

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 SHUT DOOR AND OPEN WINDOW.

MATTHEW VI. 6 and DANIEL VI. 10.

THIS subject may be looked at first of all in connexion with the beginning of another year. The door is closed upon the old; from the window we survey the new. In this sense we can never open the door again. The year is past, and the days — whether used for good or ill — will never return. The misspent moments, the useless employments, the wasted opportunities are beyond recall. The door is closed.

Let it be closed. It is waste of time to brood over the year's sorrows and disappointments, its failures and sins. Let us rather, from the open window, look forth upon the new year, and as we kneel at its threshold, seek grace from God to go through it with Him.

Let the door be closed too, not only upon the year's failures, but upon its successes and achievements. And as we look upon the three hundred and sixty-five days in front of us, let us pray for grace, not only to do better the things we have been doing, but to fill up those days with new endeavours and fresh enterprises. In this sense,

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then, may each one of us shut his door and open the window.

But it is in connexion with prayer that the "shut door" and "open window" are referred to. The blessing bestowed in certain districts during the past year has been given in answer to prayer. The all-important inquiry is, will it spread? The answer largely depends upon the use we make of the "shut door" and "open window."

First of all the closed door. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." The context shows that prayer is a secret intercourse between ourselves and God. We do not engage in it to gain the attention or applause of men. But while no one may know how much time we spend in this way, or how often we seek the face of our Friend, He has promised that the answer shall be as public as the act in itself was private.

It is not too much to say that prayer is the most important business of our lives. The door is closed, and you find yourself in audience with the King of kings. God and yourself on one side of the door, the world and your nearest and dearest on the other, in order that you may speak to One Who, though a King, is also your Father.

Shut thy door, because you will have things to tell to God that no one else may hear. Tell Him everything. Let there be full confession. Confess

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all your weakness—shortcomings, failures, sins—and make the sins of others your own. Mourn over the condition of the Church and the world. Other people may not understand your sighs and groans, God will. Enter into thy closet, get as far away from man as you can, and shut thy door. Let God sometimes look upon a tear-stained face.

The shut door, too, ought to make us feel our helplessness. You are alone. Every other friend, support, and confidant is outside. But then is the time to cast yourself upon omnipotence. Take hold of God. His majesty may well make any one feel his own littleness, but one may also remember prayer is of divine ordering, and God loves to be counted on. Jacob was left alone the night the angel wrestled with him, but what blessing it meant to him! The shut door also implies that all our concerns—family matters, business, and our cares—must not be allowed to intrude *except as we harness them to the wings of prayer.*

The door must be closed upon everything that would interfere with the prospect from the “open window.” We read of Daniel’s windows “being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem.” At that moment Jerusalem was the most needy place on earth. Instead of being the glory of all kingdoms, it was desolate. Never shall we pray with sufficient urgency and importunity unless we feel the pressing needs around us. Need is what inspires all true prayer. It led Daniel to put up

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that wonderful plea and make the confession recorded in chapter IX. Is there not enough to-day to lead us to imitate him? Was the need ever greater? On the resistless tide of time what untold multitudes are being hurried into eternity unprepared! Think of the teeming millions of heathendom "who call us to deliver their land from error's chain." The *least* we can do is to pray for them. If you have an open window you *will* pray. And the need close at hand will not escape us. In a so-called Christian land the indifference to every claim of God is simply appalling; beside the wretchedness and sin on every hand. As you gaze from the open window, what a sight you will behold of squalor and wretchedness, of ignorance and vice, of starved children, forlorn women, and degraded men. We live our respectable lives, but how little we know, and sometimes how little we care, about what goes on beneath the surface.

Nor will the needs of God's people escape our eye. How much sorrow and sickness and suffering there is even amongst the Lord's own. Nor shall we fail to mark the state of the Church. If the state of Jerusalem and her people aroused the inmost soul of Daniel, until he was led to pour out his heart in prayer and supplication, there is not less to arouse us as we look upon that which bears the name of Christ. Errors of every kind obtain a hearing and a following.

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Many are in bondage to superstition. Thousands allow themselves to be defrauded of truth divinely certified, relinquishing even the verities of the faith for the changing shadows of human opinion. The need is great wherever we look. May we gaze upon it until stirred to our inmost depths.

Daniel's window, open toward *Jerusalem*, suggests another thing. The very meaning of the name "the vision of peace" is significant. If we had only a vision of the need we might well turn away disheartened, but from the open window we look up into an open heaven and see Jesus. At His birth peace on earth was announced, and He will yet establish it. At the present moment all who acknowledge Him have peace with God and should be at peace with one another, for God is now preaching peace by Jesus Christ. If the first word at Christ's birth was "peace," almost the first word on His lips, after His resurrection, was also "peace," and God is going to send Him back to accomplish the restitution of all things and give peace to the whole world (Acts III. 20, 21).

With the din of earth's discords in our ears, can we help praying that He Who is the Prince of Peace may soon come and bring in the peace of heaven to this poor distracted earth?

As we look through the open window the prospect widens. We see God unfolding His purpose and fulfilling it. Jerusalem in Daniel's day was

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the centre of all God's ways in relation to the earth. It is not now Jerusalem, but Jesus. God's purpose is to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Eph. i. 10). And if we want the unfolding of this grand panorama, we have only to turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians. There one may survey all that God will do for His Beloved and for us. For in Him we have obtained an inheritance. If Daniel prayed three times a day with his eyes toward Jerusalem, is it any wonder that Paul bowed *his* knees that the saints might comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of all that God has in view for Christ, and for us as joint heirs with Him? As we see these two men bowing their knees, shall we not bow ours as we gaze from the open window and think of the accomplishment of so glorious a purpose, and that our prayers can hasten it?

Once more. If we look through the open window we shall not fail to see the Morning Star. That star speaks to us in two ways. First, of what we have in Christ Himself during His absence. "I, Jesus . . . I am the bright Morning Star." If our window is open, there will come to us the light of another world—Christ will shine upon us (Eph. v. 14). Secondly, the star is the herald of the coming day.

A traveller returning from the Continent arrived

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in the Tyne, a short while ago, at two o'clock in the morning. He could not leave the vessel and was on deck very early. About five o'clock he had a sight which well repaid him. There in the east, in a cloudless sky, were the moon, the morning star, and the first pale tints of approaching day. The picture was complete. Christ and the Church together in heaven just before He rises as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. Are our hearts in the truth of this? Has the day dawned, and the day-star arisen *there*?

Was not the apostle Paul looking from the open window when he penned those remarkable words in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also 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 even to subdue all things unto Himself"? (chap. III. 20, 21).

During this coming year may we know the value of a "shut door" and an "open window." An increasing acquaintance with both will be an untold gain. And lastly, let us not forget that God has spoken on His side of "open windows." If we seek His face, we may expect that according to His promise He will "open the *windows of heaven*, and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

R. E.

SALVATION TO THE END.

IF we see ourselves lost, guilty sinners on our way to judgment, our first great concern will be, How may we be saved from the eternal consequences of our sins?

Scripture is quite clear that no Saviour will ever come from heaven to endure the judgment for those sins in the future. We are therefore compelled to turn our eye to what has already taken place.

Paul declares that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again (1 Cor. xv. 3). Hebrews ix. 28 tells us Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many, and in Corinthians v. 21 we read that He "Who knew no sin" was "made sin for us."

Thus His death is set before us as God's way of saving us from all the eternal consequences of our sins. In His death all God's claims have been met. The sorrows and sufferings of the blessed Saviour in those hours of agony on Calvary's cross show the greatness of the work needed to save us. *That work is finished.* Christ will never die again. If we recall Him in death, it is as the One who has done a work that is *finished*. He did it by *Himself*. The purger of our sins was alone in those hours of darkness. Fellow-believer, shall we not give Him the honour and glory due to Him, as the One Who, by His *great*

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sacrifice, has settled for ever the question of our sins? "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter II. 24).

Now we cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that when God's claims and the judgment due to our sins are in view, the death of Christ is the *only* way by which they can be met. But, thank God, *they have been met*. You ask, How do you know? Because *the One who had those sins is now in the glory of God without them*. He *once* bore the intolerable burden of guilt, and endured the judgment for sins He never committed. They were yours and mine. But He is in heaven to-day, and the burden is gone. Every believer—the youngest and feeblest—is therefore entitled to say, I am as clear of sin and all its consequences as He is.

Repeat it over again; look at Jesus in the glory of God, and if you do not know the meaning of it, get on your knees and ask God to fix your eyes upon the One Who is risen again, and is in the holy light of the presence of God without the sins He had on the cross. I once asked a troubled believer, Did Christ take your sins into heaven? When he saw that sins could not possibly go there, he went on his way rejoicing that the sins which had hitherto burdened his conscience had been atoned for by the death of Christ. He looked to Christ in heaven *without* his sins and rejoiced that he was as free as Christ

Himself from the penalty of death and judgment due to them.

We cannot be too clear on this grand foundation truth, that the death of Christ, the work He finished on the cross, saves us now and to all eternity from the wrath those sins deserved. When we are in the glory of God by and by, we shall not be more completely saved from the wrath to come than we are now.

If, like the thief on the cross, we were to go to heaven the moment we rested our souls on the *salvation that is finished*, we should not need to consider the second aspect in which salvation is looked at. This we may term a *present and continuous work*.

We will suppose you have just laid hold of the fact that you are saved from all the just judgment due to your sins. What you now need is not a *dying* Saviour, but a *living* one; not one crucified in weakness, but one who is all powerful. You have difficulties to meet every step: a deceitful heart, fleshly lusts, the world and its allurements, and the malice of Satan. Who can save us from all this? Thank God, the One who died is alive. His present occupation is with you. He *ever lives* to make intercession. He is able to *save to the uttermost* all that come unto God by Him (Heb. vii. 25). During the still hours of the night He watches over you, and all through the day, with its business and family

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cares, He ever lives—a present, living Saviour, not dying, but living; not atoning, but interceding. Not putting away the guilt of your sins, but taking up every slip in your pathway, every sin you may commit in your heavenward journey, and by His word and Spirit making you sensible of it, that by confession and self-judgment you may have the *joy* of salvation restored.

As the Advocate with the Father He restores our souls, sets our feet again in the narrow path, leads us to confess the sins of which we have been guilty, and to reach the root from whence those sins spring. If we have a sleepless foe in Satan, we have a sleepless Saviour in Christ. Satan accuses, Christ advocates. If, then, we are to know salvation from the misery brought into our souls by a departure in our Christian pathway, we must remember that there is only one way by which it can be reached. One of the best things in Bunyan's pilgrim is that when he got into By-path Meadow, there was no way of return but in coming back to the point where he began to wander. Let us take this lesson to heart. You remember how happy you were when you learned the value of the past and finished work of Christ—how you sang, "O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away." But you are not so happy now. Why? Is it because you are wandering in By-path Meadow? Have you turned aside from that blessed One Who put your

sins away? If so, let me urge you to go and tell Him all about your sin and what led to it. Search the secret spring of your heart for the point of departure. You confess; He will forgive. You tell Him *all the truth; now at once*. He waits to restore, bless, and give you the joy of communion once more with Himself and His God and Father.

Then we may consider Him as a Saviour in another way. He has become a gracious priest to sustain and maintain the people of God in their heavenward journey. In this part of His service He saves by fortifying His people. He administers mercy and grace step by step. He supplies what is to meet the need *before the need begins*. If sorrow comes, His sympathies are drawn out, and the mighty succour of His hand is put forth on their behalf. The priesthood of Christ is for the help of those who are seeking to go on aright; His advocacy for those who need restoring after having gone wrong.

We may illustrate it by a man who goes forth to labour, having been strengthened by rest and good food before he starts. He is ready for the demands before they come. The throne of grace is always accessible to us. That throne provides all we need for the path, before we start on our day's journey, and all we need to keep us going in it. He ever lives to make intercession for us, and to save to the uttermost all that come unto

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God by Him. He lives to administer strength, succour, sympathy, help, blessing for every exigency.

Abram was fed and refreshed by Melchizedek before he met the king of Sodom; therefore he could refuse the king's offer. In this way Christ saves us from the influences of things in this world. We are on a journey from earth to heaven. Satan cannot hinder us from reaching heaven, but he may succeed in robbing us of our joy. What can preserve us? The Word of God and the priesthood of Christ. The one detects evil, the other supplies the good.

Our daily and hourly occupation should be to look to Him for mercy and grace. As we draw upon His resources, we shall know what it is to be saved from our three great enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. A *dying* Saviour has delivered you from the consequences of your sins. A *living* Saviour, if you look to Him, will save you from the *power* of these sins, and presently He will put forth the last act of His power, and change your body and fashion it like unto His body of glory, and thus save you from the last vestige of sin and its very presence.

Oh, what a Saviour is Jesus the Lord !

Well might His name by His saints be adored.

H. N.

THE GREAT CONFLICT.

SOME of us thought when we turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, and received through Him the forgiveness of sins, that all would then be quietness and rest until we reached our home in the glory of God. But we have been undeceived, for when a man turns to Christ the fighting days begin, and he who would follow the Lord wholly must gird himself for the battle.

The Christian's course is one of constant conflict, and the language which describes it is not that of the drawing-room, but of the battle-field. Scripture speaks of "the good fight" and of "the weapons of our warfare." It exhorts us to take to ourselves "the whole armour of God" and to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It reminds us that it is possible to be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us," and encourages us by telling of rewards that await the overcomers. It is abundantly evident then that though we have peace with God, there must be no peace with the foe; if we have surrendered to Christ, there must be no surrender to those things that would spoil our testimony for Him.

We will divide the conflict into three parts:—

1. We must hold the fort.
2. Help our comrades.
3. Lay hold upon fresh territory on the Lord's behalf.

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God's glad tidings have reached us to the intent that we, being delivered from Satan's power ourselves, might deliver others also. But how deliver others if we ourselves are overcome? So the first thing is to hold the fort; or, in other words, to *keep ourselves for Christ*.

O ye who rejoice in Jesus as Saviour, ever remember that ye are His—spirit, soul, and body—by right of purchase. Moreover, He has taken possession, for when we believed the gospel of our salvation the Spirit of God took up His abode within us, and the indwelling of the Spirit means that the Lord has claimed His own.

Men often purchase property to let it out to others. Not so the Lord. He has not purchased us to ticket us "*This house to let,*" and yet how often do we act as though this were so. We let out the front apartments of our life to others, and reserve a back room for the rightful Owner of all. Overcome, indeed, are all those who act thus.

"Yield yourselves unto God." "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." These are exhortations which call for prompt obedience. Without this there will be no victory. But His commandments are not grievous; He is most gracious, and His ways are ways of love. Not by the might of His hand, but by the love of His heart; not by the iron bands of law, but by the knowledge of His deep and undying affection, He would constrain us to surrender ourselves to Him.

Anything that would rival Christ in our hearts is an enemy to be overcome. Perhaps you are conscious of many rivals, and as a consequence there is but little freshness or spiritual vigour about you, and constant defeat is yours. Possibly there are other things controlling you of which you are not aware, though you know that something is wrong. Under such circumstances what must be done?

The way is plain. Yield yourself into the hand of the Lord. Say unto Him, "Lord, take Thy candle and search me. Go through my whole being, and give me grace to cast out all that is contrary to Thee." Have you ever spent an hour in the Lord's company like that? It is astonishing how different everything will appear if you do. Oh, it is necessary, the most necessary thing in your life, and if so it is the thing you should attend to first.

Is there a secret chamber in your life which you dare not throw open to the dearest earthly friend? Let it be open to Him, He will deal with you so tenderly, and though He make you utterly loathe yourself, He will give you such a sense of His love and worth that it will be the greatest relief to be rid of those things which you imagine to be indispensable. However humiliating the process, it will yield the deepest blessing, and He will turn the sorrow into songs, and make you happy indeed.

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Take Thou my heart and let it be
 For ever closed to all but Thee ;
 Thy willing servant, let me wear
 The seal of love for ever there.

What a blessed thing it is that if we desire to be wholly for Him there are all His grace and the power of the Holy Ghost at our disposal, so that we need not be overcome.

You may tell me that you are weak, without ability, and of no use to the Lord. In this you are mistaken. Hold the fort, keep yourself for the Lord, and in doing this you will be amongst those who prevail.

2. *Help our comrades.* Every one is not placed in the same part of the field nor called to the same kind of warfare. There are those in the forefront of the battle who carry the Standard of Truth right into the enemy's land. We can help such by prayer. That great and valiant soldier, the apostle Paul, asked for the prayers of God's people. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. vi. 18-20). Here you have the case stated, and mark it well, this is connected with the great conflict, for which the whole armour of

God is needed. It is evident that the great Captain's eye is on the field of conflict. He sees every movement, knows all the strategy of the foe, and connects His succour with the prayers of His people. No more honoured place could any have than that of intercessors. It is the place that our Lord has taken in heaven. It is in intercession that we help our brethren; but to truly intercede we require two things—we must be acquainted with the need, and at the same time be in touch with the supply. Have you not felt the fierceness of Satan's attacks yourself, and that the Lord was your only resource? Did you not find how strong He was to deliver? Knowing then the need and the sufficiency of the supply, you can intercede for others. Oh that this were always our happy occupation! Alas! we often find Christians treating each other as foes. They turn and wound and bruise each other. How pitiful is this! May the good Lord deliver us from it!

The battle is the Lord's. I know not why He has placed one soldier here and another there; I have no right to demand that all should fight at my side or follow with me; if these are my notions, I may expect to hear the Captain's rebuke, "What is that to thee?" It is His business to direct, not mine. Or, if I begin to be jealous of others and take the place of fault-finder, it is evident that I have been overcome, and instead

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of criticizing others, I should judge myself and seek restoration to the Lord.

3. *Laying hold of fresh territory on the Lord's behalf.* There are many sides to this great conflict, but I desire to press the blessedness of winning souls from Satan's power. I had occasion a few days ago to visit one long held in darkness and doubt. Before going, I went to the Lord in prayer, and in His presence the whole matter appeared to me in a new light. There was a soul held in bondage; no note of praise had ever been raised to the Lord; the sunshine of His love was a thing unknown; Satan held the fort, and had resisted all attempts to take from him that piece of territory. But that soul was the Lord's property. It was my business that day to go in His name and claim it, to drive Satan back and plant the standard of the Lord where Satan's dark banner had floated. But the Lord's power alone was sufficient for this, and hence the call to prayer and dependence. It was a great joy half an hour afterwards to see the darkness pass from that soul, and to give thanks that another bit of land had been wrested from Satan and added to the Lord's kingdom.

And it is ever so. When the Lord rose triumphant from the grave and stood in the midst of His own, there at least were eleven men delivered from sin and death and Satan's power, whom the Lord could use. On the bright day of Pentecost

Satan's dominion was overthrown in no less than three thousand souls. Still the conflict wages, and the day is coming (O hasten it, Lord!) when a multitude that no man can number, white-robed and glory-crowned, with palm branch of victory in hand, shall shout the praises of God—every soul of them won from Satan's power in conflict here below.

Are our hearts united in happy fellowship for this conflict, beloved fellow-soldiers? In the presence of it how mean are all our quibbles and contentions! Well may we sing:—

Oh, Lord, enlarge our scanty thought
To know the wonders Thou hast wrought ;
Unloose our stammering tongues to tell
Thy love, immense, unsearchable.

No matter how or where engaged, we must ever keep in touch with the base of supply. When in South Africa recently I noticed that right up the line from Cape Town to Pretoria were the remains of trenches, forts, and block-houses, and from them I learnt a lesson. The British general took good care not to allow the line of communication to be cut. He knew that to be victorious touch must be kept with the base. A madman would that soldier be who was indifferent to this, and so the line was carefully guarded lest the enemy should outflank them and cut off their supplies.

Now an army can carry supplies that may last

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for a longer or shorter period. We cannot do this. The moment the line of communication is cut we are exposed to defeat. Then we must "cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart." He is our base. Food to sustain, strength and ammunition with which to fight and overcome are all found in Him. We have a living link with Him by the Spirit, and as we go on in dependence from day to day all is well. How wonderful is the Lord's plan! Long before wireless telegraphy was ever dreamt of messages were sent from earth to heaven and received an instant answer. It is the same to-day. Our Lord is unchanged, His glory undimmed; no weapon that the malignity of Satan can devise shall prosper against Him. Victory is on His side, and shall be for ever. He is above the din and dust of the conflict to succour and sustain His soldiers, and the weapons of our warfare are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5). May God give us skill in the use of these weapons, and grace so that we may be valiant in the fight. Then when the end comes, and the war-worn hosts are welcomed to the home of rest, the Lord shall have His own delight in saying to us, "Sit down on My throne."

J. T. M.

SOMETHING ABOUT QUEENSLAND.

WE placed on the cover of our October issue a letter from Mr. R. F. Tunley, of Brisbane, asking whether any of our readers would be willing to send a copy of this magazine to persons living in out-of-the-way places in Queensland. Mr. Tunley's inquiry received an immediate response—some asking for one, some two, some six, some twelve, and some fifty names; and we have now the satisfaction of knowing that month by month hundreds of copies of *Simple Testimony* go to many of the outlying districts of that distant land. May God speed these silent messengers of His grace and truth! May His abundant blessing continually rest on this simple service so willingly and lovingly undertaken!

A subsequent letter from Mr. Tunley says:—

“I am sure people in England have no idea of the vastness of this country. There are selections and stations miles apart, to say nothing of the hundreds of farms in closer settlement. At many of these places there are those who at one time were bright and happy Christians, but who have lost heart through the hardships they have had to endure and the dry seasons that have brought so much loss in their train. Besides these, there are the careless in greater numbers still. I know how books are read in these places, for I have travelled about a bit, and know, too, what it is to be isolated, as these dear folks are.”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 23

May we venture to suggest, in case it should not have occurred to any, that along with *Simple Testimony* might be enclosed some gospel paper such as *Tidings of Light and Peace*, *The Gospel Messenger*, or *Gospel Tidings*? Placed under one cover the two magazines would go for the same postage.

And will the kind senders occasionally attach their name and address to the little packet, so that the receivers might write and notify to their unknown friends in England any change of address? Thus the link would be preserved, and we earnestly hope that many will hear of great good resulting from their work of faith and labour of love.

As we go to press another list from Queensland is to hand. We shall gladly send names to any who care to have them. Applications, enclosing post card addressed and stamped, should be made to the Editor of *Simple Testimony*.

 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. R. T.—We rise up from the reading of your letter with feelings of uncertainty as to whether you have ever really turned to God as a repentant sinner, and received forgiveness of sins through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. True, you speak of a time when you began to be troubled about yourself and your sins, and you think this must have been a work of God in your soul; for though you know no definite turning-

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point, your life seems to have been changed. A higher vision of life rose up before you, with its grand possibilities, which made you ashamed of the past and gave you a nobler ideal at which to aim. From this, you say, a certain amount of happiness resulted, though "*real rest of mind, without a doubt as to your salvation, you do not think you ever had.*" Since then that "little bit of *true* happiness has gone, and the worst of it is that your desire to get nearer Christ is very faint." Instead of reading your Bible and helpful Christian books, "a good deal of your spare time is spent with the great masters in the fields of literature—Goethe, Shakespeare, Longfellow, Lowell, and many others"; though you are "beginning to find out that even poetry, however ennobling, does not quite satisfy." Such is the account you give of yourself. From the last sentence, copied from your letter, we glean some hope. Like the young man in Luke xv., you are learning, slowly perhaps, that there is "a mighty famine in the land," and that the soul's hunger can only be satisfied with the "bread enough and to spare" of the Father's house.

Reading your letter again, we can but ask ourselves—Does this young lady know herself to be a sinner before God—guilty, defiled, covered all over with the leprosy of sin? Does she realize that her sins are such that the Son of God had to die to put them for ever out of God's holy sight? Has there been any repentance on her part, any turning from herself in loathing such as we read about in Job XLII. 6? Has she ever felt her need of cleansing by the precious blood of Christ? Has a Saviour in the glory of God, alive for evermore, ever risen before her soul? Such

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questions you alone can answer. We have our doubts. Forgive us for saying so.

But if these doubts are groundless, the assurance of the soul's safety is not everything. The salvation of God is a wider thing than that. It is a total deliverance from the state and condition of a child of Adam into that of "*a man in Christ*." If by the blood of Jesus my sins have been put away, to be remembered no more, still the question of what *I am* has to be met. For not only have I committed sins, but I am vile, my nature is corrupt. All that I am as of Adam's ruined race, is so bad that it cannot be bettered. The truth of this has to be learned by experience, and the lesson is neither easy nor pleasant. But when learnt so that the soul can say with Paul, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18), then it is joy indeed to see that the evil thing is gone in the death of Jesus, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature—a new creation—not a betterment of the old with its vision of grander possibilities of life. See how Paul speaks of this in Galatians ii. 20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." That is Christianity; anything short of it is not.

"Christ liveth in me" is a great word to say. Ought we to be content with anything less? Not self, even though it have beautiful ideals, but Christ. The lovely traits seen in His life of perfect obedience and trust and devotedness to God now marking our life,

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while Christ Himself—the living glorified One—is the ever-present Object of our faith—"the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

This is a very different thing from living in a world created by the genius and imagination of Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Longfellow, and the rest. It may be necessary for a young lady completing her education to know something of these great names whose writings have enriched the literature of the world. But the heart of the happy Christian finds its home and rest in that circle of which Christ is the Light and the Sun. Then in the truest sense grander possibilities of life arise before the soul. What could be grander than a life from out of which Christ shines, a life poured out upon His altar, spent in His service and to His glory? A life thus consecrated may lead you to the bedside of the sick, to the dwellings of the poor, to the slums of the city, to the labour of the Sunday-school. But this is to walk in the path the Master trod. What could be higher and nobler than that?

ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—Hebrews x. 26.—The wilful sin spoken of here in such solemn terms is that which is described in verse 29. To that sin the Hebrews were especially exposed and against it explicitly warned. If any among them, having received the clear and certain knowledge of the truth, turned back to that out of which they had come, this was to apostatize from Christ. Returning to their Temple, their altar, and to their priesthood, they spurned Christ, trod underfoot the Son of God, counted His blood an unclean thing, and cast insult upon the Spirit of Grace. Such was the wilful sin. If the law of Moses could

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not be broken with impunity, what did such conduct deserve and what recompense would it assuredly receive?

A. B.—1 Peter III. 29.—The spirits in prison are not fallen angels, but the spirits of men who lived in Noah's day, who being disobedient to the testimony given to them by the Spirit of Christ speaking through Noah—a preacher of righteousness—perished in the waters of the Flood.

R. G.—We believe the writer intends us to understand that where shallow thoughts exist of our lost condition there will be necessarily shallow thoughts of our salvation. Let a man be convinced that he is thoroughly lost, he will be certain to understand that he is thoroughly saved if he be saved at all. Inadequate thoughts of the one lead to inadequate thoughts about the other.

W. J.—2 Corinthians v. 8.—We take these words to mean that when the believer dies he is then present with the Lord. "To depart and to be with Christ" is how Paul puts it in Philippians I. 23, and the Saviour's answer to the penitent thief was, "To-day shalt thou be *with Me*." Prior to this other terms were used. The beggar Lazarus was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom"—an expression meaning much to an Israelite. But now, since Christ is risen and in heaven, the one who falls asleep in Jesus goes to be *with Him*. You ask: Where, then, was the spirit of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, between the hour of his dying and his being raised from the dead? (John XI.). We answer: Where the spirits of other just men were who had died before him. There is no reason to think differently. But

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many things but dimly seen in former days stand out clearly enough in the light of Christian revelation. This is one of them.

W. M.—It is evident from your letter that you still fail to distinguish between our being born of the Spirit and the Spirit indwelling the one who believes the gospel. No one ever has been or will be saved—from Adam's day to the end of all time—apart from the new birth. But whatever the manner of the Holy Spirit's operations in different dispensations, it is only from Pentecost that He has been abiding here. John vii. 39 with John xvi. 7 are quite decisive and place the point beyond the pale of doubt or discussion. But you are unable to understand how any could have been born of the Spirit, and some even to be filled with the Spirit, as was John Baptist, apart from His being upon earth. To this we say, Guard yourself against too materialistic a thought, and remember there are things that cannot be reduced to the measure of the human understanding. Scripture is unerring, and its testimony on this point is as clear as day. Our wisdom is to believe it.

BELIEVER.—Luke xvii. 21.—If you consult the Revised Version you will see that the marginal reading runs thus, "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you," and so does the new translation of J. N. D. It came not with outward observation, appealing to the senses by signs, wonders, and outward show. Faith was needed to see it, but the kingdom was in the midst of them because the King was there though they knew Him not. "The kingdom of *heaven*," or "of the heavens," means heaven's kingdom on earth. Its similitudes in Matthew xiii. show this to be the case. Read them, and write again if needs be.

ALL OF GRACE.

"Justified freely by His grace."—ROM. III. 24.

"Justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

"Justified by His blood."—ROM. V. 9. ROM. III. 28.

WE are not writing this little paper for any who have no interest at all in spiritual matters, though if the reader be one of these let him read on, for it will do him no harm, and possibly some good. We write mainly for those who, like the blind man of Mark VIII., see men as trees walking, and who, like him, need a second touch ere they plainly see.

First, what is the meaning of the word "*justified*" with which our three texts begin? We confess there was a time when Bible terms in our ears were but empty sounds, and as unintelligible to us as the language spoken in the streets of China. There may be others no wiser than ourselves, and for their sakes we feel some explanation is necessary.

We say then that a justified man is one who, having been proved guilty in the courts of God, is nevertheless cleared from every charge of sin by God Himself. Awakened to see his sinful state, and full of fears, he has fled to Christ for refuge. Believing in Jesus (Rom. III. 26), in God Who justifies the ungodly (Rom. IV. 5), in Him Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Rom. IV. 24), he is now accounted righteous.

Henceforth no accusation can be laid against him and no voice raised to call for his condemnation (Rom. VIII. 31-9). Such is the import of the term.

We are not speaking, dear reader, of something that takes place in the day of judgment. There is no need to wait till then to know how we stand. Our case has come into court, it has been already argued, and the verdict has gone against us every one. Thank God, there is a way of deliverance, but we must avail ourselves of it now or not at all. In the Judgment Day there will be no escape. It is here and now that men are justified, or they never can be. We beseech you to remember that.

Do you inquire further as to the character of those who in the sight of God are justified from all things and against whom no charge of sin shall evermore be brought? Do you ask what sort of life they led before they were thus absolved? Were they good? No. Righteous? No. Seekers after God? No. Had they any fear of God before their eyes? No. What were they then? Bad as bad could be. Their mouth was full of cursing and bitterness, their tongues deceitful, their throat like an open sepulchre, their feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery were in their ways. Arraigned before the bar of God as lawless men, they were found guilty. Not one could plead innocence, nor did any seek to excuse themselves.

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What! say you. Is this the sort whom God justifies and saves? Are these the ones who are going to walk with Christ in white? Is heaven to be filled with such? Shall they enter its pearly gates, throng its golden streets, wear its crowns, sing its everlasting songs, and sit down with Christ upon His throne?

Yes. But that is what they *were*, not what they *are*. There is an immense difference between the two states. Do you remember what Paul says to the Corinthians in chapter VI. 9-11 of his first epistle? He makes mention of thieves, covetous men, hard drinkers, revilers, idolaters, men of impure lives, doers of desperate deeds of darkness, and then he adds, "And *such were some of you*: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Are you still inclined to think there is some mistake? Do you say, But surely the language you have used describes the hooligans of our cities, the ruffians who lie in wait for the defenceless, the felons that fill our prisons, men worthy of the gallows. Are the mansions of glory prepared for these? I cannot believe it!

Well, let me further explain. First of all, the appalling picture is not mine. Another hand has painted it, and placed it in that gallery where there is nothing but what is true to life. Take up your Bible, turn to Romans III., and read

from verse 9 to 19. That is the picture. Stand before it, examine it with care, look at it a little way off, now come closer. What do you think of it? It is a divinely drawn portrait of humanity at large, from the king on the throne to the captive in the dungeon—of you and me therefore—of everybody.

You are incredulous! Impossible! you exclaim. It is no more like me than a gorilla is like an angel!

Ah! You do not recognize it yet, but you may. For recollect, SIN—no type, dear reader, has ever yet been cast that is large enough to print that word aright—SIN, I say, is in us all, for “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Outwardly our conduct may be correct enough, but where is the heart in which no pride, envy, discontent, ambition, or selfishness has ever lurked? Of course there is not space enough in one human life for SIN to show all it can do and be. In Cain it took the form of murder, in Judas the love of money, in Ananias and Sapphira the thirst for church reputation. In some we see it in its coarser forms, in others in its more refined. It clothes itself in fustian, and in silks, and talks in bad grammar, and in faultless English. But could we lay life to life as plank is laid to plank, high and low, rich and poor, rude and cultured, dwellers in the palace and in the workhouse, then at last we should have a stage where SIN is seen as in

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the picture from which you recoil, and which you protest bears no resemblance to yourself or any other respectable person—no, not in one single feature.

It is possible, alas! for a man to consent to all we say without moving a muscle or feeling the slightest twinge of conscience. It is a very different story when the soul, convicted of sin, is brought face to face with God, and the first pangs of wakening guilt are felt. Then its eyes are opened. Then it cries with Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone"; with Job, "Behold, I am vile"; with Simon Peter, "I am a sinful man, O Lord"; with the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner"; and with the keeper of the jail, "What must I do to be saved?"

It is then that the gracious hand of God directs the awakened soul to Jesus. In Him there is salvation—not for men who have never sinned, but for the guilty and lost; for men who may not have done one good thing in all the past, and who, if left to themselves, are as sure of eternal condemnation as if their sentence had been pronounced, and the angels of God were hurrying them down to their solemn and never-ending doom.

And how is this great blessing to be obtained?
"Not at once, of course?"

Yes, at once, on the very spot, and while you hold this little book in your hand. God's grace is

great enough to blot out every sin. Nor does He cease to be just in doing this. Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. If you believe in Him, not only will you be justified, but God will be your Justifier. How great must be His grace to pardon thus, and how precious the blood of Jesus to make it possible!

It may seem strange to you that God should do all this at once, without waiting to see the sincerity of your repentance by a change of life and a sorrow for past sins that no one could deny. And possibly you have thought that no one could get beyond *a hope* of being forgiven and saved at the end of a life in which there had been some endeavour to serve and please God. In this you are mistaken. We are justified freely by His *grace*, justified at the very start and before any of us have lived a holy life. To see ourselves as God sees us—poor wretched sinners and nothing more—to feel the heinousness of sin and a horror of it, is most desirable. But we are not saved because of these experiences, nor are they the procuring cause of our salvation, though they always accompany it. If we are justified freely by His *grace*, then nothing of the nature of *merit* has any place at all. We cannot be too clear as to that.

And the same gospel that brings to us the assurance of God's love, of the preciousness of

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the blood of Christ, of the freeness and fulness of God's salvation now preached to every creature under heaven—the same gospel, I say, gives to the believer the certainty of that salvation being his both now and for ever. Our faith rests on a divine foundation. God has spoken, and He is to be believed. What hardihood to doubt Him and to make Him a liar! Whom He calls He justifies, and Whom He justifies He glorifies (Rom. VIII. 30). And if we think of our Saviour now living in heaven, it is by His blood that we are justified, and by Him we shall be saved from wrath in that day when the hand of mercy holds back God's wrath no longer (Rom. v. 9). Blessed salvation! perfect in all its parts. Blessed be God Whose grace has made it ours! Blessed be the Christ Who died that we might obtain it! And blessed be the Holy Spirit Who opened our eyes, convinced us of our sin, and led us to believe the gospel! Reader, can you join us in this ascription of praise to our triune God? Are you a justified man? Are your sins blotted out? Is your precious soul saved? We entreat you not to dismiss such questions as impossible to answer. Read the passages of Holy Scripture to which we have referred. They are God's word, and if on the one hand they show us what we are, on the other they reveal what God is—the Justifier of the ungodly (Rom. IV. 5).

ARE YOU A WORSHIPPER?

IN the gospels we read of two seekers—one is Jesus. He came to *seek* and to save that which was lost (Luke XIX. 10). The other is God the Father. He *seeks* worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John IV. 23).

Jesus finds His joy in bringing the lost sheep home to the Father, and the Father in receiving the grateful worship of their hearts. Shall we look at Exodus XXIX. and learn how God fitted a company of worshippers to minister to Him? The first verse explains what worship is. It is not *getting* something *from* God, but *giving* something *to* God. Moses was to hallow the sons of Aaron to *minister* to God *in the priest's office*. It is important to remember that these sons of Aaron are types of every believer to-day. There is now no separate priestly caste. Every believer is a holy priest, and a royal priest (1 Peter II. 5, 9), and is called to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Please open your Bible and read Exodus XXIX. 4, 5. There you will see that the priests of old were first *washed* and then *clothed*. The other part of the chapter speaks of *consecration* and *communion*.

The first thing needful, if you are to approach God in worship, is to be clean from all your sins, and to *know* it. If you do not know the forgiveness of sins you cannot be at ease in the presence of a holy God. We shall therefore ask you to

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notice two things. One is, that Aaron and his sons were identified in this cleansing; the other is, that they were never *washed all over again*. From this we learn that we are so identified with Christ in His cleansing work that we are as free in the sight of God of all defilement as He is, though in ourselves we are, and always shall be, poor, imperfect, failing creatures. Then, that His one finished work on the cross is so perfect that it need never be repeated.

Scripture speaks of both water and blood in connexion with cleansing. Though their meaning is closely allied, there is an important distinction. In the verse we are looking at, water only is spoken of. They had already been sprinkled with blood (Exod. xxiv. 8). The two are found together in Hebrews x. 22. Our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience. That is by blood. Then our bodies are washed with pure water.

The *blood* meets the need of a guilty conscience. It has made a full and complete atonement. It has satisfied the claims of a holy God. It is a standing witness to the expiation of sins, the execution of all judgment due to those sins, and has so completely met the whole question that God can say, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. viii. 12).

The apostle in Patmos could burst into praise and worship, and say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood"

(Rev. I. 5). We hope you are clear on this grand foundation truth. It is useless our speaking to you of worship if your conscience is burdened. An evil conscience is occupied with sins; a *purged conscience with Him Whose blood has put those sins away*. If you have the smallest doubt as to whether your sins are gone out of God's sight, and *gone for ever*, let us earnestly entreat you before you read another line to rest your soul on Leviticus XVII. 11, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"; and on 1 John I. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth* us from all sin." This does not mean it is going on cleansing, or that it is applied every time we sin, but describes the inherent value of the precious blood of Christ in its complete, perfect, and everlasting cleansing from all sin.

The believer is cleansed once and for ever. God, having cleansed him from his sins, will never impute those sins. The unchanging testimony of God's Word witnesses to this conscience-relieving, peace-giving truth, that Christ by His one offering on the cross made such a full and complete atonement, that God can justify the most ungodly sinner, and view him as clear of his sins as Christ is in the glory of God to-day.

Believest thou this? If so, let us look at the other cleansing spoken of, the washing of water. Water is connected with the death of Christ and the Word of God. This you will see by turning to John XIX. 34: "One of the soldiers with a

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spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water"; Ephesians v. 26, "The washing of water by the word"; Titus III. 5, the mercy of God *saves* us by the "washing of regeneration." The regeneration in Matthew XIX. 28 refers to the millennium. From this expression and its use in the chapter we are looking at we learn that this washing is to free us from all our old habits and associations. So here with the priests; they were by this act cleansed, washed, separated from their old associations, and fitted to draw near to God in wholly different service and surroundings. Washing by water in Ephesians is said to "sanctify and cleanse." It separates mind and affections from the objects which once engrossed them and fixes them on heavenly things. This effect is produced *in* the believer. The atoning work, connected with blood, is a work *outside* us, done by another, laid hold of by faith. The water is the practical application of the death of Christ to *ourselves*; *our bodies are to witness that we are a cleansed people*. This is what the apostle urges on the Corinthians. They were using their bodies for self-gratification. He reminds them that people once knew them as "drunkards, revilers, and extortioners"; but he says, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified" (1 Cor. v. 9). Scripture uniformly maintains two grand truths: Christ's blood has cleansed the believer *before God*; the Word of God *obeyed* cleanses the believer before men from the world and all his

old associations, and *separates him to God*. He is started on his heavenward journey, not only completely severed from the world and its judgment by the death of Christ, but separated from its aims, its politics, its occupations, its pleasures, by the washing of regeneration. He is invited to draw near in company with other purged worshippers and find new companions and new occupations. His lot is to be associated with the company of worshippers who minister to the Lord in the priest's office. This washing of water is practically to free him from a world of defilement, and link him with a heavenly, holy company of worshippers.

Can you, who sing the songs of Zion, sing the song of the drunkard?

Can you, washed from covetousness, be a covetous man still?

Can you, whom God has separated for His pleasure, spend your life in self-gratification?

Let us never forget that this cleansing by water and blood has dissolved all our links with the world, and made us "whiter than snow." *At the start* of our Christian life we are entitled to say—

Clean every whit, Thou saidst it, Lord,

Shall one suspicion lurk?

Thine surely is a faithful word,

And Thine a finished work.

Divine directions to meet failures in our Christian pathway we hope to consider in a future article.

H. N.

PASSAGES MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD.

"It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."—ROM. IX. 12, 13.

IN the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the question discussed is this: If God is going to save men, Jew and Gentile alike, on the ground of grace, as Paul has been arguing in the earlier part of the epistle, how are the promises made to the Israelitish fathers to be fulfilled? It is in this connexion that the texts are quoted which we are about to examine. The apostle shows first that it cannot be on the ground of descent. You say you are children of Abraham; but if that gives title to the promises, then Ishmael must have them too, for he also is Abraham's son. No Jew would consent to that. He would insist that the promises were only for *Isaac's* seed. But if they can be claimed on that ground, then Esau must have them, for he was Isaac's son as much as Jacob. It is clear, therefore, that the promises cannot be possessed in virtue of descent, but only on the ground of God's sovereign grace.

Before Esau and Jacob were born it was said, "The elder shall serve the younger." This is a quotation from Genesis xxv. 23: "The Lord said to Rebecca, *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people . . . the one people shall be*

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stronger than *the other people*, and the elder shall serve the younger." It is plain that the Lord is not speaking of the children personally, but of their descendants, the two peoples or nations who should spring from them. Please note that.

Let us now look at the history of these two peoples. When the Israelites were on their way to Canaan, Esau's country lay in their path. A most friendly message was sent to the King of Edom from "his brother Israel" begging a passage through his land, promising not to go through the fields or orchards, nor to drink of the wells, but to pass along the king's highway. What answer did Edom return? "Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword." What an unbrotherly reply!

