become set and dull, it needs to be stirred up, so that its energies may be renewed, and that they may spread forth on all sides. In like manner, with the Lord's own people who may have become dull and inactive, they need stirring up. But when the divine life in the soul has been stirred up by the Spirit of God, then it will manifest fresh life and fresh energy. A heavenly freshness will pervade the soul as if it had received new life. This blessed work may begin, and for some time be manifest, in only one or two individuals; but where the

Spirit of God is there is gathering power, and their numbers must soon increase. By this means the people of God are brought into sympathy and fellowship with His mind and purpose. Now they can work together. The love of the world in its many forms will immediately and greatly decline. Obedience to its exorbitant demands will be refused. And on the other hand, love to Christ and true subjection of heart to His claims will greatly and rapidly increase. To meet the desires of His heart will now be the delight of each newly invigorated soul.

2. The second sign will be manifested in a *revived spirit of prayer*. The tender sensibilities of the renewed mind will soon be made to feel the coldness and deadness that prevail around. This will lead to an earnest desire for prayer on behalf of such. Time and place will be found. Difficulties hitherto insurmountable will be overcome. Still, there may be an increase as to the *number* of prayer-meetings without much increase as to the *spirit* of prayer. An effort may be made to "get up" prayer-meetings in one place because they have been made a blessing in another, or because they are becoming general. In some instances this may be little better than imitation. But where the work has been begun by the Spirit of God, there will be a real, earnest spirit of prayer. There will be such felt need and such conscious weakness that prayer will

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be eagerly desired. Any hour, any place, that affords the desired opportunity, will be heartily welcomed. The less display, the more congenial to the heart. There is a wonderful difference between merely coming to a prayer-meeting and coming in the true spirit of prayer. The one may be a formality, the other is a living reality; the former may be gone through in a dull, sleepy state, but the latter will be manifested in the stirring energies of life—in *a spirit of real waiting upon God and earnest crying to Him.*

3. The third sign may be *an increased love for precious souls.* The spiritual vision of the revived ones is now so bright and clear that the fearful condition of unbelievers, and the solemn realities of the future, are vividly before them and greatly affect them. Hence the eternal welfare of the unconverted becomes a subject of the deepest interest. They will think much about them, affectionately entreat them, and constantly pray to the Lord about them. Their love for precious, immortal souls will grow exceedingly. The love of Christ Himself for them is seen in a new light. His glory in their salvation, and His dishonour through their unbelief, are differently felt. The perishing soul is now, as it were, seen in His light, and loved with His love. Oh, what a change! what a happy change as to their love for precious souls! When things are in a low

state *within* the Church, souls that are *outside* are but little cared for.

4. There will now be *efforts made answering to this love*. We have observed in such times of refreshing that there is not only a difference in *praying*, but also in *preaching*. What plainness—what earnestness—what beseeching—what depth of feeling is exhibited, and how intensely bent the preacher is upon one thing, namely, to win souls to Christ. The Church has been awakened, aroused, blessed, and has caught the sacred fire. Everyone is seeking to do something for the glory of the Lord, the building up of the Church, and the ingathering of precious souls. Attention and kindness are shown to strangers. Children are cared for. The salvation of their souls is earnestly desired. The thoughtless outside are thought of, and efforts are made to bring them in. Tract distribution in various ways is attended to with the most lively and hopeful interest. All are at work, and all are earnest and happy in their work. A revived, healthy, vigorous, elevated tone and self-denying effort now characterise the assembly of God.

5. Another happy feature of a true revival is *an enlarged expectation of blessing*. Not only is blessing prayed for and efforts made to obtain it, but it is *expected*. God is trusted. His grace to meet every need is counted upon. Answers to prayer are looked for. Blessing to souls in con-

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nection with the preaching is searched for, and prayer is made that the search might not be in vain. It is no longer the mere routine of service, the use of means, as it is called, and leaving the results with God, without being concerned as to what these results are; but now, in the improved state of things, diligent search is made as to what ground the seed has fallen upon and where it has taken root.

At such times, and on some occasions, it has pleased the Lord to give special faith to some of His servants in expecting blessing. So much so that they have been led to pray for it, not only with expectation, but with certainty. And through them the faith of others has been strengthened and encouraged to look to the Lord in the fulness of expectation and in the confident assurance that showers of blessing would be poured down. Such faith can never be disappointed. Numbers of conversions must follow—the blessing must extend. The power of God is now manifest in the assembly even if His special servants are absent. The work cannot stand still; it moves on steadily and surely. Conversions bear the special seal of God. Unbelievers are more thoroughly overpowered by the character of the work than by the power of preaching. There is no room for criticism in such remarkable cases of blessing. God is present of a truth. His power is felt,

and numbers of the most unlikely and least expected bow before Him, confessing their sins and worshipping Him as their Saviour-God. Oh, what a blessed, happy, God-honouring state for an assembly to be in. To be brought into such close communion with God—such real fellowship with Him in His work of grace—such blessed nearness as to make the praying ones feel as if they were “inside the veil.” Oh, who would not earnestly breathe after such a state of things? Who would not seek to be blessed with the bright beams of such wondrous grace? Who would not fervently cry to the Lord that He would so revive His work amongst us, and give us to taste and see such floods of blessing?

May the above thoughts, which have been suggested by such scenes, lead many who may read this paper solemnly to judge themselves before the Lord as to how far their souls are in the present current of the Holy Spirit, and whether they are now praying and looking for such seasons of blessing in this day of His most marvellous grace. _____ *Communicated.*

“WHAT is the way to become an efficient preacher? ‘Young man,’ says one, ‘go to college.’ ‘Young man,’ says Christ, ‘*follow Me*, and I will make you a fisher of men.’ The process may appear to be very simple; but assuredly it is most efficient.”

WHO IS YOUR BISHOP?

(Outline of an Address to Converts.)

IT is an old saying, and a very true one, that the mill cannot grind with water that is passed. The same truth was expressed by the poet when he wrote:—

“’Tis not enough to help the feeble up;
But to support him after.”

The lesson thus taught in proverb and poetry finds a place also upon the page of Scripture, and has a very special application to us who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

When we first knelt as wretched sinners at His feet, we lost the heavy burden of our guilt, and our fears vanished as the morning mist before the rising sun. But one thing we did not lose, namely, our own inherent *weakness*. We were left just as weak and helpless *in ourselves* after our conversion, as we had been before.

Hence our need of the *after support* to which the poet refers. The knowledge of salvation and of grace received in bygone days will not suffice to carry us through the trials and difficulties of life to the glory of God. We need the loving heart, the strong hand, and the watchful eye of a living Friend to sustain us along the way.

And this is just what we have got. When we were converted, it was not only wonderful blessing that we obtained, but a wonderful Blessor;

not only a great salvation, but a great Saviour. We were brought to taste the stream of everlasting love; but, better still, we found an everlasting Lover for our souls. It was not merely receiving some *thing*, but getting to know some *One*.

“Not alone the gift of life,
But His own self He gave me.”

This truth is made very clear in the First Epistle of Peter. First of all, in chapter ii. 24 we read: “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” Then, in verse 25 we read: “Ye . . . are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” That is, that Jesus, besides having given Himself *for* us, to bear our sins and heal us by His stripes, gives Himself *to* us to be our Shepherd and Bishop.

We could not make a greater mistake than to suppose that any of us could get on for a single day without this living, loving Friend and Protector.

I once heard of a committee of men who met to arrange for the building of an asylum for the blind. It was thought that there would be no necessity to have windows; for what difference would it make to the sightless inmates whether the rooms were dark or light? As long as proper ventilation was secured, surely windows were not needed!

. So the asylum was built. For a time all seemed to go well, but by-and-by one after

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another of the inmates began to droop and sicken. Before long everyone in the place was ailing, and the committee met to inquire the cause.

"Why," said the doctors, "the cause is evident. The people, though blind, need the sunshine if they are to keep well. Put some windows in, and they will soon be all right."

Their advice was followed, and soon there was a marked improvement. Drooping spirits revived, haggard countenances regained their former cheerfulness. The mistake had been in thinking that the inmates could get on without windows.

In just the same way, if any Christian imagines that to have an asylum from the wrath to come is all that he needs, and that he can get on without the daily warmth and sunshine of the Saviour's company, he is woefully mistaken. We cannot possibly do without our Shepherd and Bishop.

In connection with the Shepherd, we think of the *hand*, and from that hand we receive two things—security and food. None who know the power of the Shepherd's hand will be afraid of being ultimately lost. Has He not Himself said of His sheep "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand"?

And the same hand that protects us and upholds us *feeds* us. He makes us to lie down in green pastures, prepares a table for us in the wilderness, and makes our cup run over. What

do we not owe to the shepherd-care of Jesus? Can you say, with David, "He is MY Shepherd"?

But He is also the Bishop of our souls. In connection with the Bishop we think of the *eye*, just as in connection with the Shepherd we think of the hand. Now what we have from the eye of Christ is guidance and rule. "I will guide thee with Mine eye," He says. His eye can read the future as well as the past, and amid the mazes and perplexities of life He can trace out a path for our feet. Do you ever feel at a loss to know which way to turn? Do you feel the need of having someone wiser than yourself to guide you? Then go to the Bishop of your soul for direction.

Then, as our Bishop, He *rules* us, and there must be a corresponding submission on our side. This is where the difficulty comes in with so many of the Lord's people. They want to have the Lord Jesus as a kind of constitutional sovereign with themselves as prime minister to do the greater part of the ruling. But Christ will not accept a position of that kind. He must be the absolute monarch of our lives; our real, and not merely our nominal Ruler.

Dear fellow-believer, you have trusted Him as your Saviour. You delight to think of Him as your Shepherd. Now look up and say, "Lord, Thou shalt be my Bishop, as well as my Saviour and my Shepherd."

H. P. B.

A MOMENTOUS INQUIRY.

(An answer to a Correspondent.)

IT is a rare thing for any lady to ask a clergyman such a pointed question as, *Are you saved?* and we are glad you had the kindness and courage to do so. Most people shrink from making this momentous inquiry of any, more especially of those who consider it their business to care for the spiritual welfare of others. Why this should be I cannot tell, for clergymen have souls like all the rest of us, and there may be many among them willing enough to learn from simple folks who hold not their office nor possess their gifts. Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, but he did not disdain the help of plain people like Aquila and Priscilla, who invited him to their home and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. From that time his sphere of usefulness was much enlarged, and he became a great help to many (Acts xviii. 24-28). Why should not the same thing happen in our day? If we can help those whose mission it is to help others, then the good is greatly multiplied—the seed sown may result in acres of waving corn.

A present salvation, alas! is so little known—there are but few who preach it in comparison with the many. What we mean by a present salvation is a knowledge of the forgiveness of our

sins, of the soul's reconciliation to God, of our acceptance in Christ, of our standing in the cloudless favour of God, a child, a dear child in His family, and *never to be anything less*. If any think that in speaking thus we are sailing under the flag of the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not as other men, we frankly admit the charge if our confidence is based on any goodness of our own, any supposition that we are without sin, or holier than other people. But it rests on nothing of the kind. Our boast is that all this blessedness is entirely of His free grace, and that we no more deserve it than a murderer deserves to be rewarded by the king for his crime. It is all of grace, we say, and if we speak with unwavering assurance, it is not because of aught we feel—though we are not without feeling—but because His word upon the subject is so plain that it is not possible to doubt without making Him a liar (1 John v. 10).

Three consecutive verses in Colossians i. deal with these points in a very simple manner. We invite the reader to turn up the chapter and look at verses 12–14. Here we learn that in God's dear Son we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. *We have it*. It is not a subject of hope, for a man does not hope for that he already has. But it is in Christ and through His precious blood we have it. And how freely this forgiveness is preached to

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men—to all men—may be seen in Acts xiii. 38, 39. It is the believer, and he only, who receives it. “By Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Observe the emphatic way in which Paul speaks. Especially observe the words “are justified from all things.” Could language be plainer? Could anything be more sure? Am I not entitled to appropriate those words to myself? Shall I be rightly charged with presumption if I believe them with the trust of a little child? Surely God would not mislead me, nor will His Word be found a refuge of lies which the storm by-and-by shall sweep away.

But this is not all. “Who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” We underline the *haths*. Observe them well. Not long ago we were under the authority of darkness. God was unknown. Utter ignorance of Him characterised us. How dense must that darkness be which no ray of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ has ever pierced. Such was our condition. But God has delivered us from it. He has shined into our hearts in all His ineffable love. As we gaze upon the cross of Jesus we behold, not alone the meeting of righteous claims on account of our many sins, but

love—the love of God revealed. The cross of Christ is indeed the declaration of His righteousness and the revelation of His love. The God whom the cross reveals is the One who has made Himself known to us. That revelation is our deliverance from the power of darkness. The sun rises and the night is gone!

But yet more. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." This is no life-long process, but a fact already accomplished. Does anyone say, "But you are going too far. Surely we are not fit for heaven while we have so much sin in us"? True, the flesh is still in us, and its works we know well—they are always and only bad. But there is something beside the flesh. We are new creatures in Christ, and we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. So, on the one hand, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," and, on the other, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). It is thus that we have been made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

If this be all true of us to-day, may we not through carelessness and sin relapse into our former state, and perish after all? We answer, "The Lord Jesus says of His sheep that they shall

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never perish, and none shall catch them out of His hand" (John x. 28). Ought we not to believe Him when He says this? But will not such doctrine lead to looseness of life? The very opposite. What appeals so powerfully to our hearts as the amazing grace of God, who has saved us and brought us near to Himself at such a cost? If we had been saved from earthly ruin by the benevolence of another, would not gratitude lead us to render such returns as lay in our power? Loved by Him, we love Him in return, and find our pleasure in seeking to give Him pleasure, to whom we owe our all for time and eternity. Moreover, Jesus is our Saviour to-day. From the judgment due to our sins He has already saved us, and now He lives to give us daily, hourly grace to cling to Him, to obey Him, and to pursue our way with diligence to the goal of all our hopes—Himself, His glory and kingdom. He teaches us to watch and pray, to distrust ourselves, and to count on Him every moment. It is thus He saves day by day.

And now in closing let me add a word about 1 Corinthians ix., which your clergyman quoted to prove that none can know whether he will be saved or not. Remark, the apostle is not speaking of himself or others as saints and saved ones, but as professors and preachers. He does not say, as so many are apt to suppose, "Lest having been forgiven and saved I should become a castaway,"

but lest having *preached* to others I should be one. Now a man may be an eloquent preacher, able to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, he may have vast stores of knowledge, be competent to understand all mysteries, and yet be nothing (1 Cor. xiii.). These intellectual endowments are no evidence of divine grace. The proof of the latter is seen in holiness of life and not in the power to preach. This humbling fact the gifted Corinthians needed to know, for they were glorying in external show and forgetting that all this counts for nought if there be no inward work of God and no outward look of faith to Christ as the Saviour of sinners. But were we able to explain every text in the Bible that your clergyman could quote in support of his contention, it would not give settled peace to any. It might remove difficulties, but to enjoy peace with God we must know what Christ has wrought for us by His finished work and also the true import of His resurrection. We will only add that many of these misused passages are dealt with in a pamphlet entitled *Fallen from Grace*, to be had from our publisher for twopence. A special article on the very subject of your inquiry will also be found in our January issue of 1904, which we believe is still on sale.

THINGS THAT MAKE PEOPLE ANXIOUS.

THE Lord Jesus once spoke of the "cares of this life." He knew all about them, and how very real they are. One great object of His coming into the world was to teach men how to get free from those cares. He taught them by precept and example to trust God.

What are some of the "cares of this life"? There is, first of all, the care connected with its very *maintenance*. How to make both ends meet, we may depend upon it, presses very heavily upon not a few. The husband does not know, perhaps, how long he may keep his situation. His health is failing, his income barely sufficient, and with a growing family expenses necessarily increase. Or, worse still, he is actually out of work. There is a widow with a number of young children dependent upon her. Work is uncertain, at the best hard, and the entire responsibility of the family devolves upon her. Is it possible under such circumstances to be free from care? We answer with unhesitating certainty, Yes. God has given us an object-lesson. It is before our eyes every day. Christ drew our attention to it. The birds have neither storehouse nor barn, yet they sing so blithely as if all the world were theirs. How are they fed? "God feedeth them" is the divine explanation.

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The prayer the Lord taught His disciples is in harmony with this: "Give us this day our daily bread." If the kind of life indicated here is accepted, it is possible to be free from care even in the poorest circumstances.

Are we not led back once more to the lesson of Luke x., "Take care of him"? If you are a child of God, however low down the ladder, however trodden upon and tried, however heavy the burden you are called upon to bear—have you ever yet taken the lesson of the Good Samaritan home to yourself, and realised that God has given orders for you to be taken care of?

For what does that guarantee but the very friendship of God? And if we can go to Him for all we want—no matter how great the want—we need have no care. We have said that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to teach men to trust God. Was anyone ever so poor as He, or so tried? And remember He had been rich. Possibly the greatest care comes not to those who have been born poor and remain poor, but to those who have known better days. The lesson Christ came to teach has therefore a special application to them, for He had been rich, but became poor (2 Cor. viii. 9). If we wish to know how poor He became, and how much He was tried, we have only to read the twenty-second Psalm. He was "a *reproach* of men," "*despised* of the people," laughed to scorn. Great and

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small, high and low, were against Him. His most intimate followers forsook Him. But there was one thing that wrung His heart more than all this: He was forsaken of God when made sin for us. And yet running all through the psalm there is a tone of unshaken trust. How wonderful, amid such abandonment, to hear not a murmur escaping those lips! Never for a moment did faith waver, though He was brought into the dust of death. And it is that One who says to us, in the midst of all our cares, that not one sparrow is forgotten before God, in order to remind us that we never can be; and then adds words that had remained unspoken since the beginning of the world by either philosopher or poet: "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke xii. 6, 7; 22, 24).

We are bound, of course, to use all proper means. But it will generally be found that it is not what we can do that brings the care, but *what we cannot do*. And it is just here we have

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to trust in God, simply resting in the words, "Your Father knoweth." "If ye then be not able *to do* that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" Do all you can do, but never be troubled about what you cannot do.

And then let us remember that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. It is astonishing, when we are put to the test, how little of real happiness depends upon things or circumstances. Christ had no money, and sometimes not where to lay His head, and yet He could speak of His peace and His joy. Someone who had resided in South Africa said the happy people were the Kaffirs, with only a simple hut and a blanket, and whose entire possessions would sell for 2s. 6d., and not the men who were making fortunes over diamonds and gold mines.

Ill health is often another fruitful source of care. Your very success in life may depend upon good health, and that seems denied. Or you may have others depending upon you, and you are feeling less and less equal to the strain. Perhaps few things are more trying than to feel unequal, physically and mentally, to the demands of your calling, and yet to be obliged to face them day after day. Under such circumstances everything is apt to become draped in black. All we look at is in varying shades of Indian ink. Heaven's blue is forgotten, and cold grey mist envelops

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everything. The thistle-down lighter than a feather seems to our distorted imagination a ton weight. All this may be purely physical; and there is the physical side of getting free from care as well as the spiritual, for man is body as well as soul and spirit. To pay due attention to each is one of the great problems of life. But the very remembrance that your feeling of depression has no real cause in circumstances, but only in some transitory condition of your body, will enable you to arise and shake yourself free from it. There is one text, too, which has often been like a sheet-anchor under pressure of this kind. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able; but will with the trial also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

Another cause of care is the habit of anticipating trouble and meeting difficulties half-way. How much arises from this mischievous foreboding! It would serve a useful purpose if we kept a record for a month of things that might have happened, but which never did happen. It would turn out something like this:—

1. Received letter from landlord that the house you rent is to be sold. A gentleman calls to look over it, and says he thinks he will become a purchaser; and if so, would come and live in it himself. You immediately become anxious as to where you will find another house to suit you as

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well, and mentally go through all the discomfort of a move.

Result, after some weeks of anxiety:—House did not find a purchaser at the auction, and you are left undisturbed.

2. Your boy comes home from school badly bruised: some other boy has pushed him down. For some hours you are in great anxiety as to whether the bone is broken and his face be disfigured for life.

Result:—Bone not broken. J—— just as good-looking as ever.

3. Your letter to a friend has not been answered. As it does not come your anxiety increases.

Result:—The answer did come; but through an extraordinary occurrence never reached you. When found, it proved that any anxiety respecting it was pure waste of time.

4. An act is done, or a word spoken, which seems to indicate unkindness on the part of one from whom you expected better things. You spend hours in considering what it can mean, and how it is to be met; and perhaps in smarting under a sense of gross injustice. Circumstances transpire afterwards which show that the word was never meant for you, nor had the act the significance you gave it.

Each one of us could add indefinitely to the list, and we should never exhaust the number of

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matters about which we trouble ourselves, and all to no purpose. Are they not occurring almost every hour?

We once overheard something that passed between two Christians we shall not easily forget. One was aged, and had been prosperous, but in the decline of life misfortune overtook him through the dishonesty of another. We can see him now as he stood in the doorway, his shining face set off by an abundance of white hair. As they parted, his friend said to him, quoting from Psalm xxxiv., "Well, remember, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.'" "Ah," he said, and they were the last words we ever heard him utter, "He has done a greater thing for me than that: He has delivered me from all my *fears*" (see same Psalm, verse 4).

Yes, it is surely a greater thing to be *delivered from all our fears* than *saved out of all our troubles*. It is those fears that cast such a dark cloud over many a life. And yet how often they are groundless fears! But if trouble actually does come, and the trial is upon us, then let us remember the words of the psalm already quoted: "This poor man *cried*, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." He *cried*, just as if he had fallen into some pit, or was being washed out to sea. And this is just how we must cry to God in our trouble.

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In this connection there are three verses we might do well to keep in mind.

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”

“I will trust, and not be afraid.”

“Trust in Him at all times.”

In regard to anticipating troubles. We once visited an old Christian suffering from a wasting disease, who expected, in the ordinary course of things, to last some three or four months longer and to gradually grow weaker and weaker until life ebbed away. This was a great trial to him, for he was a widower, living in the house of his daughter, a widow, and he seemed hardly able to bear the thought of the burden that his prolonged illness and consequent helplessness would be to her. Seeing his trouble, we knelt down and asked God that His child might be spared the many days of weariness that seemed between him and his longed-for release. The answer came more promptly than either of us could have expected. Instead of three months of weary waiting, there remained not three hours. We saw him at twelve. At two o'clock the same day his spirit was absent from the body and present with the Lord. “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. vi. 34). Here is our warrant for living, as someone has said, within the compass of twenty-four hours. And this is one secret of how to be free from care. R. E.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SEEKER FOR LIGHT.—“Mercy clearly is not the same thing as grace. Free gift, gift without any remuneration paid for it to the giver, seems to me to be the meaning of the word *grace*. But there is more in mercy than that; the term itself marks *de-merit* in the receiver, consciousness, too, in the giver or show-er of mercy that the party to whom he shows it deserves a contrary kind of treatment: thus the two words are carefully distinguished in Scripture.”

ANXIOUS ONE.—It is assuredly the duty of children to care for parents who have fallen into needy circumstances. Under the law a man was to open his hand wide to his poor brother: how much more under grace and when poor parents are in question. No argument should be necessary to convince any child of so plain a duty.

E. E.—1 Cor. viii. 13.—This passage, we believe, might be justly cited in support of the practice you name. A tender regard for the conscience of the *weak* should mark us all.

BAPTISM.—We believe the primitive administration of baptism was by immersion. Do not confound Christian baptism with that of John Baptist, to which the Lord, in grace, submitted. Be on your guard against attaching undue importance to external forms; it is the moral import of the act which is the great thing. If you inquire as to the latter, read Romans vi. Christian baptism cannot be intelligently administered the second time, even if thought faulty in its form.

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W. M.—The Holy Spirit was not abiding with the disciples when the Lord Jesus was with them. John vii. 39 plainly shows that He would not be given till the Lord was glorified. The act of the risen Saviour in John xx. 22 carries our thoughts back to Genesis ii. 7 and suggests the imparting to them of His risen life—life in the power of the Spirit. It was an act the significance of which would be better understood after the Holy Spirit has personally come. We do not look upon Acts x. 44–47 as a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost, though it was accompanied with the gift of tongues. The reason for this sign is easily seen. Cornelius and those with him were *Gentiles*. How should those of Jerusalem be satisfied that these *Gentiles* had really received the same gift as themselves? Tongues should be the convincing proof. This made it clear and undeniable.

J. A. E.—Luke xv. 25.—We cannot see how anyone can seriously contend that the elder son represents the angels. Surely those sinless and unselfish beings, in the presence of whom there is joy over the sinner's repentance, cannot be supposed to speak to God as that son spake to his father. The error arises from the unwise attempt to find a meaning for every detail of the story. The elder son represents the Pharisees who found fault with the Lord for receiving sinners and eating with them. Anyone with a proud, pharisaic spirit, finding fault with grace shown to the unworthy, is the elder son. We should try to seize the great teaching of the parable, if we would understand it right, and not fix our eye on the local colouring; if not, we shall find ourselves in a great maze, out of which it will not be easy to make our way.

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Mark xvi. 15 we take to apply to the present moment. It is the divine authority for our going everywhere with the glad tidings of grace for perishing souls. Our Lord would have all men know of His salvation. How shall they know if no one carries the message to their door? See Romans x. 14, 15, and mark the manner in which the apostle justifies his going to the heathen with the gospel of God. "*Whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"—be he Jew or heathen. But how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how believe if they never hear? and how hear if no one ever tells them? Oh that many a loving heart, warmed with celestial fire, may hasten to carry the glad tidings even to the very ends of the earth! Finally, in the second part of Numbers xv. you will find that the sin offering *is* mentioned.

M. A. W.—Matt. v. 22.—We must not divorce the latter clause from the former. If anger rages in the bosom—anger without a cause—unholy anger, heated with the fire of hell, leading him who is under its power to speak in false and bitter terms, then it is evident that such a person is in danger of coming under the judgment of God. But in Luke xii. 20 and 1 Corinthians xv. 36, the term "fool" is used in another manner and in another spirit altogether. It exposes the unwisdom of a man who leaves God out of his plans, and reproves the folly of another who, in his reasonings, overlooks the processes of God in nature and forgets that God is omnipotent and can do everything. It is not the mere use of the word that is to be considered, but the *how* and also what lies behind it.

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GAL. iv. 22-25.—The allusion here to the two sons of Abraham and to their mothers, Hagar and Sarah, is to illustrate the difference between law and grace, flesh and spirit, bondage and liberty. It is an allegory picturing the two systems, Judaism and Christianity—the bondage of the one, the liberty of the other. This is plain if you read down the chapter and on into the next.

R. A. M.—For a reply to your question, see “A Momentous Inquiry” in our present issue.

LEARNER.—The difference between the parable of the talents in Matthew xxv. and the pounds in Luke xix. seems to be that in the former we see the wisdom of the Lord in bestowing the talents as He pleases and according to the several ability of the receivers, and in the latter, where to each is given the same sum, it is rather a question of responsibility. The differing talents remind us of Romans xii. 6; the pounds of Col. iii. 23. There are special gifts and also the responsibility that rests on all, whether gifted or not. As to 2 Tim. i. 12-14, Paul had committed unto the One whom he believed his soul, his eternal happiness for another and brighter day. What was committed to Timothy was the truth he had learned of Paul. The foundation of God in chap. ii. 19 was what God had laid, which nothing could shake, and which had the sure seal named in the verse. Attention to Matt. xxi. will show that the Lord did not enter into Jerusalem riding, as you suppose, upon the ass *and* upon its colt. Our space does not allow us to answer, save briefly, a string of questions. One or two at a time would be better.

SINS AFTER CONVERSION.

YOU may rest assured that this detail in the great plan of salvation has not escaped the notice of the God of all grace, and though it is a far graver matter for the believer to sin than for the unbeliever, yet He has made provision for it of such a nature as to deepen the believer's abhorrence of sin, whilst relieving him of every burden.

Sin affects a man in more ways than one. It has various results. Let us first of all distinguish between them.

1st. *Sin separates from God.* In the case of our first parents it caused a complete rupture in their relations Godward (Gen. iii. 24). Thousands of years after, the prophet said to the people of his day, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. lix. 2). This effect of sin is, in its nature, eternal, for in Luke's gospel the Lord Jesus draws aside the curtain of the eternal world, and shows us the rich sinner of earth for ever banished to hell, with "a great gulf fixed" (ch. xvi. 26). Note in connection with this—the great primary result of sin—that we think of God simply as our *God*; the Judge of all.

2nd. *Sin spoils a man's career in this world.* Just as surely as the material world is governed by the law of gravitation, so the spiritual world is

governed by a law, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7): thus it is that sin brings suffering and sorrow in its train. This "law" works with absolute impartiality. If a believer sins, he has to suffer its results in this life just as much as an unbeliever. Note that in this connection we think of God as the *Governor*, in a providential way, of this world.

3rd. *Sin snaps the tender link of holy, happy intercourse, which exists between a believer and God.* This side of the question has nothing to do with the unconverted, for in their case the link has never been established. David prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Ps. li. 12); but then the very word he uses, "restore," implies that at some former time he had possessed it. Note that in this connection we think of God as the *Father*.

Now, let us inquire what bearing conversion has upon all this. When you were converted, what happened?

As to the first effect of sin, I dare say you can readily answer, "Thank God, when I was converted my sins were forgiven." True; but now for another question. How many of your sins were then forgiven? Let Scripture answer: "All that believe are justified from *all things*" (Acts xiii. 39), *i.e.* "are cleared from every possible charge." Read the passage for yourself. Notice how unqualified it is. It does not say "all things up to

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the time of conversion," but simply "all things," and though we may not speak of the forgiveness of future sins, inasmuch as the believer ought never to sin again, yet it is most surely true that ever after he is numbered among God's forgiven ones, of whom it is said, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember *no more*" (Heb. x. 17).

Many do not quite see this because they view the matter from their standpoint, and not from God's. You necessarily live your life a day at a time, just as you tear off the slips from a block calendar, day by day, in ignorance of what text there may be for the morrow—unless through curiosity you peep before the time. But God, from His standpoint, views your life as you may read a large sheet almanac. There, it is as easy to see at a glance the text for December 31st as for January 1st. Your life as an open sheet is before the eye of God, its beginning and ending perfectly known; and across all, from the hour of your conversion, there is boldly written one word, "*Forgiven.*"

It does not, however, follow that conversion does away with the second effect of sin of which we have spoken. On the contrary, it does not. One man may have forfeited a good name and a good situation through dishonesty, another may have well-nigh ruined his health through intemperance. Conversion in itself mends neither of these matters; it only plants our feet in a road

which, if diligently followed, may eventually lead to the recovery of an honest reputation in the one case, and renewed health in the other.

As to the third point, conversion only has to say to it in this way, that it leads to the establishment of the link of communion. The converted person it is who rightly can call God his Father, and enjoy communion with Him.

Now for another question. Should we, alas! sin after conversion, what happens? Well, it is clear that no sin shall ever be imputed to us as guilt. For *that* sin Christ *has* died, and from it—being part of the “all things” of Acts xiii. 39—we *have* been justified. Still, as we have shown in dealing with the second point, we shall have to bear that sin’s consequences, whatever they may be. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, by whom we have been “sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. iv. 30), is grieved, and since it is by Him that all happy intercourse with God our Father is sustained, *that* link is broken, and we become desperately unhappy.

This leads us to a third question. When we sin after conversion, what are we to do?

