

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.

ALWAYS REJOICING.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice.”
PHILIPPIANS IV. 4.

CHRISTIANITY was not walking in her silver slippers when Paul wrote this inspiring epistle. It was not popular to be a Christian, and he had found this out to his cost. Persecutions, bonds, imprisonments, chains—these were all she had to offer on the earthward side, and of these Paul had his full share. And the humble Christians living at Philippi knew something of it, too, for unto them it had been “given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” To these Paul writes, bidding them “*Rejoice in the Lord alway* : and again,” said he, “*Rejoice.*”

Although spoken nearly two millenniums ago the echo of those joyful words still falls in power upon the ear. Nor will it die away so long as our pilgrim days shall last. It greets us afresh on this the opening of another year, and calls upon us in cheery, blithesome tones to “*Rejoice in the Lord alway.*”

And we may be quite sure that Paul was doing this himself. His practice always followed close on the heels of his preaching.

Yet no man was ever in circumstances more depressing. But they did not depress him, because he kept the eye of his heart looking at Christ, alive and in the glory of God. Had he brooded over his earthly lot he would have been dejected and disheartened indeed. But his long prison life and his approaching trial before the Roman Bar in no way damped his spirit or sealed up the fountain of his joy. Impossible that it should if Christ were the spring of his happiness. Let the day grow darker and everything assume a more threatening look, still Christ remained in all His beauty, love, and glory. Nothing could change Him, nothing rob Paul of his Treasure or separate him from His Saviour's love.

And so with us. The One in whom Paul rejoiced is as much ours as his. We need to remember this. No matter what happens, Christ in all His undiminished fullness remains. Things around may be disquieting. There may be much to make us anxious both in the world, in the Church, and in our own individual circle, but Christ abides "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And He knows, and loves, and cares. As in the days of His flesh, when on the mountain top He saw His disciples in their frail boat, battling with the winds and waves, so He sees us. Be of good cheer, then. Listen to Paul as he bids us "*Rejoice in the Lord alway.*"

ALWAYS REJOICING.

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It is the tendency of us all to dwell too much on the sorrows and disappointments incidental to our earthly life. The canker-worm of care soon eats up our little store of happiness if we lose sight of the Lord. Then our strength is gone, for "the joy of the Lord is your strength." We must beware of this. "Rejoice in the Lord *always*." *Always*! What does *always* mean?

Needless to say, we are not to take things in a light and jaunty way. But our hearts are not to be over-burdened—always carrying their load of care and groaning, reeling, staggering beneath its weight, till all the sunshine is gone out of our life. God is our refuge. Is not that a great thing? If we knock at His door it is always opened, if we seek an audience with Him it is always granted, if we have any request to make He is always ready to hear. And He invites us to cast all our care upon Him—to place our matters in His hand—to leave the problems that perplex us for Him to solve in His time and way. Our anxious thoughts accomplish nothing. His wisdom is unerring. His eye sees the things of to-morrow, and the next day, and the next. How much better is it that the guiding reins should be in His hands than in ours. Let us leave them there in quietness and confidence of heart. It is our wisdom to do so.

Let us, then, bear in mind these cheering

words all through the coming year, "*Rejoice in the Lord alway.*" And let us pass them on to others, for :

"There are lonely hearts to cherish
As the days are going by."

LIVE FOR ETERNITY.

NOTHING can be more truly sorrowful and humbling, as regards the Lord's work at the present day, than to see dear brethren spending their time, talents, and energies in mere controversy "about words to no profit." We "lift up our eyes and look on the fields, and behold them white already to harvest" ; and then, when we proceed to ask "the Lord of the harvest" to send forth more labourers, the mind instantly recurs to the thought that at this very moment there are gifted men of God wasting time in the mere effort to build up some theory or other which, after all, can only tend "to the subverting of the hearers." Oh ! that we could be made to feel the surpassing importance of the Lord's work in this day of need. We see deadly error spreading rapidly around us, and yet we will spend our strength in the attempt to set forth and establish speculative points. *We want to live, work, and preach for eternity.*

A BIBLE TALK ON FAITH AND WORKS.

IT has been commonly supposed that between faith and works a deadly feud exists ; so much so that they are utterly irreconcilable. This is far from being true. Most mistaken ideas have, however, a grain of truth embedded in them somewhere, and this one is no exception to the rule. It is perfectly true that the popular doctrine of salvation by human merit, in the shape of works of some kind or other, is totally opposed to and inconsistent with the Bible truth of justification by faith. Yet the Scriptures speak of good works, but they are of another order altogether and are as much in harmony with faith, and as intimately connected with it as the fruit and leaves of a tree with the sap which flows through trunk and branches.

If we open our Bibles at Colossians I. 21 we find the expression “ *wicked works.*” These there is no need to define. They are the hideous outcome of the fallen and depraved nature of the children of Adam. The bad fruit of a bad tree.

In Hebrews IX. 14 we get the words “ *dead works.*” These are works done with the object

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of obtaining life and blessing, such as the diligent performance of religious duties and observances. They are man's "righteousnesses," which are only as "filthy rags" in God's sight (Isa. LXIV. 6)—the product of the bad tree when cultivated to the utmost. Bad fruit after all, for no amount of skill can produce grapes from thorns or figs from thistles.

In Titus II. 7, 9 we have "*good works*" spoken of, and strongly enforced upon Christians. They are the fruit of that new life and nature of which the Christian partakes, which has its vitality in faith and of which the Spirit of God is the power. They are the good fruit which grows upon the good tree.