Israel again pleaded for leave to pass through, and again Edom refused, coming out against them with much people and with a strong hand; "wherefore Israel turned away from him" (Num. xx. 14-21). This was three hundred years after the children were born.

Pass on now to the prophecy of Obadiah, twelve hundred years after. Speaking to Esau, God says, "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever . . . in the day that strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even

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thou wast as one of them." The entire passage is too long to quote here, but if it be read it will be seen what unbrotherly conduct Esau's was.

Read again, in the Book of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, fourteen hundred years after the children were born: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness" (chap. i. 2-4). So then the descendants of Esau had been persecuting the children of his brother for fourteen hundred years. Was God not justified in saying after all that, "I loved Jacob and hated Esau"? Is there unrighteousness with God in this? I am bold to say that when most Christians read the two passages which the apostle brings together in Romans ix. 12, 13, they think that both are in the same part of the Scriptures, not knowing that one is in the *first* and the other in the *last* book of the Old Testament. From the time that God said, "The elder shall serve the younger," till He said, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated," there was a period of fourteen hundred years.

Pursuing the question, the apostle quotes again: "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."—ROM. ix. 15.

When did God say that? We must see. In Exodus xxiv. we find the Israelites, after Moses

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had rehearsed to them all the details of God's commandments, solemnly promising obedience with one voice. They made covenant with God, saying, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (*vv.* 3-8). Moses afterwards goes upon the mount and remains there forty days, receiving instructions from God regarding the tabernacle. Then in chapter XXXII. we read that "when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us." So they made a calf of gold and worshipped it. Was God going to divide His honour with a calf? When He saw all this He said to Moses, "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." He would not own them as His people, and He proposes to consume them and to make of Moses a great nation. But the Lord hearkened to the intercession of Moses, and "repented Him of the evil which He had thought to do unto His people."

Then Moses goes again to make intercession for them. God, in answering him, promises that His angel would go before Moses, but He adds, "Nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." When did God visit the sin of making a golden calf upon Israel? *Not for more than seven hundred years after!* Oh,

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the grace and long-suffering mercy of God! He puts off the evil day as long as possible. If He sees any signs of repentance, He holds back the judgment again and again until a generation rises up worse than any that had gone before "and there is no remedy," as we read in the last chapter of 2 Chronicles (*v.* 16). It was then that God visited the sin of making the golden calf. See how Stephen speaks of it in Acts VII.: "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol . . . and I will carry you away beyond Babylon" (*vv.* 40, 43).

And now we come to the Scripture quoted in Romans IX., "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Exodus XXXIII. 19). Why? Because He was God, and therefore sovereign. It was after the complete failure of Israel, and when it had become evident that they never could receive the fulfilment of the promises on the ground of righteousness, that God pronounced these words, falling back upon His own sovereign grace and mercy. Now I venture to say that the majority of Christians, when they read Romans IX. 15, have a vague idea that the first half of the verse is love and mercy and the second half all vengeance, whereas it is all mercy and compassion. How carelessly people do read the Scriptures! How great their loss! and into what mistakes they fall in consequence!

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The apostle next takes up the case of Pharaoh.

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee.”—ROM. IX. 17.

He was a wicked man and a blasphemer, whom God had raised up from a position of obscurity and set upon the throne of Egypt that He might show His power in him. Moses and Aaron asked him to let Israel go away to serve Jehovah. He answers that he will not let them go; he neither knows Jehovah nor cares about Him. Then God visits him and his people with plagues. While God's hand is upon him he relents, but as soon as it is taken away he hardens his heart again.

I know that some people have a great deal of sympathy for Pharaoh and think he was very hardly dealt with. God, indeed, gave him up to judicial hardness, but it was after he had despised God's messengers and ignored the signs sent him by His servants. Suppose my child is outside the house and I send a servant to tell him to come in, but he refuses; then I go out myself and chastise him, and he promises to come in, but does not. I do that ten times, and after that I shut the door. Suppose some person going past meets him wandering about the street, and asks him what he is doing out there in the cold? “Oh,” he says, “father shut the door in my face.” Would that be the truth? So it was with

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Pharaoh. He was a wicked, blasphemous man, whom God raised into a position of eminence (that is the meaning of "raised up" in Romans ix. 17; not that He created him for this purpose); he despised the word of Jehovah, and, though he might relent while God's hand was upon him, he hardened himself again as soon as it was removed.

Thus we see, in the first place, that promises cannot be claimed on the ground of descent; and, in the second, that they cannot be had on the ground of righteousness, for Israel was wicked and rebellious. There was nothing left therefore but for God to have mercy on whom He would have mercy, and compassion on whom He would have compassion. Thus it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Then, thirdly, the question is raised about God's divine sovereignty, and His righteousness vindicated. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, *willing* to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, *endured with much longsuffering* the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath

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called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" Those called beloved who were not beloved are the Jews (v. 25); those who were not God's people but who are now the children of the living God, are Gentiles (v. 26).

Every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is a child of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John v. 1). We are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. III. 26). That is why God tells us all His secrets. Did it ever occur to you why it is that the epistles are all given at the end of the Bible? Shall I tell you? The Israelites were God's earthly people—as we are all the people of King Edward. If the King has anything to communicate to the nation he puts it in the *Gazette*, or makes it known by a proclamation posted upon the walls. That is very much like the way God spoke to His earthly people of old. But if the King had something to say to the Prince of Wales or any of his own family, he would not print it in the *Gazette*, or post it upon the walls, but he would write him a letter and tell him all the family concerns. We are brought into the relationship of children, and God speaks to us directly and tells us all His secrets. What grace!

If we want to understand the epistles we must have an acquaintance with the Old Testament. Often when speaking to others of something in

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the Old Testament they say, "Oh yes; I quite forgot that." But I am afraid they never knew it. People go on reading the gospels and the Psalms till they know very little about them. I think we should take great shame to ourselves for being so very ignorant of the text of the Scriptures, which are given to us that we may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. How can we expect to understand God's will if we do not know His Word? "Ye do err," said the Lord, "*not knowing* the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. XXII. 29). He meant the Old Testament Scriptures, for there was nothing else then.

If I were to ask every reader: "What Scripture did you read this morning? What Scripture have you had before you to-day? Have you been feeding upon God's Word?"—would not this be a rather awkward question? His Word is the thing God has given us to feed upon—that is, upon Christ as made known there. By the Word we have been born again, and by the Word the divine life in our souls is nourished and strengthened.

May the Lord give us increasing reverence and love for His Word, and more understanding of what His grace is, establishing our hearts therewith. If there is one thing we understand less than another, it is the grace of God. He is the God of *all* grace.

J. G.

AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you."—JOHN XIII. 34.

I HAVE been feeling very much of late the force of the Lord's new commandment in John XIII. and how little we seriously address ourselves to the carrying of it out. Perhaps, however, I had better say *I*, not "we." What a love His is! How unwearying—never turned aside even by the denial and desertion of the objects of it. Stooping to wash their feet, disdaining no service, however lowly, that would be for their comfort and blessing—loving them to the end, till He has made them all He would have them be in glory. It is most affecting. And *I* have to love the saints—all of them—with the same pattern of love! Alas! We often love them with a love in which poor fallen human nature has too large a part. It is easy to love those we naturally like, but to go on loving the saints when their ways do not conform to your own, when their thoughts run counter to yours, to serve them uncomplainingly and unweariedly as Jesus serves us, content to be misunderstood, spoken ill of, and yet to love with a love that remains unchilled—that is what we must seek after. O Lord, work this in us by Thy grace. Make us more like Thee.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

I FEEL how God is speaking to us all, and would have us more occupied with the return of our absent Lord, and more ready for it, for everything seems to declare the time is at hand. For myself, the nearness of it has pressed upon me greatly. What is to be looked for either from the world, or the Church, or anything else down here? Where can we look but to heaven? "from whence also," the apostle says, "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (or the Lord Jesus Christ *as Saviour*, for the world and the Church need Him as such; He is the only One Who can bring deliverance to either), "Who shall change these bodies of humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." He will have to come back to put things right—to present the Church to Himself all glorious, and have us with Himself, according to His desire, in the Father's house, and to be acknowledged by the world as its Saviour; even as the Samaritans did when He was here.

This is the hope which is left to us, and what brighter hope could we have? And we are privileged to say "Come" to Him Who can be all this to the Church and the world. May we all know Him better in the character in which He is pleased to present Himself to His people at the close—"the root and offspring of David, and the bright morning star." The One Who alone can truly cheer His people through the night with His ineffable brightness until the

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morning dawns, and the One Who alone has title to anything on earth.

God keep us in the secret of this, and may the desire of our hearts and the testimony of our lips, growing ever stronger and stronger, be this, in response to His own message that He is coming quickly: "Amen—even so come, Lord Jesus."

* *

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F. W.—The future of the impenitent is a solemn subject, and should be seriously dealt with. We know nothing about it apart from the light which Holy Scripture gives and the principles which it enunciates. It is certain that the sentence passed at the last great tribunal of Revelation xx. by "the Righteous Judge" will be just in every particular. It will vary, for the dead shall be judged "each according to their works." You seem startled by the prospect of an upright, moral man, but an unbeliever, having to spend eternity with murderers, drunkards, evil-doers, whom on earth he sought to reform. But this is a mere detail. And after all, the gravest sins are not breaches of morals, deplorable as these may be. The apostle Paul before his conversion was a pattern of high morality, but observe how he speaks of himself in 1 Timothy I., and calls himself the chief of sinners. We may be sure that as each case comes before the Supreme Judge—the Son of Man—every circumstance will be duly weighed, and the advantages possessed during life taken into account. Discriminate judgment, then, there will be, the many stripes and the

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few ; but we believe that Scripture gives no support either to the doctrine of annihilation or of universal redemption. There may be things relating to this sad subject that are beyond our range of thought, for we are but creatures, having creature limitations. All we can do is to own the authority of Scripture and to walk humbly, believingly in its light.

E. N.—The joy that possesses the heart when Christ is first known as Saviour, and the assurance of forgiveness of sins and of the soul's reconciliation to God is received, often passes away, leaving us to lament its loss and to sigh for its return. Not that our salvation is lost, but the joy of it has fled. Frequently this results from our having been absorbed with the joy itself, and failing to keep near the spring of it, even Christ. The light of a lamp dies down unless the supply of oil be kept up. Our remedy lies in turning simply to the Saviour with the confession of our foolishness. His love towards us is unchanging and unchangeable; it is as deep, true, tender as ever it was, and so it will always be. Perhaps this little bit of experience, miserable as it makes you for the moment, may be the means of untold good. It is teaching you what a wretched, worthless thing self is; but along with it will come, we trust, the ever-growing sense of the greatness of God's grace. Possibly you never expected anything like this. You thought your ship would always sail in smooth waters and under sunny skies. Let it all lead you to keep near the Lord, looking away from yourself, looking up to Him. Pray, read your Bible, and *never doubt His love*. So Christ will reveal Himself afresh to you, comforting, strengthening, blessing as He only can.

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W. R. G.—We do not remember any passage that speaks of “our old man” as “dead.” Romans vi. 6 says: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him.” But crucified and dead are hardly synonymous terms. The former speaks of judicial dealing, and so God has dealt with “our old man.” It has been crucified with Christ. We are therefore no longer debtors to serve it, nor has it power to overcome us necessarily; and it cannot, if we walk in the Spirit (see Gal. v. 16). But “the flesh,” with all its power to work evil, is still in every Christian, however devoted to Christ he may be. And if we are able to say, “It is no more I,” yet it is there, to be refused and never yielded to in one single thing. Now though in one sense “our old man” is gone from under the eye of God, in another it is not. God knows that we are not free from its presence, and He keeps His eye upon it, and often deals with us in His wisdom and love to prevent its working. So Paul, when caught up into Paradise, as he tells us in 2 Corinthians xii., had a “thorn” given unto him to keep him humble, dependent, and free from spiritual pride. Let us never forget that “the flesh” is in us, a potent force for evil, whose works are manifest (Gal. v. 19–21). But if we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, if we walk in the Spirit, then “the flesh,” with all its works, will be held in check. It would be a sad thing if the Christian, delivered from the penalty of sin, were left under its power. Thank God, such is not the case.

TROUBLED.—Romans xiii. 14.—Are you not looking at the exhortation to “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,” as if it meant that

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a man is not to make any provision for the possible needs of his family beyond the demands of the day? It is assuredly a mistake to interpret the passage thus. Observe the preceding verses and the sense in which "the flesh" is spoken of. Rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying, these are the works of "the flesh." As children of light and of the day we are to form no plans to gratify "the flesh" in these or in any other forms, but rather to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Such is the bearing of the passage.

C. J. P.—It is kind of you to send us your little poem on "God's Way of Salvation," which we have read with much thankfulness and pleasure. God be praised that you can speak as you do of Him Who has loved us even unto death. Oh for a thousand tongues to sound forth His praises and to show the fulness of His salvation to the very ends of the earth! Your poem, however, is hardly suitable for publication. This is not to be wondered at. Your residence in an English-speaking country has not been long enough to make you master of the English tongue. But be of good courage. It was in your heart to serve with a poet's pen, and though you may not succeed—very few do—yet the will to serve the Lord in this way will not be forgotten by Him.

R. P.—Romans II. 7; 1 Timothy VI. 12; Galatians VI. 8.—In the first of these scriptures eternal life is viewed as that state of blessedness to which patient continuance in well-doing will certainly conduct us. In the second, it is a life to be laid hold of now as opposed to the fleeting shadows of earthly life—life

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indeed. In Galatians it is the result of sowing to the Spirit. We reap it here and hereafter. Elsewhere it is spoken of as the gift of God, the present enjoyed possession of the believer in Jesus. These are various phases of that eternal life which is ours in Jesus Christ our Lord. For a fuller unfolding of the subject see a paper called "Questions on Eternal Life," in February, 1902.

H. E. J.—Whether a Christian man should insure his life or not is a matter that must be left to his own conscience and faith, *as also that of his wife*, for whose welfare he is anxious to make provision. Matthew vi. 19, as we read it, does not forbid his doing so. It does counsel us not to lay up for ourselves *treasures* upon earth. But can an insurance policy be called a treasure? By insuring his life a man does not necessarily exhibit his want of faith. He looks upon it as a business transaction, nothing more. He acts with a clear conscience, and is free before God as to what he has done. But a life of quiet confidence in our Father's care is what the Lord constantly enjoins; and many of us, who have but little, know the preciousness of His words as recorded in Luke xii. 24–31. If any feel that they could not in all good conscience insure their life, then it is clear they ought not to do it. We neither urge people nor dissuade them; to their own Master they stand or fall, and let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. None of us can walk in the faith of another. As to saving money, we very much question whether God would have His children amass large fortunes. The needs of the poor, and the various pressing claims connected with the Lord's work and testimony, if liberally responded to, hardly admit of it.

A PERPLEXING PROBLEM.

“**I** DON'T know whether I am a Christian or not. Sometimes I have tried to believe, but no sooner do I make the attempt than I meet with some grievous failure in my walk. I don't seem to be able to resist temptation. So I can't say how I stand with regard to the matter.”

Such was the substance of the reply given by a young man when asked whether or not he was converted. I venture to think his words will express just the difficulty in which many of my readers find themselves. Shall we examine the matter together?

First let me remind you that the fact of a Saviour being provided for you implies that you are what you say you are, full of failure and altogether powerless to stand against temptation. Were it not so, were you able to rise above failure and overcome when tempted, you would not stand in the same need of the gospel as those who are utterly sinful and helpless.

As a matter of fact, however, you are full of sin, and have no strength to amend your condition. Your mind is enmity against God. Sin is your master, and you have been its willing slave. Struggle and strive as you may, you are always driven from the field defeated and disheartened.

Now it cannot be too strongly emphasized that it is by the Spirit of God alone that victory is

possible. In His power alone can temptation be successfully resisted.

The fact for you to face is this: *You have not received the Holy Spirit.* Nor, if you were to pray for Him till your tongue clave to the roof of your mouth, could your prayer be granted. *God never gives His Holy Spirit to unconverted, unforgiven people.* The world cannot receive Him, we are told; and as long as you are of the world, it is altogether impossible for you to have the Spirit of God to dwell within you.

And yet, apart from His presence and power there can be no joy, no victory for you. What, then, must you do?

Leave, for the moment, the matter of which we have spoken, and consider *a prior question.* Before you can receive the Holy Spirit, you must have your sins forgiven, must be washed from your guilt in the precious blood of Christ, and be able to speak of Him as *your* Saviour.

How can this be brought about? Listen! "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv.).

Think, first of all, not of failure or success; not of victory or defeat, but of your sins, and your need of forgiveness. Speak to the Lord Jesus Christ. Though He is in heaven, He can hear your faintest groan. Say—

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"Lord, I am a sinner. Sinners are not entitled to expect the power against temptation that Thy people have. But they are entitled to expect *forgiveness* from Thee. It is this that I seek. I trust in Thee, my Saviour, for cleansing and forgiveness."

Does your heart go with these words? Can you say that, in spite of feelings, experiences, and disappointments, you do trust in Him? Then remember what His word declares: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

Two things that God hath joined together are these: *Believing in Him* and *Receiving the remission of sins*. Do not put these two asunder. Do not say "I believe," but "I do not feel that I have received." Remission of sins is yours when you turn in simple confidence to the blessed Saviour, Who once died in your stead and Who now lives in glory. Do you not see this?

Well, then, as one forgiven, and at peace as to your sins, there is the other question to be considered. And in this connexion I would call your attention to the verse that follows the one which I have quoted twice from Acts x. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

Is it not clear from this that if remission of sins follows upon faith in Christ, the gift of the Holy Ghost follows upon remission being received?

Look, too, at Ephesians I. 13: "In Whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." First believing, then being sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Now the Holy Spirit is not given to any one in order to help him in the way of self-improvement. He would rather lead our thoughts altogether away from *self*, as that which is hopelessly corrupt, and which, moreover, has been judged in the cross of Christ. He fixes our eyes upon Christ in glory, and day by day ministers to our souls of His excellence and peerless perfection. We are thus nourished with thoughts of Christ, and abiding in His love, temptation loses its power. Conscious that we ourselves are a mass of failure, we are taken up with Another in Whom is no failure at all; and instead of bemoaning our own shortcomings, we are glorying in His perfections.

Does this seem hard to understand? Let me put it in this way: There are two persons with whom God is never disappointed.

The first is *yourself*. God never expected to find any good in you, and is not, therefore, disappointed because there is none. In His reckoning you met with your just deserts at Calvary; *you* were judged, and "our old man" crucified with Christ when He died upon the cross.

The second person with whom God is never disappointed is *Christ*. All that He desires to find in man He sees in Him. And He sees you, dear fellow-believer, *in Christ* before Him.

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As *one in Adam*, God wrote "Finis," as it were, to your history at the cross. As *one in Christ*, He sees you clothed with all the glorious perfection of that Blessed One Who satisfies His heart so thoroughly.

The Holy Spirit in you gives you to reckon as God reckons. He engages your thoughts and affections with Christ. You are thus practically delivered from that which has invincible power over a mere child of Adam.

Now it will be a great mistake if you, upon reading this, turn the eye inward and ask yourself, "Am I such a one as the writer describes?" *You* are nothing but a mass of sin and failure. But *Christ* is altogether such a One. All perfection is seen in Him, and God finds infinite delight in Him. Oh, what a relief it is to think of that, that *God delights in Christ!* And then to think that He has linked me up with Him in His thoughts, and therefore delights in me!

You reply, perhaps, "Yes, but still, as a matter of fact, I am as imperfect as ever." True; but the point is, is the imperfect man (yourself) or the Perfect One to occupy your thoughts?

Let your thoughts revolve around *yourself*, and your life will be a dismal failure to its end. Let your thoughts centre upon *Christ*, and the question with you will no longer be, "What am I?" but, "What is He?"

In this lies the secret of true liberty.

H. P. B.

[62]

SET FREE.

“Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.”

LUKE XIII. 11-17.

BOWED down through many a year,
Bowed down by many a fear;
What wondrous words to hear!

She was set free!

Bowed down in deep distress,
Bowed down in bitterness;
By Satan long oppress'd,
She was set free!

Loos'd from her bond and pain,
Bound never more again,
Gone every crimson stain,
She was set free!

Gone her infirmity,
Gone her captivity,
How sweet her liberty,
She was set free!

Upraised by power and grace,
Upraised to see His face,
Upraised to run the race
Now she was free!

Some there rejoiced in God,
Whom all her soul ador'd,
While by her stood the Lord,
Who had set free!

Should one her story hear,
Who trembling would draw near,
“Come now” without a fear,
He will set free!

Then haste the tale to tell,
“He hath done all things well,”
Broken the tyrant's spell—
He hath set free!

S. C. M. A.

THE PEACE OF GOD AND THE GOD OF PEACE.

PHIL. IV. 6-9.

VERY few of us know what it is to go through life without an anxious thought. Yet we have the Lord's own word, "Take no thought for the morrow," and here in Philippians IV. 6 we are told to "be careful—or anxious—for *nothing*."

Let us look for a moment at the conditions upon which this immunity from anxious care may be enjoyed. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." How absolutely inclusive these terms are! When the Spirit of God says "*nothing*," He surely means nothing; when He says "*everything*," He means everything, from the most insignificant trifle to the most momentous question. Everything likely to cause us the least anxiety, whether it concerns temporal things or things spiritual, is to be made a subject of prayer. "Supplication" seems a fuller and stronger word, indicating earnest, humble entreaty. In Hebrews v. 7 we read that our Lord Himself "offered up prayers and *supplications* with strong crying and tears."

But what about thanksgiving? How can a Christian be *giving thanks* when he comes to God with a request, and perhaps a heavy burden upon

his heart? If for nothing else, he may well be thankful that God has by His Spirit brought him to exercise of soul about that very burden, and led him to come and tell out his trouble in the unwearied ear of interested Omnipotence. But does not God know all about it? Surely He does. "I will yet for this be enquired of, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). We are therefore invited to "*make known*" our requests to God, as though He were absolutely ignorant concerning the matter. He would thus have our hearts brought into real deep exercise, so that we might rise from our knees with a distinct sense that we have spoken to Him about the trouble, and that He has heard our petition. These are the conditions. Now what about the result? Will He give me at once what I ask or expect? What wise father would deal with his children thus unless for their good? No! He does not promise to give us exactly what we want or ask, but something infinitely better, viz. that *His own peace*—"the peace of God" which passeth all understanding—shall guard our hearts and minds.

It is necessary to know something of the "peace of God" before we can enjoy the company of the "God of Peace." The conditions for the latter are not simply prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. It is rather a question of *doing* those things that are true, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report, which the Philippians had not

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only heard, and learned, and received from the apostle, but which they had also *seen* exemplified in his life. "These things *do*, and the God of Peace shall be with you."

This beautiful expression—the "God of Peace"—is also found in Hebrews XIII. 20, where again it is connected with *doing*. "The God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to *do His will, working in you* that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever." We are reminded of the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant under which we are sealed, and of our Great Shepherd as the One Whom He has raised from among the dead. And if through a sense of His grace we are constrained to yield up *our* wills, *He* will "make us perfect in every good work to *do His will*" that He may be *with us*. If the God of Peace is to be *with us*, it is clear we must be morally suitable for His company. May He thus prepare our hearts that we may not only know what it *means*, but taste the wondrous blessedness of what it *is* for "the God of Peace to be *with us*."

H. J. J.

THE INSIDE WORKINGS OF REVIVAL.

THE other day I heard of a party of tourists who thought to spend a brief holiday in "seeing" the Welsh Revival. Having arrived at the Cardiff station, they sallied forth to see the sights. Alas! they were doomed to disappointment. There were plenty of people about, it is true; but instead of seeing a revival orator, preaching to enthusiastic multitudes at the street corner—as their imagination had pictured—each and all were on business bent as usual. They sought out several chapels, only to find all silent and the front gates locked. At last, espying a police constable, they resolved to apply to him.

"Policeman," said the spokesman of the party, "can you tell us of anywhere where the Revival is going on?"

At this the big, burly man drew himself up, and bringing his hand down on his chest with a heavy thud, said, "*In here!*"

Are *you* praying and waiting for a revival in your neighbourhood and district?

Pray on! But meanwhile, why not let operations commence within? Remember, the outward manifestations of revival are one thing, the inside working of it is quite another.

From the history of Hezekiah, as recorded in 2 Chronicles xxix. and xxx., we may gather some idea of its practical bearings.

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CONFESSION

was the first step that Hezekiah took. Read verses 5 to 9 of chapter XXIX. and see the remarkably correct and candid estimate he formed of their condition before God.

Self-occupation is a great affliction whatever shape it may assume; but at the same time, it is absolutely imperative that we should form a calm and impartial estimate in God's presence of our own spiritual condition.

Mark, I do not say that you must correctly estimate the condition of those Christians with whom you meet, or to whom you belong, but *your own* spiritual condition. Do not attempt to form your estimate when on your feet preaching, or when talking to the girls in your Sunday-school class, or even when, at the Bible reading or lecture, your soul expands with delight at the treasures of the Word of God. Let it be away yonder in the quiet of God's presence and in the more lowly walks of life and service that you discover what you really do know, and have got, and whether, after all, you can truly say—

Jesus, *Thou* art enough
The mind and heart to fill.

In Hezekiah's day they had "turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord," and they had "shut up the doors of the porch" (*vv.* 6, 7). The sun may have brightly shone without, but

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all was gloom within; and compared with the bright days of David and Solomon, all was confusion and worse.

That, by the way, is the proper standard by which to gauge. Compare yourself with the standard of modern Christian profession, and you may be content and self-satisfied. Compare yourself with the standard of primitive Christianity, and you will be overwhelmed with shame and confusion of face.

But to be effectual, confession must be followed by

CLEANSING.

Verses 12 to 19 of chapter XXIX. record how the cleansing operations began in the sanctuary of God, working from the innermost shrine to the outermost court, and in verse 14 of chapter XXX. we find them continued throughout the whole of Jerusalem, when many a cherished altar and idol were utterly destroyed.

At this point many of us have reached a deadlock in our spiritual history. We have often made our confession to God, and many a fervent prayer for help and a higher level of Christian experience has escaped our lips; but we have not risen from our knees with a set purpose by the grace of God to put away every defiling thing.

Beloved young Christian, is there in your heart some altar erected—not to the Unknown God—but to some well-known idol, the idol of worldly

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pleasure, or of mammon, or even of religious ambition? Search and see, and if so, go forth in divine strength and hew down this altar in the name of the Lord.

Cleansing, however, even of the most rigorous kind, is but negative. In Hezekiah's day they followed it up by something positive.

CONSECRATION

followed the cleansing operations. In verse 31 of chapter XXIX., Hezekiah is able to say: "Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord."

The marginal reading, "Now ye have *filled your hand* unto the Lord," is very instructive here. Consecration for us implies not only that we are cleansed and set apart for God, but that our hearts and hands are filled with that which is pleasing and fragrant to God.

Notice the primary force of the word consecration is Godward. It is "unto the Lord." If He finds pleasure and delight in seeing Christ, His well-beloved Son, reproduced in you, then yours will be "a consecrated life" in its highest sense.

Nevertheless, in a secondary way, its force is manward. They whose hands are filled as "an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," are also "a royal priesthood," to "shew forth the praises

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of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (see 1 Peter II. 5, 9). These two go hand in hand: the one is the practical proof and demonstration of the other.

To have one's hands filled with fragrant offerings Godward, coupled with loving service manward, is consecration indeed.

Things worked precisely after this fashion with Hezekiah and his people. Following their consecration unto the Lord, we find in chapter xxx. that in the first place they kept a passover unto the Lord, and, secondly, that they were moved to extend a helping hand to others of their less-favoured brethren, the remnant of the Ten Tribes still left in the land. And if the majority mocked at their efforts, yet the rest humbled themselves, came to Jerusalem, and shared in a time of great blessing, so much so that when they returned home they commenced cleansing operations on a larger scale and of a more thorough nature than ever. They "brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all" (chap. xxxi. 1).

So while chapter xxix. gives us revival in its inside working—confession, cleansing, and consecration, chapter xxx. shows the revival in its outside power and effect—great humbling (*v.* 11), great unity (*v.* 12), and great joy (*v.* 26), coupled with

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the reaching for God of people who had been estranged from God's sanctuary for centuries (v. 11).

Go in, therefore, for revival in your neighbourhood, dear friend, and pray on, and expect largely. Meanwhile shrink neither from heart-searchings, even deep ones, in the presence of God, nor from the relinquishing of long-cherished idols, so that with a heart truly devoted to and fragrant of Christ, you may have your hands well filled with His blessed service. Then, like the Cardiff policeman, you will be able to answer all inquiries as to where revival work is proceeding by laying your hand upon your heart and with all humility of mind, saying— “IN HERE!”

F. B. H.

THE WORSHIPPER CLEANSED.

READ EXOD. XXIX.

YOU will notice the priests were cleansed at the entrance to the Tabernacle. The altar on which the sacrifice was offered stood at the door. This cleansing fitted them to approach God as worshippers. The altar of incense was inside in the holy place. This altar is expressive of worship. To reach that they had to pass a brass vessel filled with water (see Exod. xxx. 18–21). Every time they approached, both hands and feet had to be washed. They were not

washed all over. The Lord refers to this in John XIII., when washing the disciples' feet. Peter wanted to have his whole body cleansed; the Lord told him that he was one of those who had been washed all over, and was clean every whit, and needed not save to wash his feet.

You reply, "I do not understand how it applies to me." Look back upon to-day. You started out this morning rejoicing. You sang, "O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away." You realized you were cleansed, forgiven, and rejoiced to think you were saved. Somehow or other when you got home at night you felt miserable, depressed. The devil came and tempted you to give it all up; he said, "Ah, it was all a sham; you never would have felt like this if you were a true child of God."

Now what is to be done? You cannot be saved, cleansed, over again; there cannot be a fresh application of the blood. What, then, is to be done? Why, just this: look back since morning—find out what robbed you of your joy. Was it some impure thought, some passing folly? Did you lose your temper, or go with that friend of your unconverted days to have a glass together? Was it some trashy novel, or some covetous transaction, in which you overreached your neighbour? A lie perhaps? Anyhow, you went out happy and you came home wretched, so something must have caused it. When you have

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found *where* you went wrong, and *what* led to it, get before God, confess it to Him.

Do not say, "Make me clean, wash me, a poor, miserable sinner!" Read 1 John i. 9: "If we confess our *sins*, He is faithful and just to forgive us our *sins*, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is the verse which explains the washing of hands and feet. It deals with the actual wrong done. It means that you are to put your finger upon the sin you have committed, condemn it, and confess it to God. You will find this much harder work than saying, "Have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner." Let me add that if you truly and honestly confess that sin to God, you will abhor it and greatly dread a repetition of it. Notice that the verse speaks of what is due to Jesus. God is faithful and just to Jesus, to forgive. His blood has atoned for that sin. God in justice to Him forgives it, when confessed. It also speaks of something that takes place in you. The water of purification is applied, you are cleansed from all unrighteousness. It is no light thing for a Christian to sin. He is made to feel that his sin caused Jesus to die, and that he has acted contrary to the Word of God. He, however, seeks to "cleanse his way" by the word (see Psalm CXIX.), and every time he finds anything contrary to that, he is to deal with it, in confession and self-judgment.

The moment you find you are out of communion

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with God, look for the cause, confess it at once, don't wait until evening. Get your feet washed immediately, so that you can happily minister to God's pleasure.

Let us repeat that this washing of the feet must not be confounded with that washing referred to last month. There we saw that the precious blood of Christ cleanses you wholly on believing.

It is the gracious act of God in freeing you once and for ever from that which is due to your sins. When Christ died, those sins so hateful to God were removed by His one offering. It was on Calvary's cross "Jesus put our sins away." The knowledge of this is brought to us in God's Word and by the Holy Spirit. He makes us sensible that our sins are gone, and we are washed all over, once and for ever.

Following that, we are to seek to clear ourselves from everything coming under the head of the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are to walk circumspectly. To avoid exposing ourselves to temptation. To identify ourselves heart and soul with Christ's interests and God's people. *We need not sin.* It is possible to answer to that word: "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." This does not mean we shall ever reach a state of sinless perfection in this world. We shall always have sin *in* us. The man who says he has none, deceives himself. We have no

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sin *on* us. Christ has removed it by dying. Should, however, the sin that is *in* us show itself, in word or deed, we are at once to remember, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father"; and as soon as we become conscious that our communion is interrupted, we must find out the cause, confess it, and get cleansed from it. This is the washing which goes on. It is the answer to the feet being washed. It is ever needful if we are to enjoy the presence of the Saviour and the love of the Father.

That is what it means in the end of 1 Corinthians XI, where Christians are to "break bread" in remembrance of their absent Lord. They are told to "judge" themselves "and so eat." They are to see if there is anything inconsistent in their walk and ways, or any allowance of those sins from which they were cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, and if so, confess and judge the evil, whatever it may be.

This makes us morally fit to approach God as worshippers.

We trust you are clear as to the difference between being cleansed once for all by the precious blood of Christ and the repeated washing each time we sin. If not, write to the Editor of this magazine, who will be glad to help you in any spiritual difficulty.

H. N.

DOES GOD HEAR PRAYER?

DOES God hear prayer? David, in Psalm LXV. 2, addresses God thus: "O Thou that hearest prayer." He evidently believed God heard prayer. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him." "Oh, yes," you say, "that might be true of a man like David, but does He answer prayer to-day?"

Let me tell you of two instances, both well authenticated. The first occurred only a short distance from where I live. A Christian man, a farmer, had a dream. He dreamt that he must get up, put five pounds in his pocket, and take it somewhere! The thing that puzzled him was that he did not know where. He was so deeply impressed that he got up, put five pounds in his pocket, saddled his bay horse Jack, and let the rein fall loosely on his neck, so that he was free to go in whatever direction he pleased. He took the farmer down his fields until he reached the road leading through High Wycombe to West Wycombe. It was now about five o'clock in the morning. As the horse was wending its way, the farmer all the time wondering what was to be the end of this strange journey, he met an old friend of his named Mr. B., a preacher to whom he had often listened. After expressing their surprise at meeting each other in such an unexpected manner at that early hour in the morn-

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ing, the farmer inquired what had induced Mr. B. to take such an early walk. He told him he had been passing through great trial. His wife had been greatly afflicted for a very long time. The heavy expenses attendant on her illness had reduced them to poverty. The rent was all behind, and he had received notice that if not paid *on that very day they must be turned out of their house.*

The pressure of this had driven all sleep away, and he felt that he must get up and walk down this very road. The farmer said, "Now I understand why I am here this morning, and why I was to put this money in my pocket." He then handed Mr. B. the five pounds. This was just the sum required. You can imagine the light heart with which he returned to his home, and what a relief it was to his wife and himself to find that the Lord in this gracious and unmistakable way had answered their prayer, and permitted them to remain in their home.

The other instance was in the very heart of London. God had met and saved a poor man. He was a striking instance of the grace of God. When salvation reached him he was just about to take away his life. His soul was unmistakably saved, but his circumstances were of the most trying nature; both himself and wife were in the direst straits. He turned to God, the God of his salvation, the God Who hears prayer. He pleaded

with Him to meet his need. A servant of the Lord named Mr. B. was just going to the country for a much-needed rest. He had set aside the money he felt needful for a short vacation. He retired to rest, purposing to start early the next morning. I do not know whether he had actually gone to sleep, but anyway at a most unreasonable hour of the night he felt powerfully impressed with a feeling that he must get up and take the holiday money to the poor man we have mentioned. What was to be done? If he took that money, where should the necessary means for the holiday come from? The feeling at last grew so strong that he got up, went to the room in which the poor fellow lived, and inquired if he was in need. It was with some difficulty that he learned the true state of the case. The upshot was that the holiday money was parted with and the man's need met, and a way found for Mr. B. to have his change as well. What is striking in both these cases is that there was no human intervention. God acted directly upon both His servants. It proved on the one hand that He was the hearer of prayer, and on the other that it is His pleasure to use His people to minister to the needs of others. He desires that they may abound to every good work. Is it not a rebuke to many who have this world's goods that they so seldom hear the Lord's voice thus? God's will for His people is that there should be equality. Read 1 Corinthians VIII., IX.

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This is a changing world. Rich people often become poor, unexpected events happen. What is the consolation of such? Can they truly say, "In my abundance I ministered to the need of others"? If so, "he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Their need shall surely be met. God says so. What God loves is a cheerful giver. What the cheerful giver needs is an exercised heart as to the right objects, and to be near enough to the Lord to hear Him say, "Go here and go there." On the other hand, we have to learn that in our need we must go straight to God, our Father. There would be fewer begging letters on earth if there were more begging letters addressed to heaven. One who had experimentally proved God as a hearer of prayer could say, "*My God shall supply all your need.*" He does not say all we want, or all we ask. God knows best the right answer, and the *right time* to answer. It does not follow that an *unanswered prayer* is a *forgotten one*. Many a petition lies on the table in heaven waiting for the right moment. No doubt Martha and Mary prayed earnestly for Lazarus not to die. They got their answer in a way that surprised them. It, however, brought out the wealth of God's resources to meet their need. He is the same God still. Pray on. Trust ever. God is faithful. Prove Him and you also will know Him as the Hearer of Prayer.

H. N.

GLEANINGS.

“DIFFERENT measures of light will separate disciples from each other, but not from their common Master. Mary the sister of Lazarus was not at the tomb of Jesus. Her richer knowledge of Christ kept her apart from such a journey and such a task. She could not have been there. Faith, or light and knowledge, forbade her. But Mary of Magdala and others are there, and the angels and the Lord of angels will meet them there though Mary cannot.

“Oh the sweet and sure truth which all this illustrates in days of distraction like these! Disciples are now separated, through divers measures of light and knowledge, like these women of faith and love; but those who, though in the place where faith would not have them, are yet where love had sent them, shall know something of heaven and the presence of Jesus.”

J. G. B.

“WHAT is man, even the best of men? Or what are his thoughts worth? Just nothing, if not founded on the eternal foundation of the Holy Scriptures. Do we not see every day how easily men slip away from Scripture, and get into their own notions? And do we not also see the disastrous consequence of so slipping away? It is like the points on the railway; at first the measure of divergence seems hardly perceptible, but look at the end. We want to bow to Holy Scripture. We want a ‘Thus saith the Lord’ for all that may be pressed upon us.”

C. H. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. A. H.—You will find in our issue for December, 1904, some remarks on the subject of smoking, in answer to a correspondent. Our thoughts about the practice remain unchanged. We believe it to be a habit no young Christian ought to take up. If he has already done so, let him abandon it. Money so spent might be devoted to better things. “Glorify God in your body” is a Christian exhortation, and we can hardly see how God is glorified by an indulgence of that kind.

J. M.—2 Kings vi. 5-7.—Any power any of us may have in felling trees to build our Master’s house withal is not our own, it is only borrowed. Unless we watch it may soon go, and we then shall be like the man whose axe-head was at the bottom of the river. Samson lost his power when he laid his head in the lap of Delilah, and was shorn of his Nazarite locks. The axe-head was gone. So did Lot in Sodom. Let us be very jealous as to this. There are many who once lifted up their axe upon the thick trees — “famous” men who made the forest ring with their swinging blows (Ps. lxxiv. 5). But their borrowed power is gone; the axe-head is lying in the river-bed. Oh for some man of God to come along who shall be the means of bringing back the power long lost. May not the incident be used in that fashion? Does it not suggest a very important lesson?

ANXIOUS.—Yours is a sorrowful story. There is no sin into which a Christian may not fall unless he walks humbly with God. But if he yields to sin and will

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pursue it, how bitterly shall he rue it when the hour of his awakening comes. Then the terrors of hell get hold of him, his stricken conscience lashes him as with a whip of scorpions. The devil mocks, his sin stares him in the face, and his outraged religious profession haunts him with agonizing persistency. The anguish of this you know. But there is hope even for one who has deeply fallen. If there be repentance, if there be unreserved confession of your sins to God, and a turning away from them, then there is forgiveness and a cleansing from all unrighteousness. God's pardoning grace has no limits, and the blood of Jesus atones for the blackest sin. You may be slow to believe this fully. It may seem incredible that such sins as yours should be cast behind God's back, and that He should say He will remember them no more. But such is indeed the case, and we pray that you may know it of a truth. Let the recollection of the past lead you to distrust yourself, and to cry to the Lord at the first approach of temptation. Read Psalms LI. and xxxii. The first paper in next month's issue, we trust, will help you.

A TRIED ONE.—It is always a serious thing for a wife to go contrary to the express wishes of her husband, though there are times when even this must be done if she would be true and faithful to the Lord. But a Christian wife should let her yieldingness be known in every possible way so long as her conscience towards God is not violated. And if her husband will not allow her to speak to him of the things of God, let her not despair, for he may yet be won, without the Word, by the purity of her daily life, and by her meek and quiet spirit. Of this the Holy Spirit speaks in

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1 Peter III. We deeply feel for you, but you are suffering as a Christian and for the Truth's sake, and need not be ashamed or afraid. Your happier course, we think, is to continue patiently waiting until the way be clear. May we give you Psalm xxxvii. 4? And the First Epistle of Peter will be very helpful in your present circumstances. Read it!

J. W. D.—Hebrews x. 7.—Some have thought that by "the volume of the book" is meant the whole of the Old Testament scriptures, of which Christ is undoubtedly the subject (Luke xxiv. 27). But until your letter was received, we had never heard of any one thinking that it meant one particular book of the Bible. For ourselves we believe the allusion is to the Book of God's Counsels written before the world began, and in which the wondrous work of redemption assuredly had a great place. It may also embrace the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms. See Luke xxiv. 44.

H. M.—1 Cor. xi. 4-16.—No doubt this passage has led to the custom of women wearing their hats or bonnets in Christian assemblies. The apostle insists on their head being covered when engaged in holy exercises. But we have no fancy for curious discussions as to whether their head should be covered with an artificial covering when praying privately. If any think the head should be covered, no one can possibly object.

F. R. A.—We do not in the least suppose that when we find ourselves in heaven with the Lord, our memory will be an utter blank as to all the past. But ties of nature are for earth, and end with the ending

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of our earthly days. In heaven we shall view things from God's standpoint, and feel about them as He does according to our measure. Many questions one might ask which would be hard to answer. We leave them, assured that in our cup of happiness there will be no bitter drop—nothing to cause us constant grief. (ii.) There is no record of the Lord's being seen by above 500 brethren at once, save 1 Corinthians xv. 6. The mention of 120 in Acts i. 15 does not collide with this at all. It only states that when Peter stood up to speak that number was present—other of the disciples were elsewhere. At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down, there is no mention of their number, nor any ground, so far as we know, for limiting it to 120 persons. (iii.) As to Matthew xii. 20, in Jewish reckoning a part of the day was accounted as the whole. Finally, we really do not know why Dan is not among the tribes named in Revelation vii. Doubtless there is a reason, though we may not see it.