Some would advise us to re-present ourselves before God as guilty sinners, and seek that again the precious blood of Christ, with all its cleansing powers, may be applied. Shall we do this? Hardly; for we should be giving a practical denial to two facts. First, that conversion takes us off

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one platform before God, and places us on another, so that we are no longer guilty sinners under condemnation, but the children of God. Second, that this sin was among the many for which atonement was made by the precious blood of Christ.

What, then, shall we do?

First of all, ponder deeply the thought that to meet the eternal results of this sin, Christ had to suffer and die. This will lead you to love Him more fervently, and hate your sin more deeply.

Then as far as its results in this life are seen, humble yourself "under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter v.6).

And as to this broken communion with God your Father and the consequent unhappiness, open your Bible at 1 John ii. 1.

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

It is a deeply affecting thought that the Lord Jesus Christ holds in heaven a special office in relation to this sin of yours. He is not only a "Saviour" from the guilt and penalty of sin, and "High Priest" to sustain you that you may not sin (see Hebrews iv. and vii.), but also "Advocate" if you do sin. As the Advocate He fully undertakes your cause and represents you. Only

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note it is "with the Father," for it is against God as the Father that you as a believer have sinned.

Turn back now to chapter i., and read verse 9.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

CONFESS ! that is the great word for the Christian ; that is in one word the answer to our question, "When we sin after conversion, what shall we do ?"

To whom should I confess ?

Confess to "the Father."

And when ?

Instantly the sin is committed. Beware of the habit of allowing sin and defilement to accumulate until some stated time, perhaps on rising from bed or retiring at night. How often has the devil got the thin end of the wedge into a believer's life by such a procedure !

But is it *only* to confess ?

Yes, only that ; but "confess" is a bigger word than some suppose. In Psalm li. we have David's confession recorded. He not only acknowledged his sin and asked forgiveness (verses 1-3), but he also looked at the sin as it affected God (v. 4), and probed matters to the bottom to find the evil root of this evil fruit (v. 5). A very good example of a thoroughgoing confession.

And if we confess, what then ?

Why, the Father is faithful and just to the

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Advocate who—blessed be His name!—is there for us, and forgives us our sin. The clouds that had come in between our souls and the enjoyment of His love roll away, and once more we bask in the sunlight. Communion is restored.

But there is more than this, for the verse closes, “and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” That is to say, if we, having sinned, are properly broken down and humbled in confession before the Father, the whole process will have a sanctifying and cleansing effect upon our souls, inasmuch as we shall have an increased abhorrence of sin, and in particular of that sin into which we have fallen.

The Bible never contemplates such a thing as a believer sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing, and yet sinning again, as an habitual thing. If such has been your sad experience, my reader, I ask you to get into the presence of God, and there inquire whether, after all, you have ever once made a good, honest confession after the pattern of David in Psalm li. F. B. H.

“THROUGH neglect of watching and prayer — or by reason of carelessness in the walk and conversation—it is quite possible to break that holy connection between ourselves and heaven which is the secret of deliverance and the talisman of victory. There is always a Delilah ready to shear off the locks of our strength if we allow ourselves to sleep in her lap. And our strength may be gone ere we know it. ‘He wist not that the Lord had departed from him’ (Judges xvi. 20).”

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MIXI.

MIXI was one of the early Inkongo converts. It was hoped that long years were before him, to be spent in the service of his Master, and in the adornment of His doctrine. But it was not to be, and Mixi is now with Christ. We gladly insert the lines written on the occasion of his death. They reached us with the following little note :—

INKONGO, SANKURU, KASAI,
CONGO FREE STATE.

I came across these verses the other day, written by one of our number. With the writer's permission, I am sending them, so that some who have prayed for souls here, and to whom the name of Mixi is not unknown, may know how greatly we were comforted, though losing him.

A seven years' acquaintance with this native of the Congo Free State enables me to heartily share in the assurance of the writer, that this once dark heathen, changed and cleansed by faith in the Person and work of Christ, will have part in the first resurrection.

Perhaps it is necessary to add that the few verses were written at different times, and just as the thoughts spontaneously followed one another: and not being intended for publication, their differences of metre are accounted for.

Would that the dying in England and in many Christian countries might know the calmness and confidence in Christ with which this youth fell asleep in Jesus.

WM. H. WESTCOTT.

February 23rd, 1905.

MIXI.

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Upon his wooden bed we found him lying,
 Amid the smoke and gloom ;
 And wailing voices, and Loximba's crying,
 Resounded through the room.

"Oh, Mixi, speak ! Oh, hast thou gone for ever ?"
 The widow wildly said,
 Though well she knew how vain was each endeavour ;
 She knew that he was dead.

But we who *knew* him, knew that we had parted
 To meet again once more,
 That though his spirit had indeed departed,
 It had but gone before.

We stood beside that body worn with illness,
 And closed our eyes in prayer.
 The wailing ceased, there fell a sudden stillness
 On all the people there.

We thanked the Lord that He to earth descended,
 And died our souls to save,
 That now for ever is our terror ended
 Of death and of the grave.

We did not tarry long ; our hearts seemed breaking,
 Our eyes with tears were dim,
 And yet with joy we thanked the Lord for taking
 Our friend to be with Him

Till that bright day, when once again united
 Shall soul and body be,
 When all the saints of God will rise, delighted,
 And their blest Saviour see.

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 No stone is there, no monument to tell
 The place where Mixi's body is at rest,
 But mem'ries of our friend will ever dwell
 Within our hearts, who knew and loved him best.

And though no stone is there, no tree to spread
 Its branches o'er the grave where Mixi lies,
 He will not be forgotten when the dead
 Shall hear their Saviour's summons and arise.

For though the places where the dead are sleeping
 Are oft-times hidden, and to friends unknown,
 These spots are known to Christ, and He is keeping
 A careful vigil over all His own. T. H. W.

“ANGELS IN WHITE.”

CARE may press very heavily upon some because of a sense of failure in a trying and responsible post. Or there may be some secret in your life you cannot communicate to anyone—the skeleton in the cupboard. Or some great disappointment has befallen you, and you are inclined to let these blighted hopes darken the remainder of your own life and that of others. It may be you are suffering from the sin and disgrace of those near and dear to you, and truly this brings enough care to weigh down the stoutest heart. Care will often arise, too, from the thought of what *might have been*. This reflection will cause the bitterest pang. Let it be said at once that all regrets of this kind are useless. In many such cases it is impossible to tell what might have been the issue even if a different course had been adopted; and even if you could tell, yet being done you cannot alter it. Our advice is, get forgiveness from God or man, or both if necessary, and make the best use of present opportunities.

“Act, act in the living present,
Heart within, and God o’erhead.”

Forgetting the things that are behind, reach forth unto those things that are before, and press toward the mark.

Some people are always worrying as to whether

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they have done the right thing. As soon as they have acted they begin to wish they had acted differently. Such people require to learn that it perhaps does not matter so very much after all. Let us learn to leave things with God. He can make them fit in in a wonderful way, and He does make all things *work together* for good to them that love Him.

There is the care, too, that arises from persecution, opposition, or from being misunderstood. The anxiety this brings is known only to those who have passed through the ordeal. The injustice, apart from every other consideration, is sufficiently galling, and when, as is almost invariably the case, your efforts to put things right only increase your difficulties, the situation becomes well-nigh unbearable. But if you are persuaded of the justness of your cause, and what God's mind about the matter is, you may safely leave your character, as well as your comfort, in His hands. He will use it all to teach you many a needed lesson to fit you for nobler ends, and at last "will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday."

Whatever your care, remember there is one all-sufficient remedy. It is found in, first of all, obeying the injunction, "Be careful for nothing," and then in accepting in their full meaning those blessed words, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Instead of being careful

we are to rejoice in the Lord, because He has control of every matter. All power is in His hands. "*Be not afraid.*" Twice the Lord Jesus uttered these reassuring words to His disciples, and under very different circumstances. Once when they were in a ship on the sea "tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary," and once when three of His disciples were with Him on the mount surrounded by the glories of the transfiguration. What a wide field is covered by these two events! The one has to do with everything that is around you, the other with everything that is above you. Are you tossed on life's tempestuous sea experiencing how much there is contrary to you? Jesus says, "Be not afraid." Is it a question of the coming glories and your fitness for them? The same voice utters the same words. You may feel that while you have become accustomed to this scene, with its troubles and trials, you are very unaccustomed to such a scene as that on Mount Tabor. But notice the Lord Jesus was as much at home in the one as in the other, and He would make us at home. What a wondrous Person the Saviour is! He can make us feel at ease amid divine glories; and equally at ease amid all the circumstances of the path that leads to them. "And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." If only we

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see Him, care will vanish. He is enough for us as to things temporal, and enough for us as to things eternal (see Matt. xiv. and xvii.).

We may well be happy with such a One to care for us. "He careth for you." Have you realised that the order which was given about the man in the inn (Luke x.)—"Take care of him"—has been given about you? Let us wake up to the fact that we have SOMEONE to care for us. Why is a babe so happy though so helpless? Because it is the best cared-for person in the house. Its cry brings immediate aid, its wants are always attended to. Would that we were content to be the Creator's babes! For are we anything more in the presence of the vast universe that stretches all around us, and of Him who made it? Are there no arms to enfold us, no hands to uplift, no bosom to shelter? Thank God, there are for all those who become as little children.

It will assist us to rise above all our care if we are looking in the right direction. We catch the impress of what we behold. "They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." During some very costly wars in which England was engaged, more than a hundred years ago, it is said that while the then Prime Minister was always elated, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the contrary, was always depressed. The former looked at the trophies of the war, the latter only at the expense.

Where are we looking? and what do we look for? Upon the answer to these two questions very much of our happiness depends. We very often look for that which is bound to bring us disappointment, but if we look as Scripture directs us, we shall be more than satisfied. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time . . . unto salvation." "Looking for that blessed hope." "From whence also we look for the Saviour" (Heb. ix. 28; Titus ii. 13; Phil. iii. 20).

We wrong both God and ourselves by being anxious. In four ways at least. (1) The cares of this life choke the word, and we become unfruitful. (2) They rob us of the peace and happiness we should otherwise enjoy. (3) The effect upon others is bad, and we lose opportunities of being useful. For how can we speak to others of God's goodness unless we ourselves are in the enjoyed sense of it? (4) It casts a reflection upon the character and ways of God.

Whenever, then, we are tempted to despond, let us repeat to ourselves those consoling words of the Psalmist: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

And yet, though we have written so much, there are some who will put down the book

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resolved to hug their care as much as ever. Your case is so different from that of anyone else. It is so unique and exceptional that even God cannot meet it. Dare you turn to Him and tell Him? Rather see whether it is not some secret pride that leads you to carry your care, in order that you may draw attention to yourself. How absurd is your position! It amounts to this: God is enough for millions of His creatures, but not enough for one. If He is not enough for one, how then can He be enough for millions? He cannot, according to your version, make you happy on earth, and yet you expect Him to make you happy in heaven.

Ah, dear friend, how you mistake God, and what blessing you are losing! If only you would accept all that has come upon you as from Him, and see that He can turn it all to good account! Over many a life God sits as a weaver at the loom. All the threads seem so tangled, and to move in opposite directions, but they are all moving according to His will, because all the threads are in His hand, and He is working out a wondrous pattern. In Persia, we are told, some carpets take a hundred years to make, and they are worked in the dark so that the colours may not be affected by the light. Is not this how God works? He brings us into the dark, blotting out sometimes the very light of our earthly life, or bringing black clouds across the sky. But

it all has a purpose. The other day a gentleman was asked by an artist friend to come and see a painting just finished. Much to his surprise, he was shown into a dark room and left there. After about fifteen minutes his friend came and took him up to the studio to see the picture, which was greatly admired. Before he left, the artist said, "I suppose you thought it queer to be left in that dark room so long?" "Yes," the visitor said, "I did." "Well," his friend replied, "I knew that if you came into my studio with the glare of the street in your eyes, you could not appreciate the fine colouring of the picture; so I left you in the dark room until the glare had worn out of your eyes." And God leaves us in many a dark room here below, but it is only a preparation for what is coming. One day we shall be invited "upstairs," and we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. In the meantime, let us wait and trust.

While we do so, we may shed many tears perhaps, but of these we need not be ashamed. Tears are the prisms into which the light of heaven often shines and becomes broken up that we may see its beauty. Mary Magdalene saw more through her tears than either of the apostles Peter and John. They went to the sepulchre, but went home again with no angelic vision. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and *as she wept*, she stooped down, and

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looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." That is what Mary saw—the *angels in white*. Before her was the dark tomb, emptied of all that she loved best; but it was just there the "angels in white" appeared. And they are always to be seen, if only we have eyes to see them. "Angels in white" filling the darkest place on earth—the sepulchre; "angels in white" where all seems most dead and desolate. Have you a grave beside which you weep, the burial-place of some loved one; or some fond ambition, or desire? Try to see the "angels in white."

But you must be seeking Jesus; and if you see the "angels in white," your Lord will not be far off. The moment Mary had answered their question, "she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing," and one word from Him changed all her sorrow into joy.

What do these "angels in white" say to us? What they said to Mary: "Why weepest thou?" They bid us, as it were, dry our tears. They tell us that hope is not dead, that victory is secured. For they were "sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, *where* the body of Jesus had lain." At either end of the mercy-seat that rested upon the ark, of old, there was a cherubim; so at either end of the sepulchre here there is an angel. The true ark of the covenant had passed

through the waters of death, and the glorious resurrection morning had dawned. The "angels in white" put to us the question, "Why weepest thou?" and they may well do so. They tell us that for the believer judgment has been borne, the sting of death has been taken away, and that the One who has done all this for us is alive again and calls us His brethren, and we can call His God our God, and His Father our Father.

If we see that the cares of this life may become celestial benedictions, will they not sit more lightly upon us? The foundations of the New Jerusalem are garnished with all manner of precious stones. As precious stones have become purified by the pangs and throes of earth, may they not represent God's answer to all the sorrows felt by His people on the homeward journey? The sorrows of earth will become the gems of glory. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Every suffering that Christian martyrs ever bore, every sorrow rightly felt by saints of God, under the hand of their Father, is helping to produce those stones that shall ere long flash in the light of the Lord God Almighty.

If we have to shed tears now, there is a time coming when they will all be wiped away. It is said that God will do it. Will you have any to be removed by such a hand? Do not think it hard that you have to shed them now. Think of

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what it will be for God to wipe them away! An aged Christian once wrote: "If I had not been called to pass through this trouble, and shed these tears, I should have missed the softness of the hand that wiped them away." God has numbered the hairs of our head, and He, and no other, will wipe away our tears. Oh, the gladness of that moment! For when God has wiped them away, they will never come again! Our sins are gone for ever, because He has put them away; and our tears will go, too, some day, for the same reason, never to return.

Need we then be careful and troubled about many things when there is a God who bids us cast all our care upon Him, and tells us that He cares for us? Let us trust Him. There is a time coming when every riddle will be solved, when infidelity shall for ever be a nightmare of the past, and faith shall reach its pinnacle of triumph; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, and become one vast temple to His praise; and then the one universal note of adoring worship upon every lip will surely be this: "As for God, His way is perfect."

"O Lord, how happy should we be
If we could cast each care on Thee,
If we from self could rest,
And feel at heart that One above
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best."

R. E.

A WORD TO YOUNG MEN.

(By A Young Man.)

I WRITE as a young man to young men. My object is twofold. I desire to realise for myself and to place before others something of the responsibilities and privileges of the Christian life.

We remember the day we were converted, how, in the early blush of "first love," we determined *to be*, and *to do* for God. Let us sit down now and ask ourselves, "Have we realised our intentions? Have we been what God intended us to be?" Let us face the question squarely and answer it honestly.

And if not, what has been the cause? Without doubt, it has been *divided affections*. Then it was Christ alone; since then it has been, many a time and oft, Christ and something else. What that "something else" may have been, each one knows for himself. But it has meant loss of *power*. Six times over it is said of Caleb, "He *wholly followed the Lord*"; and what a power he was, and what a hero he became! (Joshua xiv. 6-15). Young men of Caleb's type and fibre are wanted to-day as much as ever—separate from the world—out-and-out for God—devoted to Christ—young men in whom the Holy Spirit of God not only *dwells*, but RULES. These are a few of their needed

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characteristics. Are they ours? If not, let us seek them and let us be in earnest. Let us henceforth weigh all our words and actions in view of the judgment-seat of Christ and in the light of Eternity.

What will this produce? A greater desire to be here for God, and a more genuine love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Self and self-pleasing will be lost sight of, and we shall go out into the world with a real desire to see souls saved, and blessed with the joy and peace that we ourselves possess. Oh! my fellow young men, I am convinced God could do great things with us *did we but let Him*. Do I speak to one who is yet undecided? I beseech you to remain so no longer. Life is short and eternity very near. Enlist *now* under the banner of the cross, and boldly own the Lord Jesus Christ as your Master and Lord. There is the deepest possible joy in His company, there is the greatest possible reward in His service, and there is in Him the highest possible ideal set before you to shape your life and actions by. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

"If, in haste, we would give a draught of refreshing water to a traveller, we take from our shelf the first vessel which is *clean*. We pass over the elegant and richly-chased cup for the earthenware mug, if the latter has a cleanliness which the former lacks. And our Lord Jesus will gladly use us for His service, though we be but common ware, if only we are clean and ready for use."

BUILT ON REEDS.

1 Cor. vi.

THE Corinthian assembly was a very gifted company of Christians. There were many eloquent tongues among them, and stores of knowledge; but with all that their moral tone was very low. They ate the Lord's Supper together on Sunday—that feast of love—and on Monday morning clutched one another by the throat, and dragged one another before the tribunal of the unjust, shouting, “Pay me what thou owest.”

And yet the saints, possessing the Spirit and the mind of Christ, shall one day judge the world and angels—they shall be associated with Him who is the Judge of all. Competent to join in that exalted function, and yet unable to judge things that pertain to this life! They must needs bring their differences for adjustment before the unbeliever! This was to their shame.

But did they not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Let them not be deceived. The evil-doers whom Paul describes in verses 9 and 10 shall not, he repeats, inherit the kingdom of God. There must be no mistake about that.

No thief shall be in heaven, no covetous man, no drunkard, no man whose life is unclean—none

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of these shall ever tread its sacred courts. What! Is there no pardon for such, no cleansing fountain open? Is the door shut against them for ever? No, that is not it. But the saving grace of God not only forgives, but it changes a man's life, so that the thief becomes honest, the drunkard becomes sober, and the unclean life becomes sweet and pure. Plenty will be in heaven who were once among the worst on earth, but they were washed, they were sanctified, they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

By all means let us cry up the doctrines of grace; we cannot exalt them too much, for it is by grace that we are saved—not of works, lest any man should boast. But we must also insist on holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. In the divine plan they go together. The grace of God, which brings salvation, also teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly every day (Titus ii. 11–14). This the Corinthians were forgetting.

To correct so serious a defect in their Christian life the apostle reminds them of the three things which we have already named. From all the evil that had characterised them in former days they had been washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Would they hold these truths in theory

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and deny them in practice? What evidence would that offer of their Christianity being anything more than a thing of words? Words are cheap, and if there be nothing in their life to back them up, what are they worth? A religion of words is a religion built on reeds.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

THE weary ones had rest, the sad had joy
 That day ; I wondered "how?"
 A ploughman singing at his work had prayed,
 "Lord, help them now."

Away in foreign lands they wondered "how"
 Their single word had power !
 At home the Christians, two or three, had met
 To pray an hour !

Yes, we are always wondering, wondering "how,"
 Because we do not see
 Someone, unknown perhaps, and far away,
 On bended knee.

ANON.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. S. L.—1 Cor. xi. 29.—This passage refers to the manner and spirit in which the Lord's Supper is taken, and not to our being personally worthy or unworthy. Broadly speaking, every true Christian is worthy to eat the Lord's Supper. His title is all of grace. He shares in that Holy Feast because he belongs to Christ, and for no other reason. Washed from his sins,

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sharing in the life of which Christ is the source, and indwelt by the Spirit, he is entitled to sit down at the Supper Table though he be the least of all saints. And no one has a better title than he. The most heavenly-minded saint upon earth goes to the Lord's Supper precisely on the same ground as the one who has but just entered on the Christian life. Difference in title there is none. So the feeblest need not be discouraged. Are my sins forgiven? Am I resting alone on Christ for salvation? Can I cry "Abba, Father"? If so, I may with confidence partake of the Supper of the Lord. Of course, it is easy to allow this great privilege to degenerate into a formal religious function, and when this is the case there is nothing in it to give pleasure to the heart of Christ, or to yield spiritual refreshment to us. Hence the exhortation, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat"—a too-much-forgotten word. Needless to say, we are not to examine ourselves to discover whether we are worthy to eat, for of that there is no doubt if we belong to Christ, but rather to see that there is nothing in our life and inward state inconsistent with that of which the Supper speaks. If before partaking of it we get alone with God in real heart-exercise, if every shade of distance between our souls and our Saviour is swept away, if our spiritual affections are stimulated by the sense of His unutterable love, then we eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup aright, with feelings of deep gratitude, and with praise and adoration. And surely, at such a time, it is sweet to remember that He is in the midst of the two or three gathered to His name according to Matthew xviii. 20. We would not relinquish this for anything. Unseen, but

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so real, is the presence of our Beloved. The heart delights to be near Him whose love many waters could not quench nor floods drown. How happy thus to forget ourselves in being occupied with Christ, whose loveliness and glory the Holy Spirit is ever ready to reveal to the heart that is prepared for such revelations. Avail yourself, then, of this privilege, and if circumstances prevent, you can be, nevertheless, in heart and thought with those thus gathered together "to break bread." He who knows everything will not suffer you to be a loser on that account.

A. B. P.—We should be sorry indeed were you to discontinue distributing your tracts and magazines in the villages because of your lack of earnestness. The most earnest man in the field owns that he is not half so earnest as he ought to be, and the most devoted servant of Christ feels that his measure of devotedness is but scanty. To give up active service for the Master on that account is simply to play into the enemy's hands. Do not think of such a thing, but rather enlarge the sphere of your labours. Stir up your zeal, and count on God to bless the seed you sow. In reference to the Y.M.C.A., you must act according to your own light and conscience. Our rule might be no rule for you. Go forward, trusting God to lead you right. May He bless you, and make you a blessing to many. For your other questions, see our answer to "F. S. L."

M. S. A.—All inquiries relating to the republication of articles in this magazine should be addressed to the publisher. If you will kindly send us your postal address, we will gladly let you know who wrote the article on "Care."

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W. C. M.—It is well for you, and for us all, that there is in our Bible such a verse as “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” No sin too foul for that blood to cleanse, no sin too great for the grace of God to forgive. And if it be true that “he that covereth his sins shall not prosper,” it is equally true that “whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.” Precious, sure words, on which the most sinful soul may rest without one distracting doubt. But do remember that the sins confessed *must be forsaken*. Evil habits, long indulged, acquire an awful ascendancy over us. But in the hour of temptation you must fly to Christ, and you will find in Him not only deliverance from the *penalty* of sin, but also from its *power*. And this is what you want. Keep near to Christ all the day long. Let your thoughts live in a pure and holy atmosphere (Phil. iv. 8). If powerless in yourself to do this, do not forget that the Holy Spirit is given to us to be our Helper. Get a little book from our publisher, called *Victory over Sin*, price one penny. We think it will help you. If needs be, write again.

J. H.—John ii.—The marriage in Cana of Galilee has no doubt a dispensational meaning. It was on the *third* day it took place. The first day was that of John’s testimony; the second, that of the Lord Himself; and the *third* points onward to the millennial day, when Christ, the true Messiah, shall bring in the joy of the kingdom, and Israel shall be established in blessing, according to Isaiah liv. 5, lxi. 10. We may also learn from the story how good it is to invite the Lord and His disciples to our marriage ceremonies. Not the disciples without the Master, nor the Master without the disciples. Happy is it when these joyful and momentous occasions are blessed with the presence of the Lord and of His people.

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S.—1 John iii. 6-9.—In these verses things are traced to their source, and the apostle, as his manner is, speaks in the most abstract way, without pausing to deal with exceptional cases dealt with elsewhere. Bear in mind that "*commit*" here has the sense of "*practise*." If any one practises sin, his life being characterised by it, he is, morally speaking, of the devil; if any one practises righteousness, he is righteous, even as Christ is righteous. Then the apostle speaks of two marks of one born of God—he does not practise sin, and he loves the brethren. If he cannot practise sin, it is because he is born of God, and thus made a partaker of divine life, the nature of which is to love righteousness and hate sin. But you must remember that all this is stated in a very abstract manner. Forget that, and you will soon be bewildered, because of what is stated in other passages and confirmed by our own experience. As to sins after conversion, see the article on that subject in our present issue.

INQUIRER.—Heb. iv. 12-16.—Two things are named here as helps to us on our pilgrim way: the Word of God and the priesthood of Christ. To gain the good of these our faces must be towards the Rest that remains—the true and heavenly Canaan. The Word of God sheds its light on whatever hinders our progress, and by its help we are enabled to spiritually discern these hindrances, thankful to have them exposed, so that they may be laid aside. On the other hand, there is our Great Priest, who, though He has passed into the heavens, can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. To the throne of grace we may therefore boldly come and find seasonable help. As to the Word of God, we have often of late expressed our views upon the subject in these columns. If our repeated arguments and proofs have no weight, we must leave the objector to enjoy his own "vague and singular" opinions.

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KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God ; they ask of Me the ordinances of justice ; they take delight in approaching to God.”—ISA. lviii. 1, 2.

WE live in a day when you would think that almost everybody has got a conviction that the main thing is to appear well before your neighbours ; that it does not matter a great deal how things are underneath if only you have a good outside to meet the eye. “Never mind the broken bricks and bad mortar,” say they ; “plaster the walls over : they will look all right.” Such work is not “all right.” One day there is an earthquake, and the plaster cracks and the walls begin to crumble, and then the deception is plain to anybody’s sight. The “plasterer” has been a fool. “There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.” Give it time, and it will all come out. Oh, yes ; God may be slow, but He is very sure. There is a day with Him when inside becomes outside ; when the unseen is seen ; when every man stands before God just as he is, and not anything more.

As for foundations, almost any kind of thing

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seems to do. Great houses are going up on most insecure bottoms. You fairly stand aghast at the builders, and question their sanity. Professed Christians are found on every hand whose lives have little at the bottom which is stable, and yet they profess to know that Christ will soon be round to inspect it. Are these Christians really insane? It looks very like it.

An architect, when he goes to examine a building, does not first observe whether it is painted inside or out, nor does he look to see if it has an up-to-date front door, nor whether it has a name on the front gate, nor does he climb up to the chimney-pot. No; he makes a straight line for the *foundation*. He does not give his certificate that the building is satisfactory until after a careful survey of the most important part.

Depend upon it, the Lord, on His inspection day, will at once make for the foundation of your life, and will see upon what the life-work is based. Many a one's home-life has a bad bottom when you can get low enough into it; perhaps his neighbour does not see it. It is going to be seen! There is many a screw loose in Christian homes which is not noticed by the occasional visitor. Look at that man who is so much to the front in the assembly of Christians; he loves to minister the Word on all occasions, and his prayers are "so fervent." What is he at bottom? Is there any "substance" in his everyday walk?

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Don't judge him by his Sunday oratory ; go to his foundation — that which he is when he rubs shoulders with men on a Monday.

The prophet Isaiah was told to cry aloud and spare not, and to show God's people their transgressions and their sins. We may guess his message was not over-sweet to Israel's palate, because, to all appearances, they were in a very fair state. Human nature is quick to resent a wholesale condemnation of one's state of soul. "You are not to judge," is what a great many get behind when a prophet of the Lord starts to "crack the plaster" and chip off the veneer of appearances. But, pleasant or unpleasant, the bidding of the Lord must be done.

What was that people doing to whom Isaiah was sent? Well, they sought God daily; they seemed to delight to know His ways as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God. "Wherefore have we fasted," said they, "and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?" The answer is plain: "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure." The inner life of the soul did not tally with the outward profession. They paid attention to formalities, but their hearts were adrift, and God was angry.

Oh, sirs, the need is vital godliness. We are losing the integrity and backbone of our fathers, which made a man carry himself erect and scorn

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unreality. The printer who set up the words "Daniel had an excellent spine in him," for "Daniel had an excellent spirit in him," did not commit a serious blunder. Daniel had an excellent "spine," and the lions' den proved it. Men with excellent "spines" are much needed in these time-serving days, when people seem to think a great deal more of ornamental display than of what is plain and solid. Live so as to have people say of you: "That person has got some stamina about him." Only fools find time to discuss the "harmony of paint" and the qualities of "plaster." The old Romans used to build walls in so substantial a way that when a piece of one has needed shifting in modern times, it has given no little trouble to break it down. They built for posterity, and their workmanship does them credit. Fellow-Christian, think you that your work will do you credit?

There may be seen on the gates of some old mills this suggestive notice: "Closed for new machinery"; and the writer has long felt that the best thing to do with some meeting-houses would be to close them up for a complete overhaul and renewing, and reopen when new "machinery" has replaced the old. "But we must keep up the meetings, you know." Ah, yes; and like the old gate swinging on its hinges, you come and go till one day the thing breaks down. Then there *is* a stop!

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When the Lord revealed to one of old his poor condition, he cried out: "My leanness, my leanness; woe is me!" If we were given to see ourselves as He sees us, the discovery would bring about deep searchings of heart, with an earnest desire for re-adjustment to the divine ideal. Oh, let us each one humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt us in due time. Let us beseech Him to set us right. A mark of the "last days," as foretold in Scripture, is "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"—just the empty shell of a thing, nothing in it.

Many go to the "Breaking of Bread," they are present at the gospel meeting, they attend the week-night meetings, they are orthodox in their belief, and contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. And yet, somehow, there is within a feeling of dissatisfaction. You don't get what you want. Can you explain it? Something has gone wrong, that's sure. You go to conferences; the ministry is all right; everything is very good. But, somehow, you feel it did not reach you quite. You cannot explain. You know that the week after you are just where you were before, and there is no power in your life. The conference has done nothing for you worth mentioning. You say: "I can't understand it." You feel there was a want in your soul which all these right things did not seem to meet. When the thing is

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pressed home, you have to confess that the routine of the week's meetings and the periodical conference is gone through quite mechanically: you are keeping up appearances, that is all about it. Old Christians find the effort to "keep going" a bit hard; the young ones feel almost as if they must "give it up."

"The Holy Ghost was not yet; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39. *Given* is in italics and need not be used). We know the primary meaning of this verse. But we shall not be accused of wresting Scripture in saying that it also implies that there can be no Holy Spirit power in one's life until Jesus is first glorified in it. He must be enthroned in the heart as *Lord*. There must be a definite presenting of ourselves to Him, and this day by day. He will accept the gift, and use you for His glory. Renounce at once every known sin, and pray to be shown anything else in you which is not agreeable to the Lord's will. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." Be done with such sin when you know it. Those things which, though they may not be wrong in themselves, are yet hindering your spiritual life, lay them aside as "weights." Yield to God. Read your Bible prayerfully to find out the will of God for *you*, not for your neighbour; and as you learn it, act it out. Speak of Jesus to others. Pray, "Open Thou my lips,"

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and you will soon be sounding His praises. Don't make Moses' excuse, saying, "I am not eloquent." Who made the mouth? Abandon yourself to the Lord Jesus; you will find it all right.