In the Epistle to the Romans, chapters III., IV., and V., Justification before God is seen to be solely on the principle of faith. One verse will be sufficient proof.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by *faith without the deeds of the law*" (chap. III. 28).

In the second chapter of James we have it laid down with equal clearness that justification—as a public thing in this world before men—is not only or mainly by faith, but by works. One verse again will suffice to prove it.

"You see, then, how that by *works* a man is justified, and not by *faith only*" (chap. II. 24).

Study carefully the context of these two passages, and you will see a most striking

A BIBLE TALK ON FAITH AND WORKS. 7

proof of the harmony that exists between faith and works. Both Paul in Romans and James in his Epistle cite Abraham as the great Old Testament example which supports their contention. In the life of that remarkable man called out of God to become "the father of all them that *believe*" (Rom. iv. 11) we see *faith* as a living reality between his soul and God; when gazing into the starlit heavens he "believed God"—accepting as certain that which was humanly impossible—"and it was counted unto him for righteousness." We also see a great *work* of faith when years afterwards, in simple obedience, he went forth to Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac, in whom the promises reposed. He believed in God as a God who raises the dead. This public act proved it beyond dispute before men. It was the outward evidence of the inward faith.

The former we find in Genesis xv., and to this Paul appeals in Romans iv. The latter is recorded in Genesis xxii., and to it James refers.

Like the fable which tells of two men, one inside a hollow ball, the other outside—one declaring it to be concave, the other insisting upon its being convex—Paul gives us the inside view, and cries "by faith." James, viewing things externally, says "by works"—only, unlike the fable, in so saying they do not disagree over it.

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But now for some questions.

What is Faith?

Elaborate definitions might be given, but they would probably be less satisfactory than the answer made by a little child to this very question. She simply replied, "Believing what God says, *because God says it.*"

Faith is like a window. It receives the light. The sunlight is there. It shines *upon* the wall outside, but *in* at the window; nothing is added to it, but its rays illumine the otherwise darkened room. To "believe God" like Abraham lets Divine light come streaming into the soul.

But faith is more than this. It means not only to have light, but to *wholly repose on the One whom the light reveals to us.*

Dr. Paton of the New Hebrides tells us that when translating the Scriptures into the tongue of the islanders he failed for some time to find an appropriate word for "trusting" or "believing."

One day, however, he called an intelligent Christian native, and seating himself on a chair he said, "What am I doing?"

"Master, you are resting," said the man.

The doctor had heard that word before; it was not what he wanted, but a bright idea struck him.

He lifted both feet off the ground, and

A BIBLE TALK ON FAITH AND WORKS. 9

placing them under him so that they rested on the rail between the front legs of the chair, he said, " Now what am I doing ? "

" Oh, master ! " said the man, " you are resting wholly, you are trusting," using a word quite new to the doctor's ears. That was the word he wanted !

Faith is reposing wholly upon Christ—*with both feet off the ground*.

What are we to understand by that verse which says that a believer's faith is counted for righteousness? (Romans IV. 5).

We must not read those words with a *commercial* idea in our minds, as though they meant that we come to God bringing so much faith for which we receive in exchange so much righteousness, just as a shopkeeper across his counter exchanges goods for cash.

Nor must we entertain a *chemical* idea, as though they meant that we bring our faith that it may be transmuted into righteousness, after the fashion of the fabled philosopher's stone that turns everything it touches into gold !

No ! Abraham is the great example of what is meant (*v.* 3). He—and we—are accounted or held by God as righteous in view of faith. That is its simple meaning. Faith brings in all the justifying merits of the blood of Christ ; these are the great basis of that righteousness ; and further, it may safely be said that the first

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right (or righteous) thing in anybody's life, and the beginning of a course which is right, is when he turns to God as a sinner and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are verses which seem to connect works with salvation. Philippians ii. 12, for instance. How should we understand them?

Always strictly in relation to their context. Even if we had no context to refer to, we might be sure that "work out your own salvation" is not intended to clash with the truth of Ephesians II. 8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast."

Turning, however, to the context we find that the Apostle's subject in Philippians I. and II. is the practical walk of the believer. Adversaries were abounding (chap. I. v. 28). Difficulties were thickening in the bosom of the Church (chap. II. vv. 2-4). Paul himself, the watchful pastor, was removed far from them (chap. II. v. 12). In effect, he says, "Christ Jesus is your great example. With fear and trembling, because conscious of your weakness with the flesh within, work out your own salvation from the various forms of evil which threaten you." And lest they should think of their own abilities for one moment he adds, "*for it is God which worketh in you.*" By His Spirit He works *in* and we work *out*.

A BIBLE TALK ON FAITH AND WORKS. II

Might not the preaching of "only believe" without demanding good works lead to disastrous results?

Yes. To preach "only believe" in an indiscriminate way may lead to mischief. We shall not improve upon apostolic methods, so let us see what Paul did.

To men generally he testified, "*Repentance* toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts XX. 21).

When speaking to the anxious jailer of Philippi, in whose soul a work of repentance was already proceeding, he said *only*, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts XVI. 31). There "only believe" was quite in place and to have "demanded good works" would have been worse than vain. It is recorded, however, that within one short hour of conversion the jailer performed his first good work, the fruit and proof of his faith (see *v.* 33). He did it not in order to be saved, but as the result of the change that grace had wrought within.

Paul further tells us that he preached that men should "repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts XXVI. 20). This is most needful. If a man professes repentance we may safely demand that the change shall become manifest in his daily life ere we fully accept his professions. But this has nothing to do with preaching good works as an auxiliary to our justification.