PERPLEXED.—2 Cor. vi. 14.—We are inclined to think the unequal yoke is hardly of so sweeping a nature as your question implies. Still, let the Christian be careful, or he may soon subject himself to anxieties from which a wiser course would have exempted him. And remember that "to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, *to him* it is unclean." To another it may not be. It is of great moment to keep a clear conscience, to be free from entanglements, and not to run risks or accept responsibilities which we are not prepared to meet.

DISAPPOINTED CHRISTIANS

MANY converted people find it very difficult to resist temptation and to live as Christians should. At the time of their conversion they sang loudly enough—

“He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.”

But now they daily discover that this is no true description of their state. They may continue to “watch and pray,” but somehow the “rejoicing” does not come; or if it comes, it does not last.

Of course it is a great relief to them that their sins are washed away in Christ’s precious blood, and that God has said He “will remember them no more.” So far it is

ALL RIGHT WITH THEM UP THERE,
and they know it; but they feel that all is not right with them *down here*. After their conversion they expected to have glorious experiences, to put the enemy to utter rout, and to march onward to their heavenly rest with colours flying all the way. Instead of this, defeat after defeat has been their lot, and they seem to have no more power against the wiles of Satan than a feather has against a Biscay hurricane.

Crossing the Channel from Folkestone to Boulogne, you may notice upon a hill near the French coast a high pillar. You ask one of the

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sailors what that monument is. He replies, "It is Napoleon's Pillar." Inquiring further, you learn that the Emperor Napoleon had formed a plan to invade and conquer England. So sure was he of success that he caused that pillar to be erected, within sight of the English shores, to celebrate the great victory he was *going to win*. Needless to say, the threatened invasion never came off, and the pillar commemorates nothing but a great man's folly.

Has there been something akin to this in your experience, reader? Did you not, when first converted, erect a monument in your mind to celebrate the wonderful victories you were *going to win* over sin and temptation? Alas! the victories have not been won, and to-day you are perplexed, disheartened, and sometimes tempted to wonder whether, after all, your conversion was genuine.

Your experience is certainly discouraging. But be of good cheer. Every lane has its end. The path you are treading has been trodden by thousands, and they have found it to have a bright and glorious ending. But those who would reach the end must be prepared to have

THREE BITTER LESSONS

burnt into their souls. Some take a whole lifetime to learn them. But unbelief and self-will are largely answerable for that.

What, then, are they? You will find them in the seventh chapter of Romans. Please turn

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to it. Notice that the chapter is addressed to *believing Jews* (v. 1). The apostle calls them "brethren," that is, they were Christians, yet they *knew the law*. They had groaned under its iron yoke, and had known what it was to stand conscience-stricken and self-condemned in the presence of its holy requirements.

The lessons of Romans VII. would not be so necessary for us, who are of the Gentiles, were it not that in Christendom people are almost as much under law as were the Jews. Even the precepts of Scripture are used in a legal way; and the life and example of the blessed Lord here on earth is often made into a kind of *law*, and it is demanded that others should imitate it and follow in His steps.

You ask, Is not this right? Surely we ought to obey the commands of Scripture, and follow the example of Jesus.

Assuredly, but have you the power? Do not your present exercises of soul arise from the fact that you are

SO UNLIKE JESUS?

You try to obey the precepts of the Bible and to walk in His steps, but you are forced to conclude that you can do neither.

You have, then, unwittingly, used Scripture precepts and the holy example of the Lord Jesus as they were never intended to be used. You have made a *law* of them. The consequence

is you have brought a good deal of soul-exercise and trouble upon yourself, and before you can enjoy true *Christian* experience, you must learn the lessons of Romans VII.

1. Have you found the chapter in your Bible? Then look at verse 17. Put a pencil mark against it in the margin, for it speaks of the first great experimental lesson which you must learn, namely, that

SIN IS STILL DWELLING IN YOU.

SIN is the source of all your trouble. The many sins over which you have mourned are like the *fruit* of the tree, but *sin* is the tree *itself*. When as a sinner you turned to Christ your *sins* were all forgiven and put out of God's sight for ever. Perhaps you imagined that indwelling *sin* had gone too. And great has been your disappointment at finding it still there.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Suppose you live next door to some very disagreeable people who lose no opportunity of annoying you. One morning you see a furniture van standing at their door, and some chairs and other articles carried out of the house and placed in it.

"Oh, what a relief!" you exclaim. "My disagreeable neighbours are moving at last! How thankful I shall feel to be rid of them!"

Next day, however, you discover to your dismay that they have not moved after all. They have merely sent some of their furniture to an auction sale!

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This is just the sort of thing that happened at your conversion. Your sins went; but in getting rid of them, you did not (as perhaps you at first believed) get rid of indwelling *sin*. Like the disagreeable neighbours, it remains. Sin is still within you. This is the first great lesson.

2. The second is in verse 18. I do not quote it, as it is much better for you to read it for yourself. You will hardly understand what I am going to say unless you do so.

The lesson of the eighteenth verse is this. Not only is there plenty of *bad* still within, but that in you (that is, in your flesh) there is

ABSOLUTELY NO GOOD.

This is a far deeper discovery.

It is true that God, by His Spirit, works in us to produce what is of Himself, but this proves that there is no good there apart from His working. And He does not work in connexion with what this verse calls the "flesh," nor alter its character in the smallest degree. It remains corrupt and totally devoid of good to the end. And flesh is really only another way of spelling "self." The work of God in us is not to make "self" better, but to displace it and to bring us into line with His own thoughts about it. More of this, however, later on.

This lesson of verse 18, that no good dwells in us, is one that has to be *learned*. You admit the truth as to it, and think you know the lesson;

but experience shows that you have not really *learned it*.

Little Harry is sitting upon his bench at school trying to master his appointed task. When he had been called upon to repeat it, he had grievously failed, and had been "turned." Now, however, he believes that he knows it, and he approaches his teacher, book in hand.

"Well, Harry," says the teacher, "let me hear if you can say it now."

Harry begins; but after a few words he stumbles, breaks down, and comes to a stop.

"You do not know it yet," says the master. "Go back to your place and learn it."

The ringing shouts of his schoolmates at play reach Harry's ears, and the "turned lesson" is irksome. Rebellious thoughts rise in his mind; but once more he applies himself to his task. Only for a few seconds, however, for his thoughts, unbidden, wander off to the playground; and the words he is mechanically repeating make no impression upon his mind.

Presently, however, he can repeat the lesson to his own satisfaction. "I am sure I know it now," he says; and he marches up to the master's desk.

"Begin," says he, taking the book from the boy's hand.

Harry begins, and manages to get out a line or two, only to discover that he does not *really* know the lesson that he fancies he knows so well.

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Has it been thus with *you*? Many a time you have thought that you knew this lesson thoroughly. "Yes," you have sighed, "I know there is no good in me." Yet the words have hardly died away when you have found yourself acting upon the assumption that there *is* some good in you. And you have been bitterly disappointed at again finding that there is none.

Does it ever strike you, I wonder, that the very fact of your being disappointed with yourself is a proof that you have not experimentally learned the lesson of verse 18? For there can be no such thing as disappointment unless there has been

SOME SORT OF EXPECTATION.

Suppose you buy a chicken for dinner, and some one asks, "Did you find anything of special value inside the bird?"

"I don't understand you," you reply. "What do you mean?"

"Oh," says your friend, "then you did not find a golden egg in it! How disappointed you must be!"

"Why," you would say, "I am not a bit disappointed. *I did not expect* to find a golden egg inside the chicken."

Ah! that is it. You are not disappointed because you did not expect. If you had been disappointed at not finding a golden egg, it would have proved that you were cherishing an ill-founded expectation.

In the same way your disappointment in connexion with your experience and state of soul proves that you have been cherishing expectations. You have expected to find good where there is none, even while assenting to the scriptural statement that there IS NO GOOD in you.

3. But there is yet one more appalling discovery to make: a lesson still more humiliating to be learned. With your Bible still open at Romans VII. read the nineteenth verse. What does it mean? It means that though you ardently long to do what is right and loathe what is wrong, yet

YOU HAVE NO POWER

in yourself either to do the one or resist the other. The things that you would do are the very things which you leave undone; while the wrong things which you hate are the things which you find yourself constantly doing.

At this point a most critical stage is reached in the spiritual life of the believer. It is just here that many go wrong. "I cannot make a success of the Christian life," they say. And not having found in their Christianity the joy they expected, they turn to the world for relief, and seek to drown their exercises of soul and hide their bitter disappointment by going in for a whirl of amusement in company with others like themselves or with mere worldlings.

Have you ever felt tempted to do this? Do

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you at times feel ready to despair? Do you say that it is no good your struggling any longer, that you may as well give up the battle, that the enemy is too strong for you, finding an ally as he does in your own treacherous heart?

Is this how you feel? *It is the point to which God intended that your exercises should lead you.* If you have really learned that sin dwells in you still, that there is absolutely no good in you, and that you are without a shred of power to translate your desires into practice, then you have travelled a long way on the road to true

LIBERTY AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.

If you read Romans VIII., which describes the *state and experience that are proper to Christians*, you will see at once that, however wholesome and necessary the exercises of chapter VII. may be, they are not, properly speaking, the exercises that belong to Christianity. God may lead His people that way, but it is by no means His will that they should remain all their days in discouragement and despondency. He would have us learn the lessons of chapter VII. and then pass on to experience the joy and liberty and power of chapter VIII.

It is necessary for me to remind you of this, for there are some who positively make a virtue of their unhappy experience. Their despondency and gloom they regard as evidence of divine

grace, and they settle down to live amid the experiences of Romans VII.

A gentleman—one of the sort I refer to—was trying to explain these two chapters in Romans to a few coloured people. Presently one of the company, a devout old negress whose experience was of a much higher order than that of the expounder, broke in upon the discourse, saying—

“’Pears you don’t understand them chapters.”

“Oh! What is the matter with my exposition of them?”

“Why, you talks as if we were to live in the misery of the seventh chapter and only pay little visits to the blessed eighth.”

“Well, that *is* just what I think, don’t you?”

“Why, no, honey,” replied the dear old saint. “I *lives* in the eighth.”

And that is where God would have all His people be, living in the sunshine and liberty of grace.

Do you ask how this wished-for goal is to be reached? Read on, then; there is much to be learned yet.

Turning once again to Romans VII. and looking at verses 22 and 23, we find something of the greatest importance, namely, that though in ourselves we are totally corrupt and good for nothing, yet there has been a work of God that has produced in us

A NEW BEING ALTOGETHER.

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As a result of this, we delight in what is of God. The old evil principle is still there, but we learn to connect ourselves, in our thoughts, with the *new* principle instead of the old.

When we think of the workings of evil within, we say, "No more I." We reckon as the true "I" that which is formed in us by the work of God and which delights in His things.

How, then, am I to deal with the old principle, the evil "I," that is ever present, and ever ready to assert itself? If it is incapable of improvement, what is to be done with it?

You hate that old "I," do you not? That wretched "self," that is wholly sinful and bad, you would fain get rid of altogether.

See, then, where you have arrived. *You are at one with God Himself as to the way you regard your evil self.* Does not the thought bring comfort to you? However contrary to God your thoughts have been, there is one matter as to which you have, by His own work, been brought into agreement with Him. You hate what He hates.

This being so, it will be a relief to you to know

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with regard to the "self" that you loathe. For the way in which He has acted with regard to it will give you a clue as to the way *you* should act.

Now, since you as a child of Adam were not an object that God's eye could rest upon with plea-

sure, He must needs remove you out of His sight. The only way in which this could be done was by death. You deserve to die, and in death there would be an end of that which is so hateful to God. But in order that God might, after all, have you for Himself, in such a way that He could regard you with pleasure, He sent His Son. In the death of Christ your history as connected with the flesh was brought to an end judicially. God removed you from His sight in death, but it was in the death of His Son. Therefore we read: "Our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. VI. 6).

Have you often longed to be rid of yourself? That is just what God has effected *for Himself* in the death of Christ. He has rid Himself of you, the being that was so hateful and obnoxious to Him. He reckons that when Christ died, *you* died. Sentence of death was passed upon *you*, and *you* were executed at Calvary. Now,

FAITH ALWAYS RECKONS AS GOD RECKONS.

We may not quite understand it; it may seem strange and mysterious, but we must learn to reckon, even as God reckons, that the death of Christ has for ever closed our history as members of Adam's race.

When we accept this as true we are prepared to learn something further. We find that the mere fact of the evil principle being actually present with us (though condemned and judicially

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ended at the cross) need not be a bar to our happiness and our communion with God.

A little lad sits by his mother's side at the tea-table. Within a few inches of his plate stands a jug full of hot water.

"Do not touch that jug, Fred, or you will burn your fingers," says the mother.

If Master Fred is content to accept his mother's verdict as to the nature of the jug, and to refrain from touching it, all is well. In that case the mere *presence* of the hot jug upon the table will not bring a cloud upon the boy's happiness.

If, on the other hand, he is wilful and gradually moves his finger nearer and nearer to the jug till he touches it, then by painful experience he learns that his mother's opinion about the jug was right. His happiness has now, for the time, disappeared. He is a disobedient boy, and has to be corrected. His burnt finger, too, testifies to his folly.

So with us. If we trifle with sin, we shall bring sorrow upon ourselves. But as long as we regard it as *God* regards it, a thing by no means to be tampered with or tolerated, the mere fact of its being still within us will hinder neither our happiness nor our progress. If in our thoughts we dissociate ourselves from it, and rejoice in its having met its due at God's hands, we shall soon learn the secret of practical deliverance from its power.

The reason why so many remain undelivered is that they are occupied with

THE WRONG MAN.

It is of great importance to see that God is in no way occupied with the man that He has condemned and removed from His sight in death. He is occupied with quite another Man, One in Whom He finds infinite delight—the Lord Jesus Christ. The man after the flesh, in whom we all had our part, is set aside altogether, and the Man of God's pleasure is one of an entirely different order. And it is in this *other* Man, Christ, that we are accepted. Viewed as of His order, God can and does regard us with the same satisfaction as He regards *Him*. We are thus before God in all the blessed acceptance of Christ Himself.

And, further, the One in Whom we are accepted is presented to us as an Object for our hearts. In having Him thus we find deliverance practically and experimentally.

Many excellent Christians miss their way here. In seeking liberty and holiness they make these things their object instead of *Christ*. The result is they never reach their goal, for while seeking their own blessing, it is *themselves*, more or less, with whom they are occupied.

In speaking of Christ as the Object of our hearts, I do not mean merely that He is the One in Whom we trust. We never cease to have faith in Him, but it is not altogether by means of *faith* that we reach liberty. We hear a good deal about "holiness by faith," but practically

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LIBERTY AND HOLINESS COME BY LOVE.

When Christ is before our souls in His attractiveness and glory, the Spirit of God works in us a response, and our affections are drawn out to Him. He Himself becomes the deep delight of our hearts even as He is of God's heart. We are thus led away from thoughts of self, and in being taken up with Christ, self is practically displaced. *This is liberty.*

The only power by which our love can be thus drawn out towards Christ is the Holy Spirit. Effort and resolution will not do it. Reading the Scriptures will not do it. Prayer will not do it.

Do not misunderstand me. The Scriptures cannot be too highly appreciated or too carefully studied. Prayer is a holy privilege that none of us can prize too much. But many have set themselves to pray and to read the Scriptures, and have persevered month after month, and yet the longed-for blessing has not come.

On the other hand, to get into God's presence in true self-judgment, to thank Him unfeignedly that He has dealt with you and put you from His sight in the death of His Son, to rejoice before Him that He sees you now clothed with all the acceptance of Christ, and to linger there, in His presence, that the Holy Spirit may engage your affections with that blessed One in Whom God has made Himself known to you—this, indeed, is joy, peace, and liberty.

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In speaking of these things, I have not sought to express myself doctrinally. Doctrines I have had to state, but it is sadly possible to know the way of deliverance so as to be able to explain it to others, and yet not to be experimentally in the joy of it oneself.

The writer was once taking breakfast with some Christians, when the subject of "Deliverance" came up. A young brother, not quite understanding what was said, exclaimed—

"Oh, do you want *Deliverance*? I can let you have it. *I bought it at the Tract Depot for fourpence yesterday.*"

It is to be feared that many imagine when they buy and read a treatise on the subject that they possess the thing itself. A small sum like fourpence secures a lucid exposition of the matter, and in that way one may get light and help, but the thing itself is not to be thus obtained.

THE DOCTRINE OF DELIVERANCE IS NOT
DELIVERANCE.

A little lark is vainly trying to escape from its cage. It bruises its head as it beats it against the bars, and mournfully it chirps out its disappointment and despair.

Presently a kind hand opens the cage door. The lark is free! Immediately its efforts cease, and it sits contentedly upon its perch.

The way to liberty is clear. It is no longer held a prisoner. *But there it sits.* Foolish bird!

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Why does it not spread its wings and soar aloft, singing in the sunshine?

But is it not even so with many of the Lord's dear people? They do not beat their heads against the bars of the cage; they do not groan and sigh like the wretched man of Romans VII.; they know that liberty has been won for them; they could describe the way that the cage door was opened! *But they still sit on their perch.*

Oh! why do they not spread their wings and soar aloft into the sunshine of divine love? Why do they not avail themselves of the great deliverance that has been wrought and *enjoy* the liberty which is the birthright of God's children?

Let *Christ* be the One upon Whom your thoughts are fixed. In your leisure moments keep in His company; rejoice in His love; count it your joy to spend and be spent in His service; live in daily expectation of His coming again; speak of Him as opportunity offers. Remember that all the while He is thinking of you, and that His great desire for you is that you should, even now, be at home in the midst of the wonderful things of God, of which *He* is the sum and centre; that your soul should, even now, find its portion in that bright and blessed world, where *He* fills the whole scene, and where He shares all that He possesses with His loved co-heirs.

What liberty is this!

H. P. B.

“IN DUE SEASON.”

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

HOW very true our experiences find the statements of King Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes: “To everything there is a *season*, and a time to every purpose under heaven.” “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” To the praise of God, “Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will,” and for the encouragement of His people, the writer relates the following facts.

Over thirty years ago I was travelling by rail in the south of Scotland. The only other occupant of the compartment was a country woman, to whom I handed a gospel book. Being anxious to know whether she was a real Christian, I endeavoured to engage her in conversation. She was very reserved, and in result I could only conclude that she, like many others, was resting upon her morality, and in a form of godliness while denying the power thereof. I urged her to turn as a poor, helpless sinner to Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and on parting asked her to favour me with her name and address, that I might send her some literature which would help her. For about *fourteen* years I regularly sent her month

by month some gospel magazines without the slightest acknowledgment on her part of ever having received them. Then I ceased sending them, judging that perhaps she was dead and buried. Shortly afterwards we had a large meeting in Edinburgh of brethren in the Lord from various parts, and I was rather surprised when a tall brother addressed me very abruptly at the door by asking, "Why did you stop sending the magazines to Miss Y—— of K——?" I gazed upon him in astonishment. "How do you know that I ever sent such things to her?" "Oh, very well; it could be no one but you." "Well," I replied, "I have never heard a word from her from the moment I left her in the train." Then the brother told me that she had "fallen asleep in Jesus" in the joy of His salvation, and that these very written witnesses to the grace of God in the gospel had been of real help to give her light. "But," he concluded, "go on sending the magazines, for her sister lives in the same house and much needs the truth." So the *Gospel Messenger* goes there regularly still. There is a great tendency amongst us to distribute too little, and a lack of simple confidence in the grace of God to bless the truth thus circulated. May He stir us all up to sow more seed of this kind.

Now for a word of cheer to my young brethren who speak for Christ in the open air. When a young Christian, over thirty-four years since, I

was very hearty in street preaching and the Lord cheered me with evidence of His power. About five or six years ago I was in a tramcar in Princes' Street, Edinburgh, when a gentleman walked down the whole length of it to where I was sitting and addressed me thus: "Should not brethren in the Lord greet one another?" "Certainly!" I replied, extending my hand; "are you a brother?" "By God's grace I am," he said, "and I have you to thank too." "Indeed," I exclaimed in surprise. "How was that?" He then reminded me that it was my habit about twenty-eight years previously to preach at a street corner in a poor locality on Sunday evenings, inviting people to Christ and into a small preaching room. The Spirit of God had been working in him, and he stood there time after time. He said that the word I had spoken had brought him to peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He had known me well all these years by sight; his conscience often reproached him for not stopping me to tell me of his salvation, but now he was glad to greet me. He gave me his card; he occupied an official position in the city, and was a consistent and intelligent witness for his Lord. I never saw him again. About three years since the Lord took him home. To the Lord be all the praise; and to you, my dear fellow workers, I pass on the words, "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in *due season* we shall reap, if we faint not."

T. R. D.

“WHEREIN SHALL HE SLEEP?”

EXOD. XXII. 26, 27.

IT is deeply interesting to notice how God concerns Himself with a matter so small as the clothes wherewith we cover our bodies at night! It is clear that He takes notice of the style of dress we wear by day, condemning what is luxurious both in the man and in the woman. Hence, we read that purple and fine linen were the grand attire of the rich man of Luke XVI.—a man of the world, who lived neither for the glory of God nor for the good of the poor around him, but whose grand object in life was self-gratification. He “fared sumptuously every day” until his brief career was arrested suddenly by death and the fixed gulf.

The daughters of Zion, too, bedecked themselves in fine linen, and hoods, and veils, until it came to pass that there should be burning instead of beauty and desolation in the gates of the city. Modest apparel, modesty of mien, and sobriety are enjoined on the Christian woman, and a meek and gentle spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.

This would result in a temperateness and decorum of style which would put to shame the gorgeous vanity of the world on the one hand, and the foolish and equally vain habiliments of

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the "religious" and the nun on the other. Sobriety shuns each extreme.

Hence, God signifies His desire for an ordinary style of dress. It should be plain, and of a nature that shall not draw attention. For let us remember that every particle of superfluous clothing is but an additional witness to the Fall.

Hence, "having food and raiment [covering], let us be content."

But as to our night apparel! Let us read our two verses:—

"If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?"

Mark, that is his covering—his raiment for his skin!

The sun has gone down; the chill of midnight creeps over his sleeping form, his needed rest is disturbed, and his health is endangered. His skin requires a covering and artificial warmth. Now where can this be found if the raiment is pledged and retained? Nowhere.

And therefore God kindly ordained that the garment pledged during the day was to be duly returned at night so that no mischief should arise.

Touches of this kind go far to remind us of

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the minuteness of God's regard, and of the depth of His gracious consideration for the details of our life.

He clothes the lily, He numbers the hairs of the head, and takes note of the falling sparrow. He bids us be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known our request to Him; to cast all our care on Him, for He careth for us.

"Wherein shall he sleep?" is a question which may well create in the heart of the troubled one a sense of the care of a Creator-God, Who is also the Preserver of all men, specially them that believe.

Say not, my soul, from whence can God relieve thy care,
Remember that Omnipotence hath servants everywhere.
His method is sublime, His thoughts profoundly kind;
God never is before His time and never is behind.

J. W. S.

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J. W. R.—Yes, the Scriptures do indeed teach that if any poor sinner believes in Jesus, and has faith in His atoning blood, his sins are forgiven. Sealed, too, with the Holy Spirit, he becomes a member of that Body of which Christ in heaven is Head. Forgiven, washed in the precious blood of Christ, and sealed with the Holy Spirit, such a one may well rejoice in hope of the glory of God for which he shall be assuredly preserved by the guardian grace of our great High

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Priest, Who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

F. D. B.—The parable of Luke xv. 11–32 is not designed to teach the value of the atoning work of Christ, and we ought not to expect every feature of redeeming love to be portrayed in this pictorial outline of divine grace. The picture is drawn by a Hand too skilful to crowd into it a thousand details which, however important in themselves, would only divert attention from the great central point. You have heard the story of a famous artist who painted a picture of The Last Supper. He was anxious that every eye should be attracted to the person of the Saviour, instead of which the beholders were arrested by the marvellous beauty of the cups. Observing this, he boldly brushed them out. So in this parable the shining feature is the *Father's* love, which was great enough to forgive every sin, and to welcome with every expression of affection the repentant prodigal. Such grace is based on the atoning work of Christ, as we all know; but to introduce it here would not serve the end in view. It would divert us from the great and grand point of the parable.

J. H.—Matthew v. 13.—The followers of the Lord Jesus, so long as they do follow Him, are the salt of the earth; but when their profession becomes dead orthodoxy, without spirit and life and power, then are they saltless salt and *good for nothing*. How many individuals and once flourishing religious communities are witnesses to the truth of these solemn and searching words!—Col. iv. 6. The speech of a Christian is always to be gracious and wholesome—not tasteless,

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sickly, insipid, but seasoned with salt, every inquirer being answered wisely, graciously, and with grit. —Mark ix. 49. Every one shall be salted with fire. The fire shall test, and whatsoever is not in accordance with God's holiness must be consumed. All men in one way or another are subject to His judgment. The true Christian, if needs be, comes under it now (see 1 Cor. xi. 32). It will overtake the ungodly in a day to come. Moreover, "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." The Christian presents himself to God a living sacrifice. Salt must be there—that holy energy which preserves from evil and links up the soul with God in its practical ways.

W. T.—We shrink from saying that the atoning work of Christ was over and complete before He actually had died. Possibly the speaker meant that the sufferings for sin had been borne during the hours of darkness on the Cross. Still, death was needed. The wages of sin is *death*, and surely nothing short of it would have fully met our case, or the requirements of God's throne.

A. B.—"The Millennium" simply means the thousand years spoken of in Revelation xx. 4, during which the heavenly saints live and reign with Christ. The millennial kingdom extends over that period, beginning when Christ shall sit upon His throne, and ending with the final judgment described in Revelation xx. 11–15, which ushers in the eternal state of the early part of chapter xxi.

M. P.—We infer that your anxiety of mind does not arise from any doubt of your interest in Christ. Is there anything in your life that is grieving to the Holy Spirit—some secret thing cherished which will

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not bear the light of day? If so, the darkness into which your soul has sunk is easily explained. Is there no Christian lady known to you whose counsel you could ask? Those of riper knowledge and experience are sometimes able to guide us over a darksome bit of road. Read carefully *Disappointed Christians* in our present issue. It should help you, but if not, then kindly write again. We shall be only too glad to hear from you and to offer such assistance as we can.

T. A. F.—Christianity is something more than “holding the flesh in check with all its works.” There is power for that, as Galatians v. 16 plainly shows, but were that all, the Christian life would be shorn of its wealth and brightness. The Holy Spirit is not simply a repressive force, but He is here to lead our hearts to Christ, in Whom we find a spring of endless delight. Christian life, in the power of the Spirit, is exhibited in the Epistle to the Philippians. Look at the third chapter and see how Christ in glory was the absorbing Object of Paul’s heart, and to know Him in an ever-growing measure was his great desire. Everything was dross in the light of a glorified Christ. Oh that it may be so to us! Your other point is dealt with in the first article of our current number.

C. H. M.—Romans vi. 14.—Sin is looked at in this chapter as a principle that rules and reigns. We were its slaves, but from its authority we are set free in that we have died to it in having died with Christ. This is how God views us, and we are called to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Christian is not under the law system which gives no power over sin, as we see by the painful experience described in chapter seven. He is

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under grace—grace that imputes nothing, grace that associates the subjects of it with Christ risen, grace that brings us in holy, happy liberty to God and places us beyond the sphere where sin exercises its dominion. For a further unfolding of this in its practical bearing see our first paper this month.

MERCY AND GRACE.—The word “propitiation,” in Romans III. 25, is really “mercy-seat,” and is so translated in the New Testament of Mr. Darby. It is the meeting-place between a guilty *sinner* and God against Whom he has sinned. Of old the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat. The Throne of Grace is another thing. To this the *saint* approaches with boldness to find mercy for his pilgrim path and seasonable help for every time of need. Secondly, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one and the same, but the different terms express a different thought. He is called the Spirit of Christ because it is by His indwelling we are of Christ and are brought definitely into the Christian state and condition.

Y.D.—Proverbs xxiv. 11, 12.—Does not this passage teach that if we have it in our power to do good and do it not, if we close both eyes and ears and refuse to see the need of the needy and to hear their cry, then God will take notice of our callous conduct and recompense us according to our works? Has it not also a solemn voice for us in reference to the unsaved millions who are being borne on to death and judgment? The glad tidings of pardon, peace, and life have been committed to us to deliver. If we ignore our responsibility, and plead that the giving of our Master’s message is no work of ours, if we think of

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our ease and spiritual enjoyments, and stretch out no hand to rescue the perishing, if we leave it to others to fight the Lord's battles and give them but scant sympathy and help, shall not God consider it and mete out to us the just reward for such culpable behaviour? Of all this, surely, the passage speaks.

As to John XIII. 10, we believe it means that the believer in Christ, the one who has been born of water and of the Spirit, who is clean through the Word (John xv. 3), is so once for all. No one can be born again the second time, any more than he can be washed in the blood of Christ the second time, but all of us need feet-washing. This speaks of the cleansing power of the Word when the heart, conscience, and practical ways of the believer come under its purifying influence. We shall need this so long as we remain on earth.

E. C.—John xv. 2.—“In Me” of this verse is not to be confounded with “in Christ” of Romans VIII. 1, nor is the similitude of the Vine and its branches to be taken as synonymous with that of the Body and its members (1 Cor. XII.). The sixth verse seems to show that it has more to do with profession than with what is vital.

Essex.—In such matters each must act according to his light and measure of faith. From all entanglements the Christian should keep himself, and at all costs maintain a good conscience. You cannot rely too implicitly on God's care, and He will never fail the heart that wholly trusts in Him. But no one can walk in the faith of another. Weigh, then, the matter before God and act accordingly.

IDOLATRY.

“Ephraim shall say : What have I to do any more with idols ?”—HOSEA XIV. 8.

“Children, keep yourselves from idols.”—1 JOHN V. 21.

ARE you, my reader, prepared to take up the language of repentant Israel and say : “What have I to do any more with idols ?”

For idols you doubtless have, though perhaps scarcely aware of it—not a golden image such as Nebuchadnezzar made ; not an idolatrous shrine ; neither do we suppose you worship your ancestors, like the Chinese ; or the sun, as the Parsees do. What we mean is that in the secret chamber of the heart, shut off from the gaze of all beside yourself, except One—in that spot there is something which supremely engages your heart and claims the foremost place—a competitor with God.

Is it not so ? Take ample time to consider. Challenge your secret thoughts, your longings, and aims, and then say whether Christ overshadows and eclipses everything else.

Some will doubtless say a little petulantly, “Oh, yes, I am sure I love Christ better than anything else, and give Him the foremost place.” Stay a little. Do not be quite so sure. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. *Who can know it ?*”

Idolatry takes many forms. There are men who bow down to the intoxicating cup; others worship at the golden shrine of mammon or yield themselves up body and soul to the goddess of pleasure. You may do none of these things, and yet be joined to some idol. You are not fully surrendered to the Lord—not willing that He should have the first claim upon your time, your money, your strength. You have not definitely yielded your body *a living sacrifice*. Something is keeping you back. It may be love of ease, devotion to some other person, or some achievement upon which you have set your mind. Or is it the fear of man—the shrinking from the risk of being thought peculiar? Remember that our own reputation, the good opinion of others, or (to sum it all up in one word) SELF, may prove as much an idol to us as “Moloch, or the star of their god Remphan,” did to Israel.

In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter x., he warns them against idolatry, and brings forward the instance of the children of Israel. Strange to say, there is no mention of the golden calf. The apostle tells us they “lusted after evil things”; that “they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” If we turn to see what the evil things were, we find they were not things evil in themselves—“fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlick.” Why, then, does Paul designate them “evil things”? Because they,

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having God in the desert, *and all that He saw fit to give them*, were not content. They lusted after the food of Egypt. Have not we often chosen to spend half an hour over a novel, or in amusement, rather than in reading from the sacred page written with the finger of God?

How may I know when anything has become my idol? The apostle Paul, in an earlier part of the same epistle from which we have just quoted, supplies us with one infallible test. In verse 12 of chapter VI. he says: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

This is the point: what are the things that have power over us? These are our idols. We heard it said of a certain person the other day—a Christian, too—"Her house is her god." She was always cleaning and always occupied with it. She seemed to live for this and hardly anything else. Is there anything engrossing us in the same way? Covetousness is a very common sin; but this is described in the Word of God as *idolatry*. And who is there that does not covet?

In the light of this can any of us say, "I have no idols"? What loss we suffer, what injury we do ourselves by the idols we cherish! The apostle Paul saw the danger the Christians at Corinth were in from this very cause. Pointing out the snare it had been to Israel, and was likely to be

to them, he cries: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Reader, has not this a voice to you and me? If Satan laid this snare for Eve in innocence; for Israel after they had left Egypt behind; and for the early Christians, though under apostolic teaching, is it not likely that he is preparing in some way the same bait for us?

The all-important question is: how shall we escape?

First of all, are we alive to the danger? Some, alas! know so little of communion with God that they are hardly conscious of their idols, while others are so indifferent that the possession of them causes little or no concern. Their language is not, "What have I to do any more with idols?" but "Let me have them still." Like others we read of, "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 33). There is a solemn word to such in the earlier part of the book of Hosea. Israel left the true God and went after idols, until at last God said, "Ephraim is joined to idols: *let him alone*" (Hosea iv. 17). When such a word goes forth there is little hope for a man.

Reader, have you been robbed of true happiness, deprived of power, and hindered in your usefulness, because your heart has been more or less in a divided state? Shall not your language now be from the depths of a truly contrite heart, "O

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Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name"?

If so, we can answer more fully the question already asked. The only way to escape idolatry is to have our hearts fully engaged with another object.

There is a verse in the New Testament that we should like to put in contrast with the one just quoted from the Old. The two verses stand thus—

"Ephraim is joined to idols : let him alone."—HOSEA IV. 17.

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."—1 COR. VI. 17.

"Joined to idols"; "joined unto the Lord." What a contrast! Then think of the difference in the appendix to each. "Joined to idols: *let him alone.*" "Joined unto the Lord"—"*one spirit.*" Joined to idols means isolation, isolation from God; and this means desolation. ALONE! with dead, dumb idols, from whom can come no sympathy, no love, no pity! A moment's pleasure perhaps; half an hour's gratification; a sweet morsel rolled under the tongue, and then ASHES! But joined to the Lord means an everlasting object of attraction, and the closest intercourse with all that the heart can conceive of excellence—*one spirit*. One worthy of all love, of all the heart's adoration and devotion, of highest service, and humblest submission. One to be ever faithfully followed and

safely imitated—to be near this One—so near as to catch His spirit and be formed by His company; so near as to reach the very shrine of holiness and happiness; so near as to have no clashing interests, no divergent pursuits, no divided affections! This is something of what underlies the words “*one spirit*.”

The case of Ruth, as she clung to Naomi, is an illustration. She was joined to her. Joined heart and soul. For this is what it means to be joined to the Lord. Orpah went back to her country and her gods, but Ruth *clave* to her mother-in-law. “Intreat me not to leave thee,” she says, “or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (Ruth i. 16, 17).

Are we joined to the Lord in this way? If so, there will be no room for idols. Perhaps you once knew something of this attachment to Christ, but have backslidden. Some fair object was allowed to come between you and your Lord, and for many a day He has not been the same to you as once He was. But have you been as happy? Are there no repentings kindling within your heart? Are you beginning to loathe yourself for being so unfaithful? If so, will you not make

the language of Ephraim yours, and say: "What have I to do any more with idols?" Few chapters are more pathetic than the one from which this is a quotation. It describes Israel's return to the One Whom they had forsaken, and Who alone could help them. May it describe yours. There is first of all God's appeal to them to return (*v.* 1); then He gives them the very words in which they should address Him (*vv.* 2, 3), which call forth such a gracious response on His part: "I will heal their backsliding, *I will love them freely*: for Mine anger is turned away from him" (*v.* 4). Then follows in the next verse a description of all that He will be to them, with the blessed results in verses 6-8, God at last getting the fruit He had so long looked for: "From Me is thy fruit found"; the conclusion of all being, "The ways of the Lord are right." Yes, they are, however much inclined we may be to think differently and to forsake Him because they do not please us. We can never find happiness and rest until we return to them.

But there is another class—those who have never yet been deeply exercised upon the subject of idolatry. You have accepted Christ for your sins and as the only way to heaven, but you have not accepted Him in place of self. You are not "joined unto the Lord." You are in reality joined to many other things. If you are at all interested in what is being said, and if you would like

to be different and to know more of what it means to be joined unto the Lord, will you take your Bible and open it at 1 Corinthians VI.? In verses 9, 10 the apostle describes what the believers he is addressing once were by nature. A remarkable change had come. Verse 11 describes it: "Washed . . . sanctified . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The past was gone and settled for ever through Christ and the work He had done, and they had in consequence received the Spirit.

But now as to the present. Though justified and fit for heaven, we are left with the same duties, and it may be the same associates as in our unconverted days. How are we to go on now? What is to be our attitude toward the thousand and one things that make up life here? Verse 12 deals with this very important point. First of all the apostle insists upon perfect Christian liberty. Twice over he repeats, "All things are lawful." He begins, but does not stop there. He has a question to ask. Is what I am spending my time and strength upon "profitable"? Let us each ask ourselves the same question. Then he asks another. Am I brought under the power of any? It may be right, it may be profitable up to a certain point; but is it gaining an undue ascendancy over me? If so, I am becoming joined to it: it is an idol.

Now, what is to help us against this tendency?

The apostle shows us in the next verse. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats," he says, "but God shall destroy both it and them." In other words, these things are right in themselves, but remember, both the life of the mere senses and all that ministers to them are coming to an end. Live for something higher and more enduring. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. You are not *merely* to minister to self-gratification, even in a harmless way (certainly not in one that is harmful), but hold your body as the bondslave of your Lord, ever recognizing that He has the fullest rights over you. Our bodies are ever the members of Christ, for His use and His pleasure. You are to be joined in real affection to the Lord. Then, instead of having idols, you will know what it is to be under the control of the Holy Ghost, for your body is His temple, God having taken possession of you by His Spirit, and you will come to recognize that "ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, which is God's."

If Ruth could cast in her lot so unreservedly with Naomi, are there not reasons ten thousand times stronger why the Lord should completely control our lives? When the apostle Paul summons his beloved converts at Corinth to flee from idolatry, he states the ground for such a command. They were "partakers of the Lord's table."

A cup of blessing was their portion for time and eternity, but they owed it all to the One Who had died for them. His death alone could make this portion theirs. Shall we not say then, "Where Thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried"? We have really owned this in our baptism. Shall we not be true to it? May you, in view of all this, give yourself to Him as you have never done yet, and then how gladly will you remember Him in the breaking of bread. It is only as we are free from idolatry that we can truly remember the Lord. If, on the other hand, we are "joined unto Him," our greatest delight will be to remember Him in the scene where He died.

We cannot close without noticing that the apostle John has something to say about idolatry as well as the apostle Paul. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," are the words with which he closes his first epistle. Does it not seem strange at first that he should conclude in this way? It only proves how indigenous to the soil of the human heart idolatry is, and that even Christians are in danger of being ensnared by it. Idols of wood and stone or gold and silver we may get rid of, and yet remain idolaters. We must take note of the previous verse if we are to understand the force of the apostle's admonition. "We know," he says, "that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that

is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life."

"The Son of God is come," and anything which diverts us from Him is idolatry. Yes, anything, however good in itself, however sacred; whether great or little, it matters not—a kingdom or a bit of ribbon—whether many objects or only one, for one idol, *only one*, will make you an idolater just as much as a hundred. And this is where we often fail, we keep just one. We have dashed down many, but spared one, and we will scarcely allow ourselves to be persuaded it is an idol; and yet at times it hinders our communion with the Son of God, and affects our whole Christian life.

How weighty and important the verse just quoted! We shall do well to ponder it again and again, until its significance is understood, at least to some extent, for who can comprehend it all? The apostle has been speaking much of eternal life—that new life in the Son of God that is given to the believer. Is his mind led back before he closes to what caused man to forfeit his original life? Man once had a life of innocence, but Satan set an object before him outside of God, and induced him to covet a fancied good for himself God had not bestowed. This idol caused man's downfall. Now another life for man has come to light, and though this life has been secured to the believer in God's Son, yet, if that life is to be enjoyed, God's Son must be everything

to us. The more we know of Him the more we enter upon the life that is given us in Him. Is it any wonder, then, we are exhorted to keep ourselves from anything that would intrude? In giving eternal life all that God could give is now given. After God has given so much can the heart go after that which He has not given? If all is now in the Son of God, the Second Man, can we make an object of the first man? This is what is being done on every side of us. Christendom to-day is full of idolatry. May we be preserved from it. But the only thing which can preserve us is to understand the force of the words, "We know that the Son of God is come." If He has come He can have no rival. How well the beloved apostle knew this One for himself—his joy was full. Is it any wonder he desired the same joy to be consciously possessed by all the children of God, and therefore, while setting the full truth before them, cannot close without lifting up his warning voice and saying, "Children, keep yourselves from idols."

Shall we not do so? Shall we not say with deeper emphasis than ever before, in view of the fact that the Son of God is come, and of all that He can be to us: "What have I to do any more with idols?"

R. E.

THE WORSHIPPER CLOTHED.

WE have in previous papers considered the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ in removing our guilt, and enabling us to draw near to God as worshippers with "no more conscience of sins." We have seen, too, the cleansing effect of the Word of God as applied by the Holy Spirit in purifying the *heart* (Acts xv. 9), the *soul* (1 Peter i. 22), and the *body* (Heb. x. 22).

We now ask you to turn again to Exodus xxix., and read verses five to nine. The fourth verse speaks of the cleansing of Aaron and his sons—these of their clothing. To be clothed was a needful part of their fitness to draw near to God as priestly worshippers.

The cleansing removed all defilement, all that hindered their drawing near. The clothing fitted them to approach. The worshipper to-day must know what it is to be clothed.

You remember when the prodigal, in Luke xv., had been welcomed with the kiss of forgiving love, the father commanded the servant to bring forth *the best robe and put it on him*. He must be clothed suitably to the home to which he now belonged. The welcome he received assured him of a son's place in the father's affections. The best robe set him perfectly at ease in his presence. He had done with his rags for

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ever. From this we may gather that when we trust the Saviour, God our Father not only removes all our uncleanness by the precious blood of Christ, but clothes us suitably to His presence.

The "*blood*" speaks of a dead Saviour—of His life given up in death.