Do these things, and you will soon have power in your life. Sunshine will light up your inner soul, and joy and gladness will take up their abode with you. It is true that "all God's biddings are enablings," and He will give you the strength to do what He asks of you. It is yours to obey; it is His to give power. So your life will not be barren and unfruitful, and you will be done with merely keeping up appearances, for your life will be a real life, lived in the light of your Father's countenance.—*Communicated.*

"What is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James iv. 14). A very significant figure this of the evanescent character of human life: but, underlying it, is there not a hint of what our lives *might* become? A vapour—as impalpable as the morning mist or evening dew—if brought under suitable control, and placed in contact with furnace heat, becomes a power that will keep in motion a whole factory of machinery. Let your life be placed under the control of the Spirit of God, and brought in contact with the mighty love of Christ, and what a power it may become for blessing to others, and glory to God! J. J. H.

THE TELEPHONE: OR, PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER.

THE other day I noticed a novice speaking on the telephone. It was amusing to see how he clutched the "receiver" and shouted his message into it, as if he thought that the loudness of his tone would produce a greater effect. It was not so, however, for there came a voice from the other end saying, "I cannot hear you; speak naturally, and I shall understand what you say."

This incident reminded me of many Christians who seem to think that the depth, earnestness, and reality of their prayers are measured by the loudness of their voice. Of course, public prayer should not be inaudible. Clear, distinct articulation is of prime importance. But our earnestness must be real, and the voice should be our own, if we are to edify others and prevail with God.

We never find our own children assuming a strange voice, or speaking in louder tones than necessary. They address us in all the simplicity and confidence that belong to their relationship, and we should not wish them to do otherwise. Ought it not to be so with us when we speak as children to our God and Father?

Let me notice another thing about the telephone.

Some instruments are so badly placed that the noise of the traffic and other disturbances hinder the proper transmission of messages. Under such

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circumstances a telephone room, or box, is a great convenience. It is but a small enclosure covered with baize cloth, into which the operator enters; and, having closed the door, he can unhinderedly send his message.

“When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matt. vi. 5).

Oh, for more secret prayer! a more constant desire to enter into our closet and to shut the door. Thus shall the disturbing elements of the world be shut out, and we, shut in with our God and Father, may pour into His listening ear our prayers and praises!

Have you a private telephone box, some secret place where you may get alone with God?

In the City Road, London, there stands a plain, unpretentious little cottage, in which there is a room once used by that devoted servant of Christ, John Wesley, as *his private prayer closet*. Many an hour he spent there, and many a time his heart burned within him as he knelt in that little room. The zeal and fervour which made his life so conspicuous and so useful were often kindled within its narrow walls. He went in first to pray, and came out afterwards to win in many a mighty conflict for his well-known and much-loved Master. Prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings ascended to the throne of grace from that

"closet" in the early hours of the morning, when many other servants were fast asleep.

Wesley was a great and an untiring worker because he was first great and untiring in prayer. He had his private telephone box!

Looking upon that spot, hallowed by so many sacred associations, I have felt ashamed as I thought of the little time one spends in secret prayer and in uninterrupted communion with God, away from the eyes and ears of even those who are nearest and dearest to us.

We are not, however, concerned about Mr. Wesley now, for his praying time is over; but we *are* concerned about ourselves. Much of the lack of blessing, together with the spirit of depression that often comes upon us, could doubtless be traced to the neglect of prayer and waiting upon God in private. Would it not be a searching question for each of us to ask, "How much time have I spent *to-day* in secret prayer?" With more prayer, there would be more liberty of utterance and power with those who preach; less of the fear of man, and a healthy *fear of God* in our souls; less depression and spiritual weakness to be deplored, which so often cripple our life and testimony. How gracious the Lord is to go on with us at all! May we live near to Himself and learn His present mind for us, amidst all that distracts and threatens.

T. J. K.

CHRIST'S FIRST SERMON.

LUKE iv. 24-27.

THIS wonderful sermon is contained in four short verses of Scripture, and states but two striking facts of sacred history, the mere narration of which so filled the audience with wrath that they led the Preacher to the brow of the hill on which their city was built that they might cast Him down headlong.

Now what were these two pregnant facts ?

The Lord had gone, as He was wont, into the synagogue at Nazareth on a certain Sabbath day, and had read from the book of Isaiah as follows:

"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, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

He quoted a passage which had direct reference to the Messiah—the Christ—and having done so, the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him. His hearers were astonished at the boldness of His assertion and at the claim He made to this dignity. And yet as they listened they could only bear witness to the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. What these gracious words may have been we are not told. They were surely in full harmony

with the quotation He had just read. The acceptable year of the Lord had come, and along with it the Anointed One—its Blessed Inaugurator and Herald! His words were words of grace, and fell sweetly on ears wholly unprepared for such a sound.

What of the Preacher? God had anointed Him by the Spirit who, in dove-like form, had descended from heaven upon Him, while a Voice thence had declared: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." Thus the passage quoted had its fulfilment in Him. He was the Anointed—the Messiah—the Christ. And the words He spoke in explaining this were marked by grace, that is, by the absence of arrogance and self-assertiveness. They stated the truth. We shall see their effect. How much depends on divine preparation of heart for the reception of any light which God may be pleased to give! Apart from this, there is no moral foundation on which to build. And so in our present case the people in the synagogue heard the words, admitted their grace, but, alas! could only say: "Is not this Joseph's son?" Thus, and thus only, did they recognise Him. They were unable to put together a parentage so lowly and a claim so high. Their ideas of the advent of the Messiah of Israel were very different from those now presented to them. Joseph was their neighbour, their fellow-countryman, and said they, "Is not

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this Joseph's son?" It was to an audience in this incredulous frame of mind that the Lord addressed His first recorded discourse.

Nor was it merely that they failed to appreciate the testimony of His words, for they had heard of the things—the mighty works—He had done in Capernaum, but had, like that city, turned a blind eye to them, and had refused to repent. All this lay behind their depreciatory remark: "Is not this Joseph's son?"

Now we turn to His sermon.

He speaks, first, of a time when there was a great famine in the land of Israel, and many widows as well; but He adds, with great significance, that to none of them was Elias sent, but to Sarepta—a city of Sidon—to a woman that was a widow. Israel was passed over by this notable prophet, who gave his benefaction to a poor, despised Gentile. The question arises, Why a famine in the land that flowed with milk and honey, and why so many widows therein? Again, How came the prophet to visit, in such grace, a Gentile?

Second, there were many lepers in the time of Eliseus the prophet, yet none of them were cleansed save Naaman the Syrian. Again, there is grace for the Gentile! The lepers of Israel are passed over in favour of a man whom the Lord had used as a scourge of His people!

But why were these lepers in Israel? Had

it not been said that, on certain conditions, the diseases of Egypt would not be put on the people? and here, alas! are many lepers.

Then why was Elias not accepted in his own country? Why not Eliseus? Did the fault lie with the prophets? Could they have been indifferent to the primary claims of their own country? Nay! but the moral condition of the people was such—their forgetfulness of God so appalling—that in the ways of holy government the people who held the outward place of privilege were passed over, and grace, which can never be inactive, sought out, in a Sidonian widow and a Syrian leper, suited objects for its gratification.

The place of privilege is very full of responsibility at all times.

Now, without doubt, as these two historic facts were simply placed before this captious audience, their moral must have been readily perceived. Application and explanation were unnecessary. The present bearing of such parallel instances (of prophets being not accepted by their own country) must very quickly awaken intelligence in the dullest mind. The situations were identical, and their force irresistible.

Two courses lay before them, either to accept their Prophet, or to treat Him as all other true prophets had been treated. They chose the latter. They led Him to the brow of the hill in order to cast Him down headlong, and thus ex-

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tinguish, were it possible, the light that exposed their unbelief. But His hour had not yet come, and so, passing through the midst of them, He went His way—a Prophet not accepted in His own country indeed, but none the less bent on the fulfilment of His mission of grace to the poor, the broken-hearted, the blind, the captive, and the bruised; for “God,” we read, “anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts x. 38). He went His way—He went about doing good. Such was His life; and if His rejection at Nazareth was but the prelude of that at Calvary, it only declared that at all costs He would finish the work given Him to do of the Father, and in death to atone for the sins of all His believing people. But be it carefully noted that the place of privilege, like the prophet’s own country, is one of exceeding danger because of its very great responsibility.

J. W. S.

“WHAT grace, O Lord, and beauty shone
 Around Thy steps below !
 What patient love was seen in all
 Thy life and death of woe !

“Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,—
 Thy friends unfaithful prove ;
Unwearied in forgiveness still,
 Thy heart could only love.”

THE PHILISTINES; OR, NO SURRENDER.

IN the Old Testament we see that the Philistine was the habitual and inveterate enemy of the people of God. We learn too what his tactics and ways were, and how he was to be conquered.

The Philistine is still a powerful and persistent adversary, though he be not called by that name to-day. As saints, we have to overcome him, or we shall be ourselves overcome. It is essential, therefore, that we should be able to recognise a Philistine when we meet him, know his methods, and how to gain the victory over him.

He will not admit that he is an alien—an immigrant—who comes from another land. No. He poses as one who occupies the same ground that *we* do. Nay, more, he will contend that we are the intruders, and that he was first on the ground, even as a Philistine in former times would maintain that he was in the land before Abraham and his seed ever came there.

But though he is a foe who would rob us of everything distinctive that we have from God, and bring us into captivity, yet we have nothing to fear if we meet him in the courage and intelligence of faith, and in the power of the Spirit.

“Abraham sojourned in the Philistines’ land many days” (Gen. xxi.). This is the first mention we have of him. A Philistine was at that moment just as much a Philistine as ever he was,

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but there was a power with Abraham, who walked in the energy and reality of faith, that made Abimelech and the captain of his host acknowledge, "God is with thee in all that thou doest."

But it was far otherwise with his son Isaac. An only child, brought up and educated, pampered and petted by his too-fond mother, he knew little, or perhaps nothing, of the discipline of God's school. Come to man's estate we find him easy-going and indolent, and at last self-indulgent; a lover of savoury meat, for which, as a reward, he was ready to bestow the patriarchal blessing.*

It is true that the Lord blessed him, and "he became very great." But he was not a man to face the foe. "The Philistines envied him, stopped with earth the wells that his father Abraham had digged, and took from him by violence those he had digged for himself. What are we to learn from this? A well in an arid land is a source of refreshment from God, yielding life, and giving cheer where all is dry around. Isaac valued water sufficiently to labour for it, but he had not the energy to hold it fast and to resist the enemy in his attempt to rob him of that which God had given (see Gen. xxvi.). God, in mercy, gave him at last a well and room, but he gained no victory over the foe.

Reading this into our own lives and experiences,

* In Scripture we have to distinguish between what certain characters were personally and what they were typically.

we learn the need of holding with a tenacious grip whatever our God and Father gives us in the way of refreshment and blessing, for we may be sure the Philistine is not far away. We must expect his assaults. He will endeavour to make us surrender the very thing which is intended to be for the joy and comfort of our souls. But this we are to fight manfully for. We are not to part with it nor let any Philistine take it from us. Were it a matter of our own concerns it would well become us to let our moderation (yieldingness) be known to all men. But when it is a question of losing what the Spirit of God gives us for the enjoyment and satisfaction of our hearts, our motto must be, "*No surrender.*" Carefully note this.

Secondly. This Philistine is an audacious fellow, as 2 Sam. xxiii. 11 will show. He will not only stop up, and forcibly take away, springing wells, if not boldly resisted in faith and by the power of the Lord, but he will seize, if allowed, the very food of the people of God, so that they, unfed and unnourished, may be weakened and vanquished. It is a poor spectacle that is presented to us in this passage. "The people fled from the Philistines." Where was the courage of faith? Where was God? Alas! so far as the rank and file were concerned they would have given everything up! But there was one who knew what the LORD could do, and in His strength he took his stand in the midst of the ground and defended it. The

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faith of Shammah was not misplaced, "and the LORD wrought a great victory."

Thirdly. Woe to us when the Philistine gets the upper hand! (2 Sam. xiii. 19-22). He will take our weapons of war from us and leave us defenceless. How can we, then, fight the battles of the Lord? We are in a sorry case when we have to go to the Philistine to get our share or axe sharpened. Such was the deplorable condition of Israel in this chapter. King Saul had been anointed captain over God's people, to save them out of the hand of the Philistines (chap. ix. 16). But, alas! in spite of his imposing appearance, he was a man destitute of faith in the living God. On the very day of his anointing he was given the opportunity of doing great things. He received a hint that would have been food for faith had he only possessed it (see chap. x.).

This bold adversary, the Philistine, had actually planted his garrison on the "hill of God." Samuel told Saul of this and of certain signs that would be an indication that faith should be up and doing. "And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee." What, then, did Saul do? NOTHING. He was a big man to look at, but, arguing as a man, and not as faith does, he considered himself no match for the "garrison of the Philistines." Faith would have said, "The hill of God is no place for this enemy of God and His people. I shall drive him out!"

In his son Jonathan we find one who knew what it was to count upon God. Read chapter xiv. and see how he "wrought with God" (v. 45) when, accompanied by his armour-bearer, he made his way, in the face of great difficulties, into the garrison of the Philistines, "and they fell before Jonathan." He attacked this mighty foe in the confidence that "there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" (v. 6). "So the Lord saved Israel that day" (v. 23). May the lesson learned by such a victory give us fresh courage, knowing our resources and our power!

Fourthly. Separation to the Lord—Nazarite-ship—is the secret of our power. Only let us divulge that secret to the Philistine, and he will rob us of our strength and blind us (Judges xvi.). Think of the once mighty Nazarite making sport for the Philistine! To what a terrible depth one once separated to the Lord may fall! Thank God, there is a way of recovery. Power was restored to Samson, so that a greater victory over the Philistines was achieved at his death than at any time during his life. But he died! He was not left for further service. It is not difficult to read between the lines the meaning of this.

Let it be borne in mind that when the Philistine is in the ascendancy there is no testimony with the people of God. "Israel is fled before the Philistines, . . . and the ark of God is taken" (1 Sam. iv. 17). The ark of the testimony was in

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the hands of the enemy. This is solemn, and full of meaning for us.

Fifthly. There is one more instance of the way in which the Philistine showed himself an opponent. The time had come for the true king, who had suffered, and had been rejected (hunted like a partridge on the mountains), to take the throne. It was his by divine right. But though "David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel," yet the Philistine resolutely set himself to frustrate this decree (2 Sam. v.). To this very hour the Philistine will resist Christ's getting His true and proper place in our hearts, to which He has every right. He is to be enthroned there, and owned as our only Lord and Master. David, in the might of the Lord, gained the victory over that opposing power. Let us know how to meet and overcome every Philistine that would seek to put down the greater than David from His place of exaltation in our hearts!

Oh, those persistent, opposing, home-born Philistines that are ever at hand, and ready to claim the very ground that is beneath our feet! They are not quite like the Midianites, who will come with their wiles and "prowl and prowl around"; nor are they the same as Amalek, a child of the wilderness, who unfurled his banner and fought against the people who journeyed to the land of their possession, escorted by the cloud of the Shekinah glory of the God of Israel.

No, the Philistine can be a noisy, blasphemous

foe in the land, who claims as *his* what God has given *us*. Let us mark him well when we meet him. He is doughty and defiant. See him in 1 Sam. xvii. He defies the whole host of God's people! He is great in stature, and well-equipped for battle, but he cannot stand before faith. A little stone from the brook, slung by one who had been an apt scholar in the school of God, brought down the mighty giant, and that ponderous sword is used to kill its owner!

In our day Philistines are not perhaps so much persons as unhallowed principles, held and maintained as wise and orthodox, but which emanate from, and belong to, the "natural" man, and not the "spiritual"; "the first man" who is "of the earth," and not "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 46-47). Such principles may be, and often are, held by children of God. They may be presented to us by such. We expect nothing better or higher from men of the world, and are not taken aback when the Philistine makes his presence known in and through them. We rather expect that it should be so. But when saints hold, act upon, and endeavour to propagate principles that are human and not divine, that are of man and not of God, the Philistine is none the less at work.

Let us therefore know and be able to overcome a Philistine when we meet him. His marks are these:—

He is one who will try to stop up and take our

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wells, to rob us of our food, and to take our weapons from us; he will try to encamp on the hill of God, and to shear us of our strength, and put out our eyes; he will try to take the ark of the testimony from us, to resist the rights of the true David, and to terrify us by his power.

But "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. i. 7).

F. C.

"**Ye are not your own**"; let us never forget this. The purchase price has been paid, and the Holy Ghost has taken possession of those whom God has purchased, for "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Not our souls only, but body, soul, and spirit are His henceforward and forever.

Had you purchased a house and agreed to take possession of it at a certain date, you would think it strange if the old owner still remained in it, and insisted upon occupying some of the rooms. Would you not point out to him the unreasonableness and unrighteousness of such a course? Yet how often we are found acting somewhat after that fashion. We say, "Yes, Lord, we are Thine!" but we do not yield ourselves to Him, and we like to use our bodies for our own selfish ends. Ponder well the unrighteousness of this, and let us hold it as our sacred privilege to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, that He may be glorified in our *body*.

J. T. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. J.—In such a matter everyone should act as his own conscience directs. We are not in bondage, neither is the habit of one to be the rule for all the rest. Let us walk before the Lord and in charity towards others, considering how far they are likely to be affected by our example. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” What can be done *to the glory of God* is lawful and right, and “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth” (Rom. xiv. 22).

SUBSCRIBER. — 1 Cor. xv. 29. — These questions stand in relation to the grave error Paul so earnestly refutes, namely, the denial of the resurrection—the goal of the believer’s happiness and the crowning of all his hopes. “*Baptised for the dead*” meant the baptised ones taking the place of those who had passed away, even as soldiers step forward to fill the place of comrades fallen in the fight. Why do this, if there be no resurrection? if those who are fallen asleep are perished? and why stand in jeopardy every hour? Better say, “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die,” than expose ourselves to constant danger if there be no resurrection. But if there be, then let no one hesitate to be “baptised for the dead.” If the ruthless hand of persecution thins the ranks of the soldiers of Christ, let other brave and loyal hearts fill up the gaps. The resurrection day is coming, when loyalty to Christ shall have its recognition and reward.

O. H.—Exodus xv.—xix.; Joshua iii.—The Red Sea is a figure of Christ’s death and resurrection, not so

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much in relation to the putting away of our sins as to the victory over the foe and our deliverance from his hand and power. It is our way out of Egypt. That land is left behind, and, having been brought to God, we begin our wilderness journey with face towards the land flowing with milk and honey. The Jordan is also a type of the death of Christ, not now as the door out of Egypt, but of entrance into Canaan. The twelve stones placed in the bed of that river, and the other twelve taken out of it and set up in Gilgal, illustrate *our* death and resurrection *with* Christ. The Red Sea places us in the wilderness with God, our Shield and Guide and Resource; the Jordan places us on Colossian and Ephesian ground, risen with Christ, the other side of His Cross and grave. Both positions are held by the believer, but they are connected with different lines of truth, neither of which can be neglected without loss.

ANON.—It is poor work when grace is divorced from practical righteousness and used as a cover for deeds which both law and grace alike condemn. Every Christian, professedly, has put off the old man with his deeds, has put on the new man; and surely it is not too much to expect, that having taken such ground, it should be shown that these truths are not held in the letter only. If they do not influence our everyday life in the direction of practical righteousness, what is there to show that we have received them at all? The deeds of the old man are to be denied, and the lovely features of the new displayed. "Instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier, shall come up the myrtle tree." So reads the Old Testament; and the New is equally explicit:

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"Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Honest toil instead of stealing, to meet personal wants no doubt, but also to relieve the needs of others. The fir tree and the myrtle spring up where the thorn and the brier grew. To use the doctrines of grace to excuse sin is surely and only of the devil.

INQUIRER.—It is too common a practice nowadays to speak loudly of the *love* of God, and to be silent as to His holiness and righteousness in relation to sin and its punishment. Some go further, and argue that because God is Love, therefore it is impossible that He should take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and though His word affirms that all such "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power," these men daringly assert that it shall never come to pass (2 Thess. i. 7-9). Satan uses them to deny these solemn declarations. It is no new thing. It is as old as the Garden of Eden, where the Serpent said to Eve: "Ye shall not surely die." Alas! she—the mother of us all—believed the lie and fell, and found to her cost that the Creator's word stood firm. And so it must be with those who receive the lie of the deceiver to-day, who knows how to clothe his falsehood in the bewitching drapery of a love which is no love at all, but only a specious imitation. How strangely do such men read the story of the Cross of Christ and forget that it is not love alone that shines out there. The forsaking of that Blessed One, the cup He drank, the deep waters into

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which He went, the stripes He received, the affliction, the misery, the wormwood and the gall which were His portion on the Tree of Death, all these tell what sin is, what are its deserts, and what the holiness and righteousness of God is in relation to it. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger." And it will always be found that any denial of eternal punishment is accompanied with low thoughts of sin, and a low estimation of what the Lord had to endure to make it possible for sinful men to be saved and brought to glory. Shun all such teaching, then. Flee from it. Be not careful to defend God's character against those who defame it by lowering the standard of His holiness and righteousness. God will clear His own name from every aspersion. Meanwhile let us cleave to His truth, and dare to believe it in the face of all gainsayers. We shall come out on the winning side.

E—R.—If a person has never been baptised, and sees from the Scriptures that he ought to be, his submitting to that ordinance is an act of obedience which surely springs from faith. Why should he desire to be baptised? He will answer: "Because the Word enjoins it." Believing this, he obeys. What is that but faith leading to action? Only divine faith must have as its warrant a "*Thus saith the Lord.*"

SAUL'S CASE.—1 Sam. x. 9.—Let anyone read the chapter, and see whether it deals, in any part of it, with the soul's conversion to God, the new birth, and the forgiveness of sins. If it says of Saul that "God gave him another heart," or, as the margin reads,

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"God turned his heart," we must, in all justice, take such terms in relation to the matter in hand. What is that matter? Not the soul's transition from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, but the turning of Saul's thoughts in reference to the crown and kingdom of Israel—a very different thing. To quote this, with Saul's subsequent career and tragic end, as proof positive that true sheep of Christ may ultimately perish in spite of the Saviour's solemn assurance in John x. that they never shall, is a mode of interpretation that will not commend itself, we trust, to many minds. It is weak and deplorable, and goes far to justify the taunt of the infidel that "the ingenuity of orthodox exegesis has always been equal to the task of making Scripture mean whatever is required." To treat the Holy Scriptures thus is but to play into the hands of cavillers, and to impose upon the understanding of the simple. But we cannot pursue the subject further here. Get a booklet called *Fallen from Grace*, price 2d., from our publisher, which deals with many passages relating to the subject on which you ask for help.

C. H.—2 Thess. iii. 10-14.—Do not these verses show that a Christian man may be so walking as to justify an attitude of reserve towards him? His conduct does not call for extreme action, and his place at the Lord's Table is not denied him; but the man's course is so unsatisfactory that in love to his soul we are obliged to have no company with him. It is painful to carry ourselves thus towards a brother, but the Word is clear. Only it must be *love* that dictates such a step, not ill-feeling or resentment. Here we need to narrowly watch, and be sure of our ground.

BACKSLIDING.

BACKSLIDING is turning away from God. Some turn away because they were never really converted. They were turned towards happy meetings, Christian friends, and pleasant experiences, but they never felt their guilt, and they never trusted Jesus. They professed, but never possessed. They had right *opinions* about Christ, but no true affection for Him. They sat at the feast with the Living Bread before them, but they never ate of it. They were among the saved, but were not saved themselves, and at last they "went out," as 1 John ii. 19 says (read it), which exactly describes them.

There are some people who live light, frivolous, giddy, and even wicked lives, and yet they say they believe in Jesus! They are not saved from foolish conversation, bad temper, and evil company, and yet they persuade themselves that they are saved! What is this but the belief of a lie? By-and-by they either go back openly to the world and to their sins, or put on a cloak of hypocrisy and stay among Christ's people as Judas did (read John vi. 66-71). And this is worse than all.

You have seen a little child, after eating an egg, turn the shell upside down crying out, "See my egg!" There are some very much like that.

They seem all right, but their profession is hollow. It is only a shell. Soon the shell is broken up, and everyone sees what it is.

Beloved friends, "Lay aside all hypocrisies" (1 Peter iii.). You cannot deceive God. He reads you as you read a book. He sees through you as one sees through plate-glass. Be real. It would be better to put off the livery of Christ than to don it and then to work for the devil.

Do you understand why such converts backslide? It is because they never knew Christ; they had no life. Throw a stone as high as you can. Upward it rises, impelled by the muscular force of your arm. Now it slackens its speed, it turns, it falls with accelerated motion, and at last lies on the ground from whence you had picked it up. Why? You say the force of attraction overcame the force of projection. That is right. Now let loose a little captive sparrow. It opens its wings and away it flies, rejoicing in its liberty. Does the sparrow come down like the stone? No; for though it, too, is attracted by the earth, the little bird has *an overcoming power*—the power of life. The convert who can keep going only as long as the influence of friends and of meetings impels him is likely to backslide, and to find his place at last just where he was at first. But the one who has the Spirit of life will overcome at last, even though, like Gad, a troop may overcome him for a time (Gen. xlix. 19).

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For a believer may backslide. He may get under the power of evil, become cold in heart, and careless in his ways. Is he lost again? He certainly might deserve to be so if his salvation depended on his goodness and faithfulness. But Christ keeps His eye on the wanderer, and will take care that he is taught by his backslidings that it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord (Jer. ii.). The Lord is faithful to His people, as even His ways with Israel show (see Jer. li. 5). Christ will not abandon His own to the enemy of their souls. Having saved them once, He will never lose them again. His one offering has put away for ever all their guilt, nor will He recall to memory sins which He declares are forgiven and forgotten (Heb. x. 17). But this very goodness and faithfulness on His part make it the more serious in a believer to turn aside after Satan (1 Tim. v. 15).

Now such backsliding is not reached by a single step. The descent is by a stairway, broad and easy. So gentle is the decline that you scarcely know you are descending at all, until some devil's trap at the bottom catches your feet, and you find out where you are. Mind the first step. Sin may follow sin, the Spirit of God within may be grieved into silence, Christ may be forgotten and His name and truth brought into open dishonour. Then inquirers are discouraged, the wicked are glad, and the people of God are

deeply grieved. Very often the backslider loses all assurance of salvation, and pierces himself through with many sorrows.

Dear young converts, would you escape this misery? Do you dread such a fall? Take time, then, to tarry alone in the presence of Jesus. Neglect of this, and omission of Bible reading and prayer are the first cause of backsliding. If you do sin, delay not to confess it. Tell it out at once, even if passion is still hot in your heart, or sinful folly has been holding your eyes. An earnest preacher, speaking of his early days, says: "Three times during the first week after my conversion hasty words escaped me while at the plough. The moment they left my lips I was on my knees asking God to pardon the slip. When the devil came up to tell me I had done it, I told him he was too late, as I had got it put right." Remember, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Unconfessed sin quickly conducts to departure.

Thank the Lord, the backsliding convert may be restored. He may get back to the enjoyment of favour, love, and blessing as soon as he desires to return. The coal that falls into the fender soon becomes black and dead. How may its brightness and warmth be restored? Put it again into the bosom of the glowing fire. A backslider is one who has got away from the enjoyment of Christ's company and fervent love,

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into the chilling world. Yet there is his place on the bosom of Christ, which he has vacated. Another cannot occupy it. The place, the tender love, await his return. If he only comes back with honest confession he will soon glow again. Forgiven much, he may love more than others, and even be brighter than they.

Nor will the Lord Jesus keep the unhappy wanderer waiting for the pardon and the love. David was a backslider for months, but he was forgiven in a moment. "I have sinned against the Lord," he groaned out under the prophet's upbraidings, and quick as the light the answer came to the king's confession: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin."

Again I say, mind the first step. Keep at the side of Christ. Bask in His love. Draw from Him your daily supplies, for all you can ever need is in Him. If you heard of a man setting up in business without money or stock of his own, you would not be surprised if he were soon in the insolvency court. There are many bankrupt professors to-day, because so many start without capital. Christ is your capital, and, drawing from His fulness every hour, you will be a spiritual millionaire, kept from the backslider's poverty, misery, and shame, and enabled to assist others out of your abundant wealth.

J. N. B.

CULLINGS FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE LATE F. E. R.

YOU could not exaggerate the importance of piety. I think it is just the opposite of worldly prudence. Circumstances test us; adversity tests us; prosperity tests us. The poor man wants piety as much as the rich, and the rich as much as the poor.

We can never wear divine things out. The more we go on, the more we find they can be looked at in different lights.

One thing strikes me about Scripture: There is no uncertainty in its statements. . . . People who give forecasts leave margins for contingencies, but in the prophetic utterances there is no uncertainty; they speak in the most decided, positive way.

Commandments, to a Christian, are like sign-posts on the road. He is very glad to come to them; they confirm him; they are welcome guides to him for the road, though he may have been pretty sure he was right.

All the writers in Scripture had the coming of the Lord as the goal and end to which they looked.

I believe what is quite common among us is consent to the truth and retaining as much of the world as possible.

If the Spirit of God works in a man He *does* bring home what is revealed in Scripture. Many a one has

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been born again through a dream or some providential thing which brought God home to him.

“*Doing* good” is the way you put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. It is not by *talking* good.

The ways of God are severely retributive, and it is so with us as Christians. If you are hard and severe, it will return upon you some way or other.

Righteousness is not simply paying twenty shillings in the pound, but giving to Christ what is due to Him.

There are those who have heard the voice of the Son of God, and who *live*; there are those who are *satisfied*; and then, too, there are those who have rivers of living water *flowing out from them*. These things cannot be gainsaid. They are standing evidences of Christianity.

In the latter day all the literature which is right and morally refreshing will go out from Jerusalem. . . .

What Jerusalem will be in the last days, the belly of the believer is to be now (John vii. 38).

Young people look after one thing and another. . . . They say there is no harm in them, but I say these things war against the soul, and people who go in for them are not going on. It is a grave question with all of us who have to do with young people. We have our responsibility in regard to it. They look up to us, and we have to seek to influence them. In natural things we do not give our children poison instead of good food, and so I think spiritually we ought to try and keep our children from poison.

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The lower people are in the social grade, the more opportunity there is for testimony. When a man is wealthy he has to be divested of the thought that it is a mark of divine favour.

I think *prosperity* may be a mark of divine favour, but I question if it ever was the thought of God that man should amass wealth.

[The Book of] Proverbs is specially written for the young.

I believe the Jewish mind is infidel, for the Rabbis have given up the promise of His coming, both the first and the second. The result is, they get into materialism, and seek to make wealth here. The same thing has come in among ourselves; the coming of the Lord has not much place with us. I suppose no two facts affected us more, to begin with, than the coming of the Lord and the presence of the Holy Ghost.

It appears to me that if God saved everybody it would seem as if man and Satan had gained the day. When the fall came in, the only hope was in the sovereignty of God's mercy, but I believe the moral effect on man would not be good if all were saved, for it would not leave God His own proper place as God. . . .

I believe there must be an eternal witness to the presence of sin having been here. The lake of fire is God's eternal witness to His righteous judgment of sin. The "lake of fire" is eternal separation from God, with, I believe, inflicted punishment.

ABUNDANCE OF RAIN.

SOMEWHERE about the year 900 B.C., two men—one a king, the other his chief domestic officer—started out upon a strange expedition. The object of their search was—water! Going in different directions, they covered a large tract of that withered, drought-ridden country, and found—not water—but a man of God, who showed them the only way to get what they wanted—not *up from the earth*, but *down from heaven*.