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We not only have "dead works" in Hebrews, but "dead faith" in James ii. 17. What is this latter?

It is human faith, mere head belief, and not the living faith that finds its spring in God. Demons share this faith, as the succeeding verses show. It appears superficially to be much like real faith, but on closer inspection it is seen to be spurious. It "hath not works." It is a fruitless tree, with nothing but leaves.

Scripture furnishes us with examples of this dead faith. Read John II. 23-25 and compare therewith chapter VI. 66-71. In that scene, living faith is exemplified by Simon Peter; dead faith by the many disciples who left Jesus, whilst Judas Iscariot gives us a man with much profession and no faith at all!

Many professing Christians have little or nothing to show in the way of good works. What does it mean?

Who can really tell but God alone? Good works are not so much like the works inside the watch as the hands upon its face, which indicate the result of the activity within. Faith is the mainspring of the activity. It may be that such people are *only* professors, like a toy watch with hands only painted on its face, and no insides at all! Or it may be that something has gone wrong with the works within; they are true Christians, but sunk into a low and carnal condition like the man of whom Peter speaks, who is "blind and cannot see

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afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins " (2 Peter I. 9).

At any rate, the principle holds good that "the tree is known by his fruit" (Matt. XII. 33). Remembering also that "the Christian is the world's Bible," we can well understand the stress laid on the importance of good works in Scripture (see Eph. II. 10; 1 Peter II. 9-12; and the whole of Titus II.).

How will the believer's works on earth affect his place in heaven?

Not at all. A place in heaven is his solely on the ground of the work of Christ. The Father "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. I. 12). With that our works have nothing to do. All is of grace. There is only one title to a place in heaven, and that *every* true Christian has.

Our works will, however, greatly affect our place in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, as shown in the well-known parables of the "talents" (Matt. XXV.) and the "pounds" (Luke XIX.). The same thing is clearly taught in 2 Peter I. 5-11, where, after urging the Christians to whom he wrote to abound in every spiritual grace and work, he says, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into"—heaven? No. "The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The *character* of our entrance into that does depend upon our works.

F. B. H.

CALL THEM IN.

HOW many children of God are languishing, neglected, in poor-houses and hospitals, as well as in their own homes, to whom loving words and cheering visits would be like cold water to a thirsty soul? In the person of how many of His members will the Lord Jesus have to say, "*Ye did it not to Me*"?

What a multitude of poor, broken bankrupts are there also, whose hopes for this world are all gone, health, character, friends, life itself, and yet the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and His great Salvation would cheer the saddest, and heal the most desperate among them. But how shall they hear of these without a preacher?

Oh, labourers, standing idle in the market-place, whilst the precious working hours are passing away, come into the white harvest field of the desolate, the sick, and the sorrowful, where the grain is perishing for want of reaping, and where the faithful labourer is sure of his hire.

" 'Call them in'—the poor, the wretched,
 Sin-stained wanderers from the fold;
 Peace and pardon freely offer;
 Can you weigh their worth with gold?
 'Call them in'—the weak, the weary,
 Laden with the doom of sin;
 Bid them come and rest in Jesus—
 He is waiting: 'call them in.' "

A. B. C.

ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD?

YES—you are a child of God, if *you have faith in Christ Jesus*. Scripture places this beyond a question. One plain passage will be enough to show that every believer shares in this precious privilege. Let me quote it. “Ye are all the *children* of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26).

Have you cast yourself upon Jesus? Is He the confidence of your heart? If so, then you are one of God’s children. You have become so through “*faith in Christ Jesus*.”

Once you belonged to another family. God has now brought you into His. And in order that you may be truly of the heavenly family, He has not simply *adopted* you after the manner of men, but has made you a partaker of the Divine nature, so that, being born of Him, you might share in the affections belonging to that relationship. Loved by Him, *you love Him* in return. Nor is that all. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because *we love the brethren*” (1 John iii. 14).

That nothing might be wanting, the Holy Spirit, as the *Spirit of adoption*, is also added. “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”

(Rom. viii. 15). This great gift is not bestowed to make us sons. “ Because *ye are sons* ”—not to make us so—“ God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father ” (Gal. iv. 6).

A little boy was stolen. His parents searched in vain to find him, and after some years they resolved to adopt a boy about the age their own son would have been. They took one of the most destitute, brought him to their home, clothed and cared for him, and gave him a place at the family table, and encouraged him to *feel* and act toward them as a child would to his own parents.

Grateful for the kindness bestowed upon him, the poor boy indeed was, but it was more the gratitude of a servant than that of a child. He was in the child's place, but he had not the child's feelings.

One day the gentleman who had adopted him called him into his room. “ My boy,” he said, “ I have a wonderful piece of news for you.” And then he told him that he had traced back his past life and had found, to his great joy and delight, that he was his own long-lost son. And as his father embraced him and tenderly kissed him the spirit of sonship came into the dear boy's heart, and he could now say “ Father ” from a new spring of affection.

The prodigal in Luke xv. returned to his

ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD ?

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father with a servant's feelings, but the warmth of the love with which he was welcomed banished all the legality of his heart, and he entered the house not only as a son, but in the enjoyment of a son's place.

It is for this purpose (among many others) God has graciously given us His Holy Spirit. He has come to bear "witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). Knowing our place as such we can say to each other, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." And we can also add with the Apostle, "Beloved, *now are we the children of God*" (1 John III. 1, 2).