The "*robe*" of a living Saviour. The believer is "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

The "righteousness of God" is *upon* all them that believe (Rom. iii. 22). "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

Consider these scriptures. Follow the Saviour from the grave to the home of the Father. An absolutely perfect Man has entered the very presence of God. That Man is none other than God's beloved Son—His elect, in Whom His soul delighted. Dwell upon His righteousness, His holiness, His perfection, His acceptance, and then repeat those words, "*As He is, so are we in this world.*"

Christ is the clothing of every believer. God sees them in Him. All the love that rests upon Him rests upon them. The Father loves them as He loved Christ (John xvii. 23).

Aaron (who is a type of Christ) was identified with his sons—when cleansed—and also when clothed; God thus intimating that it was in His mind that they should be clothed as well as cleansed.

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It is true that Aaron, like Christ, was anointed with the oil of gladness "*above his fellows.*" We are ever delighted that Christ should occupy the supreme place, and would never forget that the One who became man in order to die, is "God *over all, blessed for ever.*" *He is supreme everywhere.* Here, however, it is the supremacy of joy. Would that we could rightly measure the joy it is to the blessed Lord to associate us with Himself in all the holy nearness He now enjoys! We not only draw near in virtue of the blood of Christ, but it is *in Christ Jesus* we are made nigh (Eph. ii. 13), and by a new and living way we approach God as worshippers (Heb. x. 20).

We trust your faith will follow Christ from the cross and the grave, where all your sins were left behind, into heaven itself, where each believer is seen clothed, so to speak, in the varied perfections of Christ. Every believer is taken into favour in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6). The robe of divine righteousness is upon him. It can never be tarnished. It is the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. A righteousness which is of God, and consequently divine and eternal. Just as in cleansing we saw that whilst the blood cleanses us perfectly before God, the water shows that there is to be a moral purification of our thoughts, affections, and ways, *so* the believer is not only seen robed in all the acceptance of Christ before God, but he is also to be clothed in

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the white robes of practical separation from the world. He is counselled to buy "white raiment" (Rev. III. 18). In Sardis a few are commended because they had not "defiled their garments" (Rev. III. 4).

These garments do not refer to the "best robe" of acceptance and divine righteousness, which never can be defiled, but indicate the absolute necessity for every Christian to walk apart from the pleasures and practices of this world. He is to be clothed with humility (1 Peter v. 5). He is to be marked by kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and forgiveness (Col. III. 12, 13). He is to be "sober," putting on the breastplate of faith and love (1 Thess. v. 8). He is not to be *conformed* to this world, but he is to be *transformed* (Rom. XII. 2). These and many other scriptures show clearly that all that Christ *was* as a man down here is to be lived out by Christians before men.

We hope you see these two ways in which the believer is clothed. One is connected with the sovereign grace of God, the other with our responsibility to answer to what grace has done. The priest was clothed, not only to mark his *separation from the world*, but his complete *separation to God*. Henceforth he was to be wholly for God's service. He was to minister in holy things. The nature and character of this ministry we shall look at when we consider his

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consecration. In the meantime we urge you to appropriate the blessedness of "acceptance." Learn to regard yourself as *in Christ Jesus*—then study to answer to it in your walk and ways by purifying yourself even as He is pure (1 John III. 3). By so doing you will "keep yourself in the love of God," and the Spirit of God ungrieved will fill your heart with adoring worship. The moment you see the Word of God condemns anything in your walk and ways, give it up, and thus keep your garments unspotted.

H. N.

 ABOUT BREAKFAST-TIME.

MANY Christians may have noticed that the spiritual prosperity of a household is to a considerable extent influenced by the hour at which it is customary to ring the breakfast-bell, but I do not recollect ever having seen the matter referred to in print.

Yet, as the subject involves issues of some importance, one feels that no apology is needed for referring to it, in the hope that a word of exhortation may be read, not only with approval, but, where most needed, with profit also.

It seems almost an understood thing that the pressure of modern business life has rendered obsolete the old saying, "*He that believeth shall*

not make haste," or at least has relieved it of anything like a literal meaning. In too many Christian homes, near our business centres, the daily round begins with a scramble.

Father and the elder boys must catch the eight-something train to town, and the nominal breakfast hour is fixed to allow of their doing so without having to run to the station.

But use and wont have accustomed the family to assemble somewhat later, and after a further delay for one or another who has overslept that morning, breakfast becomes a most brief and business-like affair.

Then follow the usual—or unusual?—family reading and prayer. In six and a half minutes the business members must be out of the house, and part of a chapter is read at a pace just short of "gabbling." There is no time for note or comment, so a rapid prayer follows on the heels of the reading, and a moment afterwards the bread-winners are hastening to the station.

Such a familiar scene may seem a small matter, and scarcely worthy of description in the pages of a magazine devoted to expository teaching; but there is no doubt at all that it lays bare the secret of one element of weakness in the spiritual life of numerous suburban families. And the failure is usually attributed to the peculiar conditions of modern life, without ever owning that it just comes from the lack of Christian purpose

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and principle to *make time* for what cannot be done in no time.

Now, if that breakfast-bell had rung half an hour earlier . . . !”

“Oh, that would be giving too much time,” some one will say.

Yes, and that is just what is needed. Until the head of the house makes efficient arrangements to have “too much” time available, he may be quite sure of never having enough.

The writer recalls five happy years spent in a household where the breakfast-bell rang with remarkable regularity at seven o'clock to the tick every morning. It is true that occasional groans and grumbles were heard at such an unseasonable start to the day, but the restfulness of having plenty of time to spare after the chapter had been quietly read and discussed quite compensated for the expenditure of moral energy needed to leave the blankets half an hour earlier than might have been.

Our hearts are stirred as we read of the self-sacrificing devotion of some who laid down their lives for the Saviour they loved; but our enthusiasm is mere hollow sentiment if we cannot sacrifice a sleepy half-hour for that same adorable Lord.

And yet the word “sacrifice” seems strangely out of place here, when it may mean an introduction to the presence chamber of the King of

kings. I said to a brother that, too often, in prayer one does not seem consciously in the Lord's presence. He observed that men do not think much of *waiting* for half an hour to gain an audience with an earthly sovereign, and we must often wait to prove the blessedness of the presence of the Lord. Very surely, however, little or nothing of this can be known in family prayer when that is hurried into a last moment of leisure.

Of course each household must adjust itself to its own circumstances, and sometimes the morning reading may be better arranged before the breakfast-bell rings; but where the head of the house rightly values this most helpful custom, he will take the necessary steps to ensure that it is not crowded out of the day's occupation. From personal observation of the home-life in many Christian households, the writer can testify that wherever the morning reading and prayer are liberally arranged for, a peculiar blessing seems to rest upon the family.

And now it seems necessary to add that this family prayer must never be expected to substitute the solitary, individual time alone with God. Each member of the family should be interested to secure this, and very especially the head of the house, who needs to gather the manna both for himself and for those in his tent (Exod. xvi. 16).

S. E. M'N.

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TELL JESUS.

WHEN thou wakest in the morning,
Ere thou tread the untried way
Of the lot that lies before thee
Through the coming busy day—
Whether sunbeams promise brightness,
Whether dim forebodings fall,
Be thy dawning glad or gloomy—
Go to Jesus, tell Him all.

In the calm of sweet communion
Let thy daily work be done ;
In the peace of soul-outpouring,
Cares be banished, patience won ;
And if earth with its enchantments
Seek thy spirit to enthrall,
Ere thou listen, ere thou answer,
Turn to Jesus, tell Him all.

Then, as hour by hour glides by thee,
Thou wilt blessed guidance know ;
Thine own burdens being lightened,
Thou canst bear another's woe ;
Thou canst help the weak ones onward,
Thou canst raise up those that fall ;
But remember, while thou servest,
Still tell Jesus, tell Him all.

And if weariness creep o'er thee
As the day wears to its close,
Or if sudden, fierce temptation
Bring thee face to face with foes :
In thy weakness, in thy peril,
Raise to Heaven a trustful call ;
Strength and calm for every crisis
Come in telling Jesus all.

G. M. TAYLOR.

WAITING FOR FEELINGS.

I KNEW a young man who was well acquainted with his Bible as far as head knowledge is concerned. He had been anxious by fits and starts for years; he had tried to get peace by resolutions, and by struggling, and by praying, and by making efforts to feel sorry for sin, and to love God, and by looking inside to see if he had got faith; and now, had he been asked, he would have said he was waiting for feelings. "What feelings?" "Why, the feelings that people have just before they are converted." He had been looking for something like an electric thrill from head to foot before he would find peace. There are no such feelings at all. It is a pure delusion of the devil to keep anxious ones from looking to Christ at once. Right feelings come after we have believed in Jesus. We must trust the word of Jesus without any feelings at all, and depend on Him. We shall never be saved if we do not take a step in advance of our feelings. This young man was waiting for the feelings.

One day he had been thinking over John III. 16, and he lay down in bed at night, but not to sleep. The Spirit of God was at work in his heart. He thought, "God loved the world." That is wonderful. He loved the world—the wicked world that defied Him and dishonoured Him and laughed His mercies to scorn. And He "so loved

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the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." He gave His Son, His only begotten Son, to die for His enemies, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Why, he thought, that is the very thing I want—I want not to perish, but to have everlasting life. And "whosoever"—why, that means me as well as any other person. And so I shall not perish, but have everlasting life, if I only believe on Christ.

And then and there he was enabled to believe it and to rest on Christ. He leaped from his bed. Could this be conversion? So simple a thing as this? Was it just believing that God loved the world and sent His Son, and just resting on Christ? "Yes," whispered God's Spirit. "Why, I have been waiting for months for feelings. How foolish I have been!" And down he got on his knees, and thanked God for converting him, and asked Him to enable him to live like a Christian. And he looks back on that night as the night of his conversion. *Extracted.*

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H. M.—Acts XI. 14.—The perplexity of your friend arises from his not discerning the true meaning of "*Salvation*" in its full Christian sense. If it be limited to the safety of the soul for eternity it is indeed hard to see how Cornelius needed to hear words whereby he and his house should be saved unless we

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deny any vital work of God in his soul at all. But such a denial is in itself perplexing. It leads us to inquire whether a man can be devout and prayerful, whether he can fear God, and from pure motives give largely to the poor, without his ever having been born again of God's Spirit. Now all these admirable things were true of this pious Roman soldier. A Gentile by birth, and probably a heathen in religion, he had been brought, like another Gentile of an earlier day, to know the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings he had come to trust (Ruth II. 12). Was all that nothing? Could it have taken place without any abiding work of God's Spirit in his soul? Surely not. We look, then, on Cornelius as a converted man—not converted to Christianity, but from heathenism to the Hebrew faith—a man truly born of the Spirit. But he had yet to hear the gospel which proclaims to Jew and Gentile alike, the forgiveness of sins to every one who believes in Jesus. These glad tidings Peter preached and Cornelius heard with “the hearing of faith,” and it was followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was salvation—the forgiveness of sins—the soul's acceptance with God in Christ risen—a *known, enjoyed, abiding state*, which the Jew's religion, even in its highest privileges, offered to none. Here is something greater than the soul's safety, something beyond the new birth, though necessarily involving these. Of course, we repeat, every one born of the Spirit is safe in view of eternity, but to limit the force and meaning of “*Salvation*” to safety is largely to miss the import of it. How many there are in our day exactly as Cornelius was before he heard the gospel of his salvation. Pious, God-fearing, kind, prayerful, and

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yet not in the conscious possession of salvation revealed in the gospel, and enjoyed by all who receive it in the faith of a little child.

J. F.—Yes, at the foot of page 78 the reference should be to 2 Cor. VIII., IX., and not to the first epistle.

BELIEVER.—Exodus xxxiii. 20.—No man can see God in His unveiled glory and live. Read in this connexion 1 Timothy vi. 16. But, as the passage in Exodus implies, every manifestation of God in Old Testament days was partial. Whether He talked to Adam in Eden, or to Abram or to Moses, His glory was hid, for mortal eyes could not behold it. May not the words in John i. 18, to which you refer, have a moral significance? God had never been manifested in all the glory of His name and nature. Gleams of that glory shone forth in type, symbol, and prophecy, but the full revelation of God tarried for the coming of the Only Begotten Son. *He* has revealed Him. In the person of the Son, in His words and ways here below, God has been perfectly made known. “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John xiv. 9).

L. M. N.—The doctrine of Romans vi. is that the believer has died to sin in that he has died with Christ, and now he is called to reckon accordingly both on the side of death and life—dead to sin, alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Happy is it when this reckoning is maintained, so that in daily life we live to God and hold ourselves dead indeed unto sin. In 2 Cor. iv. 10 the thought is somewhat different. The apostle, in carrying out the ministry entrusted to him, was in constant peril. He was always delivered unto

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death on Christ's account—troubled on every side, persecuted, cast down by the ruthless hand of man, always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus—following on in the path the Master trod. But this only served to keep in the place of nothingness all that was merely human, so that the life, the character of Jesus might shine out in him undimmed. Col. III. 5 is hardly the same. Dead and risen with Christ is the point of view here, and as such our members—evil things—are to be mortified. We are to have done with them, we put them to death in a practical way. The sufferings of Christ in Phil. III., needless to say, are not His atoning sufferings. In these no one could have fellowship. They were His alone. But He also suffered for righteousness' sake, and also as the faithful and true Witness—in these sufferings His servants may have part if the will of God be so.

J. J. B.—Romans v. 21.—Grace means love in activity, love working in the midst of evil, and this verse shows that grace is now enthroned. Grace reigns and holds its benignant sway, not at the expense of righteousness, but in virtue of it. It is righteousness that has placed grace upon the throne. This never could have been save by the Cross of Christ. All that divine righteousness required in respect of sin His Cross has furnished, and now righteousness not only raises no barrier to the sinner's blessing, but prepares the way for it by making grace supreme. Sin, Adam's sin, brought in death and condemnation—that was the result of its rule and reign. Grace, in the person of the last Adam and through His obedience, now reigns, and its end is eternal life. Grace reigns, too, in the heart of the

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believer where sin once had its seat, and in the place where the thorn and thistle grew we now see the myrtle and the rose.

A. S.—Lev. iv. 12; vi. 26.—The solution of your difficulty is found in chap. vi. 30. There was a difference in these sin and trespass offerings. “No sin offering *whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle . . . to reconcile withal in the holy place shall be eaten.*” This was the case if the priest or the congregation sinned. But if the blood be *not* so dealt with, then the priest should eat it in the holy place. This determined whether it was to be eaten or not. (2) Rev. vii. 16. The sun and burning heat mentioned here are not to be understood literally; they are used in a symbolic sense. The sun is a symbol of a great ruling power, whose hand had been against this multitude of saints seen now in white robes with palm branches in their hand. They had come out of the great tribulation. Henceforth the consolations of God should be theirs, and persecution or tribulation should never light upon them more. (3) Luke x. 28. The question was not that of an honest inquirer. “What shall *I do* to inherit eternal life?” Any one taking that position can only be referred back to the law—love God perfectly and your neighbour as yourself. But who can claim blessing on that ground? Not one. His second question betrays an uneasy conscience, and in the parable that answers it the true source of salvation is set forth as well as our forlorn and desperate condition. Vain for a wounded, robbed, and dying man to ask, “What shall *I do*?” Grace, exemplified in the good Samaritan, came to him where he was and did everything. That Samaritan is Jesus.

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W. C.—We must carefully observe the distinction between the Lord's day and the ancient Sabbath—the latter is the seventh and the former the first day of the week. The Sabbath was hallowed from the beginning (Gen. ii. 3), and afterwards given to the Israelites as a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt (Deut. v. 15) and a sign of God's covenant with them. On this the prophets insist (Ezek. xx.; Exod. xxxi. 13). But it is of the utmost importance to remember that the sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people does not belong to us, and (what is more important still) that the Lord Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark ii. 28), a statement without meaning if He was to do nothing with regard to it. It has been sought, with much trouble, to prove that the seventh day and the first are one and the same. A single remark refutes this utterly—it is that the Word of God calls this last the first, in contrast with the seventh (Matt. xxviii. 1). In the New Testament the first day of the week is distinguished from all others in divers manners. The Lord was raised on that day and appears in the midst of His disciples. The week following He does the same. In Acts xx. 7, the first day of the week is marked as the day on which they gathered together to break bread. In 1 Corinthians xvi., Christians are exhorted to lay by according to what they had earned, each first day of the week. In Revelation it is positively called the Lord's day—that is its distinctive name. So if we hold to the Word of God we are forced to say that the first day of the week is distinguished as the Lord's day. This, and not the Sabbath, is the day which was privileged for us. It is only right to say that for our remarks we are largely indebted to J. N. D.

IS CHRISTIANITY AS GOOD AS YOU EXPECTED?

“**L**AND ahead!”

The cry rang round the ship, and the voyagers strained their eyes to get a glimpse of the shores of England—a welcome sight indeed, after the long, hot journey from India.

A lady lifted her child to get her first view of the country she had heard so much of. England, in that child's thoughts, was a kind of enchanted land. She had often heard of its beautiful scenes and listened to tales from its wonderful history, and she had for months been looking forward to seeing “Home” (as her parents called it) with all the eagerness of childhood.

And now England was really before her. Its cliffs loomed up through the grey mist. In an hour or two she would be there!

But a look of disappointment had settled upon the child's expectant face, and she murmured—

“Is that England? It does not look much!”

Has there been anything similar to this in your spiritual experience, my reader?

In your old, unconverted days, you heard Christian friends speak of the joy and the peace that were theirs. They seemed so happy, their faith was so real and their enjoyment so apparent.

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It gave the lie to the current notion that Christianity means a life of melancholy and mopishness.

Then came your own conversion. Burdened with sins and harried by fears, you tremblingly lifted your eye to the Saviour. You ventured to believe that His precious blood had power to cleanse away even sins of such deep dye as yours. Weary, heavy-laden, guilty, lost, you cast yourself at His feet, and lo! your burden rolled away. His own Word assured you of forgiveness.

Relieved and thankful, you nevertheless realized that you had but *begun* to live. Life, in its full meaning, yet lay before you. It was a *terra incognita* yet to be explored. But remembering the testimony of Christian friends, you looked forward with joyful anticipation to your future experiences. "I am in for a time of exceeding joy," you said to yourself.

How long ago was that? Six months? A year? Five years? Ten? Twenty?

Look back through the period that has passed since your conversion, and tell me, Has Christianity come up to your expectations? Have there not been times when you have been sorely and bitterly disappointed? You have no misgivings as to your salvation; you do not doubt God's love to you; you would rather lose life itself than turn away from your precious Saviour; yet, underneath all, has there not sometimes been an

uneasy feeling that *something is wrong somewhere*? The joy of soul of which others spoke has not come to you. Or if it has, it has been a fitful thing, coming to-day and gone to-morrow. This is hardly what you anticipated. It is no good disguising the fact; *you have been disappointed*.

What shall I say to you? Let me ask, What should I have said had I stood upon the ship's deck beside the little girl, and heard her words of disappointment as she gazed upon England for the first time?

"Child!" I should have said, "that *is* England, yet it is *not* England. It is nothing else but England, yet it is not the whole of England that you see. In order to know England you must land. Then wander through the vales of Devonshire, among the hills of Derbyshire, by the lakes of Cumberland. Look on the gardens of Kent, the orchards of Worcestershire, the waving corn-fields of Essex. View its rivers, its cities, its castles, its factories, its mines. Behold its sea-girt coasts, its lovely landscapes, its densely thronged hives of industry. Then England will grow upon you, and you will acknowledge that the half had not been told."

Now it is possible that you have been looking upon the good things of Christianity as that child looked upon England from the deck of the ship—from an *outside* point of view. You have left the far country and returned to the fatherland, but

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you have known little more than its grey cliffs. Hence your sense of disappointment.

In order to really *enjoy* the blessings of Christianity they have to be *appropriated*.

When Ruth arrived in the land of Canaan for the first time, she was warmly welcomed. Harvest was in full swing, and she found herself in the midst of plenty. But had she sat at home with folded arms, she might have starved in spite of the abundance around her. Day by day she had to go forth to glean. That is, she had to *appropriate* that which was so freely offered to her.

So with the children of Israel. The promised land lay before them. North, south, east, and west, it was given to them for an inheritance. But they really only possessed and enjoyed as much as they planted the soles of their feet on. They had to *appropriate* what God had bestowed upon them.

"I have touched the gold," exclaimed a diver, who had just come up from a wreck lying in the depths.

Yes, he had *touched* it, but had not brought a particle of it up with him.

In like manner it is only too possible to *touch* the blessed things which the grace of God has made ours, without seizing them, possessing them, appropriating them. It is possible to read about them in the Scriptures, to hear and talk about

them, without having them as the enjoyed portion of our souls.

Now there are two great principles in connexion with Christianity which I desire to bring before you, and I think that you will find it helpful to consider them.

The first is this: That all the blessing that God has for us is *in Christ*. It is set forth to our view in Him, must be learned by the study of Him, and is only to be enjoyed as we are consciously with Him in the secret of our souls.

Do we desire to learn the measure of our clearance from sin and our acceptance with God? Look at Christ! Once, as the Sin-bearer, He was charged with our offences; but as risen, He is clear of all that He took upon Him on our behalf, and He is before God in infinite acceptance. Viewing Him thus, we see the measure of our own clearance and acceptance.

Do we speak of God's wonderful love to us? Wonderful indeed it is, but we can get no idea of it, save as we contemplate *Christ*. Expressed, first of all, in giving Him to die, Divine love now finds its rest in Him. He is a worthy Object for the Father's love, and that love rests in all its unclouded fulness upon Him. But that same love rests upon *us* (John xvii. 23). We learn the greatness of the Father's love to us in viewing Christ as the Object of it.

Do we think of the blessed relationship in

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which we are placed with regard to God? We see it fully set forth in Christ. The relationship that was His from all eternity He has taken up as the Risen Man in a new way, so that He can have us with Him in that relationship. He makes us His brethren (John xx. 17; Heb. ii. 12). But in order to understand our relationship as sons to the Father, we must regard *Christ*. In Him we learn the nature and infinite blessedness of it.

Truth held apart from Christ becomes mere theology or philosophy, and there are few things more deadening to the soul than that. We can make real progress in the truth, and enjoy the heritage that is ours, only as we contemplate *Him*. This is the first great principle I would press.

The second is that by the Holy Spirit alone can we appropriate and enjoy what is ours in Christ. Years of study, persevering efforts of every kind, the diligent reading of books and constant attendance at meetings, will not suffice.

In Ezekiel's vision of the great river, it was "the man that had the line in his hand" who conducted him, stage by stage, out to the middle of the river. For us the Holy Spirit is the One with the measuring line. On our behalf He searches the deep things of God (1 Cor. ii. 10). Step by step He conducts us through the waters of God's great river of blessing.

AS YOU EXPECTED?

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He has come down from the risen Christ to be in us the means of enjoying that which is set forth in Him.

These, then, are the two important things: learning the character and measure of our blessing by the contemplation of Christ; and being subject to the Holy Spirit, that by Him we may appropriate and enjoy it all. Apart from these two things, our Christianity lacks the element of *reality*. We may be Christians, but our knowledge of the kernel of Christianity is that, more or less, of an outsider.

Hence the prevailing disappointment. Such Christians are missing the very cream of Christianity. What untold numbers there are of such! They live and die, and go to be with Christ, without ever having really tasted of the distinctive joys of Christianity.

May God in His mercy arouse such to see what they are missing, and may He help us all to keep *Christ* more constantly in view, and be increasingly subject to the Holy Spirit, that soul-satisfaction may be ours instead of the bitter disappointment over which so many have to mourn.

H. P. B.

WHETHER OF THE TWAIN?

“I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, . . . and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor?”—ISAIAH LI. 12.

O MY soul! whither dost thou direct thy gaze to-day? To the hills, or higher? To the winds and waves, or to Him Who walks in majesty upon the swelling tide? To the scattered flock, or to the Shepherd of the sheep? To the saints, or to the Saviour? To the Church militant and mutilated, or to her mighty Head up there in heaven? Whether of the twain? Is God or is man the commanding object of thy vision?

“Why look ye one upon another?” said Jacob to his hunger-bitten sons. Reuben was as powerless in the matter of supply as was Benjamin; all of them were consciously impotent. They could render no kind of help! To whom, then, should they have looked? To Joseph!

Yes, but there was something inexplicable in Egypt's mysterious ruler. They feared him, and shrank from journeying thither. Yet it was Joseph or starvation: it was Joseph and blessing. So to-day, “Why do ye look one upon another?” when the middle verse of the Bible—the fulcrum of all—says, “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes” (Ps. CXVIII. 9).

J. W. S.

LESSONS FROM THE PSALMS.

PSALM LXXXIV.

THIS beautiful psalm is divided into three parts of four verses each, each part being marked out by the word *Selah*.

In the first the psalmist speaks as one who is at a distance from the tabernacles, but his heart is there. In the second he is on his way thither, while in the third he has arrived there. But however lovely the tabernacles are in his estimation, they are so, because they are the dwelling-place of God; and nothing can satisfy his heart but God—the living God. He exclaims in the second and third verses: “*My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God, . . . even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.*”

The reference to the sparrow and the swallow should be read as a parenthesis, and not as connecting the birds with the altars. It is as though the psalmist said, “The most insignificant of birds has a home, and the most wandering of birds a nest, where she may lay her young, but I have no home here: my house, my home, my heart, are yonder at the tabernacles.”

What is home? Not simply a place. A child knows that. I knew a young girl in Stafford just

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old enough to go out to service. Four years afterwards I chanced to meet her in Bristol. Full of glee, she said to me, "I am going to have a holiday. I'm going to see mother." "Oh, indeed," I replied; "please give my respects to Mr. B——." She answered, "I'm not going to Stafford, I'm going to Chester. Mother lives in Chester now." Ah, the mother made the home to her, not the place. What would heaven be without Jesus? No heaven at all. It is Jesus Who makes heaven to be heaven.

And what is a Christian? A man born from above (John III. 3-7, margin) and who is going above (1 Thess. IV. 16, 17). It is the knowledge of his origin and destiny that makes him practically a stranger and a pilgrim. Alas! many Christians don't know where they come from, though, thank God, they may know where they are going, and so many speak of being pilgrims and strangers. The Holy Scriptures speak of strangers and pilgrims. What is the difference between a stranger and a pilgrim? A man came from Paris yesterday. He is a stranger here. He expects to return to-morrow. Then he is also a pilgrim.

A Christian on earth is like a man in a coal-pit. He has come from above, and hopes to return above. There is no light in the pit, but what he takes with him. So the Lord says to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." There is no air

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fit to breathe in the pit but what is pumped down the shaft to the miner. So the believer is preserved by the Spirit in communion with the living, glorified Lord, breathing, as it were, the very atmosphere of heaven. The pitman has to work diligently in the pit, because he will receive wages at the top according to his industry at the bottom. So will the Christian receive his reward above, according to his fidelity on earth. But not according to his usefulness or success. The Lord does not say, Be thou useful unto death, but *faithful*; nor will He say, Well done, good and successful servant, but good and *faithful* servant. While the collier is working at the bottom of the pit, he never thinks of settling and making his home there, in that cold, dark, dirty, dismal place. He is thinking of his wife, his children, his house, his garden, his field, his relations, his friends, his country, at the top. And so the Christian, led by the Spirit, as one dead and risen with Christ, is now seeking those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and setting his affection on them, and not on things on the earth (Col. III. 1-3). And the collier listens for the sound of three knocks made on the rod at the top, distinctly heard at the bottom, and then gets into the lift, by which, without any effort of his own, he is wound up to the top. So the Christian is waiting here till he hears the assembling shout, the archangel voice, and the

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trump of God; and then, without any effort of his own, he will be caught up with others, who have been raised or changed, to be for ever with the Lord.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still [continuously] praising Thee." Heaven is not for the future only, but God would have the believer to enjoy heaven to-day. He would have the place where Christ is, the home of our hearts, because, as it has been said, it is Christ who makes heaven heaven.

All things that God or man could wish,
In Jesus richly meet.

Beloved, where are our hearts? Nothing can satisfy the heart of God or man but Christ Himself. Therefore will there be hearts unsatisfied for ever and ever. Where are we dwelling? Where do I live? Where do you live?

A little girl asked a stranger, visiting the house, where he came from. He replied somewhat enigmatically, "From heaven." She was abashed and retired. Presently she returned and said, "Please, where do you live?" *That* question touched him. We read of dwellers on earth, and dwellers in heaven (Rev. XI. 10; XII. 12). To which class do I belong? If dwelling in spirit in heaven, this psalm says I shall be praising now. Not only will our eternal occupation be praise (Ps. CXLV. 1, 2), every pulse of our hearts beating with His

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when with Him in the glory, but now, on earth, the believer can enter in spirit into the enjoyment of the distant and the future, and sing unto Him Who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; ascribing the glory to Him, and desiring Him to have dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee." The believer is exhorted (Eph. vi. 10) to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, for which it is necessary to take the weak and dependent place, like a babe. And the Lord said to Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness," to which Paul responded saying, "Most gladly *therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . .* For when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

"In whose heart are the ways." This blessed man, who dwells in spirit where the Lord is, who is ever praising Him, and whose strength is in Him, accepts everything in his pilgrim path as directly from the Lord Himself. Knowing that all his steps are counted (Job xxxi. 4), and that even the very hairs of his head are all numbered (Luke xii. 7), he would not have a circumstance altered, not a single thing changed, in his pathway, if he believed it would be contrary to the mind and will of God. God's ways are in his

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heart. He says, "God loves me, and always does the very best for me." And thus his very trials and sorrows tend to draw forth his praise. How often have we proved that it takes trials and infirmities to make us sing. We do not read of angels singing in the Scriptures, but shouting for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job xxxviii. 4-7), praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest," when the Saviour was born (Luke ii. 14), and with a loud voice celebrating in heaven the worthiness of the Lamb (Rev. v. 11, 12). They know nothing of the sorrows of our nature, the ups and downs of human life, its cares and vicissitudes. But, thank God, as the harper screws up the strings of his harp to bring forth its music, so our God strings us up to sound forth His praise.

The only record we have of Paul and Silas singing was when they had been beaten with many stripes, thrust into the inner prison, and their feet fastened in the stocks. And the only record we have of the disciples singing was when their hearts were filled with sorrow. The Lord said to them, "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart" (John xvi. 6). "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mark xiv. 26). And the Lord thrice desired three of them to watch with him one hour, and thrice He found them sleeping for sorrow (Matt. xxvi. 36-45; Mark xiv.

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37, 40, 41 ; Luke xxii. 45). We read of Solomon in all his glory, and of David and all his afflictions ; but God never elicited from Solomon's heart such psalms as He did from David's heart. David said, "I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy." Why, David ? "Because Thou hast considered my troubles, Thou has known my soul in adversities" (Psalm xxxi. 7).

"Who passing through the valley of Baca [or tears] make it a well ; the rain also filleth the pools." "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38). As the rain descends from heaven and fills the underground, natural pools, which feed the water springs, so this blessed man, like the thirsty earth, having drunk in the grace which is from above, becomes, as he passes through this vale of tears, a fountain of refreshing to thirsty souls around ; like the woman of Sychar, who having now within her soul an eternal spring of living water, hastens to communicate the blessing to her fellow-citizens.

"They go from strength to strength." We are exhorted to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And it is only through occupation with Christ Himself that we grow in acquaintance with Him and become like Him. But we all, looking on the glory of

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the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. III. 18, New Trans.). And it is thus the Christian goes from strength to strength, from glory to glory now. *Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.* We are perfect in beauty through His comeliness which the Lord hath put upon us (see Ezek. xvi. 14), and He is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24).

"O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob." How characteristic of the believer; continuing instant in prayer, and watching in the same with thanksgiving (Col. iv. 2); praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Eph. vi. 18). 9th verse.—*"Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed (Thy Christ).* Knowing that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Rom. VIII. 1) and that we are complete in Him (Col. II. 10), the believer hides himself behind his Shield, and prays God to look upon His Christ, in Whom he is. 10th verse—*"For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand."*

To spend one sacred day, where God and saints abide,
Affords diviner joy, than thousand days beside.

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The title of this psalm ascribes it to the sons of Korah. At the time of Korah's rebellion Moses said to the congregation, "Depart from the tents of these wicked men"; and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah's company; notwithstanding the children of Korah died not (see Numbers xvi. 23-34; xxvi. 11). The prophet Samuel was a descendant of Korah (1 Chron. vi. 22, 28, 33, 37), and, when a child, opened the doors of the house of the Lord (1 Sam. iii. 15). So the psalmist writes, "*I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*" The Christian, in the consciousness of his dignity as a son of God, and in the prospect of the glory which awaits him, can afford to take the lowest place now on earth, knowing also that he that *humbleth himself* shall be exalted (Luke xiv. 11).

God is the source of life and light and warmth. He is our Shield from all the power of the enemy; His present grace and future glory are the free fruit of His love; and He withholds no present good from them that *walk uprightly*.

"O LORD OF HOSTS, BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT
TRUSTETH IN THEE." J. G.

THE JOY OF PRESENT SALVATION.

COMPLETE salvation is always connected with the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. As it is written, "Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also 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" (Phil. III. 20, 21).

In this sense salvation is, of course, yet future. Hence we are exhorted to put on "for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 8). In Romans VIII. 24 we are said to be saved by (in) hope. At the end of Hebrews IX. we read that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This is clearly final and complete.

Though we are still in the place where the trying of our faith goes on, thank God it will not always be so. The day of salvation is at hand, when God shall bruise Satan under our feet.

This is greatly calculated to cheer the saints in the midst of suffering and danger, and to steady them in their journey heavenward. None of us like suffering and persecution. Yet we cannot escape it in some form if we are faithful to our rejected and absent Lord. God allows it that we might be purified from things here, and made partakers of His holiness.

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That we need salvation every day is a matter of common Christian experience. Were it not that we have a living Saviour in heaven, the great High Priest of His people, Who is able to save us right to the end we might many a time despair. But "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). "We shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). This shews the constancy of His love, notwithstanding all our weakness. Indeed it is because we are weak that we receive His continual succour.

"Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter i. 5). Mark this word well. "*Kept*" by the power of *God*," not human power. Who or what can prevail against Him? And it is "through faith." Faith never leads us to self-occupation, but gives us an object outside ourselves. That object is Christ, Who meets us in all our infirmities. He put forth his hand and saved sinking Peter. Peter no doubt realized the love of the Lord in a special way at that moment.

It is through Him that grace is ever ministered to us in time of need. This is the reason we are told to come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Thus we obtain daily salvation from all that would overcome us and mar our testimony for Christ here.

This does not in any way weaken our responsibility to work out our own salvation with fear

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and trembling. It rather enables us to do so. Grace only can enable us to fulfil our responsibilities. To work out our own salvation implies subjection to the will of God in everything. It is clear that *obedience* is the secret of it.

Obedience in the saint is the way of safety from the sorrows of his own will and from Satan's present power. If the will of the flesh is allowed to work in us it becomes the means of our spiritual destruction. Satan would never get power over us if we were subject to God's will. This is true humility, and God ever supports the humble and sets Himself against the proud.

Plainly this is what the apostle meant when he said, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always *obeyed*, not as in my presence only . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. II. 12). The saint that is in the line of God's pleasure is always safe. "He keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Each of these views of salvation has its own place, but, thank God, it is also true that everyone who is in the enjoyment of peace with God, and has received God's Holy Spirit, can truthfully and fearlessly say, "*I am saved.*"

In this sense salvation is the result of a work done for us. I am not overlooking the fact that

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a work has to be done in us or we never should appropriate the work done for us. We are said to be saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. This is the sovereign act of God's mercy. "According to His mercy HE SAVED us" (Titus III. 5). Both are necessary and both are true.

In another scripture Paul says, "By grace ARE YE SAVED through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. II. 8). Grace brought salvation to us when we were in a state of sin and death, and thus under the dominion of Satan. What we call death would have had no terror for us apart from sin. It is because we are sinners that we dread to die. To meet God in our sins would be eternal judgment.

In the death of Christ our sins have all been judged and put away, and the power of death completely broken. Every adversary has been silenced. "The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Christ risen out of death is the fullest evidence of it.

And now it is *those who are in the enjoyment of present salvation* who can say and sing. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously" (Exod. xv.). Perfect peace is the result—peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. Though Israel needed salvation all through the wilderness, that did not

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alter the fact that they had been saved from Pharaoh's power.

When David wrought his great victory and triumphed over Goliath, he *saved* Israel. They rejoiced in a present salvation. Goliath was dead and could no longer terrify them. They could ever look back to David's victory as the means of their salvation from the Philistines.

The teaching of the New Testament is plain enough. When Paul said to the awakened jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," it surely had a *present* application. The man believed and rejoiced. Had he not known a present salvation he would not have been filled with joy. Besides, it is clear that no true believer can ever finally perish. "They shall *never* perish." Hence the scripture is plain, "Who *hath* saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works" (2 Tim. i. 9).

So "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which *are saved* it is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). Such will never apostatize. They may have to learn their own weakness in many a way and with much bitterness and deep sorrow, but the One Who *died* to save them *lives* to save them to the very end. The Shepherd found the lost one to bring it home and He shall do it with rejoicing. "We shall be saved from wrath through Him." This, though future, is spoken with Divine certainty of

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all who are now justified by His blood. We shall be in the Father's house before the wrath of God falls on those who have incurred it.

The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. We have no wisdom in Divine things apart from what they teach. Our wisdom will be shown in laying hold of what they say and standing firmly by it. God delights to encourage the weak, and Scripture is full of encouragement for all such. So the Lord said to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith HATH SAVED thee ; go in peace" (Luke VII. 48, 50).

Peace to her would be the result of believing the testimony of the Lord. Had she been asked if she were forgiven and saved, what could she have said but that she was, and that she relied on the Saviour's word for it ?

May the Lord encourage all timid souls, and enable them, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to receive His gracious word for themselves. Ours is indeed salvation that delivers from guilt and fear of death, and gives us the assurance of a safe conduct through the wilderness, and of final deliverance and conformity to Christ in glory. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. VII. 25).

P. W.

WORTH DOING.

“Jesus said, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”—MATT. IV. 19.

SOME young people tell me there is so little they can do for their Lord.

To these I would say, Go to Him in prayer about it, and if you truly acknowledge Jesus as Lord, He will direct your steps.

One way of holding out the Word of Life to others has lately suggested itself, in which I think many might find employment, if led to do so.

Perhaps you may have noticed the streams of funerals, especially on a Saturday afternoon, which go to the burying-places that surround our towns and cities.

If some clear and helpful gospel books could be placed in each funeral coach as it stands waiting outside the little chapels during the burial service, I think seed might be sown which would bring forth fruit for eternity.

Thousands of sleeping souls might be reached at a time when perhaps they are hearing the voice of God speaking to them through the loss of a loved one.

I need hardly say in this work that great care should be taken not to intrude on the grief of the mourners.

Let us remember that seventy per cent of the people in London never enter a so-called place of worship, nor care for the things of God, and that

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Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is *not* its goal.

May we, then, who through God's great mercy are saved for eternity, seek to be up and doing, that others also may know Him Who has said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

C. V.

 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LEARNER —The more we study "the Lord's Prayer" the more we shall see how beautiful, comprehensive, and perfect it is. But whether the Lord intended it to be used as *a form* is another matter. We hardly think He did. It admirably suited the disciples while the Lord was with them, but with His rejection, death, resurrection, and ascension into glory a great change came. Since then we stand on different ground, having Church hopes rather than hopes proper to Jews who feared God, and were attached to Messiah here on earth. Our prayers are indeed addressed to our God and Father, but now *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and while earnestly longing for the day when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven, yet with the revelation of the Church's position and hopes we see that our place is in heaven with Christ. The Father's house rather than the kingdom, and the rapture of the saints as described at the end of 1 Thessalonians iv.—these are our immediate hope, though our spiritual horizon broadens out and embraces not only the rapture but also the future kingdom, and the eternal state of Revelation xxi. 1-5. The apprehension of these great truths will help you to

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determine whether "the Lord's Prayer" was given to be used alike by Jewish disciples and by those who occupy Christian ground.

ANON.—Luke xv. 11–32.—If the dispensational bearing of the parable be inquired into, there can be no doubt that the elder brother represents the Jewish people to whom many and great privileges had been given. Hence the words, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." If any ask what those privileges were we refer them to Romans III. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5. The younger son represents the Gentiles. But taking a wider view, the elder son stands for any proud pharisaic heart, resting in its own righteousness and murmuring against grace shown to the fallen and lost. Too much stress should not be laid on the word "Son." It does not entitle us to regard the younger as a backslider. Such a view would give rise to serious doctrinal difficulties.

J. F. K.—You strangely misunderstand us. Do you really believe that we hold and teach that a man may commit the most atrocious crimes and yet boast that he is a child of God and a saved soul notwithstanding? Do you seriously believe that we hold and teach anything of the kind? Such a doctrine we detest and abhor. But we do heartily accept the conclusion to which Paul brings us in his grand argument of Romans III., namely, that a man is justified by faith *without the deeds of the law*. We italicize those words because they precisely establish the truth you seek to overthrow. We also believe that we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. III. 24), and that this great blessing is bestowed on "him that worketh not,

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but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5). Should our steadfast adherence to the great doctrines of divine grace expose us to your further strictures, we must patiently endure them. We shall find some consolation in reflecting that the apostle Paul himself, in his day, suffered in a similar fashion only much more severely.

(ii.) You seem to think that a Christian man can only be kept from wickedness by the fear of being ultimately lost. Are you a stranger to that grace of which we read in Titus II. 11.—the grace that brings salvation and which teaches that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"? Are you ignorant of the fact that the true believer in Christ has received a new life, the nature of which is to love holiness and hate sin? Do you not know that he has also received the Holy Spirit, Whose office it is not only to give him deliverance from the power of sin in his daily life but to lead him ever on in the knowledge of Christ and to conform him to His image? Surely in past years you must have experienced something of the power and blessedness of the things of which we speak. Perhaps you have lost it, as the Galatians did, by being caught in the meshes of some religious system which, promising you liberty, is fast binding you hand and foot, putting out your eyes, and making you its abject slave as Samson was of the Philistines.

(iii.) You could not speak as you do of the Blood of Jesus did you understand the teaching of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer tells us that "there is no more offering for sin"—a statement that destroys with one blow the doctrine of *the Mass*, in which it is boasted that it is identical in every particular with the true Offering of Christ at Calvary. The same chapter tells us that by One Offering we have been "perfected for ever"—the conscience cleared once for all by a Sacrifice that can

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never be repeated and whose worth can never pass away. And, further, it assures us that God will remember our sins and iniquities no more (*v.* 17). Precious, divine testimony! Are we not to believe it? If we do not we make God a liar.