Rain from heaven! Have you ever had desires in that direction?

I expect so. The majority of us could very well do with a good downpour in a twofold way.

First and foremost, we need the rain of divine blessing in our own souls. Alas! how dry we often get as the years roll by. Indeed, we seem to follow the round of the good old-fashioned barometer.

STORMY!	When first awakened to our sins.
RAIN!	When first we got a sense of the grace of God.
CHANGEABLE!	When we veered round from sin and Satan to God.
SET FAIR!	When first "peace with God" was ours.

How happy would it be if, having reached this point, we stayed there, continually bright and yet

refreshed by heaven's gentle showers. But no, only too often we pass on to

VERY DRY! When the world in some of its insidious forms has crept in, and the freshness and joy are gone.

Then it is that we need for ourselves abundance of rain.

Secondly, there is great need in connection with the work of the Lord. Even in days of "revival" like the present, and in a land like England, it is only too true that the great masses of the population remain hardly touched. Our cities and villages are like drought-ridden deserts. Thank God for all that is being done, and for every true convert made; but in spite of all we must yet sing—

"Mercy drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead."

Just open your Bible at 1 Kings xviii., and you will find the story of B.C. 900.

Read it carefully, that you may discover the secret of obtaining rain from heaven. Since history repeats itself, we may be certain that we shall obtain *our* rain from heaven in much the same way as they obtained *theirs*.

The whole chapter throbs with the spirit of faith and decision. Elijah, the man of God, knew *what to do*, and *did it*.

But, first of all, he gave the votaries of Baal

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full scope for the ignominious display of the utter impotence both of their god and of themselves. Then he alone, a solitary figure, drew near to God *on the ground of sacrifice*.

"Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (v. 38).

God signified His acceptance of that sacrifice by making a clean sweep of the whole thing. Bullock, wood, stones, dust, and water all went in the mighty burning!

This was the first link in the chain of events that led to the blessing.

In regard to the cross of Calvary we need to learn the lesson of Elijah's sacrifice. Have you ever looked upon it in that light? And do you glory in the cross not only because it has relieved you of all your sins, but because by it God has made a clean sweep in judgment of all that was hateful to Him?

When Jesus died, the fire of the Lord fell. He, personally, was not consumed. Though He laid down His life in this world to take it again in resurrection, yet in His death all that with which He in grace identified Himself, whether "our sins" or "sin in the flesh," was consumed, like stones, dust, and water in Elijah's sacrifice.

What you are, as well as *what you have done*, is gone for God in the cross of Jesus.

The second link is recorded in verse 40 :—

“And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.”

Elijah was prepared to act in concert with God, to adjust his action so as to tally exactly with God's action.

It was not enough that God should make a clean sweep of Elijah's sacrifice; Elijah must make an equally clean sweep of Baal's prophets.

No stick, no stone, not one barrel of water escaped in the sacrifice. Not a prophet escaped in the slaughter. Elijah was as unsparing in his judgment as God in His.

I verily believe that here is the secret of the drought which we all deplore. The great question for each of us is, “Am I prepared to unsparingly refuse in *practice* in my life what God judged in *principle* in the cross of Christ?”

Alas! how many of us are twentieth-century Obadiah's, with just this difference—that whereas Obadiah ostensibly served Ahab, and secretly fed the prophets of the Lord, we ostensibly serve the Lord, and secretly, in some dark cave of our hearts, nourish the prophets of Baal.

And then we wonder that there is so little rain from heaven!

Let us drop the figure and get to close quarters. You ask yourself—I'll ask myself:—

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Am I secretly pandering to the flesh and its tastes—gratifying its desires, making provision for its lusts?

Is my heart straying away into the world? Is it a novel rather than the Bible, the club rather than the prayer meeting, the latest song rather than hymns, innocent recreation rather than the service of the Lord?

Am I secretly nursing a feeling of revenge against my brother, or of envy; or am I consumed with a desire for pre-eminence or notoriety, even in the Church of God?

Has Satan gained my ear, and am I listening to, holding, or condoning doctrines which touch the glory of His Person and sacrifice?

Let us seek grace to adjust our lives in harmony with the cross of Christ and in obedience to the divine command:—

“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing . . .” (2 Cor. vi. 17).

The third link in the chain was Elijah’s prayer.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James v. 16).

Elijah’s prayer was *fervent*. His very manner expressed it. He did not loll about in various picturesque attitudes. “He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees” (v. 42).

It was also *full of faith*. See him on Carmel’s

crest waiting until the answer comes. The servant might say, "There is nothing." His answer was simply, "Go again seven times" (v. 43).

He himself was *righteous*, i.e. right with God—thoroughly right; an absolutely surrendered man.

Hence his prayer was *very effectual*. The long-looked-for little cloud rapidly developed, "and there was a great rain" (v. 45).

Let us briefly summarise the matter.

If we, firstly, learn how in the cross of Christ God has completely removed all that He hates; how all of the world and of "self" was there condemned for Him; and secondly, if we, in the grace ministered by the Spirit of God, seek to completely remove, in agreement therewith, all of the world and of "self" in our lives, thus getting really right with Him, we shall be fit, thirdly, to pray fervently and in faith.

And thus for our own souls and for the drought-stricken world around blessing will come.

Elijah was but one drop in the ocean of humanity—a solitary unit; and yet how much was accomplished through that one prayerful man.

And you and I? We are but units also; insignificant enough, if not exactly solitary; yet, without waiting for the support and help of a multitude, we may know the sweetness of abundance of rain.

God grant it may be even so!

F. B. H.

YOUNG MEN WANTED!

“Young men wanted ; separate from the World ; out-and-out for God ; devoted to Christ ; young men in whom the Holy Spirit of God not only dwells, but RULES.”

THESE words, from a letter addressed to us recently by a beloved brother in the Lord, impressed us very much. We could but fervently wish that we might be one of that sort. We thought of Daniel, and wondered why his history was set before us in such detail in the Holy Scriptures. We remembered the words, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Rom. xv. 4), and we studied his life. In the course of our reading we noticed three things that marked him, and which, we are persuaded, should mark us also if we are to glorify God in our life, and be used of Him in blessing to others.

First of all there was *purpose of heart*.—When quite a youth, Daniel, sharing the misfortunes of his people, was carried captive into Babylon. We can understand his feelings as he beheld his blighted prospects and blasted hopes. Presently, however, fortune seemed to smile upon him. The king sought out young men of ability to fill certain responsible posts, and Daniel seemed to be a likely candidate. Position and power were within his reach, and then came the test. Aspirants had to eat the king’s meat and drink the king’s wine,

and "Daniel *purposed in his heart* that he would not defile himself" (Dan. i. 8). The prince of the eunuchs reasoned with him, saying in effect, "You will certainly miss your opportunity, and I, if I hearken to you, may lose my head. Furthermore, others 'of your sort' are submitting to this, and why should *you* appear so odd, or set yourself up as being so much better than your brethren?" (Dan. i. 10). But Daniel held to his purpose; God was with him, his request was granted, and the result we know. Observe, his firm resolve made him a separate man. Young men, if we are to be men of God, we must be separate from the world in its thousand shapes and forms.

The king's meat may mean one thing in your life, another in mine. It may be the cigarette, the pipe, the newspaper, or the novel; things that could not exactly be called sinful, but which gratify self, and do not glorify God. Shall *we* then purpose in *our* hearts that we will not defile ourselves with the king's meat? The measure of our separation will be the measure of our power, and the Holy Spirit thus *ruling* in us will, by engaging our heart with Christ in glory, detach us from surrounding objects and make us living, active, powerful witnesses for Him.

In the second place, we notice that Daniel was *a man of prayer*. Ease and leisure were words that had no place in his vocabulary. Immersed in the business of the state, conscientious and alive to

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his duty as a responsible servant, he nevertheless found opportunity three times a day to pray (Dan. vi. 10). Here we touch a tender but vital point. If we are to have power with God and with men, we must *make time to pray*. It may mean wrenching ourselves from Blanket Square half an hour earlier in the morning, and returning half an hour later at night. It may claim from us spare moments at lunch time, now devoted to recreative reading. Be that as it may, we must *pray*, and PRAY, and PRAY if we are to be men of God. Many of us in our unconverted days did not mind rising early in pursuit of pleasure, or remaining till the small hours of the morning at the dance or at billiards. Is our Lord not worthy of some such self-denial? Is not our desire to be here wholly for Him sufficiently strong to cause us to find time to pray, and to get from Him needed grace and strength to be efficient witnesses for Him? Behind Daniel's practice was determination, behind his determination was devotedness, and behind his devotedness was God Himself. So thoroughly did the claims of God press upon that young man's soul that he resolved to be and to do for God at all costs, and on bended knee in His presence he got all that he required for his brilliant testimony.

Finally, Daniel was *a man marked by progress*, first, in the things of God, and secondly, in the

things of this life. Let us consider the last, and least important, first. A brother in the Lord asked recently, "Why is it that some young men do not work so well after they profess to be saved as before?" We ventured to reply, "Because they are not properly saved." There is a pious but mistaken idea abroad, that if a young man gets on in his profession or business, he is worldly-minded and self-seeking. Now, we say unhesitatingly that he who sets himself to succeed and to make his mark in this world, *making all else subservient to that*, may realise his desire; but the nearer he gets to the goal of his ambition, the further he will be from God, the less like our adorable Lord, and the more unfit for use by the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, he who seeks to be here for God will attend to the commonplace details of life in a way that will bring glory to God, rendering faithful service which God will, in His own time, duly honour. Daniel commenced at the foot of the ladder, and before long stood on the top. "A dangerous position," someone may remark. Yes, if we leave God out. But Daniel was equally unaffected, whether the world showered upon him her honours or hell turned upon him its artillery. He was as calm in the den of lions as in his official sanctum, and did his duty to his royal master in such a way that his enemies could find no means to dislodge him. All this

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was the result of his being a man of purpose, a man of prayer, a man of power, and a man of God.

And he made progress in divine things. God disclosed to him His secrets. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Ps. xxv. 14). He was as ready to confide to the youthful Daniel as in the veteran Abraham. Daniel was in immediate touch with Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i. 11). Then he received the gracious and touching announcement direct from the court of heaven that he was a "man greatly beloved"—greatly beloved by God—and heaven was cognisant of the fact. Thus, if we may speak figuratively, he had pinned upon his breast the "V.C." of God's approval. We confess the height of our ambition is not to be accounted great in this world, not to be able to sway multitudes by impassioned oratory, not to be chief amongst the saints, but to know that we are approved and *beloved by God*. Let us remark in closing, we have a glorious Person for whom to live, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. In devotedness to God and love to us, He "gave Himself." Shall we hold anything back from Him?

The power to be here for Christ lies in the Holy Ghost; but we shall only realise that power as He *rules* in us. Some of us live in lodgings, and have no part in the management

of the house in which we dwell. May we say it reverently, we fear the Holy Spirit has been having only the place of a lodger in many of our hearts. He indwells all who believe, but He desires to fill us (Eph. v. 18), to control our entire life, and to conform us morally now to that blessed One to whose image we shall be actually conformed when we see Him face to face.

We have penned these lines, not with the idea of lecturing young men for their shortcomings, but as the result of our own exercise before God, and as the expression of our own desire.

We would say to every reader, Let us make a balance sheet of our lives; let us face boldly our liabilities and our assets; let us discover where the wastage is. Let us get God's thoughts as to the priceless value of the present moment; let us share, at least in measure, His appreciation of His beloved Son, for whom He desires us to live; let us get, deep down in our souls, the sense of the infinite power of the Holy Ghost, with which God is ready to endue us; let us consider the privilege of being permitted to represent our absent Lord in the scene of His rejection; and let us definitely consecrate ourselves—body, soul, and spirit—to God, seeking by His grace, and in the power of His Holy Spirit, to "live henceforth, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15). W. B. D.

“WHEREBY SHALL I KNOW THIS?”

HOW much joy and blessing we often miss through the failure to receive simply and wholly as the Word of God the revelation of His mind so wondrously and graciously given to us; and how often our testimony has been marred by the effort to meet the questionings of human reason by any other means than the power of that Word acting upon the heart and conscience.

“Whereby shall I know this?” was the question put by Zacharias to the angel sent to announce to him good news quite beyond the reach of human understanding.

The answer of the heavenly messenger was beautiful and characteristic, and displays very simply a spirit so entirely free from the rationalism and materialism which may invade and hinder even the minds of Christians.

Without for a moment pandering to the doubts suggested, or giving one word of explanation outside the entrusted message, the angel’s reply is, as it were, in surprise:

“Can you know to whom you are speaking? I am Gabriel that *stand in the presence of God*, and all I am sent to declare or wish to understand is that *God has said that thus it shall be.*”

Lovely and sufficient answer! Searching words to the true believer to whom they were addressed. Shining to the glory and majesty of the supreme

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and omnipotent One whose message had just been declared.

May that which was sufficient for the angel be ever enough for us, while we bow in adoration before the grace which comes into our darkness to give us light from Himself. T. E. W.

SAINTS IN WRONG PLACES.

SOME get *under the tree of discouragement*, like Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4). Discouragement is a destroyer of faith, a damper upon love, a veil upon the face of hope. Therefore it is a sin to be discouraged.

Some get *on the slippery path of worldliness*, like Abram, when he "went down" to Egypt. There is no tent of separation, no altar of communion, no revelation of joy in Egypt. These are only found at the Bethel of fellowship with God (Gen. xii. 7-10; xiii. 4).

Some get *on the house-top of self-ease*, like David (2 Sam. xi. 2), who stayed at home when he should have been in the battle-field. His self-ease led to self-indulgence, which brought upon him the chastening hand of the Lord. Self-ease, like rust, corrodes the spirit with the mildew of unbelief, warps the moral fibre of consecrated work, and blinds the eyes of its devotee to the sight and attractive beauty of Christ.

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Some are *ensnared in the meshes of disobedience*, like the man of God out of Judah, who was entrapped by the wily old prophet of Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 9). No saint on earth, no devil from hell, and no man under the sun should turn us aside from the plain direction of God's Word.

Some get *into the doubting-castle of unbelief*, like John the Baptist, who sent his disciples to Christ to know if He was the Messiah (Matt. xi. 3) after he had proclaimed Him as such (John i. 34). Doubt is a faith-crippler, joy-killer, zeal-damper, mind-darkener, love-retarder, hope-annuller, and Christ-hinderer.

Some get *into the sieve of self-confidence*, like Peter (Luke xxii. 32, 33). When self puffs up and we warm ourselves at the world's fire, we place ourselves where Satan can grab us, and when he gets hold of us he riddles us, to the loss of our power and joy.

Some get *into the ring of wrangling*, like the disciples, who "disputed among themselves" as to who should be the greatest (Mark xi. 34). They did not strive for the lowest place, nor as to who should be nearest to Christ. Strife is the child of pride, the companion of ambition, the killer of unity, the grief of the Spirit, the bane of humility, the hinderer of the gospel, and the despiser of love.

Communicated.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANXIOUS ONE.—The Lord Jesus is able to save you from the everlasting consequences of your sins, and to deliver you from the present degradation and tyranny of the sin you have vainly endeavoured to overcome. His salvation is full enough, not only to exempt us from future judgment, but to set us free from the dominion of sin that has ruled over us so imperiously in the past. As to the former, though our sins were more than could be numbered, aggravated by frequent repetition, and black as hell itself, the grace of God is such that all may be forgiven and cast behind His back for ever. From every sin the blood of Jesus Christ His Son can cleanse us. Let us come in our wretchedness, our misery, our shame, to Jesus, the sinner's Friend, and we shall be welcomed with such pity, such tenderness, such unupbraiding love as tongue can never tell. Room at His feet, room on His bosom there is for any poor wanderer, nor will He send any away. All this, of course, you know, and here all of us must begin. *Have you begun there?* It is a blessed beginning, bringing with it ungrudging forgiveness for all that we have done, and knowledge of the heart of Him who has welcomed us to His home and rest. Starting here, the soul may say, "*I know Jesus. He loved me and gave Himself for me. Just as I was, loathsome and vile, He received me, and now—let me say it slowly, for it is almost too good, too wonderful, to be true—I am His, and He is mine.*" Are you able to say this?

Can it be supposed, if you have tasted that the

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Lord is gracious, that He is going to leave you shut up as in an iron cage with a monster whom you loathe? Impossible! Having saved you from the penalty of sin, He can surely save you from its power. But drink is cruel, and in its heavy fetters the devil will do his best to keep you. Your environments, too, lend you no aid. Under such circumstances you need to look earnestly to Christ, who is able to keep you from falling, and to resolve, by His help, *never to allow it to touch your lips again*. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. iv. 15). Apart from this your prayers will be unavailing. Shut up in a powder magazine, we might properly pray to be preserved, but we should have no right to expect our prayers to be answered if we persisted in playing with a naked light. Why should your young life be blighted and covered with shame by such an indulgence? Why should your usefulness be destroyed, your influence over others for their good be brought to naught? Besides, if you have received Christ as your Saviour, you belong to Him. You are not your own, you have been bought with a price, and your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are *to glorify God* in our body (1 Cor. vi. 19). Look up, then, to Christ, trust Him to give you the victory over this terrible besetment. Flee from temptation and distrust yourself, that you may lean on Him the more. Will you not write to us again? We shall be so glad to hear from you.

M. B.—We hardly see how any of us can pray effectually about the failures of others if we ourselves fail in a similar way. If we confess to God our own failures, and ask for grace to walk more faithfully,

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and get the sense of His forgiveness, then we might be able to pray for another. But with what tenderness we shall pray under such conditions! "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 21).

A CONSTANT READER.—We suggest your making yourself acquainted with the objects and rules of the association of which you speak and the character of those admitted to its membership, and then to determine whether, in all good conscience, you could enter it. Judge for yourself prayerfully and act before God in the matter. We believe it is an unspeakable gain for young Christians to engage in some definite work for the Master, only let them be careful in doing the right thing, that it be done in the right way. The story of King David's new cart, as told in 1 Chronicles xiii. xv., may help you here, and with it you might consider 2 Timothy ii. 5. But in seeking to do God's work in what we believe to be God's way, let us beware of a cold, carping, criticising spirit that can see no good in any service not cast in our mould and coloured with our brush. On this point we venture to quote some weighty words from the pen of Mr. G. V. Wigram:—"I have often, when feeling ready to find fault with others at work, had cause to stop and warn myself thus: 'If you are of the warrior band, take care, in finding fault with this other, you are not really proclaiming that yourself (the fault-finder) have leisure enough, at home and away from the work, to find fault with an ease-renouncing labourer in the field,

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your own Master's servant: and the fault, in such case, I find, is oftener about *the way* of doing it, than about the thing sought to be done, or about the object and aim of the labourer. Luther and Calvin made great mistakes, no doubt of it; so did Whitfield and Wesley; but *they lived out their light for God.*" Such words should be earnestly remembered. May the gracious Master whom you seek to serve guide you into the path of service He would have you enter. If your stock is small, still trade with what you have and it will grow. And remember that it is not alone in spiritual things that a Christian young lady can serve. Many a mother with children to care for, and only one pair of hands to do scores of necessary duties, would be grateful to have something done to lighten her daily burden. If you fervently desire to serve Christ you shall not stand long idle in the market-place.

T. A. G.—2 Tim. i. 16-18.—It cannot be supposed that Onesiphorus had turned away from Paul, indeed his unselfish bearing towards the apostle, so beautifully commended here, is all the more striking because of those who had turned from him. While gratefully acknowledging the refreshing service of Onesiphorus, the apostle can but utter the fervent desire that divine mercy might overshadow the household of this beloved man. We must not limit our view of mercy to favour shown to the guilty. Never, so long as we are on earth, are we beyond the need of mercy—God's gracious, tender favour compassionately exercised towards those so weak and frail as all of us are.

C. E. G.—The Holy Spirit is God's great gift to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Not to have received the Spirit is not to be in the

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Christian state—see Acts x. 42–45 with Ephesians i. 13. Nor does Acts xix. 1–7 lend countenance to the theory that there are some who have believed the gospel and remain without the Spirit. The disciples there spoken of had only received the witness of John Baptist, but when in receiving Paul's testimony concerning Christ, their faith rested upon Him risen and and in glory, then they received the Holy Spirit. Born of the Spirit and the gift of the Spirit are two different things.

F. R. A.—You are quite right in believing that only the wicked dead stand before the Great White Throne. None other come into judgment, though all of us have our works examined at the appointed hour. But with the Great White Throne the saved have naught to do. We are inclined to think that the book of life is introduced to show the extreme care with which this solemn judgment is conducted. The dead are judged according to their works, and there are differences, no doubt. But there is no difference in this—their names are not in the book of life. Its pages, so to speak, are searched in vain, none of their names are found there, and the just doom of the impenitent is therefore sealed for ever.

W. S. H.—Your inquiry hardly comes within the scope of these columns, but if you will kindly send us your address we will gladly forward you some observations on the subject made by an esteemed brother to whom we submitted your note.

THE MAINTENANCE OF MISSIONARIES.

A FEW weeks ago some correspondence appeared in one of the well-known religious Weeklies on the maintenance of missionaries in the foreign field. Some, it was said, having private resources commensurate with their needs, only asked for the sympathy and prayerful remembrance of brethren at home; others having nothing, went out under guarantee that the Society who accepted their services and fixed their sphere of labour would care for their temporal wants; while a third class, casting themselves entirely on the Lord, went forth relying upon Him to supply their needs from time to time through any channel He might choose. *Which of these three courses was the best?* or, putting it in another and perhaps better form, *Which of the three would the Lord have His servants follow?* Such was the question raised.

The first class may be dismissed at once as being outside the present inquiry. Having means to live a life of leisure, they prefer to devote themselves to the service of their Master. Looking on the fields white unto harvest, moved with compassion and constrained by the love of Christ, they leave home, kindred, and a thousand comforts, to endure hardships and brave dangers from which money cannot exempt them. And

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this they do that they might carry, even to the dark places of the earth, the glad tidings of a Saviour-God. They shall have their reward, and it will be great (Mark x. 29, 30).

The principle on which the servants of the Lord should act if called of Him to devote themselves wholly to the work of the ministry is the same whether serving under a British or a foreign sky. At least so it seems to us. Distance and place have little to do with the matter. Of course we start with this premise, that the Lord *has* a perfect right to say to any man, "Your sole business upon earth shall be to carry My messages, and like a soldier, ready to go where he is sent and wherever his services are required, so you are to be ready to do My bidding and go where I shall send you." His right to act thus we hold to be incontestable.

It may be through deep exercise and long waiting upon God that this point is reached in the soul of the servant. But deep down in his innermost being he has heard the Master's call, nor can he rest until it be obeyed. It may mean the relinquishing of a position of ease and competence and a quittance of the road that leads to earthly fortune, but the divine call burns like a fire shut up in his bones, and, like Peter of old, he leaves the boat to walk on an element where faith alone can hold him up (Matt. xiv. 29-31).

Turning to the Scriptures, he finds that in the

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first days of Christianity they went forth under the direction of the Holy Spirit, happy in being commended to God by those whose fellowship and prayers they valued (Acts xiii. 2-4). No rigid plan was prepared, no special or limited sphere marked out, no *guarantee* that their daily wants should be met, after a certain measure or after any measure at all, by others. They went forth counting on being guided of God, as they assuredly were (Acts xvi. 6-10), and believing that He would supply their need through channels of His own choosing (Phil. iv. 15, 16). If this was the divine plan for the first century, should it not be for the twentieth? Is God changed, or are His resources exhausted?

Of course, I do not forget that it is not every servant, though his gift be unquestioned, who is called into such a path. It is the exception rather than the rule. In England and kindred countries a man may work at the forge all the day long and yet be an able minister of the Word. Another may serve at a bank counter, engage in commercial pursuits, practise medicine, or follow some branch of the law, earning thus his own living, and all the while be an honoured and much-used servant of Christ. All that is frankly conceded. But this in no way comes into conflict with the point we are now examining. Does some reader say, "Ah, I see! you are drawing a distinction between a local preacher

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or lay-reader and the reverend gentleman who usually fills the pulpit and administers the sacraments"? No, that is not it. Scripture makes no such distinction. What we are endeavouring to show is that there are devoted, gifted servants of Christ who rightly follow some secular calling, and there are others who rightly give it up and addict themselves entirely to the ministry of the Word. They have received of the Lord what may be styled a free and wide commission, and hold themselves ready to go wherever their Master bids them—north, south, east, or west—to serve His interests and to carry out His pleasure. And they do this *freely*, and count on Him who sends them forth to supply all their need, be it large or small.

From what has been already said, the reader will have learned our answer to the question raised in the columns of our contemporary. We hold that the third class is working on primitive and scriptural lines, though to his own Master every servant stands or falls. Certainly no one has made us a ruler or judge over him.

But if any of us honestly hold such principles, how mindful we should be of our privileges and responsibilities in relation to the Lord's servants who thus go forth in dependence, not on us, but on their Master. He will not forget them, nor does He, but His care is manifested through His saints—they are His channels—the ministers of

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His bounty to Whom all things belong. A steward every one of us is, nor can any of us say that the things we possess are our own. We administer them for Him to whom we shall have to give account. But are we always sufficiently alive to what the Lord would have us do in these relations? Do we always respond to that just and generous impulse which His gracious hand knows how and when to kindle? Not always, perhaps. We linger, we hold back, and the heaven-born impulse dies away. It was begotten, possibly, in answer to prayer. The servant had been spreading his need out before his Master in secret, the prayer was heard, and to us was given the privilege of being His channel. He touched us with His hand, spake and bade us do. We heard but hastened not to obey, and so the voice passed on and did not return. Thus, so far as we were concerned, the prayer received no answer, the will of the Lord was left undone, the servant's needs were not supplied, and we missed both our privilege and our reward.

When devotedness to Christ is a rising tide among the saints, when freshness of affection for Him distinguishes them, then all such matters have their proper place, everything is remembered and nothing forgotten. Their hearts, like a well-tuned harp, respond to the gentlest touch of the Heavenly Hand. When it is not so our sympathies become shrivelled, our thoughts confine

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themselves within the narrow boundaries of our own things, and the ever-broadening circle of our Master's interests sinks out of sight. Everything spiritual languishes, the atmosphere is stifling, not a leaf on the trees moves, and the whole scene sighs for rain from heaven. Nor will there be any change until it comes. Then things are quickened into life, testimony for Christ in the home and foreign field receives fresh impetus, new gifts from the ascended Head of the Church appear, saints are edified and sinners converted. Nor are their needs forgotten who serve their Master, whether in the villages and crowded towns of Britain, on the burning plains of Africa, or the cold, inhospitable shores of Labrador—dear, devoted men, of whom it may be truly said, as of those in earlier days, “For *His name's sake* they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles” (3 Ep. of John 7).

“Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheerful words while their ears can hear them and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them. The kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way.”

LOST AT THE HARBOUR MOUTH!

AN oppressive stillness brooded over land and sea. The gulls were listless and uneasy and could not rest, but circled disconsolately in the sultry air. Scarce a ripple stirred the water, scarce a sound broke the stillness except the lapping of the tiny waves upon the pebbles. It was the calm before a storm.

The wind arose; sullen ragged clouds came racing up from the sea. It drove their angry masses forward till the sky was completely hidden. Meanwhile, the sea had been awakened from its sleep. The playful waves had become angry and spiteful as the inciting spirit of the wind, with its hoarse voice, murmured its cruel purposes in their ears, and urging them forward drove them to revengeful fury. They gathered themselves into huge rollers breaking far out to sea, and scattered their hissing foam upon the dark water. The fierce wind seemed to have aroused every sleeping passion buried in the soul of the mighty deep. That day raged one of the most awful storms within the memory of man. From those on land went up the agonising cry, "O God of mercy, send us back in safety those we love!"

But there were already some for whom that prayer could not avail, for floating spars and life-

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less bodies washed ashore told too plainly that some homes were rendered desolate.

But suddenly the cry goes up, "A sail! a sail!" Every eye searches the distance, and through the murky gloom emerges a fishing-boat making for the harbour. Intently they watch as she is driven before the mighty wind, the heavy seas bursting over her, each moment threatening to be her last. On she comes, till she has almost reached the harbour mouth. The next wave will either carry her into safety or send her to her doom. In fearful suspense the watchers wait for it. A tremendous breaker rearing its huge crest rolls in behind. Catching the fated bark just as she is entering the harbour, it flings her with resistless violence against the stonework of the pier. A heart-rending cry of anguish rises, and the men, clinging to the wreck, wave to their friends a last adieu, who close at hand stand agonised spectators, powerless to save their perishing comrades.

Lost at the harbour mouth!

And such has been the terrible fate of many sailing the ocean of life. The storm of approaching judgment has alarmed them, and they have realised that to be saved they must enter the haven of God's salvation, provided through Christ's atoning work. They have been very near to taking refuge, yet through a fatal delay have never done so, and they have been wrecked on

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the shores of a lost eternity. They were at the mouth of the harbour, yet utterly perished. King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Yet, alas! there is reason to fear that he made shipwreck of his soul.

And, reader, we would beg you to remember that to be near the harbour mouth is not to be safe in its shelter. Though near to the Kingdom of God, you may never enter it. These sailors were intensely anxious to guide their boat into the harbour, but perished in the attempt. But, thank God, whoever is willing may, through Christ's atoning work, escape the storm of judgment. The Lord Jesus says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." To every believer God gives this blessed assurance, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, nor shall such ever come into condemnation (John v. 24; vi. 47). The man that turns to Christ casts his anchor in the Haven of Eternal Peace. But every procrastinator risks shipwreck in the Gulf of Everlasting Despair, for it is written: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

L. M. B.

"WHATEVER stress some may lay upon it, a death-bed repentance is but a weak and slender plank to trust our all upon."

A WORD AS TO THE COVENANTS.

THERE is a tendency with many of God's dear children to confound the blessings of this dispensation with those which will be enjoyed by Israel in the day when the great prophecies relating to them will be fulfilled. We are slow to enter into God's thoughts about the Church, and slow to believe in the greatness of His grace towards us.

Israel had, indeed, a commonwealth on earth, but "our commonwealth is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20). Israel's calling and hopes, their worship, service, and enjoyments were, and will be, such as become an earthly people. Our calling and hopes are heavenly, and our worship, service, and enjoyments such as become a heavenly people.

With what constant care did the Lord and His apostles teach the blessed truth of our heavenly relationship and associations. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body" (Luke. xii.). "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. vi.). His coming again to receive us to Himself, that where He is we may also be, is our cheering and purifying hope (1 John iii.). "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (John xvii.).

In the epistles to the Ephesians and Hebrews

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the danger of letting slip this peculiar and characteristic truth is fully recognised. In the one we are exhorted to take unto us "the whole armour of God," and to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," so as to maintain in our souls the heavenly standing in which grace has set us (Eph. vi.). In the other, as partakers of the heavenly calling, we are encouraged to consider Him who is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, who represents us in heaven itself, and bears our names on His breast and on His shoulders in the presence of God—as Aaron bore the names of the twelve tribes in days of old. Through Him, too, we are invited to approach as those who have right to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. Our God would have us to be there in joy and confidence, offering continually to Him our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, with which He graciously assures us He is well pleased.

If the great truths unfolded in these epistles, and specially presented in Hebrews in contrast with what is Jewish and earthly, are before our souls, we shall be but little disposed to regard Israel's Covenant blessings as the measure of our own.