Then what a real Father He is to us on our journey homeward ! He has counted the very hairs of our heads. If not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him, He tells us that we are of more value than many sparrows. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him, to look to Him for our daily bread, and to His gracious care for preservation from all the evils that surround us.

This He does for each and all of His children.

An aged Christian woman living in a poor cottage and with an empty cupboard was asked, "Is God, your Father, good to you ?" "Good ?" she replied, "so good that I could almost think He had not another child in the world, He takes such care of me !"

18 ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD ?

Yes ; this God is our God, and He will be our guide and guardian right on to the end. He will be to us all that a Father's name implies. Nor will He ever leave us or forsake us until we are at home with Him in His house of many mansions.

But some one may ask, " Can this relationship ever be broken ? " We answer by asking another question. Can you ever cease to be the child of your earthly father ? You may not be all that a child should be, but the relationship remains. If we are naughty children God will deal with us as such, but He will never cease to be a Father, we shall never cease to be children. He may even take us home in the exercise of His wise and fatherly discipline because He loves us too well to trust us here.

But He never can cease to love us, for He has told us that it is not for our sakes alone, but also for His own joy and pleasure that He has brought us into this place of nearness. " Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself "—note the next words—" according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved " (Eph. i. 5, 6).

How great is the grace that has made us children of God and set us in this place of nearness and holy love !

H. N.

“NEVER.”

TWO little girls were on their way home from school. They were evidently quarrelling about something, and soon one of them, with angry looks, said to the other :

“ I’ll *never* speak to you again.”

So on they went, one walking in front of the other, for several yards.

By the time they had reached the end of the street, however, the ill-tempered resolution was apparently forgotten, for they were now walking side by side again, and chatting as pleasantly as ever.

Mark the point, the little lassie’s “ Never ” only lasted about five minutes !

The Apostle Peter once gave utterance to a “ never ” which did not last even as long as this. “ Thou shalt *never* wash my feet,” he said to the Lord Jesus. But almost immediately afterwards he was anxious to have not only his feet, but his hands and his head also washed.

Very different is the force and meaning of the word “ Never ” when used by the Lord Jesus Christ. When *He* says “ Never ” we may be sure that He means it. With Him, “ Never ” always means “ Never.”

On two very striking occasions He made

use of this word. Once in connection with the everlasting security of His sheep ; on the other occasion in connection with the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

Of His sheep, those who are “ His own,” for whose sakes He has given His life, He says, “ They shall NEVER perish ” (John x. 28). To them belongs the gift of eternal life, and in the hand of the Good Shepherd they are eternally secure. None can possibly pluck them from His hand. Given to Him by His Father, they are the subjects also of the Father’s special care. None can pluck them from the Father’s hand.

The wolf may get in amongst them and catch and scatter them, but the Shepherd’s “ NEVER ” abides. Whatever happens to the sheep, they shall never perish.

Take comfort from these words, dear fellow-believer. Do you tell me that the wolf often seems to catch you and draw you away from the Saviour’s side ? Is your heart oftentimes dismayed as you see the enemy’s success in scattering the sheep ? Then remember that word “ never.” Say to yourself, “ The Lord is my Shepherd : I am His sheep. He has said that His sheep shall *never* perish. When *He* says ‘ never ’ He means it.”

With His mighty grasp upon you, with His omnipotent hand holding you, you may go on your way in peace, and feed contentedly in

“ NEVER.”

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those green pastures where the Shepherd delights to feed His sheep.

Of a very different theme the Lord treats in the closing verses of Mark ix. There He uses the same word “ Never ” with reference to the punishment of those who die in their sins. And He solemnly says of the fire of hell, that it “ NEVER shall be quenched.”

I am not going to discuss the quibbles raised by those who would fain quench the unquenchable fire and put an end to that which is endless. When the Lord Jesus Christ says “ NEVER ” He means it. If one wants to know the truth as to the future, it is better to seek guidance from His teachings than from the theories and opinions of men.

Doctors of divinity and theologians by the score may assure us that God will *never* punish sinners for their sins in a lake of unquenchable fire. What is *their* “ never ” worth? No more than the little child’s “ never ” when she said, “ I will never speak to you again.”

But the Son of God’s “ Never ” stands on a different plane altogether. Men may *think*, and *reason* as to the future punishment of the lost. But *He knows*. We shall do well, then, to heed His sayings.

Present-day efforts to discredit the truth of eternal punishment invariably end by discrediting the truth as to the Atonement, and the person of Christ. The fact is, sin is so

infinitely terrible in the sight of God, that nothing but a sacrifice of *infinite* value can atone for it. And such a sacrifice none could make save a Person of *infinite* greatness. But it has been made. He who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person, who upholds all things by the word of His power—He came forth from His eternal glory to make purification of sins (Hebrews 1. 3). Now if men will not avail themselves of this God-given way of salvation, which *infinite* love has opened up for the guilty, the ruined and the lost, then nothing can remain for them but *eternal* punishment:

We see, then, how the deity of Christ, the efficacy of the Atonement, and the eternity of punishment stand or fall together. But the believer's portion is *infinite* blessing. The unquenchable fire has no terrors for him. He is a sheep of Christ, and has His sure word for it that he shall *never* perish. Here his soul can rest.