J. S.—The circumstances you describe almost amount to an unwritten law from which no exemption seems possible. We could not blame anyone for satisfying its demands if his conscience was not offended by his doing so. Nor should we consider it a barrier to his reception among God's people. We only give our judgment according to present light, others might take a different view.

In the second case, censure is assuredly called for, but not, we think, extreme action. For a believer to marry an unconverted man is sad enough, and a harvest of sorrow often follows. But to exclude the offender from Christian fellowship is a serious step, not to be lightly taken.

E. D. M.—Matthew *xii.* 20.—This verse has been long thought to apply to the weak and trembling who are ever tenderly dealt with by the Saviour. But viewed in connexion with its context, we are inclined to think this interpretation a mistake. The whole passage refers to Christ, despised and rejected by the leaders of the Jewish nation (*v.* 14). He withdraws Himself and charges others not to make Him known. Not judgment now but forbearance towards his foes is what He exhibits—not the arts of the demagogue, for He shall not strive, nor cry: neither shall His voice be heard in the streets. It is true His adversaries are but bruised reeds easily broken, or smoking flax easily quenched, but they are borne with till the time for judgment comes, and then they will be swept away and His kingdom established. The remarks in a previous answer refer to Matthew *xii.* 40, not to *xii.* 20—an error of the printers.

THE HUMDRUM LIFE AND ITS POSSIBILITIES.

FROM Aldgate Station, on the Metropolitan Railway, a train starts every two or three minutes upon the inner circle route. Stopping at Moorgate Street, King's Cross, and other points, it makes a circuit of the principal part of London, and then runs by way of Blackfriars and the Mansion House back to Aldgate.

It only makes the shortest possible stop there, however, before again starting upon its round. And thus it continues all the day long, and far into the night, running over the same rails and ever returning to its starting point.

One might say, "That train burns a lot of coal, or uses a great deal of electric power, and does a vast amount of work, and yet there is little to show for it. At the end of every day it is just where it was when it started."

True; but remember this, that in performing round after round of its circuit with monotonous regularity, *it carries men to their destination.*

Many of my readers will readily perceive the application of my parable to them.

Is your life one of the humdrum kind, a round of monotonous duties with no change from day to

day? Does it seem to be a mere drudgery of endless cooking, washing, and darning? Is it a wearisome routine of office work, with books and figures for your companions day after day, till you sometimes feel you would rather be a crossing sweeper than touch them again? Or do you serve behind the counter, and spend your days in opening drawers and shutting them, getting things off shelves and putting them back again, undoing parcels and tying them up, and running about the shop till your legs threaten to support you no longer?

Now consider this. What if God has placed you in that irksome situation in order that, like the inner circle train, you *might* be the means of carrying souls to a bright destination in glory?

Let the busy mother remember it, as she goes about her household duties, that God has set her in her sphere to carry her children to the destination she desires for them in heaven.

Let the Christian clerk, the shop assistant, and others, remember it. There are those with whom they come in contact every day, who perhaps will never hear the gospel unless they hear it from them. Has not God set them where they are in order that they may be the means of carrying their fellow-workers and acquaintances to the destination for which they themselves are bound?

The object of this paper is not to remind the

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reader that it is his or her privilege, as a Christian, to serve the Lord in all the little things that make up daily life. Scripture is clear as to that. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men . . . for ye serve the Lord Christ." This exhortation was addressed to those whose duties were humble indeed, the Christian slaves at Colosse.

Nor is it the writer's purpose to show that while one's life outwardly may be made up of a humdrum routine of uninteresting duties, yet inwardly there may be much freshness and joy and progress of soul; and that the very duties which are so irksome may be the disciplinary means which God uses to promote one's spiritual welfare. All this is assuredly true.

But the point is this. There is no life, however humble and obscure, without its opportunities of testimony. A word spoken in season; a little gospel book lovingly presented at a suitable moment; the loud voice of a consistent Christian life—such things as these will assuredly be blessed by God, and at the end of life's journey we shall have the joy of knowing that amid the monotonous round of daily duties we have *helped to carry others to their destination.* . . . H. P. B.

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“PINS AND CORDS.”

EXODUS XXXV.

THE tabernacle was the first dwelling-place God had amongst men. Having redeemed a people out of Egypt, it was God's pleasure to dwell among them. He called for the offerings of His people, “and they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.” All did not bring alike, for all did not possess alike, and many and varied were the materials required, but every man brought what was “found” with him.

Amongst other things that were necessary to the building of the tabernacle were “pins” and “cords.” Small items compared with the precious stones, the gold, the silver, the incense, and the curtains! Yet they were essential and even the gold and precious stones could not have supplied their place. Without them everything else would have been thrown into sad confusion.

May we not learn some practical lessons from this?

Let us first notice that every one brought what each had. More than once we get the expression

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"with whom was found." In verse 23, "every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair," etc., and again, verse 24, "and every man with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it." It was not much to possess shittim wood, perhaps; probably the blue, and purple, and scarlet, the gold and precious stones, were looked upon as more valuable and imposing, yet this was to form an essential part of the structure.

What is there "found" with us? God has a dwelling-place still, not now a material structure, but composed of living stones. And we are contributors just as surely as the Israelites of old, and much of the glory of the house and its well-being depend upon what is "found" with us.

The prosperity of the house of God in general depends upon each one who forms part of it, just as does each separate meeting. All depends upon our spiritual substance, or in other words, what is "found" with us. If we look carefully at the chapter we are considering, we find there were different kinds of material brought by different persons. In verse 23 the men are specially mentioned; in verse 25, the women; and in verse 27, the rulers. It is to be noticed that the gifts of the rulers are all connected with what is priestly; "onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate, and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet

incense." All this was of the very highest order, and these were "found" with the rulers. They brought these precious stones to be worn on the shoulders and breast of the priest, and which were to flash and gleam in the light of the divine glory. A precious stone simply reveals the glory and beauty of the light it has first received. It is a great thing for us to be in the light as God is in the light, knowing that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"—we fully made manifest as to our sin, and the blood meeting it all; and God fully made manifest for our eternal enjoyment. In order, too, that we may "shew forth the virtues of Him, Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

It was the rulers who brought these. Paul was a ruler. He could speak of God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shining in his heart for the shining forth of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What shone in the face of Jesus Christ shone also in the apostle's heart, as a consequence. Is anything like this "found" with us? Can we take our place before God, in the unclouded light of His presence, knowing all that the death of Christ has removed, and also that though we were sometime darkness we are now "light in the Lord"?—all that God is to us in the One He has made Lord. These precious stones were for

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the shoulders and the breast. Has the truth *enfolded* here been *unfolded* to us? Borne upon His shoulders and heart. The shoulders and heart of our Great High Priest at our service. Uplifted and loved by One Who is set at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. What better, nearer place could there be? Happy indeed are they who have the truth of these precious stones in their keeping.

But the rulers brought also “spice and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.” From this we see that a ruler knows something of testimony in the power of the Holy Ghost. The precious stones have more to do with the knowledge and enjoyment of our place before God, and this reflected in the life; the oil with the power of the Spirit in worship and service. Is oil for the light “found” with us? Are we continually telling forth in divine power to God and men all that Christ is before Him? There was, further, the anointing oil which seems always, more or less, connected with the thought of intelligence—our understanding God’s will, our apprehension of all that He has established for His own glory and our blessing in Christ. This is beautifully connected with the anointing in Ps. XXIII., “Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.”

They also brought the spice for the sweet incense. It is only as we are under the Holy

Spirit's influence that we can discover the moral perfections and graces of Christ, and present them to God. Thrice happy the one who can take part, under such direction, in spreading out before God the excellencies of His Beloved. How often God drew the attention of others to Him when He was down here ; surely it was that we might respond, and on our side speak to God about the One He loves so well. Are these things “found” with us, beloved fellow-Christian ?

It was the *rulers* who brought all these things connected with the priestly service. All are not rulers, even as the apostle asks of the Corinthians, “Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?” Yet we fear there are sadly too few “rulers” in the Church to-day. The service of man is so much more thought of than the service of God. Let us not forget we belong to God's house, and in His house He is to be served (Ps. cxxxiv.). But if all are not rulers, all have some service. There were the “pins and cords” as well as the precious stones and incense. Are these found with us ?

Where would the tabernacle have been, and its service, without them ? They were not so conspicuous or so precious as the costly stones that adorned the breast and shoulders of the high priest, they did not flash with the resplendent light of the Shekinah glory; they had not the place of nearness, like the gold-covered boards

and curtains of blue, purple, and scarlet they helped to support; they did not send forth any odour of a sweet smell like the incense, or attract attention by the light they gave like the oil, but they were absolutely indispensable.

The whole fabric of the tabernacle depended upon these "pins and cords"—*they kept it together and made it one*. Without them nothing would have been in its place, and all would soon have become a ruin. How much they are needed to-day, and things in the Church have mainly reached their present condition for the lack of them. Where the "pins and cords" are in their place, doing their work, all is well. What is so much needed everywhere is cohesion, being knit together. It is easy work slashing at the cords, pulling up the pins, and cutting things adrift. Every "pin" and "cord" is necessary, and every stone in the building is necessary. Alas! how loosely often we are fastened and bound together. This is seen by the easy way in which people are allowed to drift, and never recovered. Who will be a "pin" or a "cord"? How often in our everyday lives we have found even the smallest of their kind useful! A pin or a bit of string has been required, and the one who could produce these, small as they are, was thought to be the right one in the right place. And so in regard to what these larger "pins" and "cords" set forth. If you see any loosening, be a

“pin” or a “cord.” If any one seems slipping away, be a “pin” or a “cord,” do a kind act, or speak a kind word that shall fasten them on more firmly than ever. If some one seems isolated, or neglected, or inclined to stand aloof, attach yourself to such—be a “pin” or a “cord.” It may be you only need to get near enough to them to hook them to yourself, and to all the rest. Just a word in season will do it. Are there any new-comers to a meeting? Be a “pin” or a “cord” to link them on and enable them to find their right place, and feel at home.

How useful these “pins and cords” of the tabernacle must have been. No doubt at times they got roughly handled, and cast into obscure corners, when the camp was on the move and they were not wanted; and many a blow the “pins” had to bear when being driven into the sandy soil of the desert; and many a strain put the strength of the “cords” to the test, and perhaps all the time they were not much spoken of or commended, and yet how much depended upon their retaining their place and fulfilling their duty.

Reader, if being a ruler seems too high for you, will you seek, by the grace of God, that at least “pins and cords” shall be “found” with you? They support and strengthen the whole building. The apostle Paul thought much of such labour. In his address to the Ephesian elders he does not

forget to mention that he, himself, had showed them how they "ought to support the weak" (Acts xx.). Let us try, too, to carry out his exhortation to the Hebrews and to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it *rather be healed*." And in days like these, what liability there is to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, and how necessary the "pins and cords" to prevent any loosening, or any shifting, that we may "hold fast the form of sound words."

Are any of these things "found" with us? Are we contributing to the prosperity of the house of God? How much was found with David when he thought to build God a house! This was material substance, with us it must be spiritual. We contribute just what is "found" with us and no more. It is not a question of filling a *conspicuous* place. The "pins" were almost out of sight embedded in the earth, but the less they were seen the more they would be able to bear the tension of the cords, and thus the more they were lost sight of the more useful they became; and, moreover, people would be less likely to stumble against them. The "pins and cords" of the Old Testament seem to be something like the "joints and bands" of the New. "Holding fast the Head, from Whom all the body ministered to and

united together by joints and bands, increased with the increase of God” (Col. II. 19, N.T.). So that whether it is “pins and cords” or “joints and bands,” all is with a view to “uniting together.”

One word more. In bringing their gifts for the service of the tabernacle there was one thing that characterized the children of Israel which was of supreme importance. All was done as the result of a willing heart. God said, “Whosoever is of a *willing heart*, let him bring it.” “And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering to the work of the tabernacle.” “And they came both men and women, as many as were willing hearted.” And again, “and all the women whose heart stirred them up”; and yet again, “the children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord.” This was all that was needed, first of all something to bring, and then the heart to bring it. What a happy state when the heart is “stirred up,” and the spirit is “made willing,” and the fact that God so repeatedly calls attention to it shows how pleasing and refreshing it was to Him.

May we be “pins and cords,” if nothing more, and possess a heart “stirred up” and a spirit “made willing,” and perhaps one day the Lord may honour us for some lowly service more than we think, when He renders to every man according to his work.

R. E.

THE WORSHIPPER IDENTIFIED WITH THE SIN OFFERING.

WE have, in previous papers, looked at the cleansing and clothing of Aaron and his sons in order to fit them to be worshippers, and also the way the believer is now cleansed and clothed.

Let us now look at the offerings of which Exodus XXIX. speaks: "Thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bullock, and thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord." Now read verse fourteen: "The flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a *Sin Offering*."

This bullock brings before us another aspect of the death of Christ, and one most needful for us to know if we are peacefully to approach God in worship. Many a young convert filled with the joy of knowing the forgiveness of sins, thinks he will never have a desire to sin again. It is a very bitter experience when he finds that he has the same evil nature to contend with as in his unregenerate days. For some wise reason God has allowed us to retain the evil nature, whilst implanting in us a wholly new one. These two natures are always in opposition to each other.

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It is also certain that the evil nature would gain the upper hand, were it not for the gift of the Holy Spirit, to dwell in us and overcome the lust of the flesh (Gal. v. 17).

Whilst it is true that *sin* is *in* us, it is equally true there is no sin *on* us. All our sins are forgiven for "His name's sake" (1 John II. 12), but the bad evil nature in us called *sin* is not forgiven. The bullock sets forth what we *are*, not what we have *done*. Let us follow what took place, and thus learn what God has done *with us*.

Will you picture to yourself a cleansed company, clothed in holy linen garments, laying their hands upon the head of the bullock? That bullock is a type of Christ as the sin offering. The laying on of their hands identified them with the bullock. All that afterwards happened to the bullock they were to hold as true of themselves. First its life was taken away, its blood was shed; the blood was poured out on the altar and the fat consumed. But this was not all. It was carried outside the circle where God dwelt with His people and there burnt. Its skin, flesh, and dung were consumed. The unsparing judgment of God fell upon it. The whole was dealt with in judgment.

We want you to lay your hand by faith upon the head of Christ, and thus learn the truth of Romans VIII. 3: God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin,

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condemned sin in the flesh. Then Romans VI. 6, "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."

That means that all that you *are* has come into judgment in the death of Christ.

The dung of the bullock was burnt. "Ah, yes, you say, "I can understand that. God could never tolerate anything so utterly worthless in His presence." The skin, too, was to be burnt. It is by the skin that an animal is distinguished. Some animals are white, some black—the skin, too, has some value. Surely that need not be burnt? Yes! *all* must go in judgment. Your ways may not have been outwardly as bad as others', indeed you may have been distinguished among men by many good works; but that avails nothing before God. There is no difference, *all* have sinned, *all* have come under God's judgment, and *all* must be burnt without the camp. Then the flesh also has to go. That is the very best, the most valuable part of a bullock. To admit that the best part of us is only fit for judgment is very hard.

It is practically learnt when the believer can say, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing." Then you see that the *best* that is in you, as well as the *worst*, is only deserving the judgment of God. All that we are in ourselves is described in the one word "sin." Sin is in-

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tolerable to God, so it must be condemned. It is not condoned or forgiven. The practical lesson we are to learn is this—"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. VI. 11).

We are to face the fact that we have a foe dwelling in us—conquered and set aside in the death of Christ—but who needs the practical application of that death to keep it in subjection. To learn that there is not only a great deal which is bad, but that there is "*NO good*" in our flesh, is most distressing. The more earnest the desire to find some good in ourselves, the greater the disappointment. Let us beg you to give up the effort.

We would entreat you to lay hold of three grand cardinal truths as to this. First, that there never has, and never will be, any good *in* you, for sin is ingrained in your very nature and being, and God will neither improve nor change that nature. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," it is not subject to the law of God, "*neither indeed can be*" (Rom. VIII. 7). Mark, that is said of *you*! Do you admit its truth? Do you say, "I am bad inside and out. I am unfit for God in every shape and form. I deserve only the righteous judgment of God"?

If you thus admit there is no good in yourself, we direct your gaze to Jesus in the glory of God. There is One Who was always absolutely perfect.

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His acts and words when in this world set forth His inward perfection. He spoke and did what He was, and was all He spoke and did. He is now in heaven. He is a real man. He is ever before the face of God. Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption are all found in Him (1 Cor. I. 30, 31).

The next grand truth is this, *The goodness you have failed to find in yourself is treasured up in Him.* He is the only man who ever fully pleased God, and the only One in Whom all excellencies are found. Gaze upon Him there and tell me—is He good enough for God? “Oh, yes,” you say, “there is no doubt about that; but what I am mourning over is that I am not good enough for God.”

Mourn no longer. Let us assure you of the third grand truth, *All His goodness belongs to you.* Lay hold of that. No flesh—not even yours—is to glory in God’s presence, but “he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. I. 31). Are you willing to learn the lesson the bullock teaches us? We are “condemned” root and branch, ways, words, and nature—there is no good in “us”—so let us cease from looking *inside* for good, but let us look *outside* at Jesus before the Father’s face, and rejoice that all *He is* and all *He has* is now made ours, so that our joy may be in the Lord.

The next sacrifice spoken of is “the ram of

consecration," and if the bullock teaches us that we are condemned and set aside in the death of Christ, we are also to learn that God would fill our hands with Christ. This we hope to look at later on.

H. N.

CARRYING OR CARRIED.

- "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle : your carriages were heavy laden ; they are a burden to the weary beast.
- "They stoop, they bow down together ; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.
- "Hearken unto Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by Me from the belly, which are carried from the womb :
- "And even to your old age I am He ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you."—ISA. XLVI. 1-4.

THE great test of our religion is twofold : Will it carry ? Will it deliver ? Every false religion breaks down under this simple test. A false religion, or a true one taken up falsely, has to be carried. True religion carries. A false religion cannot deliver ; a true one must.

A false religion is exhibited in its blackest colours in heathendom. False gods are a burden, as our text says. They have to be carried, and they impose weariness upon their votaries. What a weight of useless, disgusting customs, what a superstitious power the heathen groans under.

Mark that frenzied worshipper of a false god as she throws her offspring under the crushing wheels of Juggernaut. Tell me when a mother, loving her child with the purest affection of any of earth, is forced to do this as the direct outcome of her heathen worship, that she is not carrying a crushing burden? Or is the worshipper sick? Then he sends for a witch doctor or uses a *fetish*, and again the awful yoke of a false religion is clearly seen. Aye, and when death in all its terrible power closes in upon the heathen, can his false religion deliver him? Can these gods—stocks and stones—carry the soul of the worshipper into heaven, or such heaven as he dreams of? They may beat their drums, and make the night hideous with their wailings and incantations, but not all they can do will deliver that precious soul from captivity.

But to come nearer home. We live in a so-called Christian land, and yet there are untold thousands who make a *profession* of Christianity, and yet know nothing of its *reality*. All such are carrying a burden, and journeying towards captivity just as much as the dark, benighted heathen. In taking up the *profession* of Christianity they take it up in its *outward form*, and are strangers to its *inward power*. This outward form is a burden grievous to be borne; to the real Christian Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light. I pity from my heart the unconverted Sunday

school teacher, district visitor, tract distributor, communicant, office bearer, or minister. If earnest, what burdens they carry. It takes real love for the Lord, and all the support He gives, to rightly take up Christian work, however simple. Only saved men and women can truly engage in it. And then when death comes, what can mere profession do for those who have taken it up? Absolutely nothing. The mere professor of a true religion goes into the same captivity as the poor deceived devotee of a heathen religion.

But to come still nearer home. Whilst true Christians must surely reach the Lord's presence at last, yet it is possible for a true Christian to get out of touch with the living God. The Galatians did so by adopting legality, and thus grieving the Spirit. To be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, as the Ephesians were warned against, would lead to the same result. It is possible to be so infatuated with some particular teacher or school of teaching that we get out of touch with God, and in reality have a heavy burden to carry. A load of distorted truth becomes error indeed, for the worst error is that which is most like the truth.

Like an oasis in the barren desert of man's imagination and effort is the refreshing thought of the test of the true God—that He is able to carry and deliver. He pledged Himself thus to

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Israel, and will He be less to us, who are His children, His heirs and joint heirs with Christ, His beloved Son? Assuredly not.

And see how tenderly God appeals to the past as His pledge for the future. He had carried His people from the womb; He would carry them to old age and hoar hairs—from the weakness of infancy to the weakness of old age, and at the end God says emphatically to them, “And will deliver you.”

And cannot we Christians testify that God has carried us up to this very moment? Has He not supported us through many trials and helped us past many dangers? Experience worketh hope, “and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Then just as He has carried us in the past, so He will in the future, even to hoar hairs. And when death comes, if the Lord Jesus should tarry, we shall be delivered. In spirit we are delivered *now* through the work of the Lord Jesus, and by the supply of the Spirit; *then* it will be experimental and actual.

What a God Christ has made known to us!

A. J. P.

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AT WHAT A COST!

CHOSEN, redeemed, in the children's place,
Holy and blameless before His face,
Once guilty, ruined, and lost ;
Not e'en doth the light of His presence show
A single stain—washed whiter than snow :
But ah ! at what a cost !

Not glittering gems, nor silver and gold,
Not worlds though teeming with wealth untold,
Could for our ransom suffice.
No, the Church of God was bought with the blood
Of the holy, spotless Lamb of God :
This, this was the costly price.

Oh wondrous truth ! deep in each breast
By the Spirit of God be it impressed,
And there by His power abide.
Grant, oh our God, that our life below
May brightly reflect the truths we know,
That Thou mayest be glorified.—M. A. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. G.—The meaning and bearing of the term “eternal life” is not to be determined apart from its context in the various passages in which it is found. There is a breadth and elasticity about it which places it beyond any rigid definition. It must not be confounded, however, with an existence which has no end. Eternal life is God's gift, freely bestowed now on the believer. But he does not possess it in himself as

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if it were a separate entity ; it is possessed in relation to its source. In having Christ we have the life of which He is the spring. John v. 24 plainly shows that the believer receives it, and that he has passed out of death into life. Connected with it is the knowledge of the Father and of the One Whom He has sent (John xvii. 3). There is, then, (1) a life communicated to the one who believes on the Son ; it is everlasting life, and gives place to no other. (2) In its fullness we shall not receive it till Jesus comes again, and this aspect of it involves conformity to Christ in glory. (3) But there is a sense in which in the energy of faith we lay hold of it as we pursue our pilgrim way—life, eternal life, in opposition to the fleeting things around, after which the heart is ever prone to run. Here, then, are three ways in which it may be viewed. John iii. 36, v. 24, vi. 47 deal with the first ; Romans vi. 22 and Jude 21 are examples of the second ; 1 Timothy vi. 12 treats of the third.

J. T. T. A.—We have never felt it our mission to say where the presence of the Lord is *not*. Enough to know that where two or three are gathered together in His name, *there He is* in the midst of them. Negatives are dangerous things, and need to be used with caution. Nor are we acquainted with any company of Christians who would exclude from the Lord's Supper a true believer in Christ solely because he was unable in all good conscience to say that the Lord was there and nowhere else. It would be a sectarian act of the narrowest and most intolerant kind, and any who were guilty of it would only show how much they themselves needed to be taught the true principles of the Church of God.

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INQUIRER.—We are not much in love with huge commercial corporations, which often make it difficult for the struggling tradesman to get a living. If the smaller shop could supply our wants we would rather deal there, even though it cost us a fraction more, especially if the master were a fellow-Christian. Love leads us to think of others and to follow the golden rule of doing unto them what we should wish them to do unto us were we in their place. As to the question of membership, it must be left to individual conscience. If any one believes it to be an unequal yoke he is bound to keep free from it, for to him who esteems a thing to be unclean, *to him* it is unclean, even if it be so to no one else.

W. W. K. and G. F.—E, Zechariah xiv. 5.—The prophetic word of the angel to Mary, the mother of our Lord, in Luke i. 32, shall surely be fulfilled: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." It is clear that the throne of David is not yet His. Instead of being received by the house of Jacob He was rejected and crucified. "We will not have this man to reign over us" was their fatal and impious cry. But not only will He reign as David's Son over Israel, but as *Son of Man* His rule shall be universal. All kingdoms of the earth shall be under His sway. In the day of His return His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives; the very spot from which He was taken up into heaven will be that to which He will return. But we hardly think the Lord will abide on earth, even though He visit it again; for the kingdom has its *heavenly* as well as its earthly side.

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All things shall be placed under Him, whether they be things above or on earth below. There will be the glory of the celestial sphere as well as that of the terrestrial. Possibly we shall see such a connexion between the heavens and the earth as we little dream of. The Prince of Ezekiel XLV., XLVI. is, so we believe, not Christ Himself, but a personage placed in a position of singular dignity and honour, but subordinate to Him Who will be Israel's true King in that day.

ROMA.—Scripture nowhere teaches, so far as we know, that the soul after death is in a sleeping condition, in which it remains till the Resurrection Day. Indeed, it teaches the very opposite. The solemn story of the rich man and the beggar, told by the Lord in Luke xvi., disproves the notion altogether. The one dies, his body doubtless laid in some humble resting-place, but he himself was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, which in the estimation of the Jew was the place of profound honour and happiness. Death also overtakes the other, and he too is seen, not in happiness, but in torment. This hardly looks like the soul passing into a deep sleep. The Lord also said to the penitent thief: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." The body of the Lord was laid in the tomb, that of the malefactor remained on the cross; but he was with Christ in paradise that self-same day. Is this sleep? When the martyr Stephen cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," is there anything about it suggestive of the sleep of the soul? Paul, too, had a desire to depart and be with Christ, for to die, said he, is gain. Would it be gain to sleep, to know nothing, to remain in an unconscious state till the resurrection call should wake him up? The notion

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is only a notion, having no scriptural basis—a figment of the human mind, worthless, deceptive, and degrading. It is true that the resurrection state is what the Christian desires. Not “that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” Nevertheless, Scripture makes it plain that a dying saint goes to be with Christ, and that his then state is far better than the best he had known on earth, though resurrection is needed to complete his happiness and crown his hopes.

(ii.) The Millennium—the time of Christ’s rule and reign—will *not* see everything on earth perfect. Death will not be then brought to an end. The hour of its final overthrow and destruction follows the judgment of the great white throne. Sin, too, will not have been entirely put away, for it is at the close of the millennial day that Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit and succeeds once more in deceiving the nations. This ends in his being cast into the lake of fire—his last and everlasting prison. All this Revelation xx. makes plain. The millennial kingdom merges into the eternal state described in the opening of Revelation xxi. The Church, during this transitional period, fills her own proper sphere. “We shall reign,” not on, but “over the earth,” as Revelation v. 10 should read.

SEEKER AFTER LIGHT.—You will find in referring to the passages of Scripture which speak of reconciliation that it is nowhere said that God is reconciled to us. Men need to be reconciled to God, and the believer is always spoken of as already reconciled. The reason is simple: all the alienation and discord were on our side, and the fruit of sin. This alienation had to be removed, and our relations with God adjusted and

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put on an entirely new basis ; and such is reconciliation, so far as we are concerned. In order to this, propitiation by the death of Jesus had to be accomplished ; for though God remained unchanged and He was ever love, yet sin must be dealt with or we remain ever unreconciled. In 2 Corinthians v. 19 it is said that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself—not *is*, but *was*. That was the aspect of Christ's ministry when on earth. But He was refused, and His refusal only fully demonstrated that man was a lost and ruined being. The ministry of reconciliation, however, was afterwards committed unto the apostles, being based on the stupendous fact that He Who knew no sin had been made sin for us. They now could beseech men to be reconciled to God ; and indeed it was as though God did beseech by them, so great and measureless was His grace. And if we are reconciled it is because our sins have been put away by the death of God's Son, and our moral relations with God adjusted according to the exigencies of His nature and the love of His heart. Reconciliation also extends to things in earth and heaven, as Colossians i. 20 plainly shows. In these there is not enmity to be removed, as in our case, but they—dislocated by sin—must be brought into harmony with the divine mind. This will be effected by and by, but *our* reconciliation is already perfect and complete.

R. A. S.—From a careful examination of the passages which speak of the institution of the Lord's Supper, we incline to the thought that the disciples alone partook of it. The Passover Supper the Lord doubtless shared with His disciples, but His own Supper He gave to them—they were to eat it. The

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spiritual significance of it seems to confirm us in thinking so.

S. B., CREWE.—Baptism does *not* necessarily precede the reception of the gospel. Cornelius and those with him not only received the gospel, but were sealed with the Holy Spirit before they were baptized (Acts x. 42-8). (ii.) The Lord's Table in 1 Corinthians x. is in contrast to the table of demons; and the apostle shows the moral impossibility of any one partaking of both. If any ate of the sacrifices offered to demons with religious intent, they were identified with idols; they ate, so to speak, at their table. If any ate the Lord's Supper, they were identified with all it expresses; they ate at His Table. If any are found in similar circumstances to those of the Corinthians, the same principle undoubtedly applies. The broken condition into which Christendom has fallen has not swept away the Lord's Table nor the truths attaching to it.

B. E. B.—We may change our circumstances a score of times without being bettered in the smallest degree. Our worst enemy is ourself, and we do not leave him behind when we quit one circle to enter another. No path, if it be a right one, is beyond the grace of Christ. He is able to carry us through to His glory, and He will if He be looked to and trusted. Many a young Christian thinks he could serve Christ better and live a life of more unbroken fellowship if he were in other circumstances. Experience corrects these mistaken ideas. If our path be a right one, no matter how contrary to our natural likings, Christ can strengthen us to bear all and go through all to the glory of God.

DECLENSION OR DEVOTEDNESS.

EVERY true servant of Christ and lover of God's people must feel greatly the apparent lack of devotedness to Christ amongst those who profess His name.

It is most lamentable to see that increase of light and Scripture knowledge has not produced its corresponding effect. We have often heard the remark that when people were less enlightened there was more true devotedness and separation from the world. How many there are who say, "Lord! Lord!" and do not what He enjoins.

The great secret of devotedness to Christ is the knowledge and enjoyment of His love. No wonder Paul bent his knees and prayed so earnestly for the Ephesian saints, that they might be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; and that they also might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and so be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. III. 14-21).

Nothing but true affection for Christ can shelter us from the influences of the world. Our hearts must be controlled by an object outside of self and of things that are seen if we would be preserved from the awful current of worldliness which is carrying so many away.

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No amount of intelligence will produce devotedness. We may be a walking encyclopædia of Biblical knowledge; we may ransack the whole domain of theological literature; we may commit to memory and be able to explain every verse in the Bible; we may be able to define and settle in a most authoritative way the hardest points of religious controversy; our lips may utter very high and heavenly truths; and yet our hearts be cold and indifferent to what suits the Lord.

Moreover, our Church position may be unassailable. We may be maintaining the right ground, as people speak, and be able to try those who claim apostolic succession and find them false, and yet the Lord may have to say of us, as He said of Ephesus, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience. . . . Nevertheless, I have it against thee, that thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. II. 2, 4, R.V.).

It is a great mistake to think that devotedness is only shown by great acts of service. *Not that service should be made little of*; but a person may be very energetic in serving without being truly devoted to Christ.

Saul thought he was doing a great service when he spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord his God in Gilgal; yet Samuel said, "Behold, *to obey is better* than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Martha is an example of this. "She was care-

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ful and troubled about many things," and said to the Lord, "Dost Thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" Mary sat at the Lord's feet and learned His mind, and thus knew what suited Him. This the Lord both appreciated and commended. *From this place all true and effective service must flow.*

No doubt devotedness to the Lord will be shown in some form of service. But it might not be of such a sort that men would approve or value. For instance, when Mary of Bethany showed her devotedness to the Lord by bringing a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointing His feet therewith, Judas said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" He thought her devoted act all waste.

There is nothing the blessed Lord is so very jealous of as the love of our hearts. He does not ask us to love Him without giving us the motive to do so. This motive is found in His own deep and unchanging love, so fully expressed in His giving Himself for us. He loved me, and gave Himself for me. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: *and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him* which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

When the apostle Paul would stimulate the Corinthians to greater devotedness and a more

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generous liberality towards others, he used the most powerful inducement when he said, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. VIII. 9).

Nothing is so jealous as true love; it cannot bear rivalry. Alas! how much the blessed Lord has to endure, for is He not often rivalled in our hearts? "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," is an admonition which is too often forgotten. Anything that supplants Christ in the heart of a Christian is an idol, to be judged and put far away.

"Take Thou our hearts, and let them be
For ever closed to all but Thee;
Thy willing servants, let us wear
The seal of love for ever there."

It is extremely sad to see departure from first love, and to witness the declension of those who once burned and were brilliant in testimony for Christ. It is said of John Baptist that he was a *burning* as well as a shining light. To shine truly we must burn—be a burning flame. Some one has said that "half-hearted Christians never shine." Whole-hearted ones do.

Of old God said of Israel, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, *broken cisterns*, that can hold no water." And the prophet in Ezra and Nehemiah's day

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said to the returned captives, in whom declension so soon manifested itself, "Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; **CONSIDER YOUR WAYS.** Ye have sown much, and bring in little. . . . Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house" (Hag. 1.).

It has been remarked that "backsliding begins at the closed door." But does it not begin even nearer home than that? When our hearts are right the door of our prayer-room will be frequently opened. If we feel that we have no desire to get alone with the Lord it would help us greatly to tell Him so. He only can revive and warm our hearts if they have grown cold, and it will give Him great pleasure to do so because of His love to us.

How forbearing and how very gracious, and withal how faithful He is!

It behoves each one of us, therefore, to watch the beginning of things. No matter how far advanced we may appear to be, or how much truth we may know, it will profit us but little if we do not seek to get alone with God.

Soul declension is far more common than we may suppose. Are there not many who, though not openly backsliding, are nevertheless backsliders in heart? They never miss a meeting; they are very correct and upright in their ways;

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they behave with the utmost decorum; but all the while they evince but little heart for Christ or care for His interests.

Of such Scripture says, "They shall be filled with their *own* ways"—not the ways of Christ or what pleases Him. They remind us of some of old, of whom it is written, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." They are *lean-souled* Christians.

The Lord save His people from such a wretched, barren, unfruitful state.

Nothing, perhaps, is more serious than to be in a declining state and not to know it, or to be indifferent as to it. God said of Ephraim, "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not." Yet think of the compassionate heart of God saying, "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together*" (Hos. xi. 8).

How very comforting to be assured that, though the Lord may allow us to feel the bitterness of having departed from Him, and to reap the fruit of our own ways, yet His love never changes towards us. No, never! "Having loved *His own* which were in the world, *He loved them unto the end.*"

Nothing could induce Him to give us up, though we in our foolishness may be tempted to give Him up. When the two disciples were on their

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way to Emmaus, thinking they had lost Him, He drew near, and as He spake to them the fire kindled. When He vanished out of their sight they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" They returned to Jerusalem with swift step to tell the others what had happened. Their hearts were all aglow with holy fervour!

Though Peter denied Him, yet the Lord's heart remained unchanged toward Peter. With a look that must have expressed the deepest love for Peter, the Lord broke Peter's heart, and afterwards fully restored him. Peter loved the Lord truly and deeply, though he was weak enough in the presence of opposition to deny Him. The Lord knew this. The Lord in love to Peter let him go his own way that all his boastfulness might be destroyed. Under the searching, probing process the Lord put him through, he, in real brokenness of spirit, says, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; *Thou knowest that I love Thee.*"

What marvellous grace! how like the Lord this is!

May we have the same spirit as Ruth, when she said to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." May our hearts thus cleave to the Lord.

P. W.

POISON!

THE British Legislature, in its wisdom, has decreed that drugs of a poisonous nature should be scheduled, dispensed by qualified chemists, properly labelled, and sold to the public only after careful inquiry as to the purpose for which they are intended. Thus every reasonable precaution has been adopted for the preservation of human life.

There is, however, on the market a poison not included in that category, and the sale of which is under no such restrictions. It can be bought for the modest sum of one halfpenny up to the more conventional price of six shillings. We are confronted with it at every railway bookstall; it is prominently displayed at the fashionable city booksellers'; and is scarcely less conspicuous at the village news-agents'. We presume, ere our readers have reached this point, they have guessed that we refer to

NOVELS.

Generally speaking, we believe this class of literature may be divided into three compartments. There is the novel in which the lowest side of animal nature is depicted with an amount of detail only sufficiently far removed from being grossly indecent as to secure it from the *index*

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purgatorius of the law. There is also the sentimental novel, in which love, so called, bulks largely. A hero or heroine, such as never did exist and never could exist on this planet, is portrayed, and an unattainable ideal is placed before the reader. Lastly, there is the religious novel. This caters for those who would have conscientious scruples about reading either of the two former. Religion is presented in an attractive form. Wonderful characters are delineated; and the lesson almost invariably is that, in the heart of the most depraved, there is a spark of good, which can be fanned into a flame. That this latter class appeals to a vast constituency is evidenced by the fact that, perhaps, on the fingers of one hand might be counted the religious weeklies which do *not* have a serial on the lines indicated.

Of course, novelists of each class contend they have a mission at least as great as the preacher's; that they reach a class which he cannot touch; that they have licence which permits them to present gross sins with a boldness that he dare not attempt; while they portray the great, the good, the noble in a way that, in their opinion, is infinitely more attractive, and is calculated to be much more successful. With all this, we have nothing to do. We desire to address ourselves to those who are genuinely converted to God, and in particular to those whose conversion is of recent date.

Our growth in divine things depends upon the nature of our food, the regularity with which we partake of it, and the amount that we assimilate. A person may remark: "We read the Bible morning and evening, *when we have time*; we admit that in the train, on holiday, and in odd moments of leisure, we do indulge in a little light reading, but just by way of recreation." On all this, dear friend, there possibly hangs a tale! You have come to Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, in order to ensure your getting to heaven ultimately; but you have not yet learned what it is to have Him as an Object for your heart. Hence you read your Bible as a duty—it may be to maintain a family tradition, or to quiet your conscience—while you peruse the novel with avidity. The result is you are starved, and if the question were asked: "Why art thou, being the King's son, lean from day to day?" (2 Sam. XIII. 4), the reply you must give, if honest, would be: "Because I am slowly, but surely, ruining my spiritual life by imbibing poison."

We inquired one day of a Christian friend, whom we saw reading a novel, and who freely confessed that she read all she could lay her hands upon: "Do you find that you have a great desire to read the Scriptures after enjoying a novel?" "No," said she, "I do not." Is not this the experience of all? Love for the Lord is weakened. Communion is broken, and

appreciation of the Holy Scriptures is materially lessened, while the name of the Lord is dishonoured, the Holy Spirit grieved, the spiritual life stunted, and the Christian, once bright, becomes an advertisement for the enemy, and a reproach to the One Who died for him.

Some may inquire, "*Must* we then read *only* the Bible?" There is no law in Christianity save that of love, and there is no bondage. You may make a resolution to discard every book but *the* Book. While you keep it you will be unhappy; and sooner or later you will break it. Permit us to ask you a few simple questions:—Do you love Jesus? Do you think He is worthy to fill your whole heart? Do you wish to please Him? Would you like to know more about Him? To all this we trust you can say, "Yes," without reserve. Then you want to read the Book, the entire contents of which may be summarized in five letters—

JESUS,

and every other book that will tell you more about Him. By so doing, He will become increasingly precious to you. You will grow in the knowledge of Himself; your heart will be filled with the joy of His love; you will manifest the traits that were ever seen in Him; and for you heaven will begin right away here and now. Then you will no more think of reading anything that will ruin your spiritual career than you will of

swallowing a deadly drug, by which to terminate your earthly existence.

In view of the holiday season now on us, when there is a tendency to relaxation, we appeal to our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ—

READ AND READ AND READ,

but read in the light of the judgment seat. Let your reading be such as will enhance your appreciation of Christ, so that from your book you will go down on bended knees to worship Him of Whom you have received some fresh impression, and in fervent prayer that by the Holy Spirit He may be formed in you more and more. In conclusion, we would affectionately address a few words to Christian parents.

WHAT DO OUR BOYS AND GIRLS READ?

Is there a surreptitious devouring of the penny dreadfuls vomited forth from the press by those who care not *how* they coin money? Or is there open reading of such healthy literature as that already indicated, and now so easily obtained? Indulgent parents contend "they must have something less solid than we read." But remember that the appetite created and indulged in the child will be developed in the man. How much of the lack of interest in the things of God, and the avoidance of the company of God's people, to say nothing of the broken hearts of fathers and

mothers, is to be traced to novel reading commenced in childhood ! We have ventured thus to write, we trust led by the Lord, on a subject about which we have had much exercise ; and we pray that our God may, by His Spirit, graciously use these lines to impress upon all, the simple yet important fact, that love for Him Who so loves us should prevent our yielding to anything that does not meet with His approval. The returns supplied by public libraries give some idea of the vast multitude who prefer novels to every other class of literature. How many Christians are included we know not.

As we close, we leave with you, dear reader, the following questions :—

Can you read your novel to the glory of God ?

Do you love novels more than Jesus ?

If He were by your side would you read a novel ?

Would you be quite happy to be called into His presence, or to be found by Him, when He comes, with a novel in your hand ?

Unless you can sincerely reply in the affirmative to each of these queries, then from every such book or paper let the fatal word which heads this paper stand out prominently before you, and shun novels as you would poison.

May we be enabled to rise to the dignity of our high and holy calling, so that we may “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. i. 10) for His name’s sake.

W. B. D.

CONTENTIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS.

ALAS! that Paul should have had to speak of contentions, and strifes, and divisions among Christians! Yet how manifest it is that the tender beseechings which the apostle, by the Spirit, addressed to the Corinthians have largely fallen upon deaf ears from their day to ours. And what makes this sad fact still sadder is that the exhortation is one to which the name of the Lord Jesus is attached in a very special way. Read over the familiar words once more: "Now I beseech you, brethren, *by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. I. 10).

In the light of these words how sad is the picture of the Church of God to-day! Instead of being perfectly joined together in the same mind; instead of marching shoulder to shoulder in defence of the truth; instead of presenting an unbroken front to the forces of the adversary; instead of "standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving *together* for the faith of the gospel"; instead of manifesting "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity";

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instead of all this, we are too often found harbouring mutual distrust, looking upon one another with sour visages, ready to believe bad things, eager to prove ourselves right at the expense of others, intolerant of what does not accord with our particular views, vehement in perpetuating feuds and strifes. Oh, the sadness of it all!

The intelligent Christian will not expect to see all these wrongs set right before the Lord comes. He knows that the Church will never regain her bright, primitive condition. Scripture holds out no such hope.

And every effort to reconstitute the Church is doomed to failure. Nor can the attempt to form a special company on the original lines of the Church be successful.