We do indeed have part in the blessing of Abraham, when in Galatians iii. the principle on which we are justified is argued. But the patriarch's seed was to be as the "*stars of the*

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heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore" (Gen. xxii.). Thus, though Gentiles, we are "Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise," but it is as the heavenly (the stars) in contrast with the earthly (the sand).

The Covenant of Sinai, four hundred years later, was a conditional one. It was made with Israel, and was broken by them almost as soon as made. The *New Covenant* will be made with Israel in a day yet to come, and on the ground of pure grace (Heb. viii. 10). But the blood of the Covenant has been shed—the precious blood of Christ—and the blessings of that Covenant became available for all on the death of the Testator. They were, indeed, proclaimed by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and Paul speaks of himself and others as "able ministers of the New Covenant," in contrast with the ministry of the old, which was to condemnation, yet not without glory.

Our blessed Lord spoke of these things to Nicodemus in John iii., and declared that the only way to have part in them was by being born again. Yet He called them "*earthly things*"—things which Nicodemus ought to have been acquainted with. "If I have told you *earthly* things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of *heavenly* things?" Mark the contrast between the earthly and heavenly, the latter being immeasurably the greater.

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The references to the New Covenant in the New Testament are indeed little more than passing allusions. The blood of the Covenant has been shed, as we are reminded every time we eat the Lord's Supper, and all the essential blessings of the New Covenant are ours certainly. But the New Covenant is not the measure of our blessing as it will be of those who come under it. They are ours in the sense that the greater must include the less. It has pleased God and our Father to bless us in a measure that goes far beyond all Covenant blessings for Israel, however great those may be. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, in Christ (Eph. i. 3)—quickened, raised up, and made to sit there in Him (Eph. ii. 5, 6). Wondrous things are indeed spoken of Zion, the city of God, but nothing like this is predicated of her, and the people in association with her, and her King. Sins, national and individual, forgiven and forgotten; cleansing from all their defilements; the law written in their hearts; the presence and powerful working of the Holy Ghost, according to the divine will; and Jehovah Himself known. These are the blessings of the New Covenant, with which will be associated a restored temple, with its worship, its memorial sacrifices, and a priesthood separate from the people.

Contrast all this with what is true of us—"As He is, so are we in this world"; fellowship with

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the Father and the Son; worship in the Holiest in association with Jesus; the bridal nearness of the Church; our oneness with Christ as forming His body; the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; the future joys and glories of the Father's House, the Tabernacle of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem! As these mighty differences press upon us, we can but exclaim with the apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. xi. 33).

Beloved, let us not be content with a lower standard of blessing than that which sovereign grace has made ours, for in so doing we should but slight that grace. In Israel's covenanted blessing made sure to them by the blood of Jesus, in grace and righteousness, we can rejoice, but at the same time we can but triumph in the boundless grace of God so richly shown to us Gentiles. Let us endeavour to walk worthy of it, and press towards the mark for the prize of our calling on high by Christ Jesus.

F. H.

"WHEN Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he called his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, and said, 'Read to me.' 'Out of which book, Sir Walter?' said Mr. Lockhart. The dying poet, looking at him earnestly, said, 'Lockhart, there is but one book. Read to me out of the Bible.'"

“I IN YOU.”

THIS little expression, occurring in three different places in the Lord's last address to His disciples, is full of deep meaning. It sets forth God's present purpose for His people. Divine persons are at work in order to form Christ in every believer. This is the object of the Spirit's ministry, the Father's discipline, and the Son's intercession.

The fact of the Spirit's sojourn upon earth gives a most unique character to this present period. God never had perfect delight in man from the moment sin entered till His blessed Son came into this world. Then He could look down from heaven and behold a Man after His own heart, who could always say, “I *delight* to do Thy will, O My God.” The world failed to appreciate that Man, hated Him, criticised Him, condemned Him, put Him to death. But they did not get rid of Him altogether. Christ is still here in His people.

Consequent upon His rejection by the world and His reception by the Father, another divine Person was sent, not in human form, so as to be capable of suffering at the hands of men, as Christ was, but a Spirit, whom the world, having no spiritual apprehension or knowledge, could not receive. The Spirit of God, though now

resident upon this earth, did not come to the world. He came to those who now form the Church—the body of Christ. His testimony may be received or rejected, but He Himself is never presented for man's reception, as Christ was. "The world . . . seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye *know* Him" (John xiv. 17). Mark, the Lord does not say to them, "Ye *see* Him." Why does He not complete the contrast, so to speak? Why does He omit the "seeing"? We perceive the reason in verse 19. "Ye see ME." Christ is the object, not the Spirit. He is the Spirit's object, and He brings Him before the hearts of His own. By the work of the Spirit we are made to appreciate Christ, and thus, being engaged with Him, we are changed into the same image. God is in this way reproducing all the moral qualities of Christ in the members of His body during His absence from this world. Anything less exalted than this, we may venture to say, would be unworthy of a divine Messenger sent from a glorified Man on the Father's throne.

"At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 21).

When the Spirit came they would understand, as never before, His place of nearness and relationship. Many times He had told them the Father was *with* Him, but He had never mentioned this to them before. He had indeed spoken to the unbelieving Jews in Solomon's

porch (chap. x.) of His purpose in doing the works of His Father, "that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him"; but that is not what He means here. When knowledge precedes belief, it is intellectual acquaintance with the truth; when it follows belief, it is the inward consciousness given by the Spirit. "Ye shall know." Knowledge is something more than receiving the testimony of a thing. The question "Where dwellest Thou?", which two of them had asked long before, would then be fully answered. John himself would so take it in that he could thus describe it: "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."

There is another significant difference, too. To the Jews He spoke first of the Father dwelling in Him, then of His dwelling in the Father. To His disciples the order is reversed (compare chap. x. 38 with xiv. 10). The Spirit never changes the order of words without design. The first thing *we* know is *His place*. If we did not know that we should never know our own. Oh that our souls were filled with a deep sense of His infinite worthiness! Then we should know increasingly the blessedness of association with Him in life and glory.

We could never have had this place apart from *His death and resurrection, and apart from the giving of the Spirit*, we could never have known

what it means to be "in Christ." The believer is brought into the nearness of relationship by receiving Him (John i. 12), and by receiving the Spirit he is brought into the consciousness of it. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The effect of so knowing His place in the Father, and our place in Him, is expressed by such words as these: "No longer live I, but Christ liveth in me." "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ." "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "Christ is all, and in all" (Gal. ii. 20; Phil. i. 20, 21; 2 Cor. iv. 11; Col. i. 27, iii. 11).

"Abide in Me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit"
(John xv. 4, 5).

What comes before us in this chapter is the Father's care exercised in discipline in order to *keep* us in the conscious nearness given by the Spirit. The divine Husbandman purges the branches. He removes all that tends to hinder fruitfulness, all that would obscure our vision of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, all that would lessen our appreciation of Him, that we might be continually occupied and satisfied with the Son of His love. This is abiding in Christ.

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It is spiritual state, not standing; communion, not security. Standing is for our enjoyment; state is for God's. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." "I in you" is the "much fruit." "The fruit of the Spirit," the normal result of His dwelling in the believer, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"—the qualities that marked Christ in this world. It is the sum total of what the new man is. Have we taken in the thought that this is the blessed end of all God's dealings with us as His children? "That we might be partakers of His holiness." "Conformed to the image of His Son." This is what He has marked us out for, this is what He has taken us up for, and this is what He will surely bring us to. Meanwhile He works to make it *our goal*, the desired haven of *our* souls.

When His end has become ours, we are content to have Him take His own way to bring us there. If we long for home, the storm that drives us nearer does not much disturb us. Every trial we meet, every sorrow that comes upon us, every blessing bestowed, every privilege given, every circumstance of our lives, even the mistakes and failures we so constantly make, are all used by Him, in matchless wisdom, to contribute to the working out of His own glorious plan. This was what caused the apostle Paul to declare with such emphasis of conviction, "We know

that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." The accomplishment of God's purpose had so become the desire of his soul that he was lifted above all wilderness circumstances. He could glory in infirmities and take pleasure in insults, necessities, persecutions, straits. He saw the thorn in the flesh as part of the Father's discipline to keep him abiding in Christ. "Lest *I* should be exalted." Wherever there is self-exaltation there is necessarily distance. That would have disturbed God's good pleasure in him, and marred the testimony to the world. Christ would not have been magnified in his body. The very greatness of the revelations made to him would have been an occasion to the flesh but for this preventive care. It was the messenger of Satan to buffet him—that was the enemy's purpose—but God overruled it to bring out a fuller display of Christ in him. This is what the devil seeks in every possible way to hinder, but we are given to see how completely he is defeated by his own weapons. God turns to the working out of His own designs the very means he uses to frustrate them. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

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"I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. . . . And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 23, 26).

We reach the climax in this chapter. It is not merely the *consciousness* of relationship by the Spirit as in chapter xiv., nor the abiding in the *enjoyment* thereof, through the Father's watchful care, as in chapter xv., but through the Son's ministry of grace there is the apprehension of the *love* of relationship, the knowledge of the Father's heart. He has made it known, and His service in heaven is exercised in order that we might fully enjoy it. Chapter xiii. begins with His eternal love for His own, and this chapter ends with the eternal love of the Father given to be the present realised portion of their hearts. Thus He gets His place *in* us now. "I in them." This is the way He takes to reproduce Himself morally. He makes us so appreciate Himself that we desire nothing else. Blessed Lord, Thou couldst never have won our hearts if Thou hadst not so fully unfolded Thine own! "We love Him, because He first loved us."

Christ in glory is not only the sole object of faith for the sinner, He is the supreme object of desire for the saint. Christ in us is the delight of the Father and the testimony to the world. The two things are inseparably linked together.

When Christ was here the testimony was perfect because God was always "well pleased" with Him. His future purpose in having Christ fully displayed in the Church is expressed in verse 23. It is really the manifestation of Himself. If God is in Christ, and Christ is in His people, the world will learn what God is by beholding them. When the Church is made perfect in one there will be no failure in the display of Him. They will know that Christ was the Sent One of the Father, and that the Father's love to us can be measured only by His love to the Son. When a wondering world shall behold the full accomplishment of all His sovereign purposes of love and grace—when the Church is manifested with Christ—when He shall have come to be glorified *in* His saints, and admired *in* all them that believe—then God will have perfect satisfaction, and the world perfect testimony.

Meanwhile, till that bright moment, labourers together with God should have nothing less than this before them. It was the object of Paul's ministry and the continual burden of His prayers. He brings before the Ephesians God's eternal purpose, His calling, His inheritance, His power, and then prays "that Christ may dwell *in your hearts* by faith." He tells the Thessalonians about the coming day of glory, when their present trouble would be exchanged for the rest and reward of His millennial reign, and then ex-

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presses God's present purpose for them and His own desire, in praying "that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified *in* you." The apostle had God's end before him, not only as an individual thing for himself, but also for the whole Church. His prayers for them are very much on the line of the Lord's own recorded intercession. If He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word," Paul's heart can take in nothing less than "all saints." If "I in them" is the Lord's great desire, nothing will satisfy Paul but "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." That is Christ. When the saints are filled with Christ, nothing will come out but what He is. The greatness of the prayer suits well the greatness of God's purpose. It is formed really by the sense of it, and the power is behind all "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," even to fully satisfy His own desires for us. Finite prayer and thought, however great, can never come up to what is in God's heart and mind for His people. May our hearts, constrained by such love, be more set for this blessed end.

J. W.

"I NEVER trusted in God but I found Him faithful, nor my own heart but I found it false."

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED!

AT the close of a gospel meeting one evening a timid old lady felt that she ought to speak to a couple of young men about their souls, but it was some time before she could find courage to do it. She had been a believer from childhood, but she was so reserved, and naturally quiet, that she shrank from doing anything that would bring her into the slightest prominence.

Finally, however, she made the effort, and with limbs almost sinking under her, she went to the young men and begged them to turn to the Lord. Her nervousness made her address them in such an odd and hesitating way that both of them laughed in her face and made no reply. This so mortified her that she began to cry, and returned to her seat, resolving that she would never again attempt to speak with people about their souls. She would leave that work to preachers and others who were gifted that way!

Now it happened that the two young men to whom she had spoken shared the same bedroom in the house where they boarded. During that night one of them was awakened by hearing his companion groaning, as if in great pain.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"Oh," replied the other, "I am disgusted with myself for the way in which I treated that good

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old lady. It was a hard thing for her to come and speak to us, and I hate myself for laughing in her face as I did. I should not like anyone to behave in that way to my mother. She wanted to do me good, and I should at least have been civil to her."

The other young man assented to all this, and seemed to feel it as much as the first. In a little while they were both under deep conviction of sin. They rose from their beds and began to pray, and before morning they were both soundly converted.

One of the two became a preacher. The other is to-day a prominent manufacturer in the town where he was converted, and is an earnest Christian worker.

And all this came to pass through God's blessing as the result of a halting effort of a timid woman who was laughed at in her first attempt to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit and say a word for Christ.

ADAPTED.

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W. M.—John vii. 39.—This passage seems to us to place it beyond dispute that the Holy Spirit was not given till the Lord Jesus took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. John xiv. 17 is no proof that the Holy Spirit was here when Jesus was on earth. The preceding verse is dead

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against such an interpretation. The contrast, observe, is between the world and the disciples. When the Spirit of Truth should come, sent of the Father to abide here for ever, He would abide with the disciples of Jesus, not with the world. So far as the world is concerned, it neither seeth nor knoweth Him. It is with *you* He dwells, not with the world, and He shall be in *you*, not in the world. The contrast is one of persons. Moreover, in John xvi. 7, the Lord says, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Words could not be plainer, and they prove beyond denial that the Holy Spirit's abiding presence was dependent on the Lord's going away. In Old Testament times, no doubt, He wrought in various ways, and it was by His power that souls were born again from the very first. But all that is distinct from His abiding presence on earth and His indwelling the believer. The Church, too, was formed by the coming and baptism of the Spirit, all believers being thereby baptised into One Body—a totally new thing. If you wish to see the subject fully dealt with, get *Lectures on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* from our publisher.

INQUIRER.—We thank you for your kind note, but do not see our way to discuss the question further. Other subjects claim our space and attention.

ANON.—No doubt God can and sometimes does impress the minds of men in the direction He would have them take, even as regards their earthly circumstances. But impressions about matters that offer reasonable grounds for doubt need to be narrowly watched, lest we interpret them according to our own

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inclinations, and suppose we are being divinely guided. It is, indeed, our privilege to take everything to God in prayer, to ask for wisdom, and if our eye be single we may surely count that wisdom will be given. Nor do we doubt that He is able to perform whatever He has promised, only let us be sure that what we rely on Him to bring to pass is something to which His promise is attached. Are you sure of that? If not, had you not better wait and see how things develop?

D. A.—We cannot believe that any intelligent Christian walking with God would ever think of being united in marriage with one who is not. Scripture is clear and decided on the point both in type and plain, unmistakable statement. And it is also most desirable that there should be oneness of thought concerning things which may not be considered vital, but with which God's glory and our true blessing are most assuredly connected. There may be no direct Scripture to forbid the union of two Christians though they be not walking in the same paths; but there is always danger in it, lest the one sinks down to the level of the other and loses—because not valued—the light God has so graciously given.

As to the closing paragraph of the "Cullings" in last month's issue, there is some force in what you say. 2 Peter iii. 9 and 1 Timothy ii. 4 are passages which undoubtedly show what God's disposition is towards all. It is good to test everything by the Scriptures, to follow the approved example of the Bereans in Acts xvii. 11, and not to receive as true and right everything that another says simply because he says it. Would that more of us followed this praiseworthy plan!

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CAST DOWN.—We deeply sympathise with you in the great sorrow you are called upon to bear. Crushing indeed it is if we speak naturally, but not if we speak in Christian language. "*My grace is sufficient for thee*" holds good in the severest trial and in the darkest hour. No one can doubt that we are intended to feel these heavy dispensations—they would yield no fruit if we did not—but when we faint under them we go to an extreme against which we should sedulously guard. So let us be watchful lest we become absorbed with our grief and loss and so lose sight of the One without whom not even a sparrow falls to the ground, who knows all, and who loves us with a Father's love. Could we see everything as God sees it we should justify Him in all His ways. We can only encourage you to look up unto Jesus and to give no place to doubts or fears or regrets. Lean on His almighty arm and on His unchanging love. Trust Him and you shall find grace for every day. Ask Him to make you a bright witness to others of the way He can sustain even in circumstances where heart and flesh fail. May He bless you abundantly. Be assured of our heartfelt sympathy and fervent prayers. As to your question on Philippians iii. 13, the runner in the race is not engaged with things which are behind. He aims to reach the goal and obtain the prize. So with the Christian. He, too, is a runner; the goal before his eyes is Christ in glory, the things behind are behind, and with these he is not engaged; but he reaches forth in eager haste, with the prize and heaven and home and rest in view.

A PATHETIC APPEAL.

“Oh, why do the ministers keep on preaching upon useless and unpractical subjects? Why do they not preach upon some of the vital questions of the soul? A short time ago the doctors told me that within six months I must die. What I want to know is how I can straighten out a wasted life so as to meet my God.”

IT is not possible, my dear friend, to straighten out your wasted life so that God shall look upon it with pleasure; no, not if you had sixty years to live instead of six months. Any hope you may cherish on that line is utterly vain, a crying of “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” I know that drowning men will catch at straws, but straws have never yet saved any man from drowning. Not that your case is hopeless; far from that. There is forgiveness for you, there is salvation with eternal glory, but not as the result of straightening out the remnant of your wasted life. Steer your ship in that direction and you steer her straight on to the rocks.

Do you not see that no straightening out of your life—if by that you mean an alteration for the better in your way of living—can ever undo the past? That is all right so far as it goes, but will it be accepted in the courts of God as a sufficient atonement for all the wrong you have ever

done? Would it be accepted in any earthly court? If a law-breaker pleads for pardon because of his penitence and his promise to live a better life, will the judge allow his plea, and let him off? The man's distress may be great, and his resolve to lead a different life sincere, but the offence is not purged by these. Sorrow for the past, and good intentions, do not satisfy the claims of a broken and an outraged law.

And if you say, "But what more can I do? If sorrow for my sins and a changed life are not enough to save my soul, then I am a lost man." Yes, that is exactly what you are, *a lost man!* No three words could more truthfully describe your condition. All men are lost, from the king on his throne to the captive in his dungeon—there is no difference.

But, blessed be God, there is good news for lost and guilty men like you and me. It comes from God Himself, that God of whom you speak as having one day to meet. Would it surprise you to hear that God has thought of your mis-spent life, of those sins which even tears of blood could never wash away? *He has thought of them,* and, so to speak, has asked the question, "How can that man's sins be purged? How can he be saved from a doom he so justly deserves?" Such questions the wisdom of angels could not solve. If a solution can be found, He who is infinitely wise alone can find it. It has been found. The

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cross of Jesus reveals it. He, the Son of the Blessed, became man that He might take up the cause of sinful men. He who knew no sin has been made sin for us. Knowing what would satisfy the demands of divine justice, He undertook to meet them, though to carry it out He should pass through seas of suffering and wrath. This is the mystery of His cross, and of His being forsaken on the tree of death. For God spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. He spared Him not that He might spare us, and that we, forgiven and cleansed, might be blessed with everlasting riches in a scene where sin and sorrow and death can never come.

A dying man trying to straighten out his twisted, crooked, ill-spent life, so as to meet God with some measure of hope, is a sorry sight when placed alongside the rights of the Eternal Throne, to satisfy which the Son of God was wounded, bruised, smitten, forsaken, on the cross of Calvary. It would be grotesque were it not so awfully tragic. He is like a man sallying forth to extinguish the flames of a burning city with a garden hose, or thinking to pay off the national debt with the most insignificant coin in the currency of his country!

No toil, no tears, no trying to mend matters does God ask for, as if atonement for sins were a joint affair in which both you and He had part. From your own doings God would now turn you.

He directs your eye to Christ in glory, the sinner's Friend and Saviour. On Him your reliance must be placed, for there is salvation in no other. He has espoused your cause, and for the ungodly He has died. "*Come unto Me,*" He says, "I will give you rest." Yes, it is to Jesus we must go, just as we are, sick and ready to die.

And though He is in heaven and you are upon earth, yet you may reach Him from the very spot where you now are. He is not far from every one of us. Turn, then, in heart to Him, and if you have naught to bring, and can only come with empty hand, never mind. That is how He would have you come, nor can any come in a better or other way.

But come believingly. If He casts you out, you will be the first that He has ever treated thus. There is no fear of that. He is not changed from the day He hearkened to the cry of the penitent malefactor, and took him from a cross of shame to be with Himself in paradise. Trust Him, then. Trust Him wholly. Cast yourself upon Him. In doing so you will please God, who delights to see Him believed in after this fashion. Then when the short lease of your earthly life expires, you shall be welcomed to His home to spend an unbroken eternity with Him who is your Saviour, Shepherd, Friend.

THERE IS ONE BODY.

THE essential oneness of all believers and their relation one to another is set forth in the Scriptures under the figure of a body; but not a body in the sense in which we speak of a political or religious body. It is the human body that is meant—a living organism, perfect and complete (1 Cor. xii. 12-27). It was first formed at Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by whom it has been maintained ever since—the one Spirit indwelling every believer, no matter what his nationality or his position in the social scale. Jew and Gentile, bond and free, are all one in Christ, and all related to each other even as the various members of our own body—eyes, ears, hands, feet—are related and all form one body, each being essential to the welfare and completeness of the whole.

It is important to see that the oneness is by the indwelling Spirit, not by community of thought, though there is and should be that, nor by identity of means and methods of work for the Lord, for in these there is much diversity. The unity exists because one and the same Spirit indwells every believing soul, and thus all are knit together in indissoluble oneness by the Holy Spirit of God.

There is a divine largeness about this great truth that is most precious and health-giving.

We look abroad, all over the wide earth, where the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is named, and rejoice that wherever one is found whose faith rests on Him alone, there is one who, having received the Holy Spirit, is a member of that One Body of which Christ in heaven is the Head. We own this oneness and rejoice in it.

Nothing can actually destroy this unity, though the Church has failed to maintain any outward expression of it. Indeed, were any one to judge only by what is seen on the surface, he might conclude that the oneness did not exist at all, so broken and divided is our state. This is our shame, and ought to be our constant grief. But underneath all that separates there is that which is vital and enduring. What divides shall pass away, but that which unites shall last for ever.

It is not of failure that we wish now to speak, but rather of some of the lovely things that naturally flow from this great truth when it is held in faith. I say *when held in faith*, for, alas! it is only too easy to boast that there is but One Body, and to theorise upon it with fluency that comes from long practice, and all the while be showing in spirit and deed that we hold it only in the letter. Then it is of no value, but fosters the Laodicean delusions of Revelation iii. 17, than which nothing is more nauseous in the eyes of Him who sees through every covering and beholds things as they really and truly are.

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Let us observe, first of all, that the truth of the One Body entirely destroys that proud but ignorant temper that would lead any of us to think and say of another, "*We can do without you.*" There is not a saint upon earth that we can do without. Each has his place as a member of the body; each has his function to fulfil, and in fulfilling it contributes to the healthfulness of the whole. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Cor. xii. 21). Indeed, the members which seem to be more feeble are necessary, and to these God gives "more abundant honour." How, we may not be able easily to say; but the fact is stated, and is therefore assuredly true.

Another result flowing from it is "that the members should have *the same care one for another*" (1 Cor. xii. 25). "No schism in the body." In the human body this, of course, is seen. We cannot conceive divided interests there—the right hand seeking to do one thing, and the left another, and the feet wishing to walk in opposite directions. The idea is too ludicrous, but were such a state possible, how disastrous the results! What care, then, we ought to have one for the other; what anxious and prayerful solicitude if anything is going amiss, what tender endeavour to correct what may be wrong; what unwearying effort to heal what calls for healing;

what remedial measures thoughtfully and lovingly devised to promote the good of all! These and every other means will be patiently and perseveringly employed when the members "have the same care one for another." Remember, kind reader, that we are speaking now of the membership of the One Body, not of anything narrower. Indeed, denominationalism or inter-denominationalism has no part in the truth of the One Body. From every kind of narrowness it delivers while guarding against all looseness which would open the door to evil at the expense of truth. How we need—as many of us as profess to recognise and rejoice in the glorious fact of the oneness of all believers—how we need, I say, to challenge our hearts as to whether we are holding fast the form of sound words, "*in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. i. 13). For what is the worth even of sound words without "faith and love"? They are but an empty shell, a body without the soul, a profession without reality, powerless save to engender a cold, proud, hard, pharisaic spirit.

One further result we may briefly speak of. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. xii. 26). Such words are beautiful in their unselfishness; they shine and glow with a loveliness that is altogether divine. The sufferings of another are

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my sufferings; the honour of another is a matter of rejoicing to me! We rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep (Rom. xii. 15). Oh, blessed bond that makes such a thing possible in a cold and selfish world! Members one of another, because we are members of One Body.

Christian reader, are these the lines on which your thoughts, sympathies, and aims run? Have you before your spiritual vision the One Body—the vast aggregate of all believers—not like a heap of stones or a bundle of sticks, having no affinity, but each and all indwelt by the one Spirit and thus livingly united to each other? If this be so, anxiously see to it that it be not a mere article in an accepted creed, but a great truth developing in you those divine traits of which we have spoken and which are so greatly to the glory of God and so rich in comfort and blessing to others. _____

“GOD’S ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man’s busy movements: they will accomplish God’s. The rest of them all perish and disappear. We have only peacefully to do His will.”

J. N. D.

“DOUBTLESS.”

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”—Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

DAVID tells us in this psalm that a sower is a weeper. But he also tells us that a weeping sower will “*doubtless*” be a rejoicing reaper. What an encouragement is this to patient sowing, even when there is no *apparent* result.

The Master was a sower, and pre-eminently a weeper. As He stood on Mount Olivet and reviewed the scene of His labours, the pent-up tears flowed as He uttered that sorrowful lament over Jerusalem, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke xix. 42). But He still went on sowing. In the deep love of His heart He gave His life for that rebellious nation, and His reaping time will *doubtless* come when “all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Rom. xi. 26).

Paul, too, was a weeper. His epistles tell us of the agonies he went through for perishing sinners (Rom. ix. 2) and backsliding saints (Gal. iv. 19). He wept bitter tears (Phil. iii. 18), but he well

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knew that he who "goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall *doubtless* come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Indeed, one of the things he looked forward to in the day of the kingdom was the joy of the reaper. He could speak of the Thessalonians as being his joy and crown of rejoicing when the Lord should come. He urged the saints at Corinth to be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know," said he, "that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Is my reader a worker in the Lord's vineyard—a Sunday-school teacher with a very unruly class? Well, do not give it up. Pray to God about the children; study the Word of God, to have something to give to them, and remember the word "*doubtless*." Perhaps you are a tract distributor. You have left the silent messengers at houses where they have little desire to receive them, and you cannot speak of a single conversion from all your labour. Don't forget the "*doubtless*." It is recorded for your encouragement. Twenty years or more ago a gospel book was written. It had lain on somebody's shelf most of that time. At last it was taken to an infirmary. God used that book to save a soul!

Or are you an open-air preacher of the gospel—a worker in the lodging-houses? You labour hard to reach souls; your desires are sincere; and yet

you see no fruit. Remember our word "*doubtless*." A servant of Christ went out to a heathen land. His deep desire for precious souls to be saved had led him there. He laboured for many years, and before he saw any fruit the natives took his life. Another servant went to labour on the same island. In a short time thousands had turned to the Lord. Will not sower and reaper rejoice together by and by?

It may be you are neither teacher, preacher, nor evangelist. Still you feel you must do something to make known God's great salvation. You are in a home where all are unconverted, or you have a fellow-workman whose soul you desire to see saved. You have often prayed for your family, often spoken to the one you are working with, but only get ridicule in return. You are becoming discouraged, and feel you must give up. Remember the word "*doubtless*," and do not despair.

There were two men living in a country village. A gospel tent was pitched there, and John went, heard the gospel, believed, and was saved. He now longed for the salvation of Joseph, his fellow-workman. Every time John spoke to him about the love of God and the work of Christ, Joseph would only jeer and ridicule, and say he did not want to be "righteous over much" like John. One day they were working together in a barn. I do not know whether John thought about what the Bible says as to the chaff being burned with

unquenchable fire; but, anyway, they were thrashing, and whilst the heavy flail fell upon the wheat and separated the chaff, John made another fervent and earnest appeal to Joseph to turn to the Saviour. He replied in his usual contemptuous manner. John was so concerned at the callousness of his friend that he burst into tears, and had to leave off work and go into a corner of the barn to hide his emotion. He soon returned, and silently plied his flail on the corn. Those tears had done their work, and Joseph's conscience was reached. "What!" thought he, "shall John weep over me, and yet I have never shed one tear for myself, nor even thought about my soul's salvation?" From that moment conviction, deep and real, set in, and he truly repented before God and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, to the salvation of his soul. It was now John's turn to rejoice. Henceforth they were united in one common desire to serve the same blessed Master. Joseph himself became a witness, both in his life and by the word of his mouth.

Now it does not always follow that *in this world* the weeping sower will be the rejoicing reaper, but there is no doubt that the deeper our desires, and the more earnest our efforts for the blessing of others, the greater will be our joy in that glorious day when both sower and reaper will rejoice together.

People sometimes say that a Paul may plant

and Apollos water, but it is useless if God does not give the increase. True, but the Scripture says Paul planted, Apollos watered, and "God *gave* the increase." He did not withhold it. Now sowing is hard work, needing much patient care. A farmer once said, "When I want a field sown, I either do it myself or send the best servant I have. Any labourer who can use a scythe can do the harvesting." Oh! then do not let us be disheartened. May the compassion of God and the deep need of lost souls so fill our hearts that, like Jeremiah of old, we may weep in secret for them, and seek in public to reach them. May we so catch our Master's spirit that we may indeed become sowers. This we can all be in our measure. We are to cast our bread upon the waters; after many days it shall be found.

If any one is disposed to give up some service for Christ, no matter how insignificant in the eyes of men, *don't do so*. Read and pray over Psalm cxxvi. and 1 Corinthians xv. 58 until the word "doubtless," and "*your labour is not in vain*," stir you to more unceasing effort. If you are growing weary, read Galatians vi. 9: "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season *we shall reap*, if we *faint not*." So we must not give up, but labour on in dependence upon our Master in heaven. The result is sure, and we shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us.

H. N.

OUR SIDE OF THE MATTER.

WE Christians want to advance in the knowledge of God, and in the enjoyment of all those blessings He has for us in Christ. At least, we *ought* to get on, whatever our desires on the subject may be.

There are two sides, however, to this matter of spiritual growth—*God's side* and *ours*.

God's side is to plan the blessing, to procure it, and present it to us, having empowered us to receive it. Ours is to make room for it and gratefully to accept.

Omit God's side, and there would be nothing for us—absolutely nothing. Lose sight of ours, and though there is everything for us, as far as we are concerned there might be nothing. For “nothing” would exactly describe the amount we should receive.

Nowadays, in Christian circles, we hear a good deal said as to the poor type of religion that prevails. Our Christianity is indeed a plant of sickly growth. We walk about in a poverty-stricken condition, though men of vast fortune so far as our title is concerned. The joy and freshness and power which flow from the realisation of our heavenly portion are but little in evidence.

There is a screw loose somewhere. Certainly not on God's side. There all is perfect. No!

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What *is* wrong is on our side of the matter. The crucial point is not, How much is God prepared to give? but, How much am I prepared to receive?