H. P. B.

“ WHILE passing by an asylum for the insane a woman stretched her arm through the iron grating and called to us in solemn words, ‘Young man, live for the eternal world!’ These words were never effaced from my memory, and when I grew up they kept ringing in my ears. What more appropriate words could be sounded in the ears of any?”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. J. M.—Your inquiry as to whether it is binding upon us to observe the Sabbath Day leads to a much larger question, namely, *Is the Law, given by Moses, the Christian's rule of life?* Many believe that it is, and while holding that we are released from the ceremonial part of it, they think that the moral law, in other words, the Ten Commandments, we are in duty bound to keep. If this be so, then surely the Sabbath Day should be kept by us. And the *seventh* day is the Sabbath. On this ground your Seventh-day Adventist friend would have the best of it. He might say, "You own the Ten Commandments to be your guide-book, and to these every detail of your life should be conformed. Very well, then, the Law enjoins you to keep holy the Sabbath Day, and it distinctly tells you that the *seventh* day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God—the *seventh* day, therefore, must be kept." And his contention would be unanswerable, for you cannot produce one line of Scripture to show that the day has been changed, or that the Lord's Day is ever called the Sabbath. But we should meet your Seventh-day Adventist friend on other grounds. First of all we might ask him by whose permission we are allowed to break the Law into two parts and to dismiss the ceremonial as having no authority over us and to retain the other. He could only answer, "By *common usage*." But does common usage justify our doing anything of the kind? Surely this is

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to make the commandment of God of none effect by our tradition (Matt. xv. 6). No. If we Christians are under the Law, then every jot and tittle of it is obligatory upon us. But if the New Testament Scripture states one thing more clearly than another it is this—that we are not under law—that the Law as a system under which Israel was placed is exactly that which we are *not* under. Accordingly we read in Romans vii., “Ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” How can we be *dead* to the Law and yet be *alive* under it ? Impossible ! And this the Apostle proceeds to show by an allusion to the two husbands and the marriage tie. The two are the Law and the risen Christ. We cannot be joined to both. But the Apostle would have us know that we have died to the Law—the first husband—and so the tie has been dissolved. We are no longer under his authority—but married to another—the second husband—even to Christ risen, and under *His* authority we have now come.

We quote another passage from Colossians ii. : “Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” So, then, the hand-writing of ordinances has been blotted out, cancelled as a bond to which we had set our hand. It was against us, in that we could not meet its demands—holy, just, and good as they were. As a consequence we were under its curse (Gal. iii. 10). But the Lord Jesus, in dying for us, bore its curse, and now the bond which was against

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us has been blotted out, nailed to His cross, as an instrument whose claims have been satisfied. What, then, does the Apostle deduce from this fact? Listen! "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath." Under the Sabbath-law, then, the Christian assuredly is not. These were but a shadow of things to come. We have the substance in having Christ.

In saying this, do we imply that there is no gain in having one day out of seven for rest from earthly toil? Far from that. We believe, moreover, that the first day of the week—the day of our Lord's resurrection—has a very special place, and great privileges are connected with it. To devote it to pleasure and amusement no Christian, in a right state of soul, would ever dream of doing. Nor would he travel without necessity by train, or tram, or any other public carriage on that day. If needs be, he may freely do so, for he is not in bondage and under law. And about such a matter every one must decide for himself. Romans XIV. pleads for liberty in these things and insists upon it.

We need but add another word. Let no one suppose that if a Christian is not under law he is under no moral restraint. God forbid! He is to "follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." If he has died to sin, as to a master whom he once served, he is henceforth to reckon himself alive unto God. If he has died to the Law, he is under authority to Christ. He is called upon to be an imitator of God as a dear child, and to walk in love. In short, Christ

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is to be his standard and his rule of life, and in following His steps he will be far from violating the moral precepts of the Decalogue.

Your remaining queries as to James II. have their answer in "*Bible Talk on Faith and Works*" in our present issue.

ALETHEIA.—LUKE XVI. 19-31.—In interpreting the parables of our Lord we should greatly err were we to attach a literal meaning to every detail of the picture. We look at it, our mind receives its impression; we see the truth it is designed to teach, and, if wise, we profit by it. Now in this story of the rich man and Lazarus, we have the poverty and pain of the one, the riches and self-indulgence of the other. We have the home-call of the beggar, carried by attendant angels to Abraham's bosom, and the death and burial of the rich man and his descent into hades, where in torment he lifts up his eyes. All this tells its own tale without requiring us to interpret every touch of the picture in a bald and literal way. We believe it teaches that happiness immediately follows the death of God's saints, and misery the death of the impenitent. The story does not carry us so far as the resurrection state. The *full* results of a man's sins follow the final judgment and sentence even as the full, complete measure of blessedness and glory for the believer awaits the coming of the Lord and the resurrection hour.

CONSTANT READER.—It would require more space than we could spare to examine and refute the deadly doctrines advocated in *The Millennial*

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Dawn, *The Watch Tower*, and *The Plan of the Ages*. Nor should any Christian caring for the glory of his Saviour need to be warned the second time against them. Enough for him to know that the true, eternal deity of the Son is denied, and that He "who is over all, God blessed for ever," is relegated to a creature-place. Many other destructive heresies these books contain—such as the denial of the true nature of the Atonement, and of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus. All this is indeed foretold in 2 Peter II., and therefore should not surprise us. But to disown the essential glory of the Person of the Son is the gravest sin of all, and shows that these volumes bear the brand of Satan. And one of the devices to which the purveyors of these books and their kindred publications have recourse is to mix with their pernicious writings choice extracts from the pen of well-known men, sound in the faith and whose names are held in high esteem. Thus the unwary are deceived. Such are some of the wiles of the devil against which we have to stand. A paper on the subject will be found in *Simple Testimony* for the year 1902, called "*The Deity of Christ*." Sundry writings exposing and refuting this anti-Christian teaching may also be had from the publishing house of Loizeaux Brothers, 63 Fourth Avenue, New York.