But, on the other hand, there may and should be, on the part of every Christian, a desire to get at *the cause* of all the contention, and a determination, arrived at in the fear of God, not to be a contributor to the strife.

"*Only by pride cometh contention*" (Prov. XIII. 10). Here we arrive at the root of all the mischief—PRIDE! And any one who knows aught of his own heart, knows full well that in many insidious forms this hateful thing—pride—lurks *right there*. The soil from which all the rank, foul weeds of strife grow is to be found in each of our hearts. The *flesh* is present with each of us, and its works are these, amongst others:

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“Variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings” (Gal. v. 20, 21).

The cause of it all, then, is to be found *within ourselves*. Pride rampant (it may be spiritual pride, or pride dressed in the garb of humility), and the flesh allowed to work—these are the things answerable for the strifes and contentions which we deplore.

On the other hand, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness,” and so on. We hear a good deal nowadays, of the Spirit’s work, but where the Spirit is really suffered to carry on His blessed work in our souls there will be the abandonment of party feuds, the reconciling of the estranged, and the displacement of intolerance by brotherly love and long-suffering.

Oh, beloved Christian readers, if we cannot set the Church right, can we not set *ourselves* right? If the love of Christ were more of a reality to us many of our mutual suspicions and strifes would immediately end.

When the Forth Bridge was being constructed, some difficulty was experienced in getting parts of the structure to unite. All that hydraulic power could do had been tried in vain. But one night a very marked rise of temperature occurred, which so acted upon the metal of the parts concerned that all came into place and the whole was united without difficulty.

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Oh for a rise of temperature! Will you not seek, dear brother or sister, that your own soul may be warmed afresh with divine love, and that there may be a similar increase of warmth amongst our fellow Christians?

Depend upon it, the nearer we get to the Lord, the nearer we shall get to one another.

A line of young trees was planted, each tree being thirty feet from the next one. As the trees grew they shot out branches. The higher the trees grew the nearer the branches approached one another, till at length they met and intertwined. Let this little parable speak to us. The more we grow in spiritual things, the closer we shall be drawn to one another. And *then*, by God's grace, it will not be a hard matter for us to "keep the unity of the Spirit" with any of the Lord's dear people who are walking in His ways.

At the beginning of this paper we remarked that the apostle's exhortations to unity had fallen upon deaf ears. Thank God, there is another word on this subject, that has *not* fallen upon deaf ears. Not an exhortation, but a prayer; not addressed to men, but to God. The prayer of the Lord Jesus for His own, "that they all may be one," is assuredly to have its answer.

The day is drawing near when the whole Church will be visibly and manifestly one. Luther and Zwingle, who quarrelled so fiercely in the service of the One they both so deeply loved, will then be

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in perfect accord. Whitefield and Wesley, who fell out with one another over the doctrines of grace, will then be in sweetest harmony. Those who have looked askance at each other on earth will then be completely at one.

Where is this great demonstration of unity to take place? *In the air* (1 Thess. iv. 17). Not in heaven, for the Lord "shall descend from heaven." The meeting will take place in the air.

Now the air is the seat of Satan's power. He is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2). It is in the region of his domain, in the very teeth of the enemy, that Christ will assert His claim to "His own" and will gather them around Him, perfectly and eternally *one*.

What a day of triumph that will be! Satan has scattered and divided us, and has sown sad seeds of discord and strife, but his discomfiture will be complete, and with Him, Who has loved us in spite of all, we shall be ushered into our eternal home.

"No more as here, 'mid snares to fear
A thought or wish unholy;
No more to pain the Lamb once slain,
But live to love Thee wholly;

"No more to view Thy chosen few
In selfish strife divided;
But drink in peace the living grace
That gave them hearts united."

H. P. B.

WHY THE CRITICS ARE SCEPTICS.

THE following letter was written so long ago as 1862. It originally appeared in the *Record* newspaper, and has been lately published by Sir Robert Anderson in his book *The Bible and Modern Criticism*. It is sent us by a correspondent, who asks that it may have a place in the pages of *Simple Testimony*. This we gladly give.

The Holy Scriptures, we regret to say, are still shamelessly assailed, not alone by avowed infidels, but by men who, if their profession counts for anything, should stand up in their defence. Sir Robert tells his readers that the letter made a profound impression on him at the time. May it similarly affect many who read it here.

“You will observe in a recent article that the public is becoming accustomed to the strange vagaries on the Bible which men of learning and high position in the Church seem so constantly falling into.

“I should be glad to express, through the medium of your columns, what appears to me the secret of all this ; and I the rather desire to do so, because I am myself a monument of the delivering power and mercy of God in this very matter.

“It is very observable that almost all the men who

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have thus notoriously erred from the way of truth are men of some kind of eminence in natural ability. Of Mr. Maurice I cannot say I think that even in natural things he excels in distinctness of ideas or the power of clearly discerning nice differences. But the errors of such men as Heath, and especially Bishop Colenso, cannot be attributed to any confusion of mind as to things which differ—their eminent honours at Cambridge forbid our taking that view. Besides, I know from past experience in the same gloomy school that the possession of very considerable natural acumen does not in the least degree aid a man whose mind is perplexed about the foundations of Bible truth.

“As to the objections urged by the above gentlemen to the generally received views of Scripture and the doctrines which flow so immediately from its simple and spiritual acceptance as the Word of God, they know as well as we do that they are hackneyed and as old as our fallen nature, but then that does not remove them; they cannot receive the simple accounts of Scripture because they have not divine faith. I remember when I first began to read the Bible (and I thought I was sincerely seeking the truth) I was miserable because I could not believe it; I dared not reject any statement I found there, but I could not fully believe it was true. The Bishop of Natal just expresses what I felt, and the fact that we took exactly the same university honours (in different years of course) makes me sympathize with him peculiarly. My own history was just this. I had read and studied deeply in mathematics, had mastered every fresh subject I entered upon with ease and delight; had become accustomed (as every exact mathematician must do)

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to investigate and discover fundamental differences between things which seem to the uninitiated one and the same; had seen my way into physical astronomy and the higher parts of Newton's immortal *Principia*, and been frequently lost in admiration of his genius till St. Mary's clock warned me that midnight was passed three hours ago. I had in fact (as we say) made myself master of dynamics, and become gradually more and more a believer in the unlimited capabilities of my own mind! This self-conceited idea was only flattered and fostered by eminent success in the Senate House, and by subsequently obtaining a Fellowship at Trinity, and enjoying very considerable popularity as a mathematical lecturer.

"It would have spared me many an hour of misery in after days had I really felt what I so often said, viz. 'That the deeper a man went in science, the humbler he ought to be, and the more cautious in pronouncing an independent opinion on a subject he had not investigated or could not thoroughly sift.' But, though all this was true, I had yet to learn that this humility in spiritual things is never found in a natural man.

"I took orders, and began to preach, and then, like the Bishop among the Zulus, I found out the grand deficit in my theology. I had not the Spirit's teaching myself, and how could I without it speak 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power'?

"In vain did I read Chalmers, Paley, Butler, Gaussen, etc., and determine that, as I had mastered all the other subjects I had grappled with, so I would the Bible, and that I would make myself a believer. I found a poor, ignorant old woman in my parish

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more than a match for me in divine things. I was distressed to find that she was often happy in the evident mercy of the Lord to her, and that she found prayer answered, and that all this was proved sincere by her blameless and harmless walk amongst her neighbours ; whilst I, with all my science and investigation, was barren, and unprofitable, and miserable—an unbeliever in heart, and yet not daring to avow it, partly from the fear of man, but more from a certain inward conviction that all my sceptical difficulties would be crushed and leaped over by the experience of the most illiterate Christian.

“I was perfectly ashamed to feel in my mind like Voltaire, Volney, or Tom Paine. I could claim no originality for my views, and I found they were no comfort, but a constant source of misery to me.

“It may now be asked how I came ever to view divine truth differently. I desire to ascribe all praise to Him to Whom power belongeth ; I desire to put my own mouth in the dust, and be ashamed, and never open my mouth any more, because of my former unbelief. I cannot describe all I passed through, but I desire with humility and gratitude to say, I was made willing in a day of Christ’s power. He melted down my proud heart with His love ; He shut my mouth for ever from cavilling at any difficulties in the written Word, and one of the first things in which the great change appeared was, that whereas before-time preaching had been misery, now it became my delight to be able to say, without a host of sceptical or infidel doubts rushing into my mind, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ Oh, I am quite certain no natural man can see the things of God ; and I am equally certain he cannot

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make himself do so. 'It was the Lord that exalted Moses and Aaron,' said Samuel; and 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' said St. Paul; and so in a modified and humble sense I can truly say.

"It used to be a terrible stumbling-block to me to find so many learned men, so many acute men, so many scientific men, infidels. It is not so now; I can see that God has said, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble'; I see, as plainly as it is possible to see anything, that no natural man can receive the things of the Spirit of God. Hence I expect to find men of this stamp of intellect coming out boldly with their avowals of unbelief in the written Word of God. The only answer I can give to them is: 'God has in mercy taught me better'; and never do I sing those beautiful words in the well-known hymn, but I feel my eyes filling with tears of gratitude to the God of all compassion:—

'Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God.'

So it was with me, so it must be with any one of them if ever they are to know the truth in its power, or to receive the love of the truth that they may be saved.

"I feel very much for the young of this generation, remembering the conflicts I passed through in consequence of the errors of men of ability."

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INQUIRER (Florence).—In our eyes it might seem impossible that the betrayers and murderers of the Lord Jesus should ever be forgiven. It was assuredly in answer to the Saviour's intercession that, instead of immediate judgment, a further opportunity for repentance was given, according to Acts III. 19–26. But it was not embraced, and thus the sin of resisting the Holy Spirit was added to that of rejecting and crucifying their Messiah. Still, even for sins so appalling there was abundant forgiveness, so rich was God's grace, so far-reaching in its efficacy the atonement Christ had made. Hence in the great commission of Luke xxiv. 46–7, the apostles were to begin at Jerusalem. In the city where sin had risen to its highest height, and the hands of the rulers were reddened with the blood of the Crucified, there the glad tidings of repentance and remission of sins should first be preached. Was there ever grace so great?

ROMA.—Nowhere in Scripture is the soul of the departed said to be asleep. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," said the Lord. The disciples thought this meant natural rest. Not so, "Lazarus is dead," the Lord replied. To be asleep, then, is equivalent to a person being dead. But does that mean that the spirit is asleep, or that there is no such thing as spirit apart from body? Other scriptures guard against so great an error. Paul, when caught up into Paradise, tells us that he knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body (2 Cor. XII.). And yet while in that state he *heard* unspeak-

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able words! This passage refutes both notions, for if the body were all, how could he talk thus? And if the spirit were asleep, how could he hear and understand words? Elsewhere the same apostle tells us of his desire to depart and to be with Christ, which he adds is "*far better.*" Does not this imply that our enjoyment of Christ is after a larger measure when we "depart" and are with Him than ever it was before? Could this be said if the spirit slept and knew nothing? As to the separate existence of spirit apart from body, our Lord's answer to the Sadducees is conclusive. They denied the doctrine, and the Lord quotes what God said to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham," etc. Not I *was*, but I *am*. Now "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." All live unto Him, though dead to us.

J. H.—2 Corinthians I. 17-20.—Looking at the preceding context, it seems as if the Corinthians had thought the apostle's conduct light and vacillating. Without pausing to vindicate himself, he turns to his testimony and says, "But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay." "Speak of me as you may, charge me with saying 'yea' to-day and 'nay' to-morrow, one thing is sure, there is no instability in that which was set before you in the word which we preached." The Son of God was the great subject of the testimony. Paul might be charged with breaking *his* promise to come to the Corinthians again, but *God's* promises stood fast, and in Christ was the substance and fulfilment of them all. They are "to the glory of God," as everything of that nature must necessarily be, and "by us" because we inherit the substance of the promises, and we do

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so as being "in Christ," firmly attached to Him by divine power, as the context plainly shows.

A. J. P.—It is not given to every one to use terms easy to understand, and certainly to say that "our salvation is at the right hand of God" is not to speak with great plainness of speech. But we should suppose that Christ was meant. He is at the right hand of God, and He is our salvation. We mean that He is our Saviour—that there is salvation in none other—none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. If this be not the meaning, then we are utterly in the dark. (ii.) Scripture is silent as to whether any particular sort of wine should be used at the Supper of the Lord. "Much controversy" on such a detail is not to be encouraged. The solemn import of the act is of infinitely greater moment. (iii.) The injunction "not to eat" with such a one as is described in 1 Corinthians v. 11, involves his exclusion from the Lord's Supper, but we believe it goes further, though we should stand for the spirit of the words rather than for the letter.

I. C. R.—Romans XIII. 8.—"Owe no man anything" is a divine direction not to be narrowed down to freedom from debt. It should be taken with its immediate context. Render to all their dues, says the apostle—tribute, custom, fear, honour, to whom these things are due. Owe no man anything. Be not wanting in such matters, recognize the obligation, and cheerfully discharge it. This is what love does, and we are to love one another. Here, then, is a debt we may be always paying, but which shall never be wholly paid. (ii.) Luke XXIII. 31. The Lord Jesus was the green tree, and if Israel acted thus towards

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Him Who had only come to bless them, what would their fate be—they who were but a dry tree, withered, sapless, and only ready, so to speak, to be hewn down? The Lord bids the weeping daughters of Jerusalem to reserve their tears for themselves in view of the days of judgment coming upon them consequent on their rejection of Himself.

CONSTANT READER.—The Lord Jesus will help you to overcome your natural irritability of temper if you ask and trust Him to do so. He will give you patience in times of provocation, and help you thus to glorify Him. In your own strength this is impossible, but the grace the Lord supplies will be found equal even to such a demand.

INQUIRER.—We can think of nothing more desirable for a young couple entering the married state than to have the presence and prayers of God's people at such a time. The marriage ceremony is a civil act rather than a religious one, and so long as the requirements of the law are fulfilled, it does not much matter who performs it. But that over, if the united prayers of God's people can be had, and the newly-wedded ones be fervently and affectionately commended to Him in their new and untrodden path, we should think it a privilege to be greatly valued and not lightly to be dispensed with.

R. D.—REVELATION XX.—Possibly what makes this very plain chapter hard for many to understand is that their thoughts have been formed by writings other than the Holy Scriptures. Satan, remember, is not yet bound, the seat of his power is in the heavenlies, out of which he will be cast after the great war described in Revelation XII. 7. During the millen-

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nial reign of Christ and His saints, Satan will be a prisoner, bound with chains in the bottomless pit, which observe is not the lake of fire. When that long period is ended Satan is loosed from his prison, and once more plays the part of a deceiver. Many are carried away by his deceits, and bring upon themselves the immediate judgment of God, and it is then that the great deceiver receives his final doom. He is cast into the lake of fire, and "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Following this is the closing judgment of the unsaved *dead* and its solemn issue, and then comes the eternal state of blessedness described in the first part of chapter XXI. We only add that the saints who live and reign with Christ include those who suffer martyrdom during the time that the power of Anti-Christ is in the ascendant. Of these chapter XIII. 15 speaks.

F. X.—When Paul and Silas said to the awakened jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," they did not stop there and say no more. "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." And so Christ, once dead but now alive again and at the right hand of God, became the object of his trust. So now a man cannot believe in one of whom he has never heard. The order of the whole matter is simply and beautifully explained in Romans x. 13, 14. The goal is salvation, and the apostle shows the steps that lead to it. First, we *hear* the report, secondly, we *believe* it, thirdly, we *call* on the One in Whom we believe, and then it is that we are *saved*. This is strikingly illustrated in the story of the woman with the issue of blood. She knew her need, and the hopelessness of all human remedies. Then she heard of Jesus; believing what she heard, she came and touched, and then she was healed immediately. There is the whole thing in a nutshell. Is this plain? If not, let us hear from you again.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN NOVELS.

ONE of the forces that have to be reckoned with in this day of many evils is the religious element in our popular novels. These books, written in an engaging style and borrowed largely from the public libraries, find easy access into homes where books wholly religious would not be welcome. They are eagerly read to while away the hour, to interest and amuse; at the same time they powerfully mould the mind by suggesting, sometimes in a striking, sometimes in an artless manner, pernicious theories, the true nature of which is not at first perceived.

To this class of reading we do not addict ourselves, but some extracts have been sent us culled from the writings of a gifted novelist, whose books are considered of sufficient interest to be reviewed in the public Press and are always widely read. Let us hear what this lady says:—

“The world is surely growing tired of monotonous sermons on the Jewish doctrine of original sin and necessary sacrifice.”

Very likely! *Monotonous* sermons are extremely wearying, no matter what their subject. They would be even if an angel preached them. But why call the doctrine Jewish? Is it not Christian also? If by “original sin” is meant that all of us inherit a tainted sinful nature,

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surely that is taught as much in the writings of the New Testament as of the Old. So also is the need of a sacrifice if men are to be saved. Sin and atonement, sin and propitiation for sins, is a doctrine neither exclusively Jewish nor Christian. It is *Bible* doctrine, for it is the doctrine of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We see it in the coats of skin with which the Lord God clothed fallen Adam; in the sacrifice Abel offered at the gates of Eden; in the paschal lamb slain on the night of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage; in the solemn and impressive ritual of the Mosaic economy established by divine direction; in the epistles written by inspired apostles; and finally, we hear it in the songs of the redeemed as they stand before the throne of God.

Why then should this doctrine never more be preached? Are the men of this generation—easy-going, pleasure-loving, and of shallow convictions—never to be reminded of their responsibilities towards Him in Whom “we live, and move, and have our being”? Must no attempt be made to arouse their conscience as to their failure in duty towards God and man? Must no poor preacher ever reason with them “of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” as Paul reasoned with Felix till Felix trembled? Must he, for fear of offending fastidious ears, forbear to speak of “the precious blood of Christ”

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—the price of our redemption—nor ever whisper to any sin-sick, dying soul that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”? These things are in the Bible, are they not? Ought then any servant of the living God to hold his tongue and never speak about them lest some lady in her satins and white kid gloves, or some gentleman of very superior attainments, should sneer at him as a preacher of antiquated doctrine which the world has long since outgrown?

But let us hear more:—

“Christ did not die because God needed a sacrifice. The idea of sacrifice is a relic of heathen barbarism. God is too infinitely loving to desire the sacrifice of the smallest flower. He is too patient to be ever wrathful, and barbaric ignorance confronts us again in the notion that He should need to be appeased. . . . Christ’s death was not a sacrifice.”

This is bold indeed. No doubt such sentiments are attractive. No doubt those who profess them think their conceptions of the love of God far grander than ours, who hold with the writer of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews that Christ’s death was a sacrifice for sins. But they are profoundly mistaken. Their views of the love of God are poor and pinched, low and degraded, in comparison with what is true and scriptural. They are mole-hills rather than mountains, shallow pools rather than the deep

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and boundless sea. God is love—not simply loving, pitiful, compassionate—but it is *God* Who is so, and He surely has attributes that must not be forgotten. We do not magnify His love by never speaking of His righteousness, of His holiness, of the impossibility of sin being anything else but infinitely hateful to Him. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Every line of the Bible forbids us to think that He regards our sins as weaknesses to be pitied rather than offences to be judged. But, oh, how great must His love be Who thought of us in our distance, darkness, and misery, and Who gave His only begotten Son, not alone that we might never perish, but that we should have eternal life! How great the love of the Son Who came to do the will of God, to bear our sins in His own body on the tree, to die, the Just One for the unjust ones, that He might bring us to God. Here is love indeed which the tongues of men and of angels could never tell; a love of which the Bible speaks, and which is shed abroad in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost given unto him (Rom. v. 5).

It is very possible that the story of God’s great love is not told as it ought to be even by those who should know it best. Moreover, the base idea that finds expression in the many mediators of the Romish Church clings to many a Protestant pulpit. Christ is preached as the One

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Who has come to gather us under His sheltering wing, to hide us from the wrath our sins have justly provoked, and little mention is made of Him as the One in Whom the love of God towards sinful perishing men is most perfectly displayed. This, to say the least of it, is very defective. It leads us to look at God in the light of a righteous Judge, offended by our many sins, and from Whose heavy hand we can only be delivered by the sacrifice of Calvary. Now there is truth in that, but it is not the whole truth. And the mischief of it is that it leads to the belief that pity, compassion, love, and a desire for our salvation may be found in the heart of Christ, while nothing of the kind can be expected from the heart of God. Those who preach thus invite us to view God's character through a glass that distorts the object at which they bid us look. The fact is, Christ did not come into the world that God might love us, nor did He die to secure that end. He came from heaven to make God known to us in all His ineffable love. His cross—which does indeed show the impossibility of sin and God meeting save in solemn judgment—is in itself the grand and glorious manifestation of God's own love, the irrefragable proof that the love of God has risen high above the sin of men. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20).

Would to God that those who preach were

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better able to set this love before the eyes and hearts of men. It is a holy love, strong in its hatred of evil, as true love must ever be, and finding in the very ruin into which sin had plunged us the opportunity for its own display. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 7, 8). This is the love which, when known, breaks the hardest heart and bends the proudest; this is that which lays hold of the chiefest of sinners, cleanses them from the pollution of their former days, and makes their life bright and beautiful with the brightness and beauty that shine in the face of a risen and glorified Christ.

But if the dying of the Lord Jesus was not a sacrifice for sins, what is the meaning of His incarnation, His life on earth, His woeful death on Calvary, His glorious resurrection? A further quotation will give this lady's answer:—

"A sinless spirit suffered to show us how to suffer: lived on earth to show us how to live: prayed to show us how to pray: died to show us how to die: rose again to impress strongly on us that there was in truth a life beyond this one for which He strove to prepare our souls."

And so the mystery of His incarnation, of His life and cross and passion, are nothing more than

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an example and a manifestation of what it is possible for men to be if they will only strive to attain to it. We shall not deny that He has left His people an example that they should follow His steps. The Bible tells us so. But can fallen, unregenerate man follow in the steps of Jesus, the Son of God? Is he ever called to follow? Never. The very thought is sure evidence of the pride, hardness, and arrogance of the human heart. It ignores our sinnership, our need of redemption and of reconciliation to God. Let a man be brought to know God as revealed in Christ, and then indeed he may ask for strength to follow Him, and he shall not ask in vain.

Another word and we have done. Did Christ die "to show us how to die"? Any one who says so cannot have rightly read the story of His death or apprehended in the smallest degree the solemn circumstances under which He laid down His life. What is the meaning of His "strong crying and tears," of His agony and bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane? What is the meaning of that bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Was He wrong in thinking Himself forsaken? Did His confidence give way and His faith suffer an eclipse? If so, others may teach us a better way to die. Here, in our own England, men and women and gentle maidens for Christ's sake have gone with joyous steps to the faggot and the flame, bearing

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triumphant witness that they were *not* forsaken in the hour of their extremity. *But Jesus was.* How shall that mystery be explained? Only in one way. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." That's the explanation. There is no other.

And now, kind reader, what about yourself? You are a sinner. We all are, and that God with Whom we have to do is holy, just, and good. However far from Him we may have wandered, the way back is clear and open, and He invites us to return. What is it that can remove every fear and fill our hearts with profound peace? It is the knowledge of Himself as revealed in Christ. He is not ignorant of our sins, nor does He make little of them; but He has already taken up that question that He might settle it for ever and place it behind His back and ours. Have you sought His face and told Him your soul's deep need? Is Jesus your only hope, His precious blood your only plea? If so, be of good cheer. You belong to Christ. God owns you as His child, and He loves you with a love that shall last for ever and ever. Your Saviour, living now in heaven, loves you too, and lives to keep you to the end. But if you cannot say so much as that, will you not turn to Him just now and taste and see for yourself how good and gracious He is?

“OH THAT I HAD WINGS!”

“And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.”—Ps. LV. 6.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—MATT. XI. 28.

STANDING the other day on an eminence that overlooked a wide stretch of country bathed in the soft light of the summer sun, and radiant in its early summer beauty, the words of the psalmist rose spontaneously to mind: “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.” But following hard, there came some other words—though instead of rising from the heart they seemed spoken to the heart, as if some still yet mighty voice had whispered them: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

What an immense contrast there is between these two utterances! Both, indeed, speak of *rest*; but of two altogether different ways of obtaining it. Let us try to discover wherein this great difference lies.

In the first place, the psalmist's desire, however eloquent and impressive, is only the sighing after something impossible. To fly away we must have wings, and no amount of sighing will procure them for us. Men in this age of progress are trying hard to fashion artificial wings, but the

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one drawback seems to be that they reach a resting-place too soon. The psalmist longed after a better sort; but wings we cannot have, therefore cannot fly away and reach the rest so ardently desired.

Now Christ proposes to us something quite different. He will give us rest, and all we have to do is to come to Him for it. Here there is nothing hopeless, nothing beyond us. But it may be said, "Yes, it would be very easy to come to Christ if He were on earth, but He is no longer here, and I seem to need the wings of a dove to reach Him." No! Have you ever thought that it needed just as much faith to obtain the blessings He had to give then as it does now? If He were on earth to-day, you would need faith to believe that He could give you rest, and that is all we need now He is in heaven. Just faith in His word. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The *word* is *nigh* thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, *the word of faith*, which we preach" (Rom. x. 6-8). No! Thank God, we do not need to sigh for wings; rest can be ours in an easier fashion. These words used in connexion with salvation are just as applicable to rest.

Notice the second contrast. David desires to "fly away": Christ says, "*Come unto Me.*" The

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human longing is ever to get away. Circumstances are trying, the path is difficult, the way is beset with thorns, there seems no rest for the sole of your foot. Where can you turn, what can you do? Then the thought comes, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.” But would flying away be, after all, any remedy? Would you be better off? It is extremely doubtful. The ills you fly to might be worse than those you seek to shun. To escape from everybody may at times seem a relief, but to be shut up to yourself all alone may be worse than all, and no wings of a dove can take you out of reach of yourself and your thoughts.

Humanity at large is still weary and heavy laden, and many hasten their escape from this life by a speedy method of their own. They have never listened to Christ. He does not advise flight or escape. He says, “Come”—“Come unto Me.” Oh, the difference, we say again, between His way of rest and all that went before Him. It is not flight, but a welcome; not a retreat, but a home; not solitude, but society; not a getting away, but a coming to. No one in David’s day could say, “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” David was a great man, yet he had no rest to give—his only way to find it for himself was to get out of the way of everybody, and be alone.

And here we would beg the reader to notice the exact conditions on which alone we can

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obtain the offered rest. Christ, be it observed, does *not* say, "Come for rest, and you will get it." What He does say is, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Oh, how much we miss because what we come for occupies our minds instead of Him to Whom we come. Let us place all the emphasis we possibly can upon the word *Me*. "Come unto Me." Let us set all our attention, and fix all our gaze upon Him, and not upon what we come to Him for. If we reach the Blessor, we cannot fail of the blessing; if we come to the Giver, we shall not miss the gift; if we repose on the bosom of the One Who has rest, that rest must become ours. "Come unto ME," Christ says first; then, "I will give you rest."

How great is this message to sorrowing, toiling humanity—great, because of the immeasurable character of the need it proposes to meet, and greater still because of the greatness of Him Who utters it. Oh, to think there is One—the Highest and the Best—Who offers a haven to the surge-tossed, storm-smitten sons of men, a haven of perfect peace and perfect rest—the haven within His own sheltering arms and loving heart! In what other book than the Bible, or from what other person than Christ, does there come such an invitation to the weary and heavy laden?

A further contrast will be found *in the kind of rest proposed by David and promised by Christ.*

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David's, after all, is only a negative kind. From a “scene of confusion and creature complaints” he would “fly away.” It is an “escape from the windy storm and tempest,” but nothing more. How different is the “Come unto Me” of Christ. He has found rest for Himself, and coming to Him we learn the secret of it.

At the time Christ offers this rest to others He was passing through one of the great crises of His life. He has to say to the generation of His day, “We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced,” and He had to “upbraid the cities where most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not.” What will He do at such a moment, when He seemed to have “laboured in vain and spent His strength for nought?” This was His answer to the divine ordering, which seems at first sight so inscrutable: “I thank Thee, O Father. . . .” “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” He rests in His Father's will, and in the knowledge that that will is good. Apparently His ministry had failed, but Christ knew something better than the worldly maxim, “Nothing succeeds like success.” He knew that through apparent failure come the greatest triumphs. And His ultimate triumph was in full view of Him at that moment, for side by side with the words already quoted come these other words, “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.” But there was a *moral* triumph already, and in the power of it Christ

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can turn to the weary and heavy laden of all ages, and say: "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." That moral triumph was in being meek and lowly in heart, and in accepting the yoke of His Father's will. Such submission places Him on a loftier pinnacle than the acclamation of the cities where most of His miracles were wrought ever could have done.

It is the "meek and lowly in heart" that find rest unto their souls. And it is in the circumstances through which we are called to pass we learn our lessons of meekness. Had Christ been always victorious in His pathway here, had His sun risen steadily to its meridian and remained there, and never set amid the storm-clouds of the cross, we might have seen His might and majesty, but we never should have learned His meekness and lowliness. And if we are told that a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price, then these we know are just the qualities God discerned in His beloved Son down here.

And, moreover, it was meekness and lowliness in the presence of the apparent triumph of injustice and wrong. John the Baptist, Christ's forerunner, was unlawfully detained in prison, and Christ's own claims, substantiated as they were by miracles and signs, were refused. Not one of us but what would have stormed and

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agitated and rebelled. Christ fell back upon His Father's goodness, and the assurance that in God's good time the right must prevail. It is not otherwise to-day, and we need all our faith and patience just to do what Christ did.

As surely as we do this His rest will be ours. Let us only take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. The same yoke must bring the same rest. Whatever the Father allowed or ordered was good. The meekness that would not retaliate or claim its rights, and the lowliness that was content to tread an obscure path seeking nothing for itself, while satisfied with the Father's good pleasure, brought Christ rest. His yoke was easy and His burden light, and He now offers that same easy yoke to us.

In Psalm LV. we learn what led David to express himself as he did. He speaks of his heart being sore pained within him (*v.* 4), and in verse 9 he tells us why this is: "For I have seen violence and strife in the city. . . . Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets." It was the state of the people of God, their evil doings, and their strife, that made David say, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." No wonder it is the wings of a *dove* he longs for. That peaceful bird that seeks the quiet haunts, where undisturbed by jarring note it can find its rest.

But he goes even deeper. He shows us the

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most unkindest cut of all. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me," he says; "then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." "Yes," says David, "this is just the bitterness of it all. That one from whom I expected something altogether so different treats me in this way. The very sweetness and sacredness of what should have been, and what ought to have been, only now lend poison and bitterness to the cup."

In all this David calls upon us to behold one of the very cruellest sights under heaven—the estrangement of brethren. And he would have us understand that it is those who are amongst our choicest acquaintance, those with whom we have taken sweet counsel, and gone in their company to the enjoyment of the most sacred privileges, who have it in their power more than any beside to add wormwood and gall to our cup. This is what David found. And has not many a one since David passed through a similar experience? To-day, for such, there is a resource that David knew not of. To all the weary and heavy laden, from whatever cause, how sweet are the words of Christ sounding still along the highway of life: "Come unto ME, and I will give you rest."

R. E.

THE WORSHIPPER AND THE RAM OF CONSECRATION.

EXODUS XXIX.

WE have already seen that to be a worshipper we must know what it is to be cleansed from our defilement and clothed in the beauty of Christ before God. We have also noticed that the bullock spoken of in Exodus XXIX. typifies our complete removal in the death of Christ—"Our old man is crucified with Him."

The next aspect of Christ's death is presented in the ram of consecration (see *vv.* 15-28). There are two rams. The one is offered whole upon the altar (*v.* 18). The other is partly burnt, and the remainder eaten by the priests. Both rams set forth the whole-hearted devotedness of Christ. In the one offered whole upon the altar, we may gather that "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father." He alone knows the infinite measure of the devotedness of Christ. It is wholly burnt, and ascends as a sweet savour to God. Jesus could say, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again."

It is good for us to ponder this aspect of Christ's death—not as dying for us, or our dying with Him, but as the One Who lived wholly to please God. He had come into the world for

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that purpose. It was not the legal constraint of the law upon a nature opposed to its claims, but the response of a nature that knew no desire but the will of God.

Peter tells us in his first Epistle, i. 2, that we are called to the same kind of obedience.

This is typified in the second ram, whose blood was put on the ear, thumb, and toe of both Aaron and his sons. In the twenty-first verse the anointing oil is sprinkled with the blood. Oil is a figure of the Holy Ghost. We thus gather that a worshipper, in all that to which he puts his hand, in every place where he sets his foot, and in everything to which his ear listens, should be a constant witness to the fact that God has separated him to Himself by the blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In order to do this he must be a consecrated man. Now, consecration may be translated by three other words—"fill the hand." We often hear it said, "That man's hands are full of business." Of us, as Christians, it ought to be said, "That man's hands are full of Christ." In the twenty-fourth verse the hands of the worshippers are filled with that which speaks of Christ. We read of one loaf of bread. This typifies the pure and spotless humanity of Christ, that holy Thing that was born of the Virgin. Then the cake of oiled bread is that same blessed One Who was anointed and filled and led of the Spirit in

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all His service here. The wafer of unleavened bread points to Christ as the absolutely sinless One. He had no sin. He did no sin. He knew no sin.

The breast of the ram is expressive of the love of Christ—that love which led Him to die for us; the shoulder, of His power to carry out all that His love led Him to go through. He had power to lay down His life and power to take it again. This gives such a precious character to the love of Christ. All this (as we are told in the thirty-second and thirty-third verses) was to be the food on which the worshippers lived.

We feed upon Christ in life and in death. We dwell upon His devotedness and self-renunciation, and this produces its own effect. Only let us see to it that we are constantly feeding upon Christ as thus presented in the ram of consecration, and the effect will be “praise issuing forth in life.” A thoroughly healthy child, having good food and good air, expresses all the overflow of life; whilst another, with bad digestion and unhealthy surroundings, will crave the enjoyment the other possesses. So it is with Christians. All are equally loved by Christ; all are equally cleansed by His precious blood; all are clothed in the best robe; but all are not in the aboundings of life. What is the secret? They do not feed upon Christ. They may know their security from judgment, they may know their acceptance

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in Christ; but in order to be a hallowed and consecrated company of worshippers they must feed upon Christ. They cannot take in the whole of what He is or has; they can only appropriate a bit at a time. "Now we know in part." What we have already learnt of Christ in His perfect pathway and the death by which He glorified God, is to be added to daily. Notice, none was to be left until the morning. What I learnt of Christ yesterday, is to lead me on to gather up some other perfection in Him to-day. Just as in natural things yesterday's dinner will not satisfy the cravings of hunger to-day, neither will what I knew of Christ in the past feed me in the present. He is Living Bread—the Bread of God and the Bread of Life. We are to eat to live, and we are to live to eat.

Do not be satisfied with the portion you got on Sunday: get more on Monday; go on each day. Mark—the priests feed together. We must get into company with Christians, we must feed on the Redeemer in company with the redeemed.

We also must feed for ourselves alone. In this way only will the life we have be sustained and kept healthy and vigorous. The Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God is the divinely appointed channel to feed our souls. May we be found each day discovering some fresh perfection of that all-perfect One Who is *the truly Consecrated One*.

H. N.

YOU MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM.

I SHOULD like the two following sentences, written, as they were, by men who have both served the Lord for upwards of forty years, to sink deeply down into the hearts of all who may be kind enough to read this paper. The subject is profoundly serious.

First: "I question if some have bottomed things in their own souls with God, and let His judgment about themselves (not their own judgment from what conscience says) into the very core of their being."

Second: "The judgment of self by conscience is not enough. To get to the core there must be the judgment pronounced by God at the cross."

You will notice that in each sentence the "judgment of God"—that is, His revealed mind—and the "core of the being" are mentioned. The mind of God as to the true state of the heart by nature is the point before each writer.

Now who are the people alluded to by the writers?

Not the unconverted, who, of course, have no sense of their condition before God at all; not even those who may have been awakened to that sense in the throes of a religious movement; but what was in their mind was the fact that, to-day, many who have heard, and, by grace,

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received a full and clear gospel, have never permitted the judgment of God, as being far in excess of any work of conscience, to reach and affect what is described as the core of their being!

This fact, for fact it is, goes far to account for the instability, the dissatisfaction, and the worldliness of many true believers, especially amongst the young of our day.

What they have received has cost them little. The conscience has been only scarified, instead of being ploughed by the mighty Word of God. Tears and weeping there may have been, and, no doubt, sorrow for sin; but such souls may have been brought too quickly into peace, and have never really or adequately faced their condition in the presence of God.

It is an awful thing to discover the truth that in the core of your being there is only hatred of God! "They hated Me without a cause," said the Son of God when here below; and what was true then is also true now. Men hate God!

This, then, is the judgment of God—His appraisement of your heart and mine—as proved only too fully at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Conscience may tell me that I have done wrongly, perhaps very wrongly; but the judgment of God reaches far deeper than my actions, even to that from which my actions proceed. It descends to that which *I am*; and

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the knowledge of what I am, as before God, creates a wretchedness much more terrible than the condition of sins—that is, of actual offences. Yet this is a pre-requisite for settled and abiding peace with God.

Let me draw attention to a scripture in Romans VIII. 3, which perhaps gives as fully as any other this judgment of God.

We read: “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

“For sin” signifies “a sacrifice for sin,” and this, thank God, was rendered at the cross.

There it was that He “condemned sin in the flesh”—a thing vastly more awful than sins in the life, because it is their source and spring. Here, then, we find the root condemned and utterly set aside in God’s sight. How could conscience, though never so sensitive, do that? Impossible! Nay, but it finds relief whenever the death of Christ is truly apprehended. It is well to be convicted of one’s own conscience, but how far short this must be of God’s condemnation of sin in the flesh!

And the discovery of the fact that “in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing,” though agonizing, is yet the only true stepping-stone to deliverance and practical Christian holiness.

Fear not, dear reader, to face this terrible truth.

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Fear not to go down to the bottom, to touch the low bed-rock of your state as utterly sinful.

It was the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save, so that the two conditions, "lost" and "saved," stand in relation to one another—as do also death in sins and life in Christ.

Extremes meet. If you refuse the totality of your ruin, you will never enjoy the completeness of God's salvation. If you complain of doubt, or bondage, or the power of indwelling sin, it only shows too clearly that you have not bottomed your case before God, however true your faith in Him may be.

The lack of this getting to the bottom is a fruitful source of error and of mysticism, and for this reason, that the effort to reform what God has judged and to make "the flesh" aught else than a thing wholly condemned is not Christianity and is counter to the Spirit of God. Scripture has but one description of sin—that it is "exceeding sinful." How fearfully graphic and how serious!

We can turn, however, to this comforting word: "For God hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Here the Sinless One was made sin in order that the sinful ones might become righteous! How marvellous are God's doings! J. W. S.

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A. R.—Be not deceived. It is quite possible for an unregenerate man to make a Christian profession, become a preacher, lead for a while a good life, and afterwards fall under the power of drink and wallow in every kind of vice. “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Peter II. 22). The reality of a man’s faith is shown by his patient continuance in well doing. If that be wanting, no matter what his profession, he falls in the wilderness and never reaches the rest of God at all (Heb. III. 17). Do I mean by this that one who has been born again, received forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, may yet be finally lost? Assuredly not. He Who kindled the fire will never suffer it to be put out. But saving faith is a living, indestructible principle which cannot be hid, and which shows itself in various forms of life. Do I mean then that a Christian will never stumble and fall? Far from it. Peter fell even to the denial that he had ever known his Master. But he did not fall out of the hand of Christ, and if he wept bitter tears and deeply repented, it was because the Saviour had said, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” He, to Whose hands we have been committed, will most surely keep us and bring us to glory. But our responsibility is to cleave to Him, to watch and pray, and to remember that we are only safe as we walk in humble dependence upon Himself. This does not open the door to distrust or to fear as to the end. It only leads us

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to trust implicitly the strong hand of Him Who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and whose priesthood in the heavenly courts is ever exercised on behalf of those whose faces are steadfastly set towards the rest that remains for the people of God. See also a little booklet, *How do I Stand after That?* in which this interesting subject is more amply discussed. A half-dozen copies can be had of our publisher for four penny stamps.

J. M.—Luke xxiv. 26.—The words "ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" should be taken in connexion with the "all that the prophets have spoken" of the preceding verse. They had prophesied of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter i. 11), and if those ancient prophecies were to be fulfilled, ought not the Christ to have suffered thus? As to Exodus x. 23, the homes of the Israelites were sheltered by divine power from the darkness that spread itself all over the land of Egypt. The fact is simply stated, but not the means of its accomplishment. So we can only surmise that it was as we have stated.

PERPLEXED PILGRIM.—"Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," these are the things necessary unto salvation (Acts xx. 21). Intelligence in the things of God is much to be desired, but were our salvation dependent on *that*, a great many of us would be in an evil case, and the unlearned shut out altogether.

We do not wonder at your having been "robbed of all your joy and of the sense of safety" since you met with your Christadelphian friend. Do not call

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him "friend"; he is no friend of yours. "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy," said the Lord, and this evil work he relentlessly pursues (John x. 10). Into greater darkness and despair you will certainly sink if you listen for a moment to Christadelphianism. What can be expected from a system that denies the deity of Christ, the need of His atoning work, the existence of the spirit apart from the body, and affirms the impossibility of any one knowing whether his good works will entitle him to salvation till the resurrection and judgment day? Of all religious systems that pretend to be founded on the Bible, this is among the very worst. If you value your soul's happiness you will shun your Christadelphian foe and his views with horror. Such folks make a great parade of their Bible knowledge, but it is of the shallowest and lamest kind. Still, it sometimes catches and makes a prey of the weak and the unwary, and of those who are ignorant of Satan's devices. It is an antichrist, concerning whom we are warned in 1 John ii.

To "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" we have no doubt to take heed (Acts i. 3). But "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). And into this kingdom we have been already brought. The Scriptures do indeed speak of a day when the kingdom shall be established in power and glory, and it shall have its earthly and heavenly side. Ours will be the heavenly—the earthly will be possessed by redeemed Israel and the nations that shall be saved. Christadelphianism, among other evils, fixes the eye on a political system

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to be set up on earth in which, say they, we, if found faithful, will have our place. Thus with one fell swoop they deprive us of our heavenly calling, hopes, and destiny. It is an evil system in all its parts. Shun it then, we once more say, for it will do you nothing but harm. Look up to Christ: trust Him simply, trust Him wholly, and He will never fail you. Rest implicitly on God's faithful word. *That* shall stand if all else crumble, and perish, and pass away.