Many centuries ago two hostile armies encamped over against each other, with a valley between. Defeat stared one of them in the face. Not because of superior prowess or overwhelming numbers on the part of the foe, but, having taken just previously a seven days' march, their water supply had failed, and the case was desperate. "Water!" was their cry, and water to them meant salvation. (Read 2 Kings iii.)

Elisha proved himself the man for the emergency, and said: "Thus saith the Lord, *Make this valley full of ditches*" (v. 16). That was their side of the matter. "Behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water" (v. 20). That was God's.

Have you ever done any ditch-digging in all your days? It is hard work, but absolutely imperative. The ditches of repentance must be dug in your soul ere the water of God's full salvation can be received.

There was plenty of water—a perfect flood—and yet for all practical purposes the amount the Israelites retained for use was measured by the cubic capacity of the ditches they dug. So is it with us. Is the work of repentance deep? Then the joy of forgiveness, and love for the blessed Forgiver, will be deep also. Is repentance shallow?

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Then these things will be shallow also. For "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke vii. 47).

Have much to do with God, and dig deep in repentance; the deeper the better. Make the valley of humiliation *full of ditches*; the more the better. If you dig no ditches the flood of God's grace will sweep by, and not a drop will you retain.

Just about the same time of day there was dwelling in Israel a widow, with ruin and bankruptcy and loss of her sons before her. Her sole asset was a single pot of oil. She appealed to Elisha, who again proved himself to be the man for an emergency. (Read 2 Kings iv. 1-7.)

His instructions were: "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even *empty vessels*; borrow not a few" (v. 3). That was her side of the matter. Having done so, and shut her house, she poured from her one pot of oil until they said: "There is not a vessel more" (v. 6). The oil miraculously multiplied. That was God's side.

Oil is in Scripture frequently connected with, and typical of, the Holy Spirit. What provision, let us ask, have we made for the filling of the blessed Spirit of God?

But God has given us His Spirit! Quite so; He has. His side is perfect, necessarily so. There is plenty of oil. What about the empty vessels?

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Ah! it may have been toilsome work dragging in those pots and pans from neighbours' houses, but it was very necessary work. Indeed, the multiplication of the oil would have been useless to her without them. The more of such vessels the better. Wise woman if she crowded her house with them from cellar to attic.

If we are to enjoy more of the filling and power of the Spirit, the emptying process of self-judgment must go on. Self in all its forms, its pride, its lusts, its importance, must be refused. If not, though the Spirit of God indwells you as a believer, just as the single pot of oil was in the house, His presence will be of little practical benefit to you. You will live your Christian life in spiritual poverty instead of affluence.

Elisha said to the widow, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and *live thou and thy children of the rest.*"

Years rolled away, and Elisha, the man of God, lay dying. Joash, king of Israel, came to the prophet's abode, and realising that, under God, he had been the secret of Israel's success and victories, he wept over him.

Once more, for the last time, Elisha proved himself to be the man for an emergency.

The window eastward was flung open, the king took his bow and arrow, the prophet put his trembling hands upon the king's, and together they shot. That arrow was symbolic of victory.

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God's power of triumph undiminished, though Elisha must die. (Read 2 Kings xiii. 14-19.)

Then said the prophet, "Take the arrows" (v. 18). Ah! there were plenty of arrows—a whole quiverful! That was God's side of the matter. "And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground." That was the king's side. "And he smote thrice and stayed."

This lack of confidence in God raised the prophet's ire. Three arrows, three victories. Had he but known and trusted, he would have smitten five or six times, and his victories would have culminated in conquest.

Are we prepared to face the conflict armed with simple confidence in God? Conflict there must be—defensive and offensive. Defensive, for the enemy will attack you with temptations and persecutions. Offensive, for you will seek to carry the war into his camp, and reach some of his poor captives with the message of delivering powers. Alas! how little do our efforts seem crowned with success! We need, we badly need, victory.

Our quivers are full, but that is not enough. God's side is perfect, His power undiminished, as great as in the days of old. Have you, have I sufficient confidence in Him to throw open our windows and shoot? The more shots the better. Without shooting, the arrows, though excellent, are useless.

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To sum up the matter, on our side diligence is needed.

"Is your mother a Christian?" said a school-teacher to a little girl.

"Oh, yes!" was the ready answer.

"And your father?"

A little hesitation, and then, "Well, yes, but he hasn't been working at it very much lately."

The little maiden was not very wide of the mark. Are you working at it?

Dig the ditches of repentance, and your soul will be flooded with salvation's joy.

Fill your house with vessels, and *empty* them, and you will be filled with the grace and power of the Spirit.

Draw the bow, and empty the quiver in full confidence in God; you are bound to get the victory.

One word more. *Do not rest content with following the argument and admiring the point, but take uncommonly good care, by the grace of God, to DO IT.*

F. B. H.

"THERE is one, and only one, right path for every man. Do not be content with anything short of finding *the one* path marked out for you by the will of God; and when you have found it, walk in it, straightforward, and let nothing turn you aside."

SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS.

THREE of the workers from the scenes of revival in Wales came to see me recently, and naturally our talk turned on the remarkable work of God going on throughout the Principality.

"Tell me," I asked, "how did the work begin?" And they answered that in their neighbourhood the first outward evidence began with a girl feeling irresistibly compelled to stand up during a meeting, and to testify that she loved the Lord Jesus.

Then I said, "What do you do in your meetings?" And they told me very simply how they went with nothing premeditated, but just depending on the Holy Spirit, and how there would be a prayer, or a verse of a hymn, or a word of testimony, and then, perhaps suddenly, the power of the Lord was present, and strong men would writhe in their soul-agony seeking salvation, while the women would be carried out weeping and crying aloud for forgiveness.

"Nothing but emotion! Mere excitement!" says the distant, unsympathetic onlooker—a person, by the way, whose judgment is seldom reliable. But I felt like the people of another day, who, beholding the man that was healed standing with them, could say nothing against it (Acts iv. 14).

Then, very sorrowfully, I thought of the meet-

ing-rooms and gospel halls, where the good news has long and faithfully been preached, but where the anguished cry of a penitent sinner, or the raptured Hallelujah of a soul just turned from darkness to light, has never shocked the ears of the too devout congregation, and I could but ask myself and you, Ought these things to be so? Does our Lord Jesus Christ not care? Indeed He does; there can be no shadow of doubt as to that. Do you and I care? Do we *really* mind? Do we mind enough to present ourselves *wholly* to the Lord? (Rom. xii. 1)—enough to bring the Lord His tithes? (Mal. iii. 8-10; Matt. xxiii. 23)—enough to get others likeminded to join with us in crying mightily to God, until our cry comes into His ear? It may cost us something; it is very likely that it may cost some of us very much. But did it cost Christ nothing? Was Gethsemane nothing? was Calvary nothing? was the grave nothing? May the Lord burn these things into our hearts until they glow with a holy passion for souls, a great soul-hunger that can only be satisfied as Jesus is glorified, and sinners converted to God.

L. R.

“THE question of speaking to souls is a question of personal love to the Lord. Do not say you have no gift for it. Do you love Christ? If so, you will never lose an opportunity of speaking a word for Him.”

G. V. W.

THE ROCK.

“And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter [a piece of rock], and upon this rock I will build My Church [assembly]; and the gates of hell [Hades] shall not prevail against it.”—MATT. xvi. 18.

NEVER did the folly of superstition manifest itself more clearly than when man made these words of our Lord to Peter a foundation for the false and foolish theory that Peter is the rock on which Christ builds His assembly.

The words of Christ—the statements of Peter himself in his epistle—the rules of grammar, and even common sense, all forbid such an interpretation.

In verse 13, Christ asks His disciples what are men's opinions concerning Him, and receives the answer: “Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets” (v. 14). Here was a jargon of voices expressing the various opinions of men, and these voices and opinions have increased until their name is Legion. Where, amidst all these expressions of man's thoughts, is there any firm foundation for the soul?

On which can I rest for eternity? Can man's thoughts constitute a rock on which I may build in view of the crash of worlds? Whither then can I turn? Man's thoughts and opinions are vain. God says, “I hate vain thoughts.”

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Nothing short of divine authority will avail here. All else is but sinking sand, and he who builds upon this will find it worse than useless in the day of stormy trial.

The Lord Jesus now asks for the confession of His own. "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter confesses Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," and does this by divine revelation. Here we have God's blessed and abiding answer to all the thoughts of man. What rest this gives! Now we have indeed a rock to rest upon! No longer the sinking, shifting sand of man's ideas, but the unchangeable rock of direct revelation from the Father. No wonder Christ calls this a rock. It is firm, stable, and abiding eternally; none can shake or overturn it.

And this confession speaks of a Person: the Christ, the Son of the living God. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect." A divine revelation about a living Person and His perfect work! Such is the Rock on which Christ builds His assembly.

J. V.

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L.—Rom. xiv. 23.—"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." We should interpret these words with due regard to the matter under discussion; if not, they are likely to bring sensitive souls into bondage. The observance of days and the use of certain things is the point in hand. Questions of this nature naturally arose

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among the early Christians owing to the assemblies being composed of Jews and Gentiles. The former would remember the injunctions and prohibitions of the legal system in which they had been reared, and from which all were not wholly free. It is possible that they sought to impose them upon their Gentile brethren, who, in their turn, may have looked somewhat disdainfully on others with whose scruples they felt no sympathy. The apostle enjoins them not to be judges of one another in such matters, but to let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. If your conscience views a thing as wrong, then *to you* it is wrong—it might not be to another. If a man eats what the law of Moses prohibits, and all the while doubts whether he is doing right, he is self-condemned. He eats not in faith. It is in these connections that the apostle says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." An indiscriminate application of the words, as we have said, tends to fetter the soul, to bring it into captivity, and thus defeat the very end in view.

We come now to your question, on 2 Peter i. 10, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure"—not on God's side, for everything is sure, stable, and abiding there. But if we follow the adding process defined in the preceding verses, our calling and election will be blessedly realised—made sure—in the experience of the soul. There will be the inward witness of the Spirit as well as the outward testimony of God's own Word. If any employ the passage to teach that our own works are the determinating factor in our salvation, they do but mis-employ it. Works of faith are indeed the outward evidence of the faith that begets them, and these are never wanting where faith

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truly exists—as James ii. teaches. The progress of the soul is greatly impeded through not distinguishing between things that differ.

As to 1 Timothy ii. 1, we can assuredly give thanks for all men as well as pray for them. We can thank God for His providential goodness towards all in making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust. We should thank Him, too, for giving them daily opportunity to know Him as the Saviour-God “who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

W. P.—Do we understand you to say that because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, therefore all will stand before the Great White Throne of Revelation xx.? If this be your meaning, the words of the Lord in John v. 24 are dead against you. There He distinctly declares that the believer shall never come into judgment and that he is already passed from death unto life. For him the sin question, to which judgment is attached, is settled for ever, and never will be raised again. The Lord Jesus has borne his sins, and the divine witness is that those sins shall never be remembered more (Heb. x. 17). Long, long before the Great White Throne is set the heavenly saints will be with and like Christ—they live and reign with Him in His millennial kingdom. See the opening verses of Revelation xx. and notice particularly verses 5, 6, which show that it is the *unsaved* dead, and they only, that are judged at the end.

A. B. C.—No one can adequately estimate a mother's influence in the household and over her children either for good or ill. It has been said that the first

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book every child reads, and the last to be laid aside, is the conduct of its mother. If this be true, no mother can be too careful as to what her children read on the pages of her life. If she be a Christian she will feel her need of *private* prayer that God may give her daily wisdom, so that by words, example, and by the whole current of her life she may be a model of what she would wish her children to be. Nor will she fail to arrange the affairs of the household that the reading of the Scriptures and *family* prayer fall not through for want of time. Even where there is great rush and pressure a little method can do much. A few moments spent together in the sanctuary of God's presence may yield gracious help all the day. There are one or two other points on which we may be allowed to touch. A wise mother will be careful not to give her children heedless commands, but when a command is given she will kindly but firmly insist on prompt obedience. She will not hastily threaten, as some mothers are apt to do, but first ask herself whether she intends to carry out her threat if disobeyed. If not, she will see it to be a thousand times better not to threaten at all. We think, too, that a judicious mother will never correct her child until she is sure the child deserves correction. The child's story will first be heard—the whole of it—and if reproof is needed the reproof will be given, but not in the presence of strangers, if it can be helped. Nor should a child ever be deceived, and when a promise is made it should be faithfully kept. Of course these remarks especially apply to the training of young children. There are many worries, cares, and anxieties in a mother's life that are not always sufficiently con-

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sidered, and which even the husband and father knows nothing of. A little sympathy, an appreciative word, will sometimes do wonders. But the well-being of a family largely depends on God's order being recognised. He speaks in His Word of wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, and tells us what is right and proper for each (Eph. v. 22-vi. 9). If His directions are followed, then His glory and our happiness are secured; but if unheeded, we need not wonder if many a thing goes wrong.

A. S. T.—To express elevated thoughts in poetic language, my dear young friend, is a rare gift, and few there be that have it. A kind contributor, at our request, has clothed your thoughts in a new dress, and we may publish the piece under another title when occasion offers. If you aspire to poetical composition, you *must* become acquainted with the rules that govern it.

Com.—Col. iv. 6.—This and the preceding verse go together, and bear upon the way we carry ourselves towards those who know not the One we know. We must walk wisely, giving no room for any to speak reproachfully. Our speech is to be alway with grace, seasoned with salt. Salt is that inward separation from surrounding evil which should ever mark us. Thus separate in heart we should be near enough to Him who is the Source of all good, to be used as His mouthpiece to others as opportunity serves.

CONCERNING THINGS THAT DIFFER.

“By grace ye are saved.”—EPH. II. 5.

“We shall be saved by His life.”—ROM. V. 10.

IN studying any particular Bible subject we should be careful to give place to passages that present it in different lights. It is only the narrow-minded, prejudiced reader—not sure of his ground—that will fix his eye on certain passages, and be blind to every other that seems to clash with his chosen texts. We make these observations in reference to the subject of salvation, which is certainly set forth in some scriptures as a thing already accomplished, and in others as a process now going on—not a precarious process, however, the issue of which is doubtful. Salvation is *never* so spoken of in respect of the sincere believer in Christ.

The texts that stand at the head of this paper are examples of what we mean. In the one it is said that we *are* saved, in the other that we *shall be* saved. The former is an actual, present fact; the latter is evidently not so.

The force of the word *salvation* is determined by the state to which the word applies. We have heard it alleged that no one can say he has been saved from hell, because he was never there. But this is shallow reasoning indeed—a mere play upon words, unworthy of a serious mind. For suppose I am unfortunately in great monetary

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difficulties, and my impatient creditors resolve to make me a bankrupt. Much as I dread the dishonour, I am utterly unable to save myself from it—twenty shillings in the pound I cannot pay. At this juncture a kind friend comes forward and meets the whole of my liabilities and satisfies my creditors to the full. Shall I be wrong in speaking of my friend as having saved me from bankruptcy? It is true I was not actually in the bankruptcy court, but I was certainly going there, and there I should have been but for his kindness. So when we speak of salvation from hell, we mean that there our sins would have taken us, via the judgment seat, if the Lord Jesus had not intervened to put those sins away.

What, then, was the state of the Ephesians before they had heard and received the gospel of their salvation? It is described in chapter II. in such terms as these—"dead in trespasses and sins," "children of disobedience," "children of wrath," "without Christ," "having no hope," "without God in the world." Such was their state, and such was ours. From this hapless condition, with all its approaching consequences, the grace of God had saved them. "By grace are ye saved through faith." And let it be remarked that the weight of the passage rests not on "*grace*," which is indeed the source of all blessing, nor on "*faith*," without which we could not be blessed at all, but, as another has said, "what

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the form of the word implies is that the salvation was complete, and that they were now enjoying its present result." Nor, indeed, could it be otherwise, for those Ephesian believers, whose previous state is described in such woeful terms, are now spoken of as "quickened with Christ," "raised up and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Once they were "far off," but now "made nigh" by the blood of Christ, through Whom they had access to the Father by the Spirit. Life in association with Christ risen was theirs. They were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Of all thus privileged, whether then or now, it may well be said, "By grace *are ye saved.*"

The force of such gracious truths is not to be frittered away by the remark, "Yes, but all that was said of the Ephesians," as if what was said of them did not apply to us. It is an unhappy effort; for "Let him that stole steal no more" was said to the Ephesians, but will any one take it upon himself to say that it is not also said to us? "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love," was also said to them; but has the exhortation no bearing on ourselves? Were *we* not dead in sins even as they? Children of wrath even as they? Without Christ, without hope, without God in the world? If the dark side of the picture is true of all, on what ground

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can it be maintained that the brighter side is not equally true of all who through grace have heard and believed the gospel of their salvation?

I do not forget that in apostolic days, even as in ours, the truth was ministered according to the condition of those immediately addressed. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Cor. III.). We cannot conceive the Holy Spirit addressing such an epistle as the Ephesians to saints in the Galatian condition. To these the foundation truths of Christianity had to be preached afresh to recover them from the legality into which they had fallen through Judaizing teachers. But when they should be in a condition to receive it, every shred of the glorious truth revealed in this, the profoundest of all the epistles, might be ministered to them. All that God has given, in the superabundance of His grace, is the heritage of all saints, be they babes, young men, or fathers in His family.

In the sense, therefore, in which salvation is spoken of in Ephesians, there can be no progress—no growing up to it as elsewhere. It is not a process, much less a precarious process, but a fact, concerning which we are to have the firmest assurance. "By grace ye *are* saved."

Looking at salvation in another light—as something effected day by day, and to be perfected at

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the coming of the Lord—we must carefully distinguish it from the great truths of justification, acceptance with God, our relationship with Him as His children, sons, heirs, and co-heirs with Christ. These are always abiding; they know no change, and admit of no progress. But in Hebrews we are seen as belonging to the pilgrim band, journeying to the Rest that remains. Our association with Christ in the heavenly places, as in Ephesians, is not the point of view at all. We are out of Egypt, but not yet in Canaan, if we may speak in the typical language of the Old Testament, and the intervening wilderness has to be crossed. Here is the place of testing, and whatever confronts us we must get through if we would enter into God's Rest. Left to our own resources, we might well despair; but for our encouragement and the strengthening of our confidence two things are set before us, namely, the Word of God and the Priesthood of Christ (chap. iv.). Are our hearts intent on pressing forward till we possess the promised Rest? The Word of God, quick and powerful, will lay bare before our eyes things that impede our progress, so that from these we might turn away. Do we feel our feebleness? Our great Priest, passed into the heavens, can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of grace. Seasonable help shall never be withheld, but be abundantly furnished. The same

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Blessed One who espoused our cause when we were in our sins, and died for them according to the Scriptures, now lives in heaven and maintains our cause as pilgrims bound for glory. Shall we need supporting and delivering grace along the road? He is able to save to the uttermost—completely, to the very end—all who approach by Him to God. Is there any room for doubt? Not the least. The One I rest in as my Saviour from guilt and condemnation is the One I trust to keep me day by day till I reach Him on yonder blissful shore. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. v. 10). He ever lives to make intercession for us. Our case, from first to last, has been taken up by Christ. His *death* has wrought for us a great deliverance, and to His *life* on high, to the exercise of His never-ceasing priesthood there, we owe our victory in times of conflict, our succour in hours of need. And when He comes again our salvation shall be completed, for “we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

Let us, then, rejoice in every aspect of this great salvation. Let us be fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able also to perform.

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If we believe in the efficacy of His atonement, may we also believe in His power to save us to the end. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter i. 5). For the day is coming when the groans of a sin-stricken creation shall be hushed by the great Deliverer, Who shall bring in His salvation. We, too, shall receive the redemption of the body, in which we now groan. In hope of that day of redemption-glory we are saved, and in that hope we rejoice (Rom. viii. 23).

It only remains for us to ask, How do you stand, dear reader, in relation to these things? Can you say, "Yes, by God's grace I know that *I am saved*, and the joy of His salvation fills my heart"? And what about the future? "As to that, I know I cannot stand for a moment alone, but sure am I that He Who *has* saved me and brought me to look up to His Father as my Father and His God as my God will love me and keep me to the last. He has said that His sheep shall never perish. In His word I rest, assured that it will never fail."

Sing, sing, my heart, along the way ;
 The grace that saves will keep and guide
 Till breaks the glorious crowning day,
 And I shall pass to yonder side.

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HANNAH'S DEVOTEDNESS.

1 SAM. I., II.

NEVER were things at a lower ebb in Israel than in Hannah's day. Never had there been such an undignified and unrespected high priest as Eli. Never had there been viler sons than Hophni and Phinehas. Dark and evil were their practices, and they caused the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. There was no open vision in those days, all was as dead and lifeless as a stricken tree in the depth of winter.

One could understand any Israelite resolving to retreat into solitude rather than associate himself with a ritual so far removed from all sense of God's presence, and where things were greatly aggravated by the positive and shamefaced wickedness of those who should have restrained evil.

But no, there were godly souls who clung to what stood for and what represented Jehovah in the land. Away in Mount Ephraim a man named Elkanah lived with his wife Hannah. Happy in a deep attachment to each other, the only domestic drawback was that Hannah was childless. And in the hidden and bitter exercises of soul that this godly, unknown woman went through lay the beginning of revival for Israel. A praying woman brought in, in the ways of God, a new era. She named her son Samuel, which means "Asked of God." What a deep joy

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to the happy mother's heart when her infant son nestled in her bosom, and found shelter, food, warmth, and love there!

We can understand how she clung to little Samuel. And the very intensity of her joy in receiving such an answer from the Lord helps us to comprehend how devoted she was to Jehovah's interests when she carried him off to the temple, only to get a glimpse of him once every twelve-month, when she gave him the little coat which her loving hands had made.

Thus did Hannah put the Lord before herself, and His interests before her own. At the same time there is a tender appreciation of the sacrifice that Hannah made. Jehovah did not allow her home to remain practically childless, as it would have been when little Samuel was devoted to the service of the Lord. Three sons and two daughters were given to Hannah to reward her for her devotedness. Her home resounded with the innocent prattle of children, and the mother's heart was comforted, though no child or children could quite fill the place that Samuel had.

It is deeply interesting to see that dear child left with faith so unwavering in the hands of Eli and where his wretched sons might have influenced him for evil. But Hannah commits Samuel to the care of the Lord, and the Lord takes care of him. "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words

fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." What joy this must have been to the heart of Hannah!—not the empty pride of having a distinguished son, but the deep thankfulness of one who cared for Jehovah's interests before her own.

Now for an application. Sometimes in our history things seem to go so terribly to the bad that we are inclined to seek the selfish and ignoble ease of an individual path. If we look at the Scriptures and recall the bright fair days of Pentecost, when all the believers were together and had all things common, how attractive the truth of the Church appears! A fascinating picture indeed. But soon the fine gold becomes dim, and what is committed to man's hands fails. Revival after revival in God's goodness is permitted as the centuries roll by, but only to be followed by repeated failure.

At such a time of widespread declension Satan tempts us. "The truth is magnificent," says he, "but it is a magnificent impossibility. Drop down to what is ordinary and understandable. Do all the good you can as an individual. Look upon the bright days of Pentecost as you would on one of the paintings of the grand old masters, the like of which cannot be produced in our degenerate day. Do not repeated failures prove this?" Thus the enemy argues.

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"No! a thousand times no," we answer. To allow such reasoning is to admit that Satan is stronger than God, evil more powerful than good, and man's ordering more enduring than God's truth.

Christ's NAME is *still* the centre to which to gather and from which blessing comes. Be it the sinner, through His NAME is offered the forgiveness of sins; be it the Christian, it still holds good that "where two or three are gathered together in My NAME, there am I in the midst of them." And if bright revival days came in with Hannah's devotedness, and her son lived to anoint David, the man after God's own heart, may we not humbly cry to God that we may be *devoted*, and in the self-forgetful strength of devotedness and love for the Lord go on with the truth? Let us not give up, but press on. Is it too much to expect that the Lord will revive us, that we shall see Christians on every hand attracted to Christ, and sinners drawn to the Saviour? I do not think so. God grant it, is my earnest desire.

A. J. .P

"PEACE of conscience and peace of heart are two distinct things. A person may have peace of conscience, knowing that he is a forgiven sinner, and yet not have peace of heart. He may say to himself, 'I know that my sins are forgiven, but I am not happy.' And why? Because in heart he has been wandering from Christ — one thing or another occupying his heart rather than Christ, so that all his thoughts turn round himself and not around Him."

DANGERS IN THE LAST DAYS.

IN 1 Timothy III. the apostle instructs "his own son in the faith" how he should behave himself in "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." In the second epistle God's house is viewed as having fallen into disorder, through the power of Satan and the will of man, which state of things has been going on ever since, and is yet on the increase. The same elements of evil which manifested themselves before Paul had passed off the scene are still working in God's house on earth, and the clearest instruction is given how to act at such a moment (2 Tim. II. 19-22). We wish to call attention to the different characters of evil as developed in different individuals mentioned by name in this epistle, that we may take warning from them, and be kept by grace from the same departure from the truth.

But first of all it is precious to remark that there were those who were holding fast to the truth at all costs, and not shrinking from the shame and suffering that its maintenance involved. Paul himself had been in the forefront of the battle, and though now a prisoner at Rome, he was fully cognizant of the existing state of things. But nothing daunted, and strong in faith in the midst of untoward circumstances,

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he writes off to Timothy, and exhorts him, too, to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. We learn the secret of the apostle's power in chapter iv. 17: "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me."

There was also Onesiphorus, who when in Rome sought Paul out very diligently, found him, oft refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain; a beautiful instance of faith and open identification with the reproach of Christ under circumstances of exceptional difficulty. Luke, too, the beloved physician, was *with him*. Mark, who had once swerved from the path of faithful service (Acts xv. 36-39), but now happily restored, was to come to him with Timothy, for he was profitable to the apostle for the ministry. Tychicus had been with him, but was now sent on another mission (2 Tim. iv. 11, 12). And at the close of the epistle we learn the names of others who were rejoicing the heart of God's faithful and devoted servant in distant places, besides several at Rome. How blessed to find such a record in God's Word in the dark days that were so rapidly setting in!

Now in turning our attention to the evidences of declension as set forth in the second epistle to Timothy, we find how widespread it had already become. "This thou knowest, that *all they which are in Asia* be turned away *from me*; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (I. 15). They

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had turned away *from Paul*, we do not read *from Christ*. They were Christians, doubtless, but Paul's line of things was too high for them. The heavenly calling and the heavenly truth of the Church might be very beautiful in theory, but the saints in Asia found that it involved a narrower path, and a more decided practice than they approved. In the first flush of conversion, their hearts touched with Christ's love and full of first love in return, they were doubtless ready for anything. But those days were past. The tide had gone down, so to speak, and the rocks of discontent had shown themselves. Even Phygellus and Hermogenes, who were probably leaders, were carried away amongst these earthly-minded secessionists.

In chapter II. 17 we find two others mentioned by name, Hymenæus and Philetus, who concerning the truth had erred, saying that the resurrection was past already, and overthrown the faith of some. This was another element of evil in the house of God. Paul warns Timothy to shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker (2 Tim. iv. 16-18). Never was there a time in the Church's history when we needed more to watch against false teachers than now. Christendom abounds with them. On all hands the Word of God is made of none effect by human tradition. The Lord said of

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the scribes and Pharisees, quoting from Esaias: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but *their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matt. xv. 8, 9). Alas, how many are found to-day in like condition! Our lot as Christians is cast in perilous (or difficult) times. We are surrounded with the subtleties of Satan, seeking on the one hand to palm off bad doctrine as good, and on the other good doctrine as bad. May God's people be found anointing their eyes with eyesalve that they may see (Rev. iii. 18).

In chapter III. we get a third form of evil of a most specious character. Two men, Jannes and Jambres, are now brought forward to show that Christians are exposed to a similar danger to that which existed in Moses's day. After describing the moral state of Christendom in the last days, wherein we find many of the same sins which characterized the heathen, but linked with the love of pleasure and the form of godliness, the apostle continues: "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no

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further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (2 Tim. III. 6-9).

We get here worldly religionists, unconverted men, upholding a form of godliness, who never arrive at the truth themselves, and resist it at every opportunity. Their minds are corrupted; hence their thoughts are all wrong, and they are void of judgment as to the truth of God. The apostle compares them to the Egyptian magicians, who, by means of imitation, resisted the power of God acting through Moses. Do we not find many such amongst the ranks of professors of to-day, people who follow outward observances, imitate in other ways the true Christian, and all the while resist the truth of God by every means in their power? Let those who know the truth beware, lest being led away with the error of the wicked one, they fall from their own steadfastness (2 Peter III. 17). A moment is rapidly approaching when their folly shall be manifest unto all, as that of Jannes and Jambres was in the past. May we, whose eyes have been opened through grace, be found cleaving to sound doctrine, and exhibiting a corresponding manner of life, like the apostle who warns us.

In chapter IV. we hear of Demas, a man who had once walked in the truth (Col. IV. 14), but who had forsaken Paul, having loved this present age, etc. The things of time and sense had attracted him, and he chose the present. Demas was a

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Christian, but ceased to walk as a Christian should. The *world* came in. If he had been occupied with Christ, he would have been found pressing towards the mark for the prize (Phil. III. 14), and would not have forsaken Paul. Being unwatchful, the world came in, and Christ, as the Object of his heart, went out, so to speak. No man can enjoy Christ and the world too. Demas departed to Thessalonica. Worldly-minded Christians are sure to find sooner or later the company of heavenly-minded ones burdensome. The conscience is ill at ease in their presence, and they desire a broader path. May the case of Demas be a warning to many.

Lastly, we find that one named Alexander, the coppersmith, had done the apostle much evil. He too had had a place among the saints. In the first epistle (chapter I. 19, 20), he had failed to hold faith with a good conscience. Having put this away, concerning faith he had made shipwreck. He had become like a ship run on the rocks. The apostle couples his name with Hymenæus, saying that he had delivered them to Satan, that they might learn (i.e. be taught by discipline) not to blaspheme. In the second epistle, he had become an open enemy. He had done the apostle much evil, and he had greatly withstood his and others' words. Paul warns Timothy accordingly. How this all shows the immense power of Satan, when a man yields to

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his own self-will! One who had taken the ground of obedience to the Lord, and hence of being one of His friends, became an open enemy of His faithful servants. The apostle leaves him in the Lord's hands (2 Tim. iv. 14).

Now the Holy Ghost has an object in giving us details of the conduct of these different men, that we may be warned (as we said at the beginning) in these last days, and avoid the snares into which they fell. Let us beware of earthly-mindedness, false teaching, religious imitation, worldliness, and enmity against the people of God. The same apostle tells us that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived"; and he then admonishes Timothy in words which every believer will do well to heed, till the Lord come, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. III. 14-17).

E. H. C.

“WORK.”

“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”—JOHN V. 17.

“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.

EVER since sin came into the world, God has been active in His love. “Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. cxxi. 4). And as for the angelic host, “Are they not *all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. i. 14).

There is never a moment when no demand is made upon divine power. Night and day thousands of prayers ascend to the throne of grace, and God gives every suppliant an audience, and still says, “Come boldly” and “Pray without ceasing.” Some prayers are addressed to the Father, others to the Son, while the power of the Holy Ghost is constantly being asked for. Some petitions can be granted straightway, and the heavenly messenger be immediately dispatched upon his errand of mercy (Isa. vi.). Other prayers must be laid upon God’s table in their proper place and order, not one of them to be forgotten, and if “according to His will” the answer, though deferred, will surely be given at the right moment (1 John v. 14).