B. H.—Spiritual power must be at a very low ebb when Christian men consent to "amusements of various kinds for the purpose of raising funds for Church work." We regard it as a degrading practice, a reproach upon the living God and a dis-

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honour to those who uphold it. If "Church work" can only be continued on such lines, we would respectfully suggest that it had better cease. But apart from these worldly methods, we think it quite out of place to make any sort of appeal to the world for money to carry on the work of God. Money is needed, no doubt. But God can supply it through other channels. It is possible that some of us are not sufficiently alive to our privilege and responsibility in these connections. We do not give as liberally as we should—not always from want of will, but rather from want of thought. Here a word of exhortation at the fitting moment might be just the thing. But that is a totally different matter. And we need to guard against the *beginnings* of such practices. The low level of "whist drives and millinery competitions for men only" is not reached at one step.

READING.—Matthew XII. 40.—We are glad to have your letter and to hear of what you are doing in the way of service for the One who is indeed worthy of our best—our all. May He abundantly bless you and make you a blessing. As to Matthew XII. 40, we do not remember any explanation that seemed quite clear to us as to the three days and nights, so long as the crucifixion of our Lord is held to have taken place on Friday, about which some have their doubts. If it was a common practice, as some say, to speak of a part of the twenty-four hours as if it were the whole, then all is simple and easy. Possibly this is the solution, but we cannot speak positively.

AS UNKNOWN AND YET WELL KNOWN.

“And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.”

ACTS IX. 10.

THE inexplicable departure of Uranus, the “rebel planet,” from the path assigned to it in the text books of the astronomers led at length to the discovery of Neptune, the remotest member of the planetary system, revolving round the sun at a mean distance of no less than 2,750,000,000 miles!

But for its perturbation of the orbit of Uranus, Neptune must still have remained unknown. The veritable *tour de force* by which Leverrier ascertained its existence is stamped as the noblest intellectual achievement in the annals of astronomy, and the crowning triumph of the Newtonian philosophy.

Much of the truest, the most devoted service for the Master has been silently and unostentatiously carried out on lines recalling the principles of “planetary perturbation.”

From the scriptural account of the conversion and call of Paul, the chief of sinners, emerges the unobtrusive character of Ananias the Damascene.

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Were it not for the fact that he was the only human instrument employed in that momentous hour, it is unlikely that we should ever have heard his name. The circumstances in which Ananias is brought to light, afford one of the happiest instances of lowly, Christ-reflecting service.

For all, therefore, who seek to respond to the claims of Christ upon their lives, the story of Ananias is invested with an abiding interest.

We search the Acts in vain for the mention of his peculiar gifts. Ananias remains simply "a devout man according to the law," living at Damascus, "having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there." Surely the choice of such an one for such a service is both suggestive and encouraging, and the details furnished in Acts IX. at once open up a fruitful train of thought.

I. GOD IS USING MEN FOR HIS PURPOSES.

We cannot understand or explain it, yet it remains an indisputable fact. He has passed by angels and the other created intelligences of heaven, and for nineteen centuries the gospel concerning His Son has been preached from the yielded lips of man.

To fill some part of His plan He would use even *us*! Are we willing? Can we trust Him sufficiently to give Him a free hand in the

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ordering of our little life-plan ? Or do we fear that He may claim more than we shall be prepared to give ?

“ Our wills are ours—we know not how.
Our wills are ours—to make them Thine ! ”

A few words falling from the lips of some humble Christian were used to galvanize Moody's spiritual life : “ *The world has yet to see what God can do for and through the man who is wholly consecrated to Him.* ” Moody silently closed with the offer ; his life thenceforth was to demonstrate the truth of those words.

Ananias, too, seems to have been unpossessed of gift, but devoted to the interests of Christ. Why was he living at Damascus at all ? His life could have been as “ devout ” at Jerusalem ; yet had he lived there, he must have missed his life-service.

We conclude that Ananias had taken God into his life and plans. He lived at Damascus, and clearly, in the light of after-events, his way there had been ordered of the Lord. What purpose had He in placing him thus at the cross-roads of the nations ? Ananias may often have wondered. But a sudden turn of the road, and he was brought face to face with his mission to the Apostle to the Gentiles : “ To him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias ! And he said, Behold ! I am here, Lord. ”

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2. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE SERVANT.

It was a strange call that came to him, but Christ's servants are engaged at short notice : " Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus : for, behold, he prayeth."

To Ananias the message was obviously a surprise. How necessary, surely, for each of us who seeks to be used in His service to be near enough to Him to recognize His answer :

" Just to let Him speak to thee,
Through His word ;
Watching, that His voice may be
Clearly heard ;
Just to tell Him everything
As it rises,
And at once to bring to Him
All surprises ;
Just to listen and to stay
Where you cannot miss His voice—
This is all ! and thus to-day,
Communing, you shall rejoice."

Ananias realized the difficulties and the dangers of his mission, and he did not hesitate to confess them to the Lord in a few words which betoken his intimacy with Him : " Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem : and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy name ! "

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In other words, if such a service as this were to be carried out at all for the Master, there must be some one else better fitted than he to accomplish it.

So thought Moses, leading Jethro's flocks in the backside of the desert, when the call came to carry the message of Jehovah to the Egyptian court: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" The answer silences every lurking fear: "Certainly I will be with thee!"