A CHRISTIAN.—Col. III. 20.—It is a very dubious thing for children to sit in judgment on their parents as to whether they are or are not exceeding their responsibility. Subjection to parental authority is what is enjoined, even though a Christian parent be not always wise. In the sphere of master and servant the principle is invariably acknowledged. If a master instructs his servant his wishes are implicitly obeyed, though the servant may see farther than his master and doubt the wisdom of his directions. But there is an end to all authority if the children are to determine how far they will obey—they themselves being the judges of the wisdom of their parents' wishes. Of course, God must be first, and our consciences own His authority to be supreme. Therefore if a parent or master require a thing in which we should sin against God, we are justified in taking our stand and in stating our reasons with meekness and fear. But when that is not the case, we shall glorify God by being subject to our parents, even if their wishes seem somewhat arbitrary. But wisdom is needed on both sides, and God gives it ungrudgingly when sought in faith. From how many sorrows it would save us did we always ask it of Him!

THE PRISONER AND THE JUDGE.

I SAT one day in a court of justice in a provincial town in England. A man was on his trial. He pleaded "Guilty." "Six calendar months," said the judge, and as I listened I could not help feeling what a great blessing *forgiveness* would have been to that guilty man had it been possible for him to have received it.

But the law shows no mercy, even though the offence be confessed and regretted. Indeed the prisoner said, "*I am very sorry, my lord.*" "Too late to be sorry. SIX CALENDAR MONTHS," was the stern rejoinder.

No one in the court said the sentence was too severe, though it was the first offence. Nor did the prisoner. People never dream of mercy if their guilt is proven.

Yet many think that God, the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, ought to treat them differently. They live a life of sin, maintain an attitude of open defiance of God, break His holy laws times beyond number, and despise His gospel; and yet He is to pass it over in silence, wink at their sins, and take them to heaven in their unsanctified condition when they die!

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27).

Let it be proclaimed far and wide that God is
XXIII. L

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merciful, most merciful. He is rich in mercy, yea, "His mercy endureth for ever." The saints in eternal glory—some of them once sinners of the deepest dye—shall be the everlasting witness of His mercy. And when all sin shall be cast into the lake of fire, that too shall be a witness of His mercy, as also of His justice. To confine it where it will never show its proud head again will be indeed a mercy. But let it never be forgotten that God is as righteous as He is merciful, as holy as He is gracious.

As a just ruler He must punish sin. God would cease to be righteous if He did not. The thought of lawlessness being allowed to go unjudged is not consistent with the justice even of our earthly courts. Can God be less just than the judge who gave the prisoner "six calendar months" for one offence? His throne is maintained in righteousness. "Justice and judgment are the habitation [dwelling-place] of His throne."

These are latitudinarian days. The gospel that Paul preached is being largely given up or not understood. The need of a Mediator between God and man is denied, the universal fatherhood of God is loudly proclaimed, and men are told that they can approach Him without the mediation of another. But that is the way of Cain.

If all men are the children of God, why did our Lord say to some who were very religious, "YE ARE OF YOUR FATHER, THE DEVIL"? (John VIII. 44).

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God could not be, at all events, the Father of that generation. "The lusts of your father ye will do," He continued. Undoubtedly man has derived his being from God. In that sense he is the "offspring of God" and possesses a never-dying soul, which the beasts have not. But man is a fallen creature. He has put himself under the power of Satan, whom Scripture calls "the god of this world." The fall is a revolt against God's authority, hence man is a *rebel* sinner.

Sin is a reality. It cannot be whittled down or glossed over. It must be made to appear what it really is in God's sight. It has put the whole world out of relation to its Creator and turned it into a moral chaos. It is utterly offensive to God, and where indulged must meet its fearful consequences, even in this life. "God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, *that shall he also reap.*" Lawlessness, which is independence of God, will meet its sure reward.

"*God is love,*" and His love has been manifested to every creature in that He sent His only begotten Son to die for all classes and conditions of men. Yet it must never be overlooked that God is holy and views sin with utter abhorrence. He does not hate man, the sinner; for him He has infinite pity and compassion; but He hates his sins.

His love and mercy have all been shown in devising means whereby rebellious creatures might be brought to Him in righteousness. His

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unbending justice is not compromised when He brings such back to Himself.

The New Testament must be destroyed before this teaching can be banished. It is the main subject of Paul's most masterly Roman epistle, which Coleridge said was the greatest thing ever written. Such teaching may not be considered abreast of modern thought, but there it stands in black and white on the sacred pages of our Bible.

"A just God and a Saviour" God proclaims Himself to be. But can the inflexible claims of His justice be reconciled with the sending forth of tidings of salvation to a rebel world in open arms against Him? The mind of the most brilliant genius cannot solve this problem. God's highest wisdom is shown in its complete solution.

But only think of the cost to Himself! He gave His own Son. This love transcends our highest thought, demands our deepest gratitude and our most exalted praise. Instead of leaving us in our ruined state, as might have been justly done, God displays the richest mercy toward us. His mercy is the result of His infinite love.

When the sword of justice was uplifted to strike, Mercy, in the person of God's own Son, bore the sharp stroke. For "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah LIII. 5).

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Let me illustrate. In the olden days before bankruptcy courts were established, the man who could not pay his debts was thrown into the debtors' prison. And there he was obliged to remain until the debt was paid. It might appear hard; but it was considered just to society, and it helped, so it was said, to prevent fraud. Whether such a law was good or not we do not now discuss; but it was the law of the land, and had to be respected.

Let us suppose a man cast into the debtors' prison. Some weeks after that same man is seen walking about the streets free. To what conclusion should we come? That the money had been found by some one and the demands of the law satisfied.

Is the administration of law in the hands of the Sovereign Judge less strict? Is there no prison for those who fail in their just responsibility to Him? Could the angels, who are observant of the ways of God, witness to His justice if sin were allowed to go unchallenged?

But oh, love divine and unutterable! The Son of God leaves the height of His power and glory, and becomes a man to suffer and die. He goes into the debtors' prison and pays the last mite. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the JUST FOR THE UNJUST, that He might bring us to God." Blessed Jesus, what deep compassion for sinners was in Thy heart!

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In tears, and agony, and blood, He paid the dreadful score. The claims of the throne were presented in all their severity against Him. Justice relaxed not her demands, though He was the eternal Son of the One Whose laws had been outraged. Nor does He Himself ask any compromise. He meekly meets all, suffers all, and yields up His life in atonement to God. He cried, "IT IS FINISHED." By His finished work those who believe are cleared for ever. God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Love has triumphed, but not at the expense of holiness. Mercy has triumphed, but not at the expense of righteousness. And now

The sinner who believes is free,
Can say, "The Saviour died for me,"
Can point to the atoning blood
And say, "THIS MADE MY PEACE with God."

Yes, he can point to the atoning blood—he can do more. He can point to heaven's throne and say, "The One Who made peace and fully met God's claims in doing it now sits upon that throne." "We see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. II. 8, 9). When He had by Himself purged our sins He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. I. 3).

And now the sword of justice is sheathed for ever against all those who believe in Him.

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Stern justice can demand no more,
And mercy can dispense her store.

This salvation is worthy of God. It makes very much of His perfect wisdom and matchless grace. It is what that "mighty propagandist" Paul—as the sceptic scientist Tyndall called him—gloried in. He had been conquered and captivated by it when he raged against Christ with the madness of a zealot. He had witnessed its mighty power in the conversion of thousands of his fellow-countrymen and tens of thousands of the heathen. He had seen it marching on to the overthrow of Grecian and Roman philosophy. He had suffered all kinds of trials and privations for the spread of it. He declared He was not ashamed of it, for "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." He compresses it into a nutshell in that most simple, most magnificent utterance, "THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS; of whom I am chief."

He waxes bold to the Galatians, who were bewitched by false teachers and led astray from the gospel which he had preached and which they had received, saying, "If any man preach any other gospel . . . let him be accursed." Plain language! He pandered to no man when the truth of the gospel was at stake.

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No milk-and-water man was Paul. He did not vacillate, nor did he blow cold and hot. From start to finish he was consistent. He never was troubled with doubts from the day that Jesus in glory had met him. He knew what he had received and Whom he had believed.

He repeats to the Galatians the gospel that He preached to them: "WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

Satan does not like such preaching, because it delivers from his powerful grasp and overthrows his kingdom. The world is under his sway—he is its prince and leader. The object of the gospel is not simply to save people from everlasting perdition, wonderful as *that is*, but to take them out of the evil course of things here and thus out of his dominion.

It introduces into another world—a world of light—of which Christ is the centre and attraction and delight. The man who is most filled with Christ in His heavenly position and place will glory most in the cross because of the love displayed there. This was true of Paul. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." So he was determined to know nothing amongst men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

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Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small ;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Reader, we commend to you the mighty love of which the cross speaks. Believe it and taste it for yourself ; it will displace the love of self and all besides. Another and brighter object will fill the vision of your soul. God grant that it may be so. Amen. P. W.

“IF your peace to-day is based upon anything whatever in yourself, your *faith*, or anything else, it *may* be gone and lost to-morrow ; but if your eyes are turned to *Christ* to-day, to find in *Him* all you need, to fill your heart and purge your conscience, the question is, Will He be any different to-morrow ? Will His blood have lost its precious efficacy, or He have changed because you have ? If I have been wrecked, and been tossing about in the water till I despaired of life, and find myself now on a solid rock, I do not torture myself to find out whether I am *standing* firmly ; but is the rock firm that I stand on ? *I* tremble, for I very nearly escaped drowning ; but the rock on which I have my feet does not tremble, and so I fear not. And it is so as to salvation : my faith is weak and poor indeed, my feelings often worse, but He my Saviour never changes and “ *He is our peace.*”

VARIED SERVICE.

NUMBERS XVIII. 1-7.

THE smallest act of service, the meanest work done under the eye of Christ, done with direct reference to Him, has its value in God's estimation, and shall most assuredly receive its due reward. This is truly encouraging and consolatory to the heart of every earnest worker. The Levites had to work under Aaron. Christians have to work under Christ. We are responsible to Him. It is very well and very beautiful to walk in fellowship with our dear fellow-workmen, and to be subject one to another in the fear of the Lord. Nothing is further from our thoughts than to countenance a spirit of haughty independence, or that temper of soul that would hinder our genial and hearty co-operation with our brethren in every good work. All the Levites were "joined unto Aaron" in their work, and therefore they were joined to one another. Hence they had to work together. If a Levite turned his back upon his brethren, he would have turned his back upon Aaron. We may imagine a Levite taking offence at something or other in the conduct of his fellows, and saying to himself: "I cannot get on with my brethren. I must walk alone. I can serve God, and work under Aaron; but I must keep aloof from my brethren, inasmuch as I find it impossible to

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agree with them as to the mode of working." But we can easily see through the fallacy of this. For a Levite to adopt such a line of action would have produced nothing but confusion. All were called to work together, how varied soever their work might be.

Still, be it ever borne in mind, their work did vary; and, moreover, each was called to work under Aaron. There was individual responsibility with the most harmonious corporate action. We certainly desire in every possible way to promote unity in action; but this must never be suffered to trench upon the domain of personal service, or to interfere with the direct reference of the individual workman to his Lord. The Church of God affords a very extensive platform to the Lord's workers. There is ample space thereon for all sorts of labourers. We must not attempt to reduce all to a dead level, or cramp the varied energies of Christ's servants by confining them to certain old ruts of our own formation. This will never do. We must all of us diligently seek to combine the most cordial unanimity with the greatest possible variety in action. Both will be healthfully promoted by each and all remembering that we are called to serve together under Christ.

Here lies the grand secret. *Together under Christ.* May we bear this in mind. It will help us to recognize and appreciate another's line of work, though it may differ from our own. We are

one and all but co-workers in the one wide field ; and the great object before the Master's heart can only be attained by each worker pursuing his own special line, and pursuing it in happy fellowship with all.

There is a pernicious tendency in some minds to depreciate every line of work save their own. This must be carefully guarded against. If all were to pursue the same line, where were that lovely variety which characterizes the Lord's work and workmen in the world ? Nor is it merely a question of the line of work, but actually of the peculiar style of each workman.

You may find two evangelists, each marked by an intense desire for the salvation of souls, each preaching substantially the same truth, and yet there may be the greatest possible variety in the mode in which each one seeks to gain the self-same object. We should be prepared for this ; indeed, we should fully expect it. And the same holds good in reference to every other branch of Christian service. We should strongly suspect the ground occupied by a Christian assembly if there were not ample space allowed for every branch and style of Christian service. We ought to do nothing which we cannot do under Christ and in fellowship with Him. And all that can be done in fellowship with Christ can surely be done in fellowship with those who are walking with Him.

C. H. M.

“MUCH RUBBISH.”

TO rebuild the shattered walls of Jerusalem after they had been so effectively destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar must have been no light task; yet, moved by divine impulse, Nehemiah undertook it and, what is more, successfully carried it through.

In that book of the Bible which bears his name, we have the record of his difficulties and his struggles, and of the great feast that was celebrated when all was done.

The first difficulty that confronted him was the power of adversaries *without*. We read:—

“When Sanballat and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it” (Neh. iv. 7, 8).

The second difficulty was the vast quantity of absolutely worthless rubbish *within*. It further says:—

“And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.”

Now has it ever occurred to you how distinct an analogy exists between the bygone history of

Israel and Jerusalem and the history of the professing Church to-day?

Israel when established in the land of promise had a short period of victory under David, and peace and prosperity under Solomon. The Church passed through a similar time in the brief yet blessed apostolic age, as recorded in the opening chapters of the Acts.

Then Israel had centuries of decline, relieved by occasional moments of brightness when for a short time the downward movement was arrested; so with the Church.

Ultimately Babylon triumphed over Israel and all appeared lost; and so the Church got submerged under the flowing tide of worldliness and corruption, until in the dark Middle Ages almost every trace of pure Christianity was gone.

Then came gracious revival—not all at once, but in three stages. A broken remnant of Israel returned to Jerusalem. Firstly, under Zerubbabel and Joshua; secondly, under Ezra the scribe; and thirdly, under Nehemiah. So bit by bit God has worked in these last centuries since the days of Wyclif and Luther.

Should *we* then be surprised if enemies of the Lord rage without, or if much rubbish blocks our way within?

It is about this latter that I want a word with YOU.

And, first of all, are you really awake to the

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fact that the professing Church has within her walls to-day an accumulation of rubbish which is simply appalling?

Broadly speaking, we may say there are two kinds of rubbish.

WORLDLY RUBBISH.

Let us speak plainly. About two hundred years ago, just before the days of Whitefield and Wesley, so history tells us, religion reached a very low ebb in England. It was no uncommon thing for the accredited minister of religion in a parish to get well drunk on Saturday night, and gabble through his Sunday morning service, so as to be in time to join the hounds or back his cock at the fight.

Shocking! you say.

Undoubtedly, and it is a mercy to think that to some extent *that* form of rubbish has been cleared out; but does nothing remain?

Alas! the notice boards outside many places of Christian worship tell a different tale. What mean these placards announcing "entertainments," "amateur theatricals," or "concerts"—not very *sacred* either—or that one giving details of "a great political demonstration"? Some fifteen or twenty years ago things had gone so far that a godly minister felt himself constrained to publish a booklet on this very thing, entitled *The Devil's Mission of Amusement*, and *that mission* has continued unabated to the present hour.

Oh! beloved friend, why do you go on with these things? Are they sanctioned by the Word of God? Were such things adopted by our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, even as a means of attracting the crowds? No.

Do they win the people? Are sinners saved? Do they, repentant and forgiven, go rejoicing away? No.

Are believers refreshed? Do you know of any who have made spiritual progress under the influence of an entertainment? Do Christians really get helped by them? No. But possibly you do know of young Christians who have by these very things taken the first step on a sad and declining pathway.

What then do these things do? They tickle the ears of the unconverted. They dispel thoughts of holy and eternal things.

What are they then? Rubbish! Worse than rubbish; they are slow poison.

Then, again, there is

RELIGIOUS RUBBISH,

and this is less easy to detect and more difficult to dispose of than the other, so much so, that Christians are to be found who carefully preserve it as though it were fine gold.

Here again we may draw a broad distinction. Great sections of Christendom are sadly hampered by rubbish of the *ritualistic* order, and those that have protested against this and severed themselves from connexion with it are becoming in-

creasingly troubled with rubbish of the *rationalistic* order.

The adherents of the former assume that God is to be worshipped by man in his natural condition, and by his natural powers and emotions. Hence they multiply everything that can appeal to the senses or sentiment. Millinery, incense, music, pomp, and magnificence generally are requisitioned to this end.

The latter have such an overweening sense of man's importance and powers of mind and intelligence, that they practically deify human reason and place it on a plane above revelation, if they do not deny revelation itself.

Both agree in this, that they practically deny the fall of man, his total ruin and depravity, so plainly taught all through the Bible. Read in particular the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Notice in chapter III.—

"*All* under sin" (v. 9).

"*All* gone out of the way" (v. 12).

"*All* . . . guilty before God" (v. 19).

"*All* have sinned" (v. 23).

They further agree in supposing that Christianity is a God-given system for improving and elevating man, as he is, whereas the whole truth of Christianity hinges upon the total condemnation *in principle* of man, as he is, in the cross of Christ and the acceptance of the believer "in Christ Jesus" (Rom. VIII. 1-3), so that it is a

question not of reformation or elevation, but of "new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17).

If you have any further doubts as to the worth of the ritualism of the day, read carefully Colossians III. 16-23, and if any as to rationalism read verses 6-10 of the same chapter.

Read also the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in John IV. 24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Do you perceive the force of this?

Worship *must* be "in spirit," the very opposite to being "in flesh," as ritualism supposes. It must be "in truth" (i.e. in godly recognition of all that God is as perfectly revealed in Christ, for "truth" connects itself with the knowledge of God), in contrast to being "in nature" or "in reason," as rationalism supposes.

Now what is to be done?

In Nehemiah's day the rubbish was removed or possibly burned (Neh. IV. 2). Certain it is that it must go.

The New Testament Scriptures speak of two ways of dealing with it.

In the early days a good deal of rubbish crept into the Church at Corinth. The apostle Paul has to speak not only of "gold, silver, precious stones," but of "wood, hay, stubble" (1 Cor. III. 12). The treatment he urged upon the Church in reference to grave moral evil runs as follows:—

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"*Purge out* therefore the old leaven" (v. 7), i.e. to reject and utterly remove from their midst the evil itself.

Again—

"*Put away* from among yourselves that wicked person" (v. 13), i.e. to equally reject any person wilfully identified with the evil.

In later years when writing to Timothy the apostle Paul speaks of vessels, "some to honour and some to dishonour," and he goes on to say that if a man therefore *purge himself from these*—the vessels to dishonour—"he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. II. 21).

Does not the same solemn responsibility rest upon those of us who profess Christ's precious name to-day? Undoubtedly it does.

Remember that though you cannot set the professing Church right, you can set yourself right by rigidly refusing to countenance these things condemned by God's Word, rejecting them personally, and if needs be purging yourself out from every association which would involve you in them. It may not be without difficulty; the pathway of faithfulness to God's will rarely is; but bear in mind those golden words of Samuel's:—

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22).

F. B. H.

WHAT IS YOUR BELIEF?

IDEAS without facts make up a philosophy. Facts without ideas make up a history. But that which we need is something which appeals not merely to our intellect, but to our conscience and heart; and that which so appeals must be the revelation of God. And if it be the revelation of God it can only be so, coming down out of His infinite eternity into our time and into our space. It must record the initiative, creative, and redemptive acts of the Most High; and, in recording these acts, it must contain a revelation of His character and of His purpose, of His commandments concerning us, and of the promises by which He sustains us. And only in Scripture have we such a combination.

All Scripture facts are full of ideas. So to speak, they are full of eyes, and light shines to us in them. And all Scripture ideas—the things which we believe and the things which we hope for—are based upon actual facts, manifestations of the Most High.

If a Christian be asked, “What is your belief?” he does not answer by enumerating dogmas, in the sense of abstract philosophical truths; but he answers that he believes in God Who created, in God Who became incarnate and died and rose again, and in God Who sent the Holy Ghost to renew his heart.

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So what is our creed but facts? But such facts as are full of light, and in which God manifests Himself to us.—*Extract.*

FOR ME.

GAL. II. 20.

SING aloud! oh, sing His praises,
 Who was Man of sorrows here,
 For the song the Spirit raises
 Cannot fail to reach His ear;
 How He came from highest glory,
 And was slain on Calv'ry's tree:
 Love pervades the precious story,
 Jesus died—He died *for me*.

Sing aloud! the Lord is risen,
 Who was buried in the grave,
 Burst the chains, annulled the prison,
 Now He ever lives to save.
 In the pathway of endurance,
 Fills the soul by grace set free,
 Faith and hope have this assurance,
 Jesus rose—He rose *for me*.

Sing aloud! repeat the story,
 For the Lord is now on high,
 Yea, received up into glory,
 Never, never more to die;
 And He cometh for His treasure,
 That it may for ever be
 With Himself—for His own pleasure:
 Jesus comes—He comes *for me*.

JAS. MACKINTOSH.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. W. M.—1 Cor. x. 20, 21.—In these verses the contrast lies between the table of the idols of the heathen and the Lord's table, and the apostle is showing the moral impossibility of any one partaking of both. An idol is nothing in itself, but Deuteronomy xxxii. 17 tells us that demons were behind the idols, and in sacrificing to these false gods the people sacrificed to devils. How, then, shall a Christian partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons? It cannot be done. In heathen lands this passage would still have peculiar force. But, much as one Christian may differ from another in his view of ecclesiastical truth and the way God would have His people assemble in an evil day like ours, it would be monstrous for him, even if his own views were perfectly sound, to call the celebrations of those who differed from him "the table of demons." It would be an ignorant trifling with Scripture which called for the sternest rebuke, (2) "The fearful," of Revelation xxi. 8, are a class to which no timid believer, whose faith is sometimes weak and faltering, shall ever belong. They are "*the cowardly*"—those who are ashamed of Christ and of His words, who will bear none of His reproach, who count the smile of men and the favour of the world greater treasure than Christ and anything He can give. These are "the fearful," who shall have their everlasting portion with those whom this verse describes.

J. S.—The Scriptures assuredly lead us to believe that there will be recognition in heaven, and that

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memory will not be a blank there. Human relationships will have ceased, of course. They are for our Time condition, and when that ceases, so do they. The apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration recognized Moses and Elias; and in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming the Thessalonian believers will be Paul's joy and crown of rejoicing—a thing inconceivable if there be no recognition in that state of blessedness and glory. It is also implied in the apostle's teaching about the coming of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13–18. As to memory, we know it will play a solemn part in relation to the lost. "Son, remember" (Luke xvi. 25). Why should it not also have a place in relation to the redeemed? Shall we not remember all the way the Lord our God led us in our earthly life? Will it not enhance His grace, and furnish us with material for endless praise?

INQUIRER.—Faith in God is very precious, and in times of sickness the suffering child of God may freely speak of his every need and wish to Him Who deigns to call Himself our Father. But can we be quite sure that it would be for our real good if every bodily ailment were taken away? Paul prayed to be relieved of the "thorn in flesh"—an infirmity which he naturally thought would be a hindrance to him in the work of the Master Whom he loved so well. But his prayer remained unanswered, though afterwards he saw the wisdom and the goodness of the Lord, and learned to glory in the very infirmity he had asked to be removed. At Miletum, Trophimus fell sick, and Paul had to leave him there. No doubt this sickness

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was made a matter of prayer, but for the time being Paul had to journey without him (2 Tim. iv. 20). Timothy, too, had his "often infirmities." All this, however, in no way hinders the proper and hopeful use of means; only let the Christian use them in sincere subjection to the will of God. It is a blessed thing to rest in God's perfect will and love, and while seeking relief and recovery when illness lays us low, to leave the issue with Him Whose love and wisdom are ever engaged on our behalf.

LEARNER.—It is in Hebrews ix.—x. that we read of a purged conscience—of the conscience made perfect—and to those chapters we should go to learn the meaning of the term. Observe, first of all, that no worshipper under the Levitical economy ever had a purged or perfected conscience (chap. ix. 9; x. 2). Its solemn sacrifices may have given temporary relief from the pressure of sins on the conscience, but a complete and lasting discharge no one ever received. Otherwise the sacrifices would have wholly ceased, inasmuch as the conscience of the people had been for ever set at peace. Under Christianity a purged or perfected conscience is the inalienable right of every believer (chap. x. 14). This is the result of the sacrifice for sins which Christ offered at Calvary. The offerings of old were but shadows, Christ's one offering is the substance; *they* gave an outward ceremonial cleansing which endured for a time, *His* perfects the conscience *for ever*. What an amazing difference! This is not a mere deduction drawn from the apostle's argument, however just. It is what he affirms, and in support of which he quotes the terms of the covenant

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to be made in a day yet to come with the house of Israel and of Judah, the blessings of which covenant belonged now to these *Hebrew* believers and to every other believer. "*Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*" (chap. x. 17). Precious testimony! Clear as a sunbeam, and firm as the everlasting hills. What a witness to the abiding efficacy of the Blood of Jesus! Thus the conscience is cleared, cleansed, perfected, and inasmuch as nothing can invalidate the one offering of Christ, so nothing can ever lay on our conscience again the guilt, burden, defilement of those sins which He has for ever put away. The cleansing of John xv. 3, about which you inquire is another thing. This is *moral* cleansing as distinguished from *judicial*. In Hebrews the great point is the perfection and everlasting worth of that Sacrifice by which we are cleansed and have access to God in the holiest. Your remaining question we must reserve.

R. A. S.—Acts xxi. 9.—The prophetic gift with which the daughters of Philip the Evangelist were endowed does not necessarily imply that they foretold events as did the prophets in earlier days. In Christian times prophesying takes a broader sweep, as we see in 1 Corinthians xiv., and has the edification and exhortation and comfort of others in view. It is needless to say that if these four Christian ladies were thus richly gifted, they were not to hide their gift in a napkin or bury it in the earth. But the sphere of its exercise had its limitations (1 Cor. xiv. 34). Euodias and Syntyche were women who laboured with Paul in the gospel (Phil. iv. 3), and the same

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apostle salutes "Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord" (Rom. xvi. 12). But we cannot exactly say what form the service of these Christian sisters took. The woman of Samaria bore blessed testimony to the One Who had told her all things that ever she did (John iv.), and Mary of Magdala was chosen to be the bearer of the most gracious and wondrous message ever heard (John xx. 17). Dorcas, too, served in another circle, and her many kindly deeds receive honourable mention (Acts ix. 36), and so was it with the widow of 1 Timothy v. 10. All this suggests a wide and varied field of service. But, so far as we know, there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that in apostolic times women were ever called to public preaching. This was reserved for men. And nature itself leads us to feel the grace and propriety of this. Women shine in a less public sphere. Their gentler nature makes them shrink from the rude gaze of the multitude. They prefer to labour where they are less observed—doing effectual service which the coarser hands of men could not perform. And this is according to the will of God. If it be urged that God blesses the preaching of women to the saving of souls, we frankly acknowledge it. But it is a reproach to us men. Were we more devoted to Christ, more in earnest, more under the influence of His mighty love, we believe that women would not be thrust into this prominent work. Was it to the honour of Barak that he refused to face the foe without Deborah? She consented to go at his entreaty, but see what she herself thought of the matter (Judges iv. 9, 10).

K. G. E.—It may surprise you to hear that in no

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part of the gospel message which God in His rich mercy sends to us, are we told *to pray* for the forgiveness of sins. If you read the Acts of the Apostles and go through the report of the preaching of the first messengers of Christ, you will find that they never called upon their hearers—whether Jews or heathen—to *pray* for pardon. Your thoughts, therefore, have been running on unscriptural lines, and you need not wonder at your being still without the assurance of salvation which you so anxiously desire. The fact is, that God in His gospel proclaims forgiveness—without waiting for sinful men to ask it—and in doing so His gracious disposition is declared. He is ready to forgive—there is no unwillingness, no reluctance, no holding back. Read Acts XIII. 38, 39. We do not quote the verses here, it is better that you should read them for yourself. They contain a Royal Proclamation, sent to every creature upon earth—therefore to you. Notice particularly those words in verse 39: “By Him all that believe *are justified* from all things.” All that *believe*, not all that *pray*, nor even all who *repent* and feel deeply sorry for their sins. So then, the same blessed God Who commends His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, tells us through His servant Paul that every poor believing sinner is forgiven, is justified from all things. We have only to believe these glad tidings to have at once the comfort, joy, and assurance for which you have been praying so long. There is no other way.

Believing in Jesus, which seems such a mystery to you, is the soul simply believing Him to be just what the Holy Scriptures declare Him to be—believing this, with the heart interested in the thing believed.

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Opening that blessed Book, we read that Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. xv. 3), died to put them away out of God's sight for ever. Would I know the sort of persons for whose sins He thus died, the Bible tells me that "Christ died for the *ungodly*" (Rom. v. 6). Sure enough, I am one of that sort. To believe in Him, then, is to believe that this is true. But if I thus believe in Him, will my sins be forgiven? Yes, for the Bible, by which God speaks to my soul, assures me that "through His name *whosoever* believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). There is therefore no doubt about it. But how may I be quite certain that *my* sins are forgiven? Shall I immediately feel happy, and will that be the sure sign of my forgiveness? No, that is putting the cart before the horse. How, then, shall I know? *By believing His word*—that is the way. Does that seem incredible? Is it too simple? Why should you think so? Faith is a very simple thing. Blessed be God, the very first time faith is mentioned in the Bible we are shown how simple a thing it is. The passage is Genesis xv. 5. God promised Abram that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for number, and Abram believed God (Rom. iv. 3). That is faith, that is believing. It is to take God's word just as it stands. How was Abram sure that it should be so? *He believed God*. How do I know that my sins are forgiven, that I am justified, and that eternal life is mine? In the same way. *I believe God*. This is indeed wonderfully simple, and just suits a poor sinner like me. Does this meet your case? If not, let us hear from you again.

“PERHAPS TO-DAY.”

“**P**ERHAPS to-day.” What does it mean? To what event does it refer? It means, dear reader, that “perhaps to-day” Christ may return for His “own.” The event referred to is the translation to heaven of “those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Cor. xv. 23).

Long ago, shortly after I knew that I was saved by grace, I heard a preacher say that he had seen upon the wall of a cottage a card, upon which were printed these two words, “*Perhaps to-day.*” The happy inmates believed that their Lord was personally coming soon, according to John XIV. 3 and 1 Thessalonians IV. 15–18, and in order to keep them watchful and for their admonition they had the card placed on the wall.

The circumstance pleased me so much that I made a card with the same words, in gold letters upon a blue ground, and hung it in our living room. At that time I was newly married, and the words “*Perhaps to-day*” were of great cheer to my dear wife as she went about her household duties. They reminded her that Jesus was coming, and that right early, to translate His redeemed into the region of His eternal love.

Years passed; many ups and downs took place

XXIII.

M

in the home circle. The gold letters became dim and the blue soiled, and I had a mind to destroy the card. But a happy thought struck me. Instead of tearing up our monitor I took it to an orphanage, where I oft-times told the story of Jesus to the dear girls. The card was received with gladness and hung up in a place of honour, the children being duly taught what the words implied.

Many strange visitors called at that Home who puzzled over the two words, and when they inquired their import the Lord's coming was announced. The converted son of a Christian nobleman sometimes spoke to these orphans, and he was mightily pleased and impressed with the words "*Perhaps to-day.*" In course of time he went to London and, alas! like many others, was drawn into the vortex of this world's society and became thoughtless of God. Walking along a busy thoroughfare one day, feeling very wretched and unhappy, as every real child of God does who turns aside after vanity, this young gentleman suddenly, as if a voice had uttered it in his ear, heard the words "*Perhaps to-day.*" A chord was touched by the Spirit of God in his heart. He loathed himself because of his disloyalty to his Lord, and humbly confessing his sin, got his soul restored to the love and grace of God. When he returned to Scotland, he told out before a company in the very orphanage

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where he had seen the card what the words "*Perhaps to-day*" had done for his soul.

The foregoing was related for my encouragement by the daughter of the lady who kept the Orphans' Home, the night before she left her native land for India, where now she rests till "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Reader, are you "ready"? If not, why not? Christ died to save you. Trust Him now. Do not forget these words, "*Perhaps to-day.*"

T. R. D.

FOLLOWING FULLY.

NUMBERS XIII.-XIV.

THE way seemed dark and difficult. God's people were full of unbelief, and continually turning aside from the way of His will. The leaders even, who were sent to spy out the land and were expected to give a true and faithful report, discouraged the people. But of these there were two whose confidence was in God and not in man. One of them was Caleb—the whole-hearted, as his name means. He had seen Hebron,

which means "communion," and had tasted of the rich fruit that grew there, and though there were giants in the way, that was the portion that he had set his heart on.

Dear young Christian, is this the portion that you desire above all things—communion and intercourse with God? Are *you* set upon following the Lord fully? There may be giants in the way, and indeed there are sure to be. There is the giant of *self*, which so often looms before us in its abnormal proportions and shuts out everything else from our view. Then there is the giant of the *world*, with his snares and devices to keep us out of Hebron, and besides these there are many other sons of Anak, whose names we need not mention. Is it worth the battle, do you say? Oh! think of the portion that lies before you, richer by far—as far as heaven is above earth—than the earthly inheritance that Caleb sought. All things are yours in Christ. His gift is unspeakable; His love passeth knowledge; His peace passeth understanding; His riches are unsearchable. All this is the portion of each child of God; but are we in the enjoyment of these infinite blessings, or are the giants keeping us out?

How are they to be overcome? We are truly but grasshoppers before them, so to attempt to do so in our own strength would be worse than useless. Caleb said, "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out"

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(Joshua XIV. 12). And in the New Testament we find another like Caleb who said, "I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). Yes, in His strength alone can the giants be overcome and our portion be enjoyed.

Paul is indeed a New Testament example of one who followed the Lord wholly. Read Phil. III. and mark the energy with which he presses on to the goal set before him. May we be stirred up to follow his example.

In Jonathan's history we see a sad picture of how a child of God may fall short of following fully. He was attracted to David by the great deliverance that he had wrought, he loved him as his own soul, he delighted much in him, he spake good of him, and he knew that some day he would have the kingdom; but meanwhile he could not face rejection with him, and so he left him and fell on the mountains of Gilboa with Saul. In Peter's history we see one who left all to follow Jesus, and who loved Him truly; but in Mark x. 28, we find him boasting of having done so; and the next thing is, when they saw where the path was leading, as "Jesus went before them they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid" (v. 32). Death lay on that road. In John XIII., again, we find Peter boasting with self-confidence that he would follow even to death, but, alas! he followed "afar off" (Matt. xxvi. 58).

and was soon in bad company, and ere long, denying his Lord, he goes back to his fishing once given up for Jesus.

His case seems to resemble Jonathan's up to this point; both gave up all in the ardour of first love, but rejection and death were the giants that met them and turned them aside. But what a comfort to our poor fickle, wandering hearts it is to see the way in which our blessed Lord restores His wandering servant in the tenderest way, and yet reaches his conscience as to his sin, for there could not be true restoration without that, and then He can afresh call him, saying, "Follow Me." Peter's boasting self-confidence is over, but still he looks aside at his brother in the Lord, just as we are so prone to do, wondering what his path should be. But the word for Peter was, "Follow thou Me," and so he did, even to death. In 1 Peter II. 21, he exhorts us that we should "follow His steps." We need to be very near Christ to do that; following "afar off," we should soon lose sight of His footprints. Then let us earnestly seek to follow with our whole hearts the One Who would draw us with the "bands of love." May our prayer be, "Draw me, we will run after Thee." And so let us run with patience the race that is set before us—
looking unto Jesus. W.

HOW ARE WE TO KNOW?

HOW are we to know that the book which we call the Bible is the Word of God? We reply, it carries its own credentials with it. It bears its own evidence upon every page, in every paragraph, in every line. True, it is only by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of the book, that the evidence can be weighed and the credentials appreciated. But we do not want man's voice to accredit God's Book. If God cannot speak directly to the heart—if He cannot give the assurance that it is He Himself Who speaks, then where are we? Can man's voice give us more certainty? Can the authority of the Church, the decrees of general councils, the judgment of the Fathers, the opinion of the doctors, give us more certainty than God Himself? If so, we are just as completely at sea, just as thoroughly in the dark, as though God had not spoken at all. Is it not plain to the reader of these lines that if God, in His great mercy, has given us a revelation, it must be sufficient of itself; and, on the other hand, that any revelation which is not sufficient of itself cannot possibly be Divine? And, further, is it not equally plain that if we cannot believe what God says, *because He says it*, we have no safer ground to go upon when man presumes to affix his accrediting seal?

Let us not be misunderstood. What we insist upon is this: the all-sufficiency of a Divine revelation, apart from and above all human writings—ancient, medieval, or modern. We value human writings; we value sound criticism; we value profound and accurate scholarship; we value the light of *true* science and philosophy; we value the testimony of pious travellers who have sought to throw light on the sacred text; we value all those books that open up to us the intensely interesting subject of Biblical antiquities; in short, we value everything that tends to aid us in the study of the Holy Scriptures; but, after all, we return with deeper emphasis to our assertion as to the all-sufficiency and supremacy of the Word of God. That Word must be received on its own Divine authority, without any human recommendation, or else it is not the Word of God to us. We believe that God can give us the certainty, in our own souls, that the Holy Scriptures are, in very deed, His own Word. If He does not give it, no man can; and if He does, no man need. Thus the inspired Apostle says to his son Timothy: “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and *hast been assured of*, knowing of *whom* thou hast learned; 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” (2 Tim. III. 14, 15).

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How did Timothy know that the Holy Scriptures were the Word of God? He knew it by Divine teaching. He knew of *Whom* he had learned. Here lay the secret. There was a living link between his soul and God, and he recognized in Scripture the very voice of God. Thus it must ever be. It will not do merely to be convinced in the intellect by human arguments, human evidences, human apologies that the Bible is the Word of God; we must know its power in the heart and on the conscience by Divine teaching; and when that is the case, we shall no more need human proofs of the divinity of the Book than we need a rushlight at noonday to prove that the sun is shining. We shall then believe what God says because He says it, and not because man accredits it, nor because we feel it. "Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." He did not want to go to the Chaldeans or to the Egyptians in order to find out from them if what he heard was, in reality, the Word of God. No, no; he knew *Whom* he had believed, and this gave him holy stability. He could say, beyond all question, "God has established a link between my soul and Himself by means of His Word, which no power of earth or hell can ever snap." This is the true ground for every believer in all ages and under all circumstances.

However, we may well inquire, Can a merely

national profession, an hereditary faith, an educational creed, sustain the soul in the presence of an audacious scepticism that reasons about everything and believes nothing? Impossible! We must be able to stand before the sceptic, the rationalist, and the infidel, and say, in all the calmness and dignity of a divinely-wrought faith, "*I know Whom I have believed.*" Then we shall be little moved by the utterances and writings of the "higher critics," as they love to be called. They will be to us no more than gnats in the sunshine. They cannot hide from our souls the heavenly beams of our Father's revelation. God has spoken, and His voice reaches the heart. It makes itself heard above the din and confusion of this world, and all the strife and controversy of professing Christians. It gives rest and peace, strength and fixedness to the believing heart and mind. The opinions of men may perplex and confound. We may not be able to thread our way through the labyrinths of human systems of theology; but God's voice speaks in Holy Scripture—speaks to the heart—speaks to *me*. This is life and peace. It is all I want. Human writings may now go for what they are worth, seeing I have all I want in the ever-flowing fountain of inspiration—the peerless, precious volume of my God.

C. H. M.

A GREAT FIGHT.

1 TIM. I. 18, VI. 12 ; 2 TIM. II. 3, IV. 7.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Will you allow me to present to your readers a résumé of the Epistles to Timothy, borrowing from the above four verses the illustration of warfare, and a great fight, and of a last stand to be made by faithful men? The Lord left His people here with complete instructions, and furnished with a divine competency to guard His interests and to stand their ground against terrible foes. But, as ever, what was entrusted to man has been marked by failure; the fine gold has become dim and the enemy has outflanked and surrounded the Christian host.

The watchword in the first phase of the campaign is 1 Timothy I. 5; that of the second phase is 2 Timothy I. 7. Each of these is an inspiring study for a devoted heart.

The first position is in the First Epistle, where the Christian entrenchments are being approached on every side by hordes of alert and relentless foes. Satan's tactics at first leave the main body intact, but by artful stratagems he succeeds in isolating no less than seven detachments and cutting them off from faithful Christian testimony. The following prove what I say, and show the means he uses to isolate, surround, and cut them to pieces:—

- 1 Tim. I. 3. *Some . . . other doctrine, etc.*
 6. *Some . . . have turned aside.*
 19. *Some . . . have made shipwreck.*
 IV. 1. *Some . . . will depart from the faith.*
 v. 15. *Some . . . turned aside after Satan.*
 VI. 10. *Some . . . have erred from the faith.*
 21. *Some . . . have erred concerning the*
 faith.

I said "cut to pieces." I should except 1 Timothy IV. 15, where the idlers, tattlers, and busybodies—the persons who misuse private correspondence and who abuse all confidence—are compared to deserters, who not only fail as regards Christian duty and fidelity, but are busily and ardently serving in the ranks of the devil.

The second phase of the campaign is in the Second Epistle. In the interval the enemy had wrought with awful success, perverting, corrupting, ensnaring, and discouraging—till everything but the last position had gone. The mass is viewed as having been overthrown—"All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." In chapter I. the gospel is suffering evil and Paul a prisoner as to his circumstances, though still able to address his subaltern, Timothy. Not a prisoner as to the testimony, not captured by the enemy as failing to maintain the honour of Christ's name or the truth of Christianity, but encouraging others to stand as standing himself, though circumscribed in his movements. In the

second chapter we must take nothing for granted. Everything and everybody has to be tested; no one may be consorted with but him who is true to Christ. In the third chapter no hope is entertained of general recovery. "Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"; and the call is for "faithful men." For *men*! Nothing can equal the fine way in which the grand old leader and veteran calls upon his junior to rally to the flag, to put spirit into his fighting, to stir up the gift that is in him, and not to be ashamed. God has not given *us* the spirit of cowardice, but of power amidst the fearful weakness, of love amidst the general decline thereof, and of a sound mind—healthy—calculated to throw out the *unspiritual* bacteria of unsound doctrine. But in spite of the fact that nothing is going to get better but rather worse, this old warrior knows no defeat. The fourth chapter is to me like the last rally. Everything is to be stood for—all the truth of the Church in its every aspect, all the gospel, all the character of God—and this right on to the end. But what is the end? Not capture, not defeat, not a collapse of the testimony, not the hoisting of the white flag, but

HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM!