Angels, mighty in strength, that do His com-

mandments, stand awaiting God's high behests, or are speeding away to execute His will in restraining the forces of evil and guarding the weak. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. xxxiv. 7).

Or, again, others are sent to awaken some *sleeping servant* of the Lord, and send him upon his errand (1 Kings xix. 5); or to direct a *waiting* one where next to go to meet the Lord's elect (Acts viii. 26).

Then think of the myriads of God's creatures whose eyes all look unto Him. "Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (Ps. cxlv. 16). Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. Worlds hold on their way, and the elements are controlled by His might. His lightning goeth forth at His bidding, and the sea is restrained at His command. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names" (Ps. cxlvii. 3, 4).

The Pharisees would have hindered the Son of God from working when here, but how could He cease? Sin, misery, wretchedness, and woe were on every hand. The time would come when He would rest, but not till the power of Satan should be finally annulled, and sin and death rooted out of God's universe, and heaven and earth filled

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with His glory. Then would the Lord God rejoice with joy and "rest in His love" (Zeph. III. 17). But meantime He had to say, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me."

It involved the cross with all its shame and agony, with all its distance and darkness and forsaking of God! But love held Him on His course till the mighty work of redemption was accomplished. Blessed be His glorious name for ever! Rising again from the dead, He immediately addressed Himself to His much-loved employ, declaring His Father's name to His brethren, comforting their hearts, restoring the wanderers, meeting their needs, and saying, "Come and dine." Blessed Master, who ever worked as Thou didst!

But hark to those words, beloved fellow-believer, falling from His blessed lips as He is about to depart: "Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21). His early disciples had a special place truly, but every Christian is sent into this world on a mission. "He gave authority to His servants, and to *every man his work*" (Mark XIII. 34). Do you not see the blessed privilege which is yours? "There remaineth a rest to the people of God," but this is the working time. Then let your loins be girded, and be ready to every good work. When the resting time comes, His servants shall find that their gracious Lord and Master will still serve, for "He shall gird Himself, and will make them

to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke XII. 37).

Be careful not to let another set you to work. Remember, "One is your Master, even Christ." If you are not engaged in any definite service for Him, let your cry be, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and He, Who has ever given direction to His servants, will show you.

In your secular calling you may serve the Lord (see Col. III. 22-5). But besides this, see to it that under His direction, and strengthened by His Spirit, you spread abroad in your spare time the light that God has given you.

Man needs must *share* if he would *keep*
 The blessings from above.
 Ceasing to give, we cease to have,
 Such is the law of love.

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The *liberal* soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. XI. 24, 25). Have not many of us been content with attending lectures, addresses, and readings, as though this were all that was required of us? Why, the resting time has not yet come, and the Lord has left us here to serve Him! He would surely have taken us to heaven when He saved us if He had not something for us to do here. It may be He

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has a great deal to do *in us* yet, but He has something to do *by us* as well.

So now to watch and work and war,
And then to *rest* for ever.

We shall have all eternity to *rest in*. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short" to *work in*!

E. E. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. W. H. asks us to explain "why God is said to *forgive us our sins* and *pardon us*, if the work of Christ has paid the debt and met all the claims in righteousness of a holy God? A debt *paid* does not need forgiveness."

The difficulty your question suggests springs from a distorted view of the sacrifice of Christ. In the form in which you present it, it excludes the necessity of *faith* on our part and of *grace* on God's. Surely there must be some defects in a scheme which leaves no room either for grace or faith. For if a debt be paid—to use your simile—it *is* paid, whether the debtor believes it or not, nor can payment be ever demanded more. Again, if a debt be discharged, there is no exercise of *grace* on the part of the creditor; a debt is not forgiven if the last shilling of it has been paid, no matter whether paid by the debtor or some one else on his behalf. We may be sure of it, that no view of the sacrifice of our blessed Saviour can be right that does not show our salvation to be wholly of *grace* and through *faith* (Eph. ii. 8).

But is your simile of a debt a just one? Helpful

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as it is in certain connexions, it does not seem so in the case before us. Its danger lies in giving our thoughts a commercial colouring, and fostering the idea of so much suffering for so many sins; it thus reduces the efficacy of the solemn sacrifice of Calvary to a mere mathematical problem, to a matter of weights and measures. We are not aware that it is ever so presented in type or doctrine, in any Scripture either of the Old or New Testament.

Consider for a moment what sin is. Scripture defines it as *lawlessness*—a momentous definition! For what is lawlessness but self-will, doing as we like without any reference to God at all? Now the blessedness of heaven is that God's will is done there, and when that will is done on earth as in heaven, perfect happiness will be the result. If in heaven among its thrones, dominions, and powers, the creature's will were to assert itself it would be the raising of the standard of revolt, and all who flocked to it would be rebels against God, engaged in the mad attempt to dethrone Him. That is exactly what happened when our first parents sinned. From that direful hour the sun, moon, and stars have looked down upon a race of sinful, lawless men.

Now in speaking of sin we are too apt to think of it only in its consequences to ourselves, and not at all in its relations to God. We are like men who measure their crimes by the number of years they may have to spend in prison. But he who defies the law by breaking it is really in rebellion against the king and his government. So it is when men sin. Their lawless acts are rebellious deeds against God and His throne.

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That God should put forth His power and sweep the lawless away could be easily understood. That He should maintain His righteousness inviolate and yet show long-suffering mercy to such, yea, that He should approach them not only to forgive, but to call them to richer blessing than was lost through Adam's sin, is a mystery that none but Himself could make plain.

It is here the Cross comes in with all its unutterable shame and suffering. Not as so much sorrow for so much sin, as if it were a transaction in the market of the merchant, but as that which should so meet the requirements of God's throne in respect of sin in all its terrible largeness, that that throne—ever a throne of righteousness—should become a throne of grace.

And here all must feel that we enter a region too vast for any creature to explore. What would meet the claims of God's throne, outraged by the creature's sin, only God Himself could tell. But this we know, that all that was needed to make that throne propitious the Saviour rendered when He made His soul an offering for sin at Calvary. It is this that we have to preach to men; it is this that we need to keep distinctly before our own hearts—the Godward side of the Cross and death of Jesus; it is this that makes it possible for the One who has been sinned against to reveal Himself as a Saviour-God, and to proclaim forgiveness of sins and justification from all things to the sinfulness of men through faith in Him Whom He has raised from the dead and glorified at His right hand in heaven.

This preaching of Christ, of repentance and remission of sins in His name, makes our salvation a

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matter of pure grace, though not as if righteousness had been put out of court. On the contrary, righteousness has placed grace upon the throne (Rom. v. 21). And "it is of faith that it might be by grace" (Rom. iv. 16). If we have redemption, it is through His blood, for apart from it there could be none; but it is according to the riches of His grace, for without the Blood no grace could have been shown to any (Eph. i. 7). Thus the death of Jesus and the grace of God are indissolubly united. We are justified freely by His grace, and we are equally justified by the Saviour's blood, and on the principle of faith. All this is gloriously true. There are other aspects of the Cross, no doubt, in which the believer, and he only, comes into view, but we have already exceeded the limits, so cannot touch them now. We trust our remarks, altogether inadequate as they are, may help to clear away something of your difficulty. If not, kindly write again.

ANXIOUS ONE.—We do indeed earnestly pray that you may yet gain the victory over your sorrowful besetment. But if you ardently desire it for yourself you will seek moral courage to resist temptation, especially when your physical infirmity pleads for indulgence. Relief from pain is a strong incentive, but to purchase it by the sacrifice of a good conscience and the committal of sin is to pay a ruinous price. And the oftener you yield to temptation the stronger it will become, till at last your sin will hold you as its abject slave. Can you contemplate such an issue without serious concern?

But amendment of life and the saving of the soul are two different things, and though the former is what

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you are struggling after, we are glad to believe that the latter is also to you an object of supreme desire. Mere reformation, however important, is not a vital link between the soul and Christ. For were you to overcome every sinful habit and lead a perfectly holy life for the rest of your earthly days, it would offer no foundation to build your hopes upon for a happy eternity. It is a blessed thing to be stripped of every shred of our own righteousness, so that as sinful, guilty creatures we may turn to the Lord and place all our confidence in Him alone. His blood cleanseth from every sin. His loving call is addressed to us as if there were no others on earth, and His outstretched arms are ready to embrace us in all our wretchedness and rags. Why, then, should you not go straight to Christ at once? The seclusion of your own room offers you the opportunity. Go to Him, kneel before Him, tell Him your tale of sin and sorrow, of your broken vows and repeated falls. Let Him know everything without reserve. Do you feel too bad? None are too bad for Jesus, the sinner's Friend. When on earth He saved and set free a Mary whose poor frail body was the temple and plaything of seven devils, but who afterwards learned to love her Saviour with a devotion rarely equalled. He can do the same to-day. Put Him to the test, and the result shall be both sweet and sure.

Then, when He has received you, *and you know it*, you will be able to look up to Him to keep you from falling in a way that is not possible now. You can then tell Him that you belong to Him, that you are His, that He loved and gave Himself for you, and that you now want Him to be magnified in your body, which is

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His. Ask Him to teach you to hate the drink, and to make you *willing to suffer any physical ill rather than you should touch it again*. Believe that He is able to save you from sinning. You may trust Him fully. Your confidence will not be misplaced. But be real, and in His strength say no when fiercely assailed by your old temptation. More desperate cases than yours He has undertaken. Be encouraged, then, to commit your case to His hands. He is the unfailing Physician. May God bless you. We shall always be glad to hear from you, and to offer such help as we can.

F. E. W.—We believe it to be impossible for any of us to say at what age a dear child becomes responsible. And cases differ. It is one of those matters that God alone can determine, and with Him it must be left. But if a child the age of the one of whom you speak came to us, troubled in his conscience on account of some naughty act and fearing the consequence, we hardly think we should have comforted his mind by telling him what you did. We should rather have spoken to him of Jesus, the Friend of little children, and explained to him that it was to put away such sins that He died for us in love upon the Cross. A child of very tender age may have its young heart drawn to the Saviour, and none are too young to seek forgiveness and share in His pardoning love. Although in glory, He is the same Jesus Who took little children in His arms and blessed them. How sweet to know this, and to encourage such to come to Him to be blessed. That is the true antidote to all our fears, whether we be young or old.

HOW DO I STAND AFTER THAT?

“**W**HAT I want to know,” said a young Welsh inquirer, “is this: Suppose I get converted and sin afterwards, then I go and ask God’s forgiveness, but fall into sin again, where and how do I stand after that? There’s my difficulty, and several of us young men in Clydach don’t see our way out of it.”

Your question, my dear young friend, is an important one, and the difficulty you feel most of us have felt in the earlier stages of our Christian course. But first of all let us clearly see how it stands when any one truly turns to God. He receives, of course, the forgiveness of sins. There can be no doubt about that. The testimony of Holy Scripture is too plain to admit of any uncertainty. “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him *shall* receive remission of sins” (Acts x. 43). Simple and sure as this passage is, there is another, if possible, more so. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe *are* justified from all things” (Acts XIII. 38, 39). Note these two passages well, and remember that God’s *shalls* and *ares* are as firm as the hills and mountains of your native land. Nothing can ever shake them.

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Sometimes people ask how they may know that their sins are forgiven. We answer, God in His Word has joined two things together—faith and forgiveness. Do I believe in Jesus? Then my sins *are* forgiven. I have His word for it, and we know that He cannot lie. But I don't feel. Ah, you are now speaking of another matter. Feelings and faith are not the same thing.

Suppose I say to one of my sons, I have put ten pounds in the bank for you. With an anxious look the lad replies, But, father, I don't feel it, how then can it be true? My son, I have indeed placed the money there. But if it were true, should I not feel it, father? And seeing I don't deserve such kindness, would it not be very presumptuous of me to believe it? It would be safer to say, I *hope* it is true, and not be too bold in my belief. My boy, can't you believe *me*? Is not my word enough? So is it with the forgiveness of sins. Is God's Word true? Can we rely upon His faithfulness? If so, then the matter is settled for every believing soul.

Another thing. When a person is truly turned to God, he becomes one of His children—he is born of Him. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1. 12). A converted man, then, is a child of God.

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This relationship is very real. It is God's handiwork, not ours. Flowing out of this are other precious things. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. VIII. 17). So, then, a converted man is not only a forgiven man, but he is also God's child, a son and heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.

Scripture also tells us that having received the forgiveness of sins, God gives us His Holy Spirit. Our body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. VI. 19), and thus we are sealed unto, or in view of the day of redemption—the day of glory soon to come. God seals us for that day (Eph. IV. 30). His Spirit, too, is the earnest of what we shall inherit with Christ when He puts forth His redemption power and reigns gloriously (Eph. I. 13).

Besides all this, the good and great Shepherd says that His sheep shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of His hand. He gives unto them eternal life (John x. 27–30). The Father, so to speak, has committed us to Christ's care to bring us safely home to Himself in heaven. Will He lose any? Shall Satan succeed in catching us away from Christ in spite of all that Christ has said to the contrary? Would faith ever harbour such a thought? Nay, we cannot dishonour our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend in that fashion. We would not for any price.

"Love so precious
Bids us every fear dismiss."

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And now let me deal with your difficulty. Where and how do you stand if you should fall into some sin after all that? Putting it into other words, Where and how does a forgiven man, a child of God, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, and sealed with the Holy Ghost—how does such a one stand should he through unwatchfulness fall into some sin?

In answering I would ask a question. Does his sin cancel the forgiveness he has received and end his relationship with God, so that he is no longer His child? Does the Holy Spirit, by Whom it is said he is sealed unto the day of redemption, straightway cease to indwell him, so that his body is no longer His temple? In short, is it a fact that every time a converted soul sins all his spiritual blessings are swept away and he is cast upon the rocks, a wreck, and everything lost? *Certainly not.* Communion with God is lost, the joy of salvation is lost, the Holy Spirit is grieved, his spiritual progress is retarded, God is dishonoured, and possibly the door has been opened by his sin for some adversary to blaspheme the holy name we bear. All this is surely sorrowful enough. But God having taken us up will never give us up, and the Saviour having loved His own which are in the world, loves them unto the end (John XIII. 1).

What, then, is the sinning one to do? He is to go back and confess his sin to God, the anguish

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of it intensified by the great grace against which he has sinned. It is not now an unsaved sinner who has sinned, but a converted man, a forgiven man, a child of God, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, one whose body is the temple of the Holy Spirit—it is such a one who has failed in holiness of life. How deep should be his repentance! How thorough his self-judgment, how full his confession! And then there is forgiveness for him—not the forgiveness of a rebel, such as he received when first he turned to God, through Christ, but the forgiveness of a child, such as a father bestows. For “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).

Long before God called us by His grace, He knew what we were, all that we had ever done, and *all that we ever should be* after we had turned to Him. Nothing was unknown, and the worst page in the book of our life He had already read. Yet, with all that in view, He graciously convicted you of your sin, led you to embrace Christ as your Saviour, placed you under the everlasting shelter of His blood, made you His child, and sealed you with His Spirit. If you discover in yourself such evil as you never had suspected, He knew all about it from the first. It is no surprise to Him. He loves you notwithstanding your sin, and He will teach you to hate it even

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as He hates it. As the days go by you may learn in an ever-growing measure the evil of your own heart, until you come to say with Paul, "For I know that in *me* (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). But this deep self-knowledge opens our eyes to see how much greater the grace of God was than we had ever thought. The worse I find myself to be, the more I feel how rich must be the grace that has taken up a wretched thing like me. All that I am and have done only makes the grace and goodness of God the more amazing, even as the dark background of a picture serves to throw the brighter colours into bolder relief.

In saying what we do, let no one accuse us of teaching that it matters not how a man lives, if he only believes, he is bound to be saved. We teach no such thing. If a man say he has faith and give no proof of it in his life, we may justly question whether he has faith at all. For faith is a living principle, the fruit of which cannot be hid. The worthlessness of a faith that consists only of words is shown in the Epistle of James, chapter ii. However pleasant to the ear, good words and fair speeches fill no hungry stomach and clothe no naked back. Words, to be worth anything, must be followed by deeds. Abraham showed that his faith was no empty thing when he offered up Isaac; so did Rahab when she received the messengers of Joshua; and so it will ever be.

CHRIST THE HEALER.

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We are not saved by good works, but saved unto good works (Eph. ii. 10). We are not saved by holy living, but saved that we may so live (Titus ii. 11-14). We are not saved by glorifying God in our lives, but saved that we may glorify Him (1 Cor. vi. 20). To reverse the process is to put the cart before the horse.

If what we have said does not meet the difficulty, we invite the young men of Clydach, or any reader, to write to the editor. The pages of this magazine are for the help of the sheep and lambs of God's flock. We are their servants for Jesus' sake.

CHRIST THE HEALER.

ONCE in a city, when the sun was setting,
 At Thy blest feet they laid the sick all down ;
 And ere it sank, all pain and woe forgetting,
 A murmur of great joy rose through that town.

And one day shall the world with mirth be ringing,
 When from Thy glance its maladies are flown ;
 Its song of joy and health exultant singing,
 When Thou hast healed its hurt, and stilled its moan.

O Healer ! hasten that sure day of gladness,—
 The whole earth's hallelujah unto Thee ;
 Hear faith's deep sighing 'neath these clouds of sadness,
 "When will the dawn break, and the shadows flee ?"

A. R. COUSIN.

A HELPFUL SKETCH.

ROMANS I.—VIII.

IT was the custom in old days, when a saint was going to a place where he was not known, to take with him a "letter of commendation." There was a sister in Christ going to Rome, named Phœbe, and the letter of commendation which Paul gave to her was this Epistle to the Romans (see chap. XVI.). It is much more than a letter of commendation, surely. Still, that furnished the opportunity of writing and sending it. Paul had never seen the Roman saints, and he takes this occasion to write to them at large about justification and other great Christian doctrines. The subject matter of the letter is Jesus Christ, "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (chap. xv. 8, 9).

In the first eight chapters you have the doctrine of Justification. Man is there seen reduced to his true moral level before God. All are brought in guilty before Him, and then it is shown that God can justify a poor sinner that believes on Jesus, and be just in doing so. In the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters the fulfilment of God's promises to His ancient people is discussed. If God was going to save Jew and Gentile alike, on the ground of grace, what

became of His promises to Israel? In the concluding chapter there are exhortations founded upon the doctrine of the first eight chapters, and finally some salutations.

The first eight chapters may be divided into two parts, the former treating of justification and the latter of salvation—two very distinct things. As far as the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter the subject is guilt and forgiveness, or justification; from the twelfth verse of the fifth chapter to the end of the eighth the subject is being lost and being saved.

The latter part of the first chapter deals with the corrupt mass of the heathen; the beginning of the second chapter with the philosophers and moralists among them, and then with religious man—the Jew. In the third chapter there is a recapitulation, the Jew being shown to be no better than the Gentile, both alike being under sin; and all the world guilty before God. It is a wonderful photograph this of man—of you and me. It is, I may say, a negative photograph, for it tells us what we are *not*. There is none righteous, no, not one; none that understandeth; none that seeketh after God; none that doeth good. Then there is the positive side: their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, etc.

There is a true picture of you and me naturally. We sometimes forget this, because God in His grace and providence has placed us in circumstances which have prevented these things from coming into action. We pride ourselves on being better than our neighbours; not being guilty of lying, theft, uncleanness, and so forth, which we see others committing. But the roots of all these things are in our hearts.

I do not think the conviction of sin that even a believer has can be very deep if he is greatly startled when he hears of some terrible crime. But for the grace of God, my friend, you or I might have committed that crime. If we had been present at the crucifixion of Christ and left to ourselves, we should have cried, "Away with Him!" just as the crowd did. There is not a crime that ever was committed by man that we are not capable of if left to ourselves.

Suppose I go into a garden and see there two trees: one covered with bad fruit, nauseous crabs, and another beside it without a single crab on it. I say to the gardener, "You had better cut down this tree that bears such bad fruit." "Oh," he says, "if you cut down one you may cut down both, for both are crab trees. There is no fruit on that one at present, but when it does bear fruit it will be nothing but crabs." A single crab determines the character of the tree just as clearly as ten thousand. And how many sins is it neces-

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sary for a man to commit to make him a sinner deserving of hell fire? Why, the apostle James, in speaking of the law, tells us that he who offends in one point is guilty of all. I remember once coming up out of a coal pit in a cage drawn up by an endless chain. How many links needed to be broken to send me down to the bottom? Only one. The consequences would be just as serious as if every link had given way. We must remember that comparing ourselves with ourselves is not wise.

The apostle next goes on to speak of the law, and he says that what it does is to make out all the world guilty before God (v. 19). "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is *the knowledge of sin.*" You see a man conceited and very satisfied with himself. He thinks he is beautiful and clean and handsomely attired, but you take him to a looking-glass, and he sees that he is ugly and dirty and ragged. The glass only gives him a knowledge of what he is, it will not beautify, or cleanse, or clothe him. That is just what the law does for a poor sinner. It is at this point that the grace of God comes in: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for

all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believes on Jesus" (*vv.* 21-6). God is for us. What a blessed truth for the heart!

In chapter IV. I see how this is made good to me by faith. I find there that Abraham was reckoned righteous in this way; David knew it and spoke of it too. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." Who is the reckoner? God. How blessed! I may make mistakes in my reckoning, but God never does. Here am I, a poor guilty sinner; I plead guilty, and put myself under the precious blood of Christ. I own that I have nothing but sin, and God says He will not reckon a single sin to me. I confess that I have not a shred of righteousness, and God reckons divine righteousness to me. It is not my reckoning, but God's. The righteousness of God is upon all them that believe; the way we get it is by believing in Him Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified

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by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We stand in grace; rejoice in hope of the glory; rejoice even in the midst of tribulations; and boast in God Himself (chaps. iv. 24-v. 11).

So far what we have had before us is the question of guilt and forgiveness, or justification. It is rather difficult to explain the difference between forgiveness and justification, but there is a shade of difference. I may give you an illustration of it. There were once two schoolfellows who loved one another dearly; they went to college together, and were great friends and intimate companions; but when they grew up to manhood their paths divided. One became a judge in Scotland and the other became a thorough scapegrace. One day the judge had a criminal before him, whom he discovered to be the companion of his schooldays. Do you suppose he dealt leniently with him? No; on the contrary, he fined him very heavily; and as he could not pay, the officers were taking him off to prison, when the judge stopped them, pulled out his purse, and said, "There is the money; you may let him go." He did not forgive the prisoner; he fined him heavily, but paying the penalty himself, he justified him. The portion of this epistle which we have been looking at does not go further than this: that I am guilty; I have a heap of sins, but God pardons my sins, justifies

me from all things, and now they are no longer upon me.

We now come to the question of being lost and being saved. What meets the case of guilty man is justification, but what the lost man needs is salvation. It is not difficult to convince men that they are guilty. A man who has stolen something, even though he may deny it, knows very well in his heart that he is a thief. So with the liar; but it is not so easy to convince men that they are lost. As you must know that you are guilty before you can know that you are forgiven, so you must know that you are lost before you can know that you are saved. The reason why so many believers are only half-saved is because they are only half-lost—that is, so far as their own consciousness goes. In this second division of this epistle, which treats of salvation for the lost, God does not take us up individually. He has two men before Him, Adam and Christ, the man in whom guilt was accomplished before he became the head of the human family, and the Man in Whom righteousness was accomplished before He became the Head of God's family. Sin, not sins, is the subject here—the root or power, not the fruit or results. The word “sins” is not found at all in the second half of chapter v. “By one man *sin* entered into the world” (v. 11); and this man, Adam, was the figure of Him Who was to come

(v. 14). Here we have the two men placed before us and also what they did.

Passing on to the sixth chapter, we see that its subject throughout is *sin*, not guilt and forgiveness, but the power of sin and how it is dealt with. The question is asked, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" What is the answer to that? "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?" Have you not been baptized as a Christian? If you have, then you have been baptized unto Christ's death. When Christ died for my sins on the cross, God saw not only the end of my sins, but the end of *me*. My sins came to an end there, but I came to an end judicially too. Baptism is the figure of burial. Some one is dead, then. Who is it? The old man? Yes, he is dead and buried. Then do not let me see him again. "Oh," you say, "but I find the old man is alive. What am I to do?" Let us read on and see. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. . . . Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (vv. 4-7).

A man committed a murder in the place

where I live. A crowd ran after him down the street, and very soon the police caught up to him and seized him. But he was never brought before the magistrates. Why? Because when they went to bring him they found he was dead. What could a policeman do with a dead man? Could a magistrate try him? He that is dead is freed (or justified) from sin. I came to an end in the cross of Christ; I died with Him, and I am freed from sin. But after all, you say, I find the old man is uncommonly alive, and I want to know what I am to do. To answer this we must read a little further. "In that He died, He died unto sin once" (not *for* sin, observe, though that is true, as we see in chapter III.), "but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Now we come to the point: "Likewise *reckon ye yourselves* to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." When it is a question of justification God does all the reckoning, and He does it perfectly; but if it is a question of practical, everyday life as a Christian, I have to do the reckoning, and I am not always right in it. This latter reckoning goes on constantly, and must never be neglected. If I see a bucket of water with a cork in it, I know that the cork will naturally always come to the top. But if I am told not to allow it to rise, then I must keep my hand always upon it. The moment I take off my hand up it springs.

A circumstance which occurred about two years ago may illustrate this in a familiar way. A man was converted who worked in a very large timber-yard and had the superintendence of a lot of the roughest men in the place. He was naturally a passionate man, and they were continually vexing him. When he was converted, and the men knew it, they tried to provoke him more and more, and very often succeeded. He was greatly distressed about it, and spoke to a brother Christian on the subject, telling him that he sometimes got into sad tempers, and did not know what to do to prevent it. The brother opened out this scripture in Romans VI., and showed him that what he had to do was to reckon himself dead to sin. The man tried it and found it effectual. When the men tempted him he said to himself, "Now you are dead," and they did not succeed in putting him out of temper.

There is another side to this. We ought to reckon ourselves not only dead to sin but *alive unto God* through Jesus Christ our Lord. I ought to own no life now but Christ—Christ living in me. If anything else but Christ comes out of me, it needs self-judgment and confession. And then we ought not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies (v. 12). It is not said, Do not let sin dwell, for it does *dwell* in us, but, Do not let it *reign*. It is as if you had a wild beast in your house locked up in a den, but one day you left the door open

and the beast came out and hurt the children and damaged the furniture. You ought to be more careful; you ought never to let the door be open again. I must be sober and vigilant, watching unto prayer. Then there is the precious promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace" (v. 14).

Then another question is raised: Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Forbid the thought! "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves slaves to obey, his slaves ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Here it is a question of slavery and freedom. A Christian is a man who has been emancipated, set free. Free to do what? His own will? No! but God's will. Every man is a slave to some one. One man is a slave to Satan, who acts upon his lusts and passions; another man is a slave to God. The use of the word "servants" here is somewhat misleading to the English reader. The word is really slaves, and there is a great difference. Suppose a man is looking for a situation and he goes to an agent who wants a secretary. He is asked what he can do. "I can write foreign languages." Well, he is engaged, and his employer gives him some letters to write. After he has done that he says to him, "Now clean my boots." Of course, he would refuse; he was not engaged to clean boots; it is not his work. But suppose a man is sold in

the market as a slave and the master who buys him tells him to clean his boots: he goes and does it at once, and the same if he is told to go and stand on his head. He has no will of his own, but has simply to do what his master bids him, whatever it may be. The sinner is set free, but it is to be the slave of God, Whose service is perfect freedom.

In chapter VII. we have a man trying with all his might to die, as many do instead of reckoning themselves dead. He is consciously under law, and God is teaching him this lesson, which we have all to learn sooner or later, that all power is in God. Having learned it as a sinner, I have to learn it as a saint. I had to learn as a sinner that I had no strength. I wanted to know what I should do to be saved, and God's answer was: "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And again: "God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God forgave me as a guilty man, and justified me as an ungodly man. But now that I have got life I want to have the credit of doing something, and God has to teach me the same lesson again as a Christian: that the power is in Him and in His Christ. This person in Romans VII. has a new nature, but he is struggling to do this, that, and the other thing that he might get the credit, and he finds that he has no power. When he cries

for a deliverer, not a justifier, giving up his struggles, then he is set free at once.

The figure used in verse 24 by the Holy Ghost is not generally understood. The allusion is to a practice that was quite common among the Romans, that of tying a prisoner to a dead body and throwing both the living man and the corpse into a pit together. Christians are ready enough to say when passing through this experience: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But suppose a Roman prisoner bound to a dead body saying, There is no good in this corpse. It is quite true; but what does it prove? Why, that he has not got rid of the corpse yet. But suppose he cries out, "Who shall deliver me?" and some one draws a sword and cuts the cords that bound him to the dead body; what then? Why, he would turn round and thank his deliverer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Chapter VIII. describes the position of a saved man. In the beginning of it we have God *with* us; in the middle of it God *in* us; and in the end of it God *for* us. This closes the doctrinal part of the epistle.

J. G.

"YOUR worst enemy is yourself: your best Friend is your Saviour. Fear your enemy, trust your Friend."

MORE SERIOUS QUESTIONS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—As one who has gone in and out amongst the hungry souls of the Revival district in South Wales, seeking to help them by personal dealing and by means of gospel booklets, I am very thankful for the paper by “L. R.” and extract from “G. V. W.,” in your September number, especially in view of the “Pathetic Appeal” with which that number opens, the substance of which I have heard again and again in Wales about the preaching of many ministers.

There are thousands of awakened souls, and as many or more old believers, all lacking peace with God, and no one to lead them into it. The possibility of *knowing* the forgiveness of sins has been commonly denied by their religious leaders, and is still, to a great extent. But the Revivalists have proclaimed it widely, without preaching *how* forgiveness may be known, so that there is a common feeling abroad that it is to be had, and there be many that say, as it were, “Who will show us any good?”

Will some of your readers to whom that priceless possession, assurance of salvation, is a matter of common enjoyment, lay themselves before the Lord, Who, by these thousands of aching hearts, is saying, so to speak, “Who will go for us?” and say, “Here am I, send me”? There is much hard bodily toil, and “hardness” of other kinds to be

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endured, so physical strength is needed, and hearts aglow with the love of Christ, and who share His yearnings towards precious souls for whom He has suffered, bled, and died.

To me it is most humbling that with all our knowledge, God has largely passed us by, while thousands have been blessed, and hundreds have been used in the conversion of others who are completely ignorant of a full gospel. And what are we doing? Can it be that any of us are fabricating *novelties* for the satiated palates of our overfed hearers, or running after those who supply them? Something like people who might be asked, "Well, how are you getting on?" "Oh, we have our five meals a day regularly at their stated times, and very full ones, too."

Beloved brethren, I would say, Does the Lord, Whose rich bounties we so freely enjoy, expect nothing more from us than that we should feed ourselves? Have you considered Isaiah LVIII. of late? Open your Bibles and look at it. These people, in the day of Israel's declension, went to their meetings regularly (see v. 3). But what for? (v. 4) And what did the Lord say to them? "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that

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thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" And what does the Lord promise? (See 8-12.) Does not much of our sadly low condition, spite of all our *light*, arise from our not having drawn out our soul to the hungry? And consequently we are not "like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not," but rather like the parched heath of the desert and like a man who cannot see when good cometh. Is not this one great reason of our low condition, and of the "schools of opinion" (Gal. v. 20, N.T.), which have arisen amongst us? See for their condemnation, amongst other "works of the flesh," Galatians v. 19-21.