Such, too, was the response of Gideon, threshing-wheat by the wine-press, when the angel hailed him as the chosen deliverer of Israel: "Oh, my Lord! wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Again the answer: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

So, too, speaks Jeremiah when the word of the Lord comes to him, announcing his ordination as a prophet unto the nations: "Ah! Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child!" But the gracious answer is: "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee, to deliver thee."

A deep sense of personal insufficiency is,

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then, no bar to our being used in His service, provided always that it cast us in entire dependence upon Himself: "My grace is sufficient for thee, and My strength is made perfect in weakness." It was Moses, "*powerfully conscious of his own weakness*," who led the hosts of Israel out of Egypt.

Difficulties loomed large before Ananias. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me. . . . And Ananias went his way and entered into the house."

If Ananias himself were surprised at the issue of that day's service, his experience was neither uncommon nor unique. We serve One "able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think"—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!"

3. EVERY BELIEVER HAS HIS PLACE TO FILL.

A personal conversion means, for us, a personal Saviour, a personal Lord, a personal Friend. It should also mean, for Him, on *our* side, a personal surrender and dedication to His cause.

Have we the desire to serve Him, who has given Himself for us? The story of Ananias has a profound significance for every member of the Christian rank and file. Christian service is not the exclusive privilege of a

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favoured and a gifted few. To acknowledge in our lives the obligation under which His death has placed us—this surely is incumbent on us *all* !

Why was Ananias chosen ? Peter was passed by. For an errand such as this, the burning eloquence that was used to win three thousand souls in one day for Christ, was hardly needed so much as tactful, Christ-reflecting unobtrusiveness. And so the choice fell not upon an apostle, but on one of whom it is simply recorded that he was a “devout man”—one able to receive communications from his Master, willing to obey them.

Had any other qualification of Ananias been recorded, the story would not have been so full of encouragement to us !

The moral of the selection is obvious :

“ Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe’er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate ;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.”

Doctrines and truths are usually understood in terms, and granted an intellectual assent, long before they are wrought into our personal experience, and brought to bear upon our practical life. We are faced with an instance—the stupendous truth of the membership of *every* believer in the Body of Christ (I Cor. XII).

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“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. . . . But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (*vv. 12-22*).

Scripture, then, makes it abundantly clear that each believer occupies an unique position in that Body; has an unique impression of his Lord, a distinct and a peculiar function to discharge for Him. Christ is the Head,

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which *every* joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (*Eph. iv. 16*).

As a doctrine, we all subscribe to it. Ananias appears to have gone further and to have actually found, and filled, the place designed for him. What was the secret of his ready response? He was living in communion with the Head.

Is our recognition of a personal membership in that Body—“compacted by that which *every* joint supplieth”—a mental abstraction or a vital reality?

The test is simple. Have we ever asked of

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Him who "hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him," what place it is that He has appointed us to fill?

One talent at least has been entrusted to our care. Has it been put out to interest? What return has it secured?

4. THE SCOPE AND SECRET OF DEVOTED SERVICE.

Ours is an age of hustling activity in every department of life; superficiality is almost inseparable from it. And alas! only too readily do we, as Christians, take colour from the prevailing features of our day. We run a dangerous risk of mistaking quantity for quality in Christian service. That arch-enemy of true devotion—the subtle and gradual substitution of self for Christ, the fatal tendency to be found working partially, at least, for our own credit, and not wholly for His glory—is ever dogging our footsteps.

As the result, preachers may usually be found in abundance, and it has been pungently observed that "our zeal to preach increases with the square of the distance whence the call comes"! But if the service be only a lowly one *at home*—perhaps only the care of a class in the Sunday-school, or a visit to some obscure sufferer—then the number of available candidates tends perceptibly to diminish.

To us, then, the example of Ananias supplies

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a wholesome corrective. The origin of his mission, the unobtrusive manner of its fulfilment, seem to strike the keynote of true service—that of which Christ alone is the Source and the Object.

The call came from the Lord Himself ; the errand was undertaken with a single eye to His glory ; the work completed, Ananias disappears from the page of Scripture as suddenly as he was introduced. Much as we should like to know more of him, the servant is hidden. His service remains monumental and supreme.

It is to be questioned whether Christian service has not become, perhaps unconsciously, associated and identified in the minds of many with *public* ministry. The talents were delivered to every man “ according to his several ability.” To pursue the metaphor, is there not a very real danger of our allowing an over-anxiety to show a large return on the principal, to hazard the security of the talent itself ?

.Preaching we at once admit to be one of the noblest phases of service. But it is only one, and all are not preachers. Ananias does not seem to have attempted it. Philip, too, appears to have preferred the equally useful, if less prominent, path of personal service, bringing Nathanael to Christ (John I. 45), and being sought out later by the Greek inquirers as one of known readiness to place them in touch with the Saviour (John XII. 21).

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Who shall say that the unostentatious service of a Philip or an Ananias is of less value to Him than the rugged eloquence of a Peter? "Nay, much more those members of the body, which *seem* to be more feeble, are necessary" (1 Cor. XII. 22).

It may well be that the requisite gifts for public service are conferred only upon a few. We need not be discouraged. He who "hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him," has a place designed for us.

What shall it be? It is open for each of us to proceed upon "the more excellent way":—to reflect Christ, perhaps not from the preaching desk, nor on the mission field, but here and now in the very circumstances in which He has chosen to place us—in the hum of the city, the workshop, or the market-place, and in the home! It is no mere chance that lays the scene of the one recorded service of Ananias at Damascus, where he was best known, "having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there."

"The trivial round, the common task,
 Will furnish all we ought to ask,
 Room to deny ourselves—a road
 To bring us daily nearer God."