Just as the Jews in Zechariah XIV. 1-4 are prophetically viewed as being *in extremis*—all lost but honour and Christ—and just as their end

will be not annihilation, but triumph through the sudden appearing of their Messiah—dashing in pieces the enemy, shattering to atoms every vestige of his power, and completely reversing the whole state of things in an instant—so the end for us who stand by the flag, who remain true to Christ and to His interest, shall not be annihilation and loss, but His glory-shout, His coming, His absolute and eternal triumph over the whole of Satan's power. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

I think in chapter IV. he shows us who are spectators of the fight as it grows more deadly, when he says, "I charge thee before *God* and Christ Jesus"; or, as Alford puts it, "In the sight of God and Christ Jesus." And the alteration from "at His appearing" to "and by His appearing and His kingdom" will be familiar to you. Down to the last we are to preach the word, to be urgent, and vigilant, and true. And, moreover, the "faithful" man is to do the work of an evangelist, by which I understand he is never to cease to present the character of God world-wide as a Saviour God. This is the light in which Jude at the very end, with the apostasy full in view and all the faithfulness it demands, still presents Him.

We are after all on the winning side if absolutely true to *Christ*. May God, our Saviour God, keep us there!

W. H. W.

THE WORSHIPPER: HIS OCCUPATION.

THE last offering spoken of in Exodus XXIX. is "The lamb," verses 38 to end.

This introduces us to the occupation of the priests. The previous part of the chapter describes the way Aaron and his sons were fitted for the priest's office. Here we learn *one* of the things they had to do. In the next chapter several others are mentioned.

As soon as they rose in the morning the lamp had to be trimmed, the incense burnt, and the lamb offered. I wonder whether we wake up in the morning with the thought in our minds—God wants me to start the day in thinking about His Lamb?

God is always thinking about Christ—always finding His delight in Him.

A blind old Christian, as his fingers ran over the raised type of his Bible, used to say, "I think Thy thoughts with Thee, O God."

That is just what these priests had to do. As God looked down from heaven and saw the smoke ascend from the altar on which the lamb was offered, He could see a man who was thinking of that which typified the One Who was ever in His bosom. That Lamb, we know, is to take away the sin of the world, to remove every trace of it from the universe.

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The believer can say, "Thank God, all my sins, so great, so many, in His blood are washed away." We can start our day with the blessed assurance that we are as clear of judgment as He is. The certainty of this will enable us to do the next thing the priest had to do—trim the lamps.

This was done the beginning of the day. At any moment, so to speak, when God wanted a light the lamp was ready. When they were cleansed, as well as when they were lighted, the sweet incense was burnt, all the fragrance filled the place. Trimming the lamps may be compared to self-judgment. We are to be vessels meet for the Master's use. We are to shine as lights in the world. When there are things about us which prevent the light burning, we have to go down in self-judgment before God. In doing so, we must never forget to burn the incense. You say, "What do you mean?" Why, just this: whenever there is anything in me to judge I must never forget that I am always in the sweet incense of Christ's acceptance. This will save us from legality. We do not judge ourselves to get *into God's favour*. We judge ourselves because, being in it, we have done something that is unworthy of the One Who has taken us into His favour. The grace of God does not change because of what I am, but that grace would teach me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

When the lamps were lighted the incense also

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had to be burnt. This is to teach us that any service for the Lord we are permitted to do is not to be done with the idea of working ourselves into His favour. Paul could say (the greatest servant Christ ever had), "Not I, but the grace of God that was with me." All service is a favour from God, and we are allowed and permitted to serve the One Who loves us. He delights in our service, but He would have it flow from a right motive. "Let us hold fast *grace*, whereby we may serve God acceptably" (Heb. XII. 28).

Then on each Sabbath they had additional work. Twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes, were placed on a table before the Lord.

This may remind us that we are not merely saved individuals, but that we are associated with a company of worshippers. We belong to the Church or Assembly of God. Every Christian is part of that assembly. In the midst Christ is leading the praises. We are to realize our association with the whole company of God's holy priests and seek to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (2 Peter II. 5).

Twelve loaves were put on the table by the priests. One loaf only is used in the celebration of the death of Christ. This proclaims the oneness of all Christians everywhere. They all form part of that one loaf. Each one may enjoy the privilege of eating the Lord's supper, at least

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on every first day of the week, if not more frequently.

It is only thus that the believer will truly answer to his priestly privileges.

From the occupations of the priests we may gather that our thoughts on waking in the morning and retiring at night are to be centred on God's Lamb. We are not to unduly think of our troubles or worries and let them occupy us, but we should tell them all to God our Father and seek to get right in our souls, so that, if any little service or work for the Lord is to be done, our lamps are bright and ready. The only light for God in this world is the people He has redeemed to Himself.

They are to shine as lights in the world. Then in company with other worshippers they are to show forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

May both writer and reader learn better how to serve, and enter more fully into all that we have in Christ, so that acceptable worship may rise up from our hearts, even the fruit of our lips as confessing the virtues of the name of Jesus.

H. N.

"PRAYER is prayer, let it come from the weak or from the strong. It is not the heart or the lip from which it comes, as the Ear that it goes to, which is the great thing."

CHRIST—THE SERVANT OF OTHERS.

“For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”—MARK XI. 45.

ONE thing impressed my own mind most peculiarly when the Lord was first opening my eyes—I never found Christ doing a single thing for Himself. Here is an immense principle. There was not one act in all Christ’s life done to serve or to please Himself. An unbroken stream of blessed, perfect, unfailing love flowed from Him—no matter what the contradiction of sinners—one amazing and unwavering testimony of love and sympathy, and help; but it was ever others, and not Himself, that were comforted, and nothing could weary it, nothing turn it aside. Now the world’s whole principle is self, doing well for itself (Ps. XLIX. 18). Men know that it is upon the energy of selfishness they have to depend. Every one that knows anything at all of the world knows this. Without it the world could not go on. What is the world’s honour? Self. What its wealth? Self. What is advancement in the world? Self. They are but so many forms of the same thing; the principle that animates the individual man in each is the spirit of self-seeking. The business of the world is the seeking of self, and the pleasures of the world are selfish pleasures. They are troublesome pleasures too; for we cannot escape from a world where God has

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said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground," etc. Toil for self is irksome; but suppose a man finds out at length that the busy seeking of self is trouble and weariness, and having procured the means of living without it, gives it up, what then? He just adopts another form of the same spirit of self, and turns to selfish ease.

I am not now speaking of vice and gross sin (of course, every one will allow that to be opposite to the spirit of Christ), but of the whole course of the world. Take the world's decent moral man, and is he an "epistle of Christ"? Is there in him a single motive like Christ's? He may do the same things: he may be a carpenter as Christ was (Mark VI. 3); but he has not one thought in common with Christ. As to the outside, the world goes on with its religion and philanthropy; it does good, builds its hospitals, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and the like; but its inward springs of action are not Christ's. Every motive that governed Christ all the way along is not that which governs men; and the motives which keep the world agoing are not those which were found in Christ at all.

The infidel owns Christ's moral beauty, and selfishness can take pleasure in unselfishness; but the Christian is to "put on Christ." He went about doing good all the day long; there was not a moment but He was ready as the servant in

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grace of the need of others. And do not let us suppose that this cost Him nothing. He had not where to lay His head; He hungered and was weary; and when He sat down, where was it? Under the scorching sun, at the well's mouth, whilst His disciples went into the city to buy bread. And what then? He was as ready for the poor vile sinner who came to Him as if He had not hungered, neither was faint and weary (John IV.). He never was at ease. He was in all trials and troubles that man is in as the consequences of sin, and see how He walked! He made bread for others; but He would not touch a stone to turn it into bread for Himself.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. D.—Rev. xx.—The claims on our correspondence columns hardly admit of an exposition of the whole of this chapter as you desire. All we can do is to make a few brief observations on its various parts. First of all, it is an utter mistake to suppose that Satan is *now* imprisoned. It is not so. He tempted the Lord Jesus in the wilderness and was vanquished; he took possession of Judas on the eve of the Lord's betrayal; hindered Paul once and again when he would have revisited the dear Thessalonian converts (1 Thess. II. 18), and will yet marshal his hosts to the great battle that shall end in his expulsion from his present seat of power (Rev. XII. 7). But during the millennial reign of Christ he will be bound and shut up

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in the bottomless pit (*v.* 3). At the expiration of that long term of years he is loosed, and attempts to deceive the nations who have enjoyed the blessings of Christ's rule and reign. In this he largely succeeds, and then he is cast into the lake of fire to undergo his solemn sentence (*v.* 10). Those mentioned in verse 4 are the faithful ones, slain during the brief period when the power of Antichrist will be triumphant. You read of them in chapter XIII. 14–18. They live and reign with Christ. But not only they; the Church will live and reign with Him, and so will the saints of Old Testament days. Finally, we get the resurrection and judgment of the unsaved dead. This is at the end of the millennium. Observe verses 5 and 6. There we see two resurrections plainly enough: the first being before the millennial kingdom is established, the second after it comes to its close and before the eternal state is ushered in as described in the few opening verses of the following chapter.

A. W. D.—1 Cor. ix. 27.—By all means let us feel the full force of this striking passage; let us diligently search out its real meaning and find its true bearing; but do not let us say, on the strength of it, that Paul was doubtful of his own ultimate salvation, and that any of us are presumptuous in being assured of ours. If we take that ground scores of other passages immediately confront us which tell a different story, and how are these to be explained? And Scripture never contradicts itself. Now, the Christian may be viewed in two lights: he may be regarded as one who already possesses and enjoys eternal life, and also as one who will receive it at the end if he pursues the path that

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leads to it. He is saved, and he will be saved. Nor are these statements perplexing contradictions. They apply to the Christian in one or the other of the two ways in which he may be spoken of. Looked at as a sincere believer in Christ, his sins are forgiven (1 John II. 12), he is justified from all things (Acts XIII. 39), he has peace with God (Rom. v. 1), to Whom he is reconciled (Rom. v. 10), in Whose everlasting favour he stands, and in the hope of Whose glory he rejoices (Rom. v. 2). He is in Christ, and therefore beyond condemnation (Rom. VIII. 1), a child and an heir of God and joint heir with Christ (Rom. VIII. 17). He is sealed, too, with the Holy Spirit unto the coming day of redemption (Eph. iv. 30). Moreover, he is one of the Saviour's "own," of whom it is said that, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end (John XIII. 1). And nothing can separate such from the love of God. No power above or below, no angel or devil, nothing in the range of present things or things to come shall ever be able, by any ingenuity or device, to sever us from God's everlasting love (Rom. VIII. 38, 39). We give the passages that support these consoling and strengthening truths, so that you may easily refer to them, which we beg you to do. In the light of these, can it be contended that Paul had doubts as to his present and ultimate salvation, and that none of us can be confident without being presumptuous? Assuredly not. Nor do we envy the boldness that would affirm the contrary. But now for the other side. The Christian is called to holiness and to a life of faith. Saved out of Egypt, with his face towards the heavenly Canaan—the rest of God—he pursues his way. Circumstances now and again

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arise that put his faith to the test. A vigilant and relentless foe is ever on the alert. He has within him, too, that principle of evil which Scripture calls "the flesh," and of his own weakness he is often painfully conscious. He must watch and pray. But to a throne of grace he may boldly come, there he shall receive mercy and find grace for seasonable help (Heb. iv. 15, 16). And there, too, he shall find One Who sympathizes with his infirmities, and Who, seeing that He ever liveth, is ever able to save completely, till daily delivering grace be needed no more (Heb. vii. 25). Now, Paul realized the latter view as undoubtedly he rejoiced in the former. The Corinthians were losing sight of it and, like a lad on a cycle going downhill, they were taking things easily. They were richly gifted and boasted in their gifts. But gift is not everything, nor knowledge either. A man may have the tongue of an angel and understand all mysteries, and yet be nothing (1 Cor. xiii.). He may be an eloquent and mighty *preacher*, and yet be a castaway. So Paul here says, lest having *preached* to others. He does not say "lest having true faith in Christ and all the blessings that follow, I should be a castaway." Nothing of the sort. But he would have the Corinthians and all of us understand that preaching is no infallible proof of saving grace. Faith, hope, love, these are the things that accompany salvation, and where these are wanting no ability to preach can be accepted in their stead. Finally, observe Paul's exact words: "Lest . . . I should be a castaway," not lest I should *become* one. No forgiven, saved soul can ever *become* a castaway any more than a good shilling can ever *become* a counterfeit. But many a preacher

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may be a castaway and nothing more, though admiring crowds hang upon his words.

C. C., India.—Your case is not so rare and exceptional as you suppose. It is as common as the day. You are discovering, by experience, the total depravity of the flesh, and that no work of grace in your heart changes the character of that evil principle within—it is only evil continually. *Nor will it ever be anything else.* But, thank God, there is in every real Christian a new principle of being, a new life and nature—the seed of God is there. And that is now your true self. You must learn to dissociate yourself, in thought, from the old—and seeing you hate it and its ways, you may now truly say, “It is no more I” (Rom. vii. 17–20). The old “I” whose works distress you God has condemned—not forgiven—in the cross and death of Jesus. And now He views you as “in Christ” (Rom. viii. 1)—a total change of standing and condition in which “our old man” has no place at all. But you want practical deliverance from the power of the flesh. This will not be gained by any endeavour to overcome it. Turn away from it as a thing hopelessly bad, and reckon yourself dead unto sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus (Rom. vi. 11). Mark the contrast—*dead* to the one, *alive* unto the other. Keep this reckoning up. You are set free from the old that your thoughts may be engaged with a new object, even Christ Who is our righteousness and life. The Holy Spirit, given unto us, ever leads away from self and up to Christ. Why should we be occupied with “our old man,” in whom there is nothing but evil, rather than with Him in Whom there is nothing but good? Nor must you forget that our fitness for glory is not

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connected with progressive sanctification, as it is called. There is no growth in our meetness for heaven, nor any varying measures of fitness among God's believing ones. All are equally fit. The precious blood of Christ has made us whiter than snow, and all of us are a new creation in Christ. We grow in other ways as a child grows. But the child's relationship to its parent does not grow—*that* is perfect from the first. So is it with our fitness for glory. Read a little booklet called *Victory over Sin, or the Secret of a Holy Life*, and another called *Disappointed Christians*. Our publisher will send you both, post-free, for three penny stamps.

E. N.—Matt. xxv. 29, 34.—Does not this twenty-ninth verse show that if we really possess and value and make use of anything of a spiritual nature that the Lord has given us, He will then bestow abundantly more? To hoard up and not to trade with what we have is a sure sign that we do not actually possess that which we think we have. And so it may slip away altogether. But if we enjoy what we have, if it be a source of gladness and blessing to our own soul, we shall surely desire that others should share it too. We shall not do what the wicked and slothful servant did who hid his lord's money in the earth. So there is a *present* reward in the abundant increase given unto us, and no doubt it will have its counterpart in the day when our Master comes and calls His servants and reckons with them. Then follows the account of the coming of the Son of Man. The throne of glory shall be His, and under His scrutiny shall all the Gentile nations pass, and He Who judges righteously shall judge them. This is not to be confounded with

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1 Thessalonians v. 16, 17, nor with Revelation xx. 11-15. In the former the dead in Christ are raised, the living saints caught up together with them, and they are for ever with the Lord. In the latter we have the resurrection and judgment of the *unsaved* dead. Here in Matthew it is the living Gentile nations who are dealt with. He shall judge the *living* AND *the dead* at His appearing and His kingdom (2 Tim. iv. 1). If this does not suffice, kindly let us hear.

G. P.—John xx. 7.—The details here incidentally recorded confirm the truth of the Lord's resurrection, and give a denial to the report circulated by the bribed soldiers that His disciples came by night and stole the body of our Lord away while the soldiers slept. We are not aware of any spiritual significance attaching to them.

A. R. S. T.—We entirely concur in your remarks on the subject about which you write. No doubt baptism was originally by immersion and should be so now. The baptism of the Spirit took place at Pentecost, and by it all believers were formed into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). We receive now the gift of the Holy Spirit when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins. Acts x. 43-5 furnishes a case in point.

J. F.—There are two words in the language in which the New Testament Scriptures were written—one *hades*, the other *gehenna*, both of which unfortunately are translated *hell* in our Authorized Version. The latter is the lake of fire, the final goal of the devil, his angels, and of the impenitent. The former simply relates to the place and condition of the de-

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parted, and is applied both to the saved and unsaved. To the one it is happiness and rest, to the other misery and woe. In the passages you quote it is *hades*, save 2 Peter II. 4, where it signifies "the deepest pit of gloom." The first clause of Acts II. 27 certainly refers to the spirit of our Lord, not to His body as you suppose.

J. E. A.—Do not be troubled because you cannot tell the date of your conversion. Many of us are in the same case. I dare say Paul could have told the date of his, and the Philippian jailer too, but it is not every one who can. But we can tell whether at this actual moment Christ is all our confidence and hope. If He is, let us be content. Then, do not be over-anxious as to whether *you* have accepted Christ or not. There is a greater question than that. Has *God* accepted Christ as your substitute? Is He satisfied with the sacrifice the Saviour offered? Has He shown His thoughts about Christ by raising Him from the dead and in giving Him glory? These are the important questions. If God is satisfied, we well may be. There *you and all of us must rest*. What better resting-place could a poor sinner want or have?

C. W.—We cannot give a better reply to your question about the different details connected with our Lord's resurrection scenes than you yourself suggest. Each evangelist is led to record those incidents that serve the end in view, some omitting one and some another. But these details, though they differ, do not clash. It is only our ignorance, our want of light, that makes us think they do. All are needed to form the four-fold picture. Had they been crowded into one we should have lost much.

PREPARATION FOR SERVICE.

LET us consider the method by which Moses, this eminent servant of the Lord, was prepared for his great mission.

The very name Moses is suggestive. It means "drawn out." Every true servant must be a Moses in this sense, and God must be the drawer. Others may attempt to draw you into service, and this is not unlawful; but unless the *drawing* power is really from God, it may only end in injury to yourself and to others.

Moses made a false start. He went out in his early strength and slew an Egyptian, supposing that "his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not." Moses could accomplish nothing in his own strength, and he had to learn that God has His own time as well as His own way of doing things.

Moses was obliged to flee, but God had His eye upon His servant. He had a work for him to do, and was about to give him the needed preparation. At the backside of the desert, Moses was to be fashioned into a suited vessel for God to use.

How was it done? "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Moses found himself unexpectedly in the presence of God. No one can

ever be an effective servant unless he has been there. Our weakness is that we know so little of it. What was the character of this revelation? *A flame of fire.* It is the servant who has seen God as "a flame of fire" whose word will pierce hearts and consciences.

The flame of fire tells of God's holiness. How many things—wood, hay, and stubble—are immediately consumed if brought into contact with fire! So no sin can stand in the light of God's presence, or come into contact with Him. No one can effectually expose sin, except he first has to do with holiness. "A holy minister," it was once said, "is an awful weapon in the hands of God."

But there was also a revelation of His *mercy*. The flame of fire alone would have been too much for Moses, but it was "out of the midst of a bush." The bush may remind us, first of all, of the incarnation. God is holy, no sin can approach Him, yet He was manifested to us in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. Secondly, that on the cross Jesus sustained all the judgment of a holy God against sin without being consumed by it.

Thus we have God's holiness and God's mercy brought together. What an impressive sight! What we need so much is to be impressed. How else can we impress others? We believe on this occasion Moses was profoundly affected, and greatly subdued. He said, "I will now turn aside and see *this great sight.*" Are we conscious of

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having seen *a great sight*? What greater sight could there be than Calvary? Do we "turn aside" often enough to behold it, to see what sin cost, and what love gave; to see how "mercy and truth could meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other," and to see, as Moses put it, "why the bush is not burnt"? (Exod. III. 3).

Is not this what we need? How lightly we handle the things of God; with what familiarity we deal with the most sacred themes, and discuss them as if they were ordinary everyday topics. So little "turning aside"; so seldom the shoes off the feet; so little "hiding the face."

If any one objects that these things belong to a past dispensation, and are not applicable in the present, our only reply is that the epistle in the New Testament which contrasts the two is the very epistle which warns us to "serve God acceptably with *reverence and godly fear*, for our God is a *consuming fire*" (Heb. XII. 28).

Moses is now prepared for a more direct communication. "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt." In presence of such a stupendous task, Moses may well reply, "Who am I, that *I* should go unto Pharaoh, and that *I* should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" God gives him the assurance that he shall not be alone. If God sends, God accompanies. "Certainly I will

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be with thee." Think of these two "I's" joined together—the one all weakness, the other almighty. Yet with reverence be it said, that if Moses needed God, God also needed Moses. "We are labourers together with God," said another servant long after. But how? Will not the one destroy the other? Have we not here only a further lesson of the burning bush? "A flame of fire *out of the midst of a bush*," and the poor feeble bush not consumed. Do not the cloven tongues as of fire at Pentecost witness to the same truth? Yes, God *for* us is the precursor of God *in* us. "Certainly I will be with thee." What a guarantee of sufficiency for the feeblest servant!

We might have supposed that Moses would now be ready to go. But he hesitates. It is a strange fact that we are often only too ready to undertake a matter in our own strength, and very slow to enter upon it in God's. Moses needed to be put through an experimental process. He had *seen* the burning bush; he had *heard* God's gracious promise, "Certainly I will be with thee." He now has three lessons to learn experimentally—lessons which are surely of the utmost importance (see Exod. iv. 1–9).

The first has to do with *Satan's* power. The rod becomes a serpent, and is changed into a rod again.

The second has to do with *ourselves*—our sinful

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state. Moses's hand becomes leprous, and is again healed.

The last with *others*. The water of the river turned into blood. The effect of God's testimony refused.

God says to Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" And he said, "A rod." Every one has some qualification—some power. God will use what we have. Moses is told to cast this rod upon the ground, and it becomes a serpent, and he flees before it. What a solemn lesson we have here! That which we have in the way of qualification or power may be debased to satanic uses, or it may be employed by God for the highest and noblest ends. Cast *to the ground*, that rod became a serpent; lifted up, it became the rod that afterwards wielded such mighty power in the service of God. Many a servant can remember the time when some qualification or power he possessed was cast to the ground, and was used for Satan and the world, and not for God. Once, perhaps, you sang the world's songs; but now you sing the songs of Zion. Once you used your powers of speech and argument against the truth of God; now you use them to preach Christ. Are there any reading these lines who are still casting their gifts to the ground, and therefore still under Satan's power? What is that in thine hand? The billiard cue, cards, dice? God cannot use these. Whatever is of a right kind, how-

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ever small, God can use it. A lad once had in his hand five barley loaves and two small fishes, and Christ used them to feed a great multitude.

But we have to remember that as sure as we are wielding the power of God, Satan will seek to make us think something of ourselves, and to use that very power for ends not compatible with God's glory. *Then the rod becomes a serpent.*

Moses is told to take the serpent by the tail. If we have to deal with the subtlety of *the* serpent, we need to be wise as serpents, and there is profound wisdom in the advice, "Take it by the tail." Many a servant has received grievous injury by trying to seize the enemy by the head instead of the tail. Satan will injure the servant, if he can, by false rumours, unkind criticism, and in a thousand other ways. In meeting him, avoid frontal attacks. Satan rejoices if he can only make a fuss. "Take it by the tail." Every one will remember the disastrous frontal attacks in the recent Boer war. With all their bravery the British suffered many a reverse on this account. When Lord Roberts came on the field he adopted different tactics. He relied upon extensive turning movements, completely enveloping the enemy. He had evidently learned the wisdom of "taking a thing by its tail." So must we. The enemy will often fire a few shots to attract attention and create annoyance, and if possible draw the servant away from his work, to be occupied with what is

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evil. Let it alone until the opportunity comes to "take it by the tail."

It is because of this danger that the servant has to be humbled by the sight of his own depravity. For this reason Moses is next directed to put his hand into his bosom, and it becomes leprous as snow. Leprosy is invariably the type of indwelling sin. Sin in the flesh, like some forms of leprosy, is an incurable disease.

But Moses is commanded to put his hand into his bosom again. When drawn out there is a change: it has become like the other. What is this to teach us but that we have two sources or springs within us? As regards the old self-life, what Scripture calls the flesh, it can produce only evil. If that directs the hand, it means leprosy. But there is also a new principle within. We have been born again, and we have the Holy Ghost. This is a different source altogether from which nothing but good can come. The Apostle refers to these two energies within, when in writing to the Galatians he says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would." What are we then to do? We are to remember that no good can come from the one, and therefore refuse it. God has judged it, and we are to do the same; we are to allow the Holy Spirit to have undivided control.

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If anything can humble the servant and keep him ever watchful and dependent, surely this will, that he carries about leprosy in his own bosom. He need not look elsewhere for evil; he carries it all within himself. "For from *within*, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from *within*, and defile the man" (Mark VII. 21-3).

These two evidences connected with the serpent and leprosy were the signs unto Israel. But surely they were equally signs to Moses, and intended to be so to us. Can we show these two signs, not only the rod of God in our hand, but the hand that wields it free from every taint of leprosy? These two things were eminently characteristic of the Apostle Paul. He could rejoice that Christ was preached even though it was done in such a way as to add affliction to his bonds. He would not allow Satan to get any advantage by allowing a spirit of bitterness or resentment to govern him. He "took it by the tail"; and, on the other hand, he could say, "For me to *live* is Christ." The preaching Christ and the living Christ, these are the two things to mark the servant.

But there was a third sign which, as we shall seek to explain, seems to have reference to others.

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Four persons are involved in everybody's service: God and Satan, the one who serves and the one who is served. It is indeed a solemn consideration for every servant—What effect is my service having upon those to whom I am sent? Moses was to take of the water of the river, and it should become blood upon the dry land. It is to be noticed that this was to be done if the other two signs were not believed. This helps to explain the meaning. What, then, was the significance of it? "Water"—especially when connected with a river—is symbolical of *life*; "blood," of death. The water of the *river* becomes blood on the *dry land*. Thus, what was meant as a means of life is turned into death. The significance, therefore, of this third sign was this: that if people refused the other two which were given in order that they might receive the testimony of God, that testimony, instead of being a means of life, would only leave them more dead than it found them. It is as the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians in the second chapter of his second epistle: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of *death* unto *death*: and to the other the savour of life unto life." Although this is apostolic primarily, yet in a secondary and no mean sense it may often be true in connexion with service to-day. If the water of the river of

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life comes to a man, and he remains unaffected by it, like "dry ground," then the message that was meant for life becomes death to him—the "water" becomes "blood" on the "dry ground."

Those in Wales who have passed through the recent time of revival without bowing to God when they had the opportunity, will now be left, in one sense, more dead than they were before it. It is "death unto death." Watch the sailors making for the shore in a rough sea; they wait their opportunity to be carried in on the crest of a wave. Should they miss it, they are exposed to the breakers, and are carried back again from the land. So with sinners. If they refuse to be carried into the kingdom on the tidal wave of revival, or when God is pleading with them through His servants, they are left to the mercy of the breakers and carried back by the receding wave further and further from the kingdom.

"Oh! it is the saddest of all sights," as a servant much used of God has said, "that any preacher can behold, to see people listening time after time to the faithful and stirring ministrations of the Word, and yet going away unawakened and unimpressed; for well he knows that the heart that is not turned is all the more hardened. On a winter evening, when the frost is setting in with growing intensity, and when the sun is now far past the meridian and gradually sinking in the western sky, there is a double reason why

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the ground grows every moment harder and more impenetrable to the plough. On the one hand, the frost of evening, with ever-increasing intensity, is indurating the stiffened clods; on the other hand, the genial rays, which alone can soften them, are every moment withdrawing and losing their enlivening power."

Oh that every beloved servant of Christ may, no less than the writer, be acquainted with the way in which God prepared Moses for his work! There was a *divine* preparation, alone with God, as there must be to some extent with every servant. May we see in the bush that burned with fire, and was not consumed, a picture of how God has wrought so that He can use the feeblest and most worthless instruments. "A flame of fire out of the *midst* of a *bush*." That common, insignificant *bush* becomes the vessel of the divine outshining. "He maketh His messengers spirits, His ministers a flame of fire." May we have, too, the same assurance that Moses had: "Certainly I will be with thee"; and last, and not least, may we remember that God will use what we have in our hand, and make it mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, if we watch against Satan and the evil tendencies of our own hearts.

Nothing is more dangerous than service out of communion with God, but in communion nothing more blessed.

R. E.

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THE COMING ONE.

HEB. X. 37.

THE day is fast approaching,
The hour draweth nigh,
When Christ will come and take us
To reign with Him on high.
Jesus, the Man of Sorrows,
On earth despised, disowned,
To God's right hand exalted,
With heavenly glory crowned.

What joy 'twill be to greet Him,
The One we've loved so long,
To worship and adore Him
Amid the heavenly throng.
To cast our crowns before Him,
And sing in sweetest strain,
Worthy art Thou, Lord Jesus,
The Lamb for sinners slain.

Lord, while we wait in patience,
Thy glorious face to see,
To self we'd live no longer,
But only, Lord, to Thee.
Then give us grace, Lord Jesus,
To serve the living God,
And follow in the footprints
Thy holy feet once trod.

M. S. S.

12 August, 1906.

GOD'S VICTORY AND HIS GRACE.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—1 COR. XV. 57, 58.

THE first of these two verses easily divides itself into two parts—first, God; second, God's victory.

In this country we are so used to the name of God that we are not a little in danger of losing the sense of the greatness and the majesty of His Person. Do we not sometimes think more of the greatness of our blessing than of the One who gives it?

Our relationship to Him often occupies us so much that we lose sight of the greatness of the One to whom we are related. Let us dwell upon it a little. The Creator of the universe (Gen. I.) is "the Almighty God" (Gen. XVII.) and Israel's Redeemer, "Jehovah" (Exod. VI.), God made known in covenant relationship; this same wondrous Person is *our* Father, and is the Most High over all the earth of a coming day (Dan. VII. 25). Think of the solitude in which He dwelt before the worlds were made, that majestic self-sufficiency which was His (a quality so *unsuitable* and sinful in man—a creature; but so suitable to God as *God*) before the heavens and the earth were

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called into being, and all that is therein (so necessary for our well-being and enjoyment) formed and placed in order. Think too of the sun and moon and stars, and the little earth on which we live, all so perfectly adjusted and rolling on in their appointed orbits for thousands of years. All human instruments of measurement are inadequate for the immensity and perfection of His works; but "He measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with *the span*, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (Isa. XL. 12).

He "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. XL. 22). Even the stormy wind fulfils His word (Ps. CXLVIII. 8). The nations are esteemed as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance (Isa. XL. 15). The God who rolled the mountains together, laid valleys, seas, and rivers in their places, and calls all the stars by name, so that not one faileth (Ps. CXLVII. 4), this is the God who loves me! Our hearts *bow down* before the marvellous wisdom, skill, and greatness of such a God. And this God, who spans the heavens and measures the sea in the hollow of His hand, describes Himself as one who notices the falling sparrow and counts the hairs of His people's heads (Matt. x. 29).

For a brief moment God was supreme in

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wisdom and in goodness in the midst of His creation, and man was blessed in His presence. But another influence came in to destroy the creature's confidence in God, to take away his happiness in this life of innocent obedience. This evil influence gained the victory, and man fell completely under Satan's power. The story of the ages only proves that man could not extricate himself; death reigned from Adam to Moses, and after Moses too. But if man cannot, *God can* get the victory. As far as men were concerned, all down the ages death was the victor: "and he died," "and he died," "and he died" is the record of one after another (Gen. v.).

But when Jesus came, it was *Jehovah the Saviour*. He was going to bring in victory over death. *None of the taint of the fall in Him*. No liability to death there. Every step pleasing to His Father, all fragrant to Him. A Man after His own heart. When His heart throbbed in tenderness and His hands moved in compassion, *it was God's heart and God's hands* shown to us. See those words in 1 Corinthians xv. 3, 4, "according to the scriptures," "according to the scriptures." Jesus was the One appointed, delegated to this wonderful work, the only One "able to save." Moses cannot save us, Elias cannot; in order that victory should be gained for God *this* was necessary. Think of it! He who was from all eternity the "Ancient of Days" (Dan. vii. 9) was here

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on earth as a child, a youth, a man. His years were *numbered*. "He was about twelve years"—"thirty years." Oh, the wonder of it all! If He were not a *divine* Person, salvation were impossible for us. If He were human merely, how could He have met death, the grave, Satan, and *have got the victory*? Yet how truly He was human! In that dreadful day when He looked on to the cross and all the terrible consequences of sin His sorrow was so deep, so real, that we read He was *greatly* depressed (Matt. xxvi. 37). His feelings were so strong, so pure. How He dreaded the thought of *contact with sin*, and He was to be made sin—endure the hiding of *God's face*. "*If it be possible*," said He, "let this cup pass; nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke xxii. 42). If these words meant as much to us as they meant to Him, what should we feel about the sufferings of Christ? It was *not* possible, for there was no other way whereby sin could be judged and the sinner set free. *Never* was there a day in which death *was* so *present* with its sting as on *that day*. All that the vindictive violence of Satan and the malice of man could devise was heaped upon the sinless One. God looked upon Him there as made sin for us. *Every* blow that sin deserved *fell on that blessed One*. There was no diminution of the sentence, no softening down of the dreadful penalty due to the sinner, because the Son

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of God was to bear it. It seems almost a marvel that the very works of His own hands, the wood His hands had made, and the nails, the metal of which *He* had created, did not *refuse* their part in such a scene. *A word* from Him, and they *would* have refused. *Nothing* could have held Him there; but *He never* gave that word. His love kept Him there — devoted obedience to His Father's will *kept Him there*.

Satan spent his utmost strength, and thought, no doubt, that he was victorious when the sealed stone was before His grave. It looked as though Satan, sin, death, and the grave had gained the victory. But the power of God visits that tomb, and we see death *is* conquered, the grave overthrown, deliverance brought in for those "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. II. 15). We all remember hearing during the late war that, on a certain date, Ladysmith "was relieved"; *what* did *that* mean to those who had so long been in captivity (one might almost say) in that city? It is impossible for us to realize the feelings of those men, but it meant victory.

Here is the relief *God* brings in. Ages before, through failure and disobedience, man fell under the mighty power of the enemy, but here is his effectual defeat (1 Cor. xv. 1-7). According to Scripture, Christ died, was buried, rose, was seen of more than five hundred at once, and was present

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with them at their meals on several occasions. Was *this* defeat? With heavenly dignity and power He *completed* the work He came to do, and assured His people by *many* infallible proofs that He was indeed alive from the dead, appearing, last of all, to the one who was in a special way to tell the story of His triumph, and to open up the blessed thoughts of God, leading us up to Christ in glory and showing us who are His companions in the victory. And who are they? Men who had been worshippers of dumb idols (1 Cor. xii. 2). Gentiles, distant aliens. "Such were some of you," he adds, after describing many forms of evildoers (1 Cor. vi. 9-11). What a company! Surely the worst of Corinth!! Totally *incapable* of reforming themselves, but described "as washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." Have you come under the influence of all this grace?

In 1 Corinthians i. 26 we learn a little more about these people: "foolish, weak, base, despised"—nothing at all—a lot of *nobodies*. Suppose I write a cipher standing alone. What value has it? None; but God puts One forward who gives value to every poor nobody attached to Him. He places His blessed Alpha and Omega, that First and Last of His thoughts, and adds a poor little nobody to Him, and *then* there is a value. Each one takes a wonderful glory *from* association *with* Him, and each one saved and added to Him brings

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glory to Christ, though *nothing* at all *in ourselves* from beginning to end. In every sphere He is going to have the victory, and He is coming to claim every one of these nobodies who trusted in Him that they may be His companions for ever, sharers in His victory and in His joy. In a moment (*v. 52*), such the rapidity of His action, such the searching glance of His eye, He will find out and call forth *every one* from *every land*—many from this land, some too from the land I came from, Africa.

Then again will there be that solitude of glory (if we may so express it), God all in all—none to call in question His rule of holy love.

Then follows verse 58, suggesting subjection to Christ, delight in Christ, and service for Christ. Every little bit of truth is to strengthen us, make us steadfast. Let us feed on it, delight in it, make it our own, live it out *every day*, and *never forget*, as we go on ourselves with God in the enjoyment of His wonderful grace, to seek earnestly to serve others for Christ's sake, to *serve Christ*. How many there are who don't know the *true* gospel; how many are weak, and weary, and fainting for want of a little word of advice, of cheer, of encouragement, and of *love*. Let us always remember resurrection is what God has in reserve, let us in the meantime rejoice in the greatness of God's victory and in the grace that makes us participate in it.

W. H. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

READER.—We heartily agree with you that it is always well to speak of Bible truths in Bible terms. To qualify them with adjectives of our own choosing is to run the risk of giving them a false colour. Now we do read of God's *great* love, and also of His *abundant* mercy, but never of His *sovereign* mercy or sovereign love. Of course, it is those who use the terms who should be called upon to explain them, but we presume by "sovereign mercy" it is meant the mercy which God is pleased to show to sinful men in the exercise of His supreme or sovereign will.

ELAKISTOTEROS.—We thank you for your kind and encouraging letter. The account of the work among the rough lads of your city profoundly interested us, and we fervently hope that the precious seed sown in the face of so many difficulties will bring forth an abundant harvest to the glory of God. Let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, *if we faint not*. But why quit the battlefield? God has not given unto us the spirit of cowardice. Take your share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and let your cry be—

"Lead on, Almighty Lord,
Lead on to victory :
Encouraged by Thy blessèd Word,
With joy we follow 'Thee.'"

H. E. M. B.—Matthew xxvi. 26-8. — We do not believe that our blessed Lord, when saying, "This is My body," intended His disciples to understand that the bread He then held in His hand was truly and really His own actual body, or that the cup was His

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own actual blood. It is impossible to take the Lord's words literally, word for word, unless we are prepared to affirm that the cup—the very vessel, and not the wine that was in it—was the blood of the new covenant, for that is what He says, "This cup is the new testament in My blood." But this would be an affront to the feeblest understanding. If in looking through a photographic album you point me to a portrait and say, "That is my mother," I understand you to mean that it is your mother's likeness. This way of speaking enters into all language. We hold, then, that the bread and wine received at the Lord's Supper are symbols of the true humanity of Christ given for us at Calvary. It is a memorial feast for those who have already received Christ as their Saviour, and for no other. The words of the Lord Jesus, in John vi. 53–6, have no reference to the last Supper, though the Supper speaks of a slain Saviour even as this passage does. If we apply it to the Lord's Supper, we must be ready to maintain that no one not having partaken of the Sacrament has life in his soul; and secondly, that every one who does partake has eternal life, and that he abides in Christ and Christ in him. What serious mind would care to take that ground? Alas! it is only too probable that vast numbers of communicants in thus fulfilling what they conceive to be their religious duties, imagine that they are on the sure road to heaven. A rude awakening awaits them. "We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence" is the plea of those who knock in vain at the closed door (Luke xiii. 26). "I know you not" is the only answer they receive. Their having eaten and drunk was no title to everlasting happiness. Let

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us but feel our sinful state before God; let us but see that nothing avails to put away our sins but the Son of God going down into death, and let us by faith feed on Him, crucified and slain, then eternal life is ours, and of our being with Him in glory there will be no doubt. This settled, we may then with adoring hearts share in the Supper of the Lord—a most precious privilege indeed for those who belong to Christ.

B.—God's ways of grace will certainly not be ended when the Church is translated to heaven. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be fulfilled, and the scattered tribes of Israel gathered back to their own land as Jeremiah xxxi. so beautifully describes. The "everlasting gospel" too shall be preached, and the great multitude that no man can number of all nations and tongues which are seen standing before the Throne in Revelation vii. 9 shall be brought into eternal blessing after the Church is gone. But 2 Thessalonians ii. 7-12 will have its solemn fulfilment, and those who have heard the gospel of the grace of God in this gospel age and refused it, will fall under the strong and lying delusions that lead up to their dark and dismal doom. (2) "Living sacrifice" of Romans xii. 1 is in contrast to dead sacrifices offered on Jewish altars. The body of the believer is dedicated to holy purposes and to be used for the glory of Christ. (3) Romans xiv. 23 must be taken with reference to the subject in hand—eating or not eating, observing days or not observing them. If you eat with a condemning conscience, it is clearly not of faith; it is sin then, sin against your conscience. So with the observance of days.

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(4) 1 John v. 18.—The epistle of John always places things in their strongest light, and pauses not to qualify them in any way. The believer, born of God, does not practise sin. The advocacy of Christ in chapter II. 1 supposes the possibility of his sinning, but sin does not characterize the one who is born of God. We regret not to answer your questions with greater fulness, but their number obliges us to be brief.

LEARNER.—1 John II. 7.—The commandment which is not new, which they had from the beginning, is that which the Lord when on earth enjoined on His disciples in John XIII. 34. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." It was a new commandment then, for never before had any been called upon to love after that manner. So the apostle here speaks of it as old, in that they had had it from the beginning, and yet it was still new, as he proceeds to say—a paradox, perhaps, but one that is so blessedly plain to those who can see. It is true in Christ and in us, in that we partake of His life, for who loved as He? And love is one of the sure evidences of our having been born of God. We cannot share in His life and not love. Not to love is to be in darkness and death. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

M. P. L.—1 Kings III. 16.—We do not know what authority there is for saying that Solomon was but twelve years old when he was called upon to decide who was the mother of the living child. If the dates in our Bible are to be relied on, he was twenty years of age. We forwarded your query to the writer of

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the book in which the statement is found, but his explanation does not convince us of its accuracy.

K. G. E.—We can only repeat that, strictly speaking, the first messengers of Christ never called upon their hearers to pray for the forgiveness of their sins, though we doubt not that those who received the word were soon engaged in prayer and praise. If an earthly monarch declares his readiness to pardon those who have rebelled against him, there is no need for the repentant rebels to send a deputation to beg him to forgive. If they doubted his gracious disposition, that would be another matter. Now, we know that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached to rebellious men in the Saviour's name (Luke xxiv. 47). The same glad tidings are announced to-day. God declares His readiness to forgive, and assures us that all who believe the gospel *are* justified from all things (Acts xiii. 39). And yet, in the face of all this, you go on praying for pardon and remain uncertain as to whether your sins are forgiven or not! Does not God speak plainly? Can you not believe Him? And if He tells you—a believer in Jesus—that you *are* justified, is it seemly of you to go on praying Him to do what He has already done? It is sheer unbelief for which there is no excuse. If a father offers an apple to his child, and the child instead of taking it thankfully continues to cry, "Father, will you please give me an apple?" is the child wise or foolish, right or wrong? That is exactly your case. We urge you, then, to believe that God is ready to forgive, and needs no prayers of yours to make Him so. Hasten to receive into your heart His emphatic testimony that your sins *are* forgiven you for Christ's name's sake (1 John ii. 12).