Dear Mr. Editor, "in crying mightily to God," as "L. R." says, and in going out to others, whether saints or sinners, lies the antidote to our sad condition, I firmly believe. It has been well said, "If you do not *go out* you will *die out*," or, in other words, Christianity to be vital must be aggressive.

Yours very sincerely in the Lord,

W. G. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANON.—You must not think for a moment that *you* have committed the unpardonable sin of Mark iii. 29. To be guilty of it one must needs impute the miracles of Jesus to the agency of the devil. We believe you would rather die than do that. Those who tremble lest they have committed it are the last

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persons in the world ever to have that sin laid to their charge. Indeed it is open to serious doubt whether such sin can be committed, now that the Lord Jesus is no longer upon earth. So be of good cheer. Yes, for the greatest sin there is forgiveness. No greater sin could men commit than to crown Jesus with thorns and crucify Him as one unfit to live. Yet to those who did this the gospel was first proclaimed. Finally, we do *not* encourage you "to persevere in confession and prayer," but urge you to believe the gospel which announces forgiveness of sins to the soul that believes in Jesus. It is to you these glad tidings are sent, and if received, joy and peace will be the result (Rom. xv. 13).

R. F. T.—We believe it preferable that the ceremony should be performed by the registrar. His religious views do not enter into the matter at all. The prayers and fellowship of God's people are a distinct thing, and these should be sought. Happy is it when Jesus and His disciples are invited to our marriages. To start in this untrodden path with the hearty prayers of the saints is something to be greatly valued. The registrar's part is purely a civil act, not a religious one.

J. D. L.—Acts x. 16.—May not the fact of the descending sheet being thrice seen be suggestive of adequate testimony? Under the law everything had to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. The repetition made the vision sure and certain, and when we consider the great truth it was designed to teach, and which was so repugnant to a Jewish mind, we see the importance of this three-fold manifestation.

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L. D.—1 John v. 16.—Should not this verse be taken in connexion with the subject of prayer of which the apostle has been speaking in the preceding verses? Love leads us to pray for others, and if a Christian be sick, and under the chastisement of God because of some sin, we can pray for his forgiveness and restoration. Such prayer is not in vain. Job xxxiii. and xxxvi. afford us some instruction here, and so does James v. 14, 15, which please read. There is a sin unto death—of the body of course—for which we may feel we cannot pray. Ananias and Sapphira, in Acts v., are examples of this. No particular sin can be named as being “a sin unto death.” It may be any sin, but committed under circumstances which, instead of awakening charity and leading to prayer, only arouse our indignation. We can make no request as to it, and the evildoer is removed by the just discipline of God.

NORTHUMBRIA.—Luke xxii. 8.—We do not think the blood of the paschal lamb was ever sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of the houses of the Israelites save on the night of the Passover, in Exodus xii. It is true that 2 Chronicles xxxv. 11 speaks of the priests sprinkling the blood, but that, we believe, was on the altar, not the doorposts (see chap. xxix. 12). When the Lord Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples, no doubt it was all done according to the law, but we do not suppose the doorposts were sprinkled. We must distinguish between the Passover and the institution of the Lord’s Supper. It was when the former was over that the latter was instituted. At least so it seems to us.

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A. W. A.—Genesis i. 7.—We have always thought the waters above the expanse were the clouds that hold the rain. Hence, at the deluge it is said the flood-gates of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days. If there be any other explanation we are ignorant of it.

W. R. G.—In the main your question is dealt with in the first paper of our present issue, "*How do I stand after that?*" Those who object to our salvation being wholly of grace, and think such a doctrine leads to an indifferent walk, are entirely mistaken. They overlook the fact that not only will our sins and iniquities be remembered no more, but that God has also said, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." How does He do this? By implanting within us a new principle of life, the very nature of which is to love His will and to do it. It is a shallow thought that if we have perfect confidence as to our ultimate salvation we shall be careless as to our manner of life. If I am *always* a child of God, I am *always* responsible to walk as one. So long as the relationship exists, so long does the responsibility last. Besides, love is a more powerful motive than fear. If what we say here, and in our opening paper, does not meet the case, kindly write again.

ONE WHO WANTS TO BE TRUE.—We deeply and heartily sympathize with you in your earnest desire to get among some warm-hearted Christians, where your soul may be nourished by the living ministry of the Word. To be isolated for so many months in the year, and then, when in England, to find yourself in

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your present surroundings, is trying indeed. Is there no other meeting within reach to which you may sometimes go? A meeting, such as you speak of, composed of the smallest possible number, is apt to become very formal and dead, and then there is no justification for its continuance. Speaking for ourselves, we would infinitely prefer only to "break bread" occasionally, if the distance made it impossible to share regularly in that privilege, than be a slave to such formality. May the Lord keep your heart near Himself. We give you as a special word Jude 20, 21.

C. S.—Hebrews vi. 4-6.—You will find this passage and others of a similar nature pretty fully explained in a pamphlet called *Fallen from Grace*, to be had post-free from our publisher for three penny stamps. It is a passage often brought forward to overthrow the great truth of the eternal security of the soul that believes in Jesus. It really does nothing of the kind. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is showing that great privileges are found within the Christian circle, even as in the Jewish circle of a past dispensation. If any Hebrew shared in these privileges, and afterwards, abandoning the profession of Christianity, returned to the system out of which he came, he, by so doing, crucified for himself the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. This was no case of common failure, such as might overtake any true Christian, it was shameless apostasy from Christ, and the soul putting its solemn seal and sanction to the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord of glory. The misuse of the passage possibly arises from its not being seen that any one might share in the privileges it speaks of without being a saved

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soul. The things that always "accompany salvation" are faith, hope, and love; these are found in verses 10, 11, 12, not in verses 4, 5, 6. Perhaps it will be asked, "But how can one be a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and not be a saved man?" Easily enough, we say. For remember that is not the same thing as being *indwelt* by the Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells in the Christian circle, and every one entering that circle partakes of the Holy Spirit, in that he shares in the privileges which His presence brings. But see *Fallen from Grace*. We believe it will help you to explain to others this much-misunderstood passage. Souls, however, need more than to have difficult passages explained. They require to understand the great truths that cluster around the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which it is our constant endeavour to unfold in these pages.

A. W.—Because our prayers are not answered by any particular time we must not conclude that we have been wrong in praying at all about the matter or person in question. Some things are so clearly in the line of God's will that there can be no doubt as to the rightness of making them a subject of prayer. Other things, right in themselves, may not be for our good, and we must recollect that God's love and wisdom are seen just as much in what He withholds as in what He gives. The most affectionate of parents has sometimes to say "No," and shows his love in saying it. Is it not the same with our Father Who is in heaven?

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ARISE!

IN days like these, emphasis should increasingly be laid upon the scriptural word which stands at the head of this paper. It is no time for sleep. *God* is moving in a wonderful way amongst men; *souls* all around us are awaking to the importance of eternal things; *Satan* is marshalling his forces with determined energy. Let *us*, then, in view of the momentous character of the times, awake and arise!

In asking my readers to do this, I shall not take it for granted that all know what it is to be saved. The first passage, therefore, that I will turn to is Luke xv. 18:

“I will **ARISE** and go to my Father.”

I shall refer to other scriptures where the word occurs, but we will start with

ARISING FOR SALVATION.

God's salvation—blessed be His name—is within reach of all, as a result of the finished work of Christ. But on the part of the one who seeks it, there must be an *arising*. He who folds his hands and says, “I will wait until God is pleased to save me,” will wait in vain. If, however, tired of folly and famine in the far-off land, one arises, with repentant heart and with a determination to turn to God, then indeed is blessing obtained. The Father runs to meet the returning wanderer with the warmest of welcomes, and his misgivings

are set for ever at rest as the arms of infinite love are thrown around him. Have *you* arisen in order to return to the Father? Do *you* know salvation after this fashion?

Now God's great salvation, though easily obtained, is not quite so easily understood. Like every other blessing of which Scripture speaks, it resembles a coin. It has two sides.

The side that people are generally occupied with, rightly enough at first, is what they are saved *from*. Their hearts are filled with thanksgiving to God for saving them from the terrible danger to which their sinful state exposed them, and from the power of the cruel and relentless foe. But there is the other side—what they are saved *for*. I should like every dear young believer to get some inkling of that.

What I mean is beautifully illustrated in the well-known story of Joseph. And what makes it particularly interesting is that here we have the first occurrence in Scripture of the word "save" (Gen. xlv. 7). It is said that the first mention of a word in the Bible often gives us a clue to the right spiritual significance of it.

Joseph's brethren were in danger of losing their lives. With gaunt famine stalking through the land, they might have miserably perished had it not been for the provision which Joseph had made. "God sent me before you," said he, "to **SAVE** your lives by a great deliverance."

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What I ask you to observe is that this salvation went far beyond deliverance from their perishing condition. It began with that, of course, but they were saved *for* something as well. They were saved to live by Joseph's bounty for the rest of their days, to dwell near him, and to see his glory in the land of his exaltation.

And these are amongst the things that *we* are saved for. We have been saved to be the subjects of Christ's love and care, to belong to Him and share all that is His—to dwell near Him, and enjoy sweet communion with Him, and to behold His glory where He is exalted. Wonderful salvation! Is the joy of it yours?

Take another illustration from the early life of Moses. The king's cruel decree had gone forth: "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river." Moses' mother, though she hid him for three months, was forced at last to abandon him to the mercy of the waters.

Pharaoh's daughter, on her way to bathe in the river, espied the frail basket in which he lay. Sending her maid to fetch it, her compassion was excited at the sight of the babe's tearful face. Though well aware that it was "one of the Hebrews' children," she determined to save him from the cruel fate to which he had been doomed. But more, she caused the child to be brought up at her expense, and in due time publicly adopted him as her son, and gave him a place of honour at

her side. That was salvation indeed ! Not only salvation from a watery grave, but salvation for the palace ; salvation for sonship ; salvation for glory. And such is the salvation of God. Well may it be called "so great salvation."

"*Arise*," reader, and explore the length and breadth of it !

Our second passage is Micah II. 10 :

"ARISE ye, and depart ; for this is not your rest."

This is

ARISING FOR PILGRIMAGE.

You remember the time, dear Christian reader, when the great question before your soul was, "Heaven or hell : Where shall I spend eternity ?" What torturing fears filled your mind as that all-important question pressed itself upon you ! Thank God, that matter is now settled. Having put your faith in the Saviour, and your hopes of everlasting happiness upon the merits of His blood, you *know* that heaven is to be your abode for ever. You are as sure of being there as if your feet were already treading its streets of gold.

But now another question claims your attention. While you are left on earth, is it your desire to live as a citizen of heaven, a stranger and a pilgrim ; or do you intend to settle down, and go in for ease and pleasure ?

If it was true of God's people in the days of Micah that earth was not their proper resting-place, how much more is it true of *Christians* !

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For ours is a "*heavenly* calling" (Heb. III. 1). "Our citizenship is in *heaven*" (Phil. III. 20, R.V.). Our earthly life is a mere "time of sojourning here" (1 Peter I. 17). We are "not of the world," even as Christ was not of the world (John XVII. 14).

Further, the Lord Jesus Christ has been rejected and crucified on earth. Reproach is still put upon His name. He is no more wanted by the world in the twentieth century than in days of old. *This* fact, coupled with the truth of our calling being a heavenly one, constitutes us "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter II. 11).

And yet how prone are our hearts to cling to earthly things, to seek a place of rest and ease here! Again and again we have to exhort one another in Micah's words: "ARISE ye . . . for *this is not your rest.*"

Perhaps some one will say: "What about business? That is a thing of earth; but must we not attend to it?"

Most certainly. But the question is: Where do our hearts rest? Where do our hopes and thoughts find their centre, and upon what objects are they set?

Have you ever watched the flies skimming the surface of a pond on a bright summer day? They plunge their bodies into the water, but keep their wings high and dry above it. At any moment they can fly away.

So with us. Brains have to be active; eyes and ears on the alert; hands and feet kept busy

with the affairs of this life. But the pity is that *hearts* are sometimes centred upon these things. We do not keep *our wings above the water*. We become earthly-minded, and are untrue to our character as "strangers and pilgrims."

Spiritual loss is the result. The earthly-minded Christian is an unhappy, powerless, useless one. His Christianity (if it can be called by that name) resembles skim milk. He is missing *the cream* of the whole thing.

May the Lord use this word from the lips of His servant Micah to arouse us all: "Arise! . . . this is not your rest."

Resting-time will come in due course. Let the thought of it make us more diligent in pressing on, instead of settling down.

"The eternal glories gleam afar
To nerve my faint endeavour :
So NOW to watch, to work, to war !
And THEN to rest for ever."

This leads us to a third scripture where we find another very practical exhortation.

"ARISE . . . and be doing" (1 Chron. xxii. 16).

Here the thought is

ARISING FOR SERVICE.

Common gratitude prompts us to serve any one from whom we have received great favours. And gratitude towards the Lord Jesus, to whom we are so deeply indebted for eternal blessing, should make us anxious to serve Him to the best of our ability..

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It is often remarked that it is the high privilege of Christians to serve their Master in the most ordinary matters of everyday life. Duties conscientiously performed with the desire of pleasing Him are indeed to be reckoned as acts of service. This is true even if the duties be humble ones, such as washing plates and dishes, sweeping the rooms out, or minding the children. In all these ways we may "serve the Lord Christ."

But I fear this fact is often stated as *a mere excuse* for not taking up some definite or special work for the Lord. We should not be content with serving the Lord in *our own* affairs. We should each seek His grace and guidance as to what service He would have us render in connexion with *His* things.

It will probably be something very small at first. But it will be *something definite*. How many there are who, like Naaman, are willing to "do some great thing," and yet fail to take up little acts of service that lie ready to their hands.

Not many weeks ago I received a letter from a young believer, saying that he ardently desired to be a labourer in the gospel in some far-off land beyond the seas. This desire I sought to encourage, but suggested that while waiting for divine guidance as to this important step, he might take a bundle of tracts and knock at the doors of the village where he lived, and say a word to the people about their souls. But this,

it appeared, was impossible ! He would not have the courage for it, and so on.

Now God's way is to entrust some *small* service to us first. If, by His grace, we prove faithful to the trust, He may call us to greater things.

Do not let this day pass, dear Christian reader, without getting upon your knees at your Master's feet, asking, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" Do not be misled by the outcry against too much activity. Such warnings may be needed in some quarters, but I am persuaded that for the great majority of those who read these lines the danger is not on the side of "too much activity." The happy Christian is the active one. Take this, then, as your watchword: "Arise . . . and be doing, and the Lord be with thee."

Remember, too, that *both the material for service and the means of using it are provided by the One who enjoins it* (vv. 14, 15).

Besides having some definite work of our own to do for the Lord, let us be on the look out for opportunities of serving Him in various other ways.

One day a workman was riding in an omnibus, when he noticed that every time the door opened it squeaked. Rising from his seat, he took a small can from his pocket, let fall a drop of oil upon the hinge, and sat down again, quietly remarking, "I always carry an oil can in my pocket. There are so many things that a drop of oil will set right."

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How true this is in a spiritual sense ! Human life is full of jarring notes, and there are many things even amongst believers that *a drop of oil*, a loving word, a look of sympathy, will set right.

The memory of a kindly word,
 Far long gone by ;
 The fragrance of a fading flower
 Sent lovingly ;
 The gleaming of a sudden smile,
 Or sudden tear ;
 The warmer pressure of the hand,
 The tone of cheer ;
 The hush that means " I cannot speak,
 But I have heard " ;
 The note that only bears a verse
 From God's own Word :
 Such tiny things we hardly count
 As ministry,
 The givers deeming they have shown
 Scant sympathy.
 But when the heart is overwrought,
 Oh, who can tell
 The power of such tiny things
 To make it well ?

The fourth passage which I will ask you briefly to notice is this :

"ARISE . . . and come away" (Song of Sol. II. 13).

This speaks of

ARISING FOR HOME.

Never were we so near as at this moment to the day when we shall hear the summons home. I do not mean *death* when I speak of "the summons

home." I refer to the coming of the Lord Jesus, when, according to the promise in 1 Thess. iv., He will descend from heaven with a shout, calling both the dead in Christ and those still living and remaining to meet Him in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord.

Has this bright hope any charm for you, reader ? Do you long for the day when you shall see your Saviour's face ?

It is a day for which *He* longs. His Bride, His Church, will then be at His side, without spot or wrinkle. His love to her was such that He willingly stooped to death for her sake. "Christ . . . loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

All through the long centuries of the Church's sojourn on earth, she is the subject of His constant care. Who can say what profound joy it will be to Him to have her *at home* with Himself ?

And are any of *us* so indifferent and so cold that *we* do not long for that day ? Be sure of this, that those who most long to meet their Lord are those who have arisen for pilgrimage and arisen for service. Those who are true to their "stranger" character, and those whose love to Him leads them to devote their days to His service, are those whose hearts beat with the most ardent expectation of His coming.

Are *you* one such ?

H. P. B.

"PHILIP FINDETH NATHANAEL."

JOHN I. 45.

BUT we must bear in mind that ere Philip found Nathanael he had found Christ. He was able to say in all confidence, "*We have found Him.*" He does not say, "We are seeking Him, and hope to find Him." This may be all well enough; but Philip was beyond this. His earnest searching had issued in a joyous finding, as is always the case; and having found Christ, he goes and finds Nathanael.

Reader, allow me to make a direct, solemn, personal appeal to your heart and conscience. How is it with your precious soul at this moment? Can you say with Philip, "I have found Christ"? Are you happy in a Saviour's love? Have you found pardon and peace in His atoning blood? If you can answer in the affirmative, if you can say, "Yes, thank God," then I ask, are you searching for a Nathanael? Are you doing what you can to spread the knowledge of Jesus?

Do you say, "I have no gift, no call, no office"? Yes, but have you no life? You may not be called to stand before assembled thousands—often a very slippery place—but can you not find a Nathanael? Is there no one into whose ear you can drop those thrilling words, "*I have found Him*"? Is there no friend, neighbour, or relative to whom you can say, "Come"? You do not need the gifts of a

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Paul, a Luther, a Whitefield, or a Chalmers in order to say, "Come." What you really want is a heart filled to overflowing with the joy of a newly found treasure. This is what we all want. If there were more Philips to seek, there would be more Nathanaels found. If every one would just do as Philip did, how blessedly would the work of evangelization go on! This is the way it should be, and this is the way it would be if persons were able to say, with unclouded confidence, "*We have found Him.*" It is the hesitancy as to this, it is the lack of holy confidence in the record of God, the absence of settled assurance as to the fullness and efficacy of the atonement and its personal application, that produces such unwillingness and incapacity to testify of Christ to others. In a word, before ever Philip can find Nathanael he must find Christ. The two findings go together. I must find my own way to the feet of the Saviour before I can conduct another thither. It is one thing to talk about religion, and another thing to be able to say, "I have found Christ." This latter is the secret of all successful evangelization. For a man to set about preaching Christ to others ere he has found Him for himself is a most frightful delusion. There is no one in such an awfully dangerous position as a Christless preacher—a Christless talker about religion.

C. H. M.

“THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE.”

JOHN XVII. 21.

LET us first see what it was that really united Christians at the beginning, and then ask if these bonds still exist.

At the commencement of the Acts of the Apostles we see a company of about one hundred and twenty people assembled together after the Lord Jesus had gone back to heaven. Certain of them, perhaps all of them, saw Him after His resurrection, and were witnesses of His ascension. After He had left them we find they were still together. The one thing that united them was faith in Him.

What did that faith mean? It meant that they all believed that Jesus of Nazareth was *the Anointed of God*—the Christ, the long-expected Messiah of the Jews. It meant that with one consent they *owned Him as their Lord*. Further, they *acknowledged Him to be the Son of God*. The faith of these early disciples comprehended all this, without question or divergence of opinion. We have here, therefore, one very distinct and definite thing that united the followers of Christ. But there was to be another link that would bind them even closer to one another and to Him. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descended in form like as of cloven tongues of fire, “and it sat upon *each of them*.” They each received the

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Holy Ghost, and yet there was only one Holy Ghost. *How really this made them one we have perhaps never conceived.* They were all indwelt by the same Spirit. The apostle Paul afterwards tells us the effect of it. "By one Spirit," he says, "are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). "Baptized"—this meant that old things were done with, the distinctions after the flesh were no longer to be a cause of animosity and separation. A Jew was no longer to think of himself as a Jew, or a Gentile as a Gentile, but as members of something entirely new—the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 27), that which He, the Lord in glory, would regard as part of Himself (see Acts ix. 4 and Eph. v. 29–30), and the members of which were members one of another (see 1 Cor. xii. 14–27).

There is a third link—believers were constituted one body. Not only were they united by faith in the person of Christ, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, but they were members one of another. Paul emphasizes this fact when he says: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all."

This also shows there were other things that united believers at the beginning. Have we ever seen how much really did unite them? They were

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“called in one hope of their calling.” What is that? The glory of God was their destiny; their portion to be like Christ. They were “all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Lastly, there was “one God and Father of all,” and He “in us all.”

It would be easy to mention other things that made those early Christians one. They had a common faith in Christ, they all acknowledged Him as Lord and as Son of God; they were all made to drink into one Spirit, and by that Spirit baptized into one body; God was their one Father, they shared one hope—that of being like Christ and glorified together with Him. Was there not enough in all these to unite them as one man in the closest and most sacred association?

And we may well consider not only the number of these ties, but the greatness of them. No less a person than the Son of God was the object of their faith; no less a person than the Holy Ghost had come to be with them and in them, that they might be so closely united that only the figure of the human body could give the idea of their oneness. One home was before them, and one Father was theirs, even God Himself. In the light of this, may not each Christian to-day ask this question: Is anything that causes a difference

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amongst believers outwardly, now, half so important as all this that united them in the beginning?

Now the point is, have these bonds ceased to exist? There is only one answer. They have not. The strongest influences at work in the world leave no mark upon them; neither death, nor the grave, nor man's effort, nor all the power of evil can loose them; they remain as eternal and fixed as the throne of God.

What makes it difficult for Christians to realize their oneness is, first, the vast mass of unreal profession which exists; and next, that many things have come in during the lapse of centuries to disunite Christians, and to obscure that which really unites them. And have we not all been prone—without ever intending it perhaps—to be occupied with what divides, and to overlook to a great extent all that unites?

We cannot alter the state of things outwardly, but we can at least decide for ourselves that henceforth we will give a larger place to what binds all Christians *livingly* together. This is no plea for unity at the expense of truth. Without truth there can be no unity. Nay, rather, to secure the recognition of the real unity, of which we speak, truth must be insisted upon, *and that in all its parts*. It is truth that unites. Mere negation never united yet, and never will. But if what united the early members of the Church



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only received due recognition, believers everywhere would be drawn closer together: not expressed in any merely *mechanical* way, or by any human system or ecclesiastical form, but an inward, spiritual union, begotten by a living faith in our Lord Jesus, and supported by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and by the recognition that there is after all only one body—the Church—the body of Christ.

We would therefore humbly appeal to all Christians to recognize what truly unites them, and give it a larger share of their attention. Surely, in view of what is before us, to be presented to Christ a glorious Church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; holy and without blame; and the near return of our absent Lord, it behoves us to be drawn more in heart to each other, and to be cultivating that which He will be pleased to find existing amongst us when He comes. One of the things that was most upon His heart ere He left His disciples was the desire that they should love one another. “These things I command you,” He said, “that ye love one another”; and again, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And if this was how He would have them when He left them, is it not how He would like to find them when He comes again? We often speak of the Lord’s return, but are we prepared for it? Are we

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sufficiently united in heart? Are we "endeavouring to keep the *unity of the Spirit*"? Ere the Lord came the first time, what characterized the true ones was, they spake often one to another. A burden was upon their hearts which *would* find expression. May not the Lord be producing the same state of things ere He comes the second time?

Many years ago, now, the truths here mentioned as uniting believers at the beginning were again recognized, and it drew many together. For long years they had been forgotten. Is there not a danger that they may be once more lost sight of? It suits the flesh so much better to allow something else to form a bond of union—a particular line of truth, the authority of man, or the desire for uniformity. It may safely be asserted that none of these, nor all of them put together, is God's way of unity. His unity is on the basis of a common life, a common relationship, the work of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. Everything else savours of man, and is spurious and artificial. It may produce uniformity, but only by crushing underfoot all that is vigorous and healthful.

At Corinth parties were soon formed round favourite teachers, but it met with the apostle's sternest rebuke. No doubt they thought themselves spiritual, but he did not hesitate to tell them they were carnal, acting more like babes

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than grown men. And he addressed this rebuke as much to those who said “I am of Paul” as to any. Would that teachers who have a following were as faithful to-day!

Let us then remember all that livingly unites. Let us think of Christ more. Let us get nearer to the one and only centre. Getting nearer to Him, we shall draw closer to one another. It is away from Him we are split into fragments and parties. May we be led to think more of what true fellowship is, and upon what it rests! “The fellowship of His Son.” “The fellowship of the blood of Christ and the body of Christ.” The fellowship we have one with another because we walk in the light as God is in the light. The fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

God’s work is always to unite and gather; it is Satan’s to divide and scatter. We believe that three instances will be found in the Old Testament of the latter, answered by three instances in the New Testament of the former. Satan scattered by introducing sin into the garden of Eden. What characterized that abode of bliss was “the tree of life *in the midst*” of it. (There was, of course, also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.) In consequence of man’s rebellion he was driven out, away from God’s centre, and of himself he could find no way back. The tree of life was there, but he could not reach it. Now the contrast is in JOHN X. 15, 16, “I lay down

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My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also *I must bring*, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be *one flock, one shepherd.*" One in His life, through the laying down of it first.

The second case of scattering was at the tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 8): "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city." In JOHN XII. 31, 32, we read, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will *draw* all unto Me."

The third case is the scattering of Israel. God's name should have kept them. He placed it at Jerusalem, "whither the tribes go up." But Satan's effort was to make some other centre, and with this intent he led them into idolatry. God's answer to this is found in John XI. 51, 52: "He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should *gather together in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad." In the light of these facts may we not solemnly ask ourselves, are we scattering or gathering? Are we aiding in God's work or Satan's? Shall they not lead us to live more in accordance with the prayer breathed with such intense desire by the Redeemer, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that *they* also may be one in Us."

R. E.

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H. D. S.—If any sufferer seek the services of the physician, we should be the last to charge him with any lack of faith or any disposition to take himself out of God's hands. That God *can* heal apart from all human help we quite believe, even as He is able to cover with ripening corn broad acres that have never been ploughed or sown. But such is not His way. On the other hand, if any rely solely on the physician, if in feverish anxiety to use means they leave God out of their confidence, they sadly err. King Asa, in 2 Chronicles xvi. 12, is a striking example of this, and Jeremiah xvii. 5 warns us of the folly and danger of it.

A. C.—The justification spoken of in Romans iii., iv., and the early part of chapter v. means our entire clearance from every charge of sin. Instead of our sins being imputed to us, righteousness is imputed; in other words, we are justified or reckoned righteous. God reckons us to be so. He is the justifier of the ungodly (Rom. iv. 5), and of him who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26). When we speak of *the* righteousness of God—using the definite article—we simply mean that God is always and everywhere consistent with Himself, with His name and character. Hence, in justifying the believer, in reckoning him to be righteous who in himself is nothing but unrighteousness, God's justice, or righteousness, is perfectly maintained. This is by the Blood of the Cross. Therefore it is said that God is *just*, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus—not gracious and merciful, though He be that. Now, the measure of our justification is

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Christ risen. On the Cross He was our suffering Substitute on Whom all our sins were laid. But when we behold Him raised from the dead, and follow Him in thought to the glory where He has been received, we see how completely He has been cleared from the sins which by imputation were laid upon Him, or in that place He could not be. And if the Lord Jesus is at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, it is divine righteousness that has placed Him there. God judged it to be right that He should be thus exalted. Thus we see God's righteousness displayed in the exaltation of Christ. Now His clearance is the measure of ours, and so is His acceptance in the presence of God. "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" (2 Cor. v. 21). *This passage goes further than those in Romans, for it views us as "in Him," where and as He is of course.* And if God's will and pleasure is to view us thus, His righteousness is no more compromised than it is when He justifies us from our sins. Precious truth! comforting and establishing to the soul.

F. H.—We must carefully distinguish between the grace and the government of God. His grace is great enough to pardon every sin, and it shall never be remembered more. The pardoned soul looking heavenwards sees no clouds, all have been blotted out. But looking downward and back upon his past life he may see many a sin from the consequences of which there is no deliverance. Suppose a man loses his fortune, shatters his health, and breaks the heart of his wife by his profligate conduct. As he stands by her graveside, the remembrance of his misspent life throws

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him into an agony of grief. In sincere repentance the stricken man turns to God, and finds a resting-place for his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Forgiveness of sins follows, his past life is blotted out, and he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is grace indeed! But grace neither restores his squandered fortune, builds up his ruined health, nor brings back his dead wife from the grave. God's grace has forgiven everything, but God's government allows the fruit of his misdeeds to remain. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). From this law no one is exempt. The lives of many of God's servants yield examples of it. Take Moses. Under circumstances of extreme provocation he spake in haste and anger. A pardonable offence as we might say, and one for which plenty of excuses could be made. But God did not think so. It was indeed forgiven on the heavenward side, and into much intimate favour with God was Moses received on many occasions afterward, yet that sin shut him out of Canaan, and he died on the wilderness side of Jordan (Num. xx. 12). Angels buried him, it is true, and in New Testament days he is seen with Jesus on the Holy Mount, so that it is no question of his salvation. Grace made that sure, but it did not set God's government aside. Another illustration of it is found in the life of that courageous servant of God whose mission it was to prophesy against the idolatrous altar which King Jeroboam set up (1 Kings xiii. 20-4). David also furnishes an example in 2 Samuel xii. 13, and many others can be found in different parts of Holy Scripture.

As to your second point, if in our unconverted days we have been the means of leading others astray, we

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may not be able to undo the evil we have wrought, however much we would wish to do so. Nothing is to be gained by allowing the mind to dwell upon it, though it may lead us to seek strength to walk humbly with God, and to commend the truth by showing the power it has over our own life.

J. A. E.—Luke xxii. 32; Matthew xviii. 3; Acts iii. 19.—Like many other words, the term "*converted*" must be interpreted by its context. We believe it may be scripturally used in reference both to saved and unsaved persons, though in common usage nowadays its meaning is very much restricted. Ordinarily when we speak of conversion we mean the turning of the soul to God, a very striking statement of which is found in Acts xxvi. 18 and in Thessalonians i. 9, 10. The term is used in this sense in Acts xv. 3, where Paul and Barnabas declare "the conversion of the Gentiles." But the Lord in saying to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," had not that meaning in His mind. Peter's denial of his Saviour was in view, and so was his restoration. "Converted" here has the sense of *restored*, and the word literally is "*hast turned back*." But it is the turning back of one already converted in the former sense. So in Matthew xviii. 3 the disciples needed to be converted, or turned away from their lofty thoughts of great places in the kingdom, and to become as little children. The meaning here is quite plain. Now in Acts iii. 19 the apostle is addressing those who had put the Lord to death, and he calls upon them to repent and be converted. It is a complete *turning about*, and implies a total revolution of thought about Him Whom they had crucified. Forgiveness of sins followed that. This is conversion as it is commonly spoken of to-day. On the Godward side it is the new birth of John iii., on our side it means all that is stated in Acts xxvi. 18 and 1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10.