How may we fill our ordered place? The condition precedent to our filling the humblest niche for Christ is our personal nearness to Himself.

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Whatever our allotted sphere and duties in the Master's plan, our personal joy in Him must be maintained. Seasons of secret intercourse with Him must be jealously guarded, rigorously preserved, as the very sap of our spiritual life. If ever the resolve to cover a wide field of service preclude this personal communion with Him, the character of the service will soon evidence the sad story of a withering soul. Luther has quaintly told us how that when the pressure of his varied labours had doubled, he found it necessary to spend, not half, but TWICE his customary time in prayer "if the work were ever to be got through."

The truest, the most exalted Christian service, then, is open to us all. It is not to copy the service of others, but to reflect Him. The one is mechanical, the other organic. "For we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *are changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. III. 18).

Practical Christian service raises many questions in our experience. Christ can solve them all. How may we be delivered from

" The restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know " ?

How shall we recognize His call, and what

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shall be our safeguard against holding back when He is bidding? What is to preserve us from serving beyond our depth, or encroaching on the province of another?

The answer is always the same: *A truer, deeper knowledge of Himself*. From how much it will save us! What factor is as potent as this to free us from the ceaseless chagrin of a self-centred service?

With His beauty engaging our affections, and with His glory as our object, self and its odious pushfulness must be eliminated. We shall reflect Him. It is only when the glass contains a flaw, that we notice the mirror rather than the image it reflects. If the eye be taken off the Master, service will soon become either a struggle of personal ambition or a burden of routine.

Occupation is the secret of reproduction. The photograph prints from the negative only so long as it is exposed to the light. It is in the passive, restful abiding in Him, that the secret of effectual service—the bringing forth of *much* fruit—will be found. Fruits require time for their growth, and apt conditions to bring them to maturity. And a reminder is often needed that “the peaceable fruits of righteousness”—“which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God” (Phil. i. 11)—“are sown *in peace*” (James iii. 18). Mary “sat at His feet and heard His words.” Is

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the call to contemplative Christianity less urgent in these strenuous days than when the intuition that marked Mary's service received such commendation from the Master's lips?

May a closer walk with the Lord Himself produce in each of us a more earnest desire to fill the place of His appointing. Humble as our place may be, it can be filled to His glory. True that "there are vessels not only of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth," and that there is no alchemy by which an earthen vessel may be transformed into one of gold. Yet each may be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. II. 21).

What a privilege to be "a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name" (Acts IX. 15)—a vessel yielded, clean, worthy to bear the impress of the Master's name! Are we willing to bear *His* name, to be spent for His sake, and after all to remain "as unknown" *here*? He who has called us will see to it that we are "well known" *there*! This is His own rich compensation for those

"Content to fill a little space
If He be glorified."

E. W. T.

NO CONDEMNATION.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”—ROM. VIII. 1.

WE take these words in their plain and obvious meaning, just as any simple-minded man would take them. They seem to us to state a fact—absolute and unconditional, and fenced about with no kind of stipulation whatsoever. “*There is [therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.]*” And there the verse should end. The qualifying clause, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” finds its fitting place in verse four—not here, and the Revised Version rightly leaves it out. It is indeed no part of the Scripture as originally written. So the words stand out before our eyes in all their native beauty. They are God’s words, full of gladness and of summer sunshine. And they wait to be received into the believing heart. *No condemnation!* Far, far beyond its reach have we been placed—high up on a rock where no threatening wave or rising tide can ever come.

The very form of the phrase, “*in Christ Jesus,*” carries our thoughts to heaven and fastens them on the person of our Saviour *there*. He has been received up into glory.

Can anything in the nature of judgment or condemnation ever overtake *Him* in those blest abodes? Is He not in the place of honour—in the full and cloudless favour of His God and Father, and the blessed and worthy Object of His delight and love? Think, then, O my soul, of this—thou art in Him *there*! He is thy Representative in the Heavenly Courts—the last Adam, the Head of a redeemed family, the Giver of eternal life to all who believe in Him (Rom. v. 21).

The sin of our first parent Adam—to say nothing of our own sins—brought all his family into a path that leads to judgment and condemnation. But the obedience of Christ, even unto death, delivers from this and brings all who are His into a place of life and favour. This is clearly stated in the latter part of chapter v. Christ, risen and in glory, is the One in whom we now stand. All that He is—as the risen and accepted Man—we are, for we are one with Him. Condemnation, then, there is none, nor can ever be for those that are “in Christ Jesus.” Well may our hearts rejoice and be glad.

How many of God’s dear people have yet to be led into the knowledge and enjoyment of their place “in Christ Jesus.” They cling to the cross, they lie at the foot of it—suppliants there—and think it is the only true and proper attitude to take. “God be merciful to me a

NO CONDEMNATION.

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sinner " is their constant cry. Hence their life is like a cloudy day with but fitful gleams of sunshine—there is but little joy and peace and triumph in it. They need to pass over to the other side. The Ark of the Covenant that went down into Jordan when that river of death overflowed all its banks is no longer there (Josh. iv. 10, 11). Christ is risen and in glory. Our sins have indeed been borne away, and if sought for shall never more be found. They are gone for ever, like a stone cast into the mighty sea, buried beneath the waves of everlasting forgetfulness (Heb. x. 17). But more, far more than this. We have died with Christ. Our life, as of Adam's fallen race, has been brought to an end judicially in His death of shame upon the cross, and now we live of that life of which He is the source. " The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord " (Rom. vi. 23).

Oh, that we could induce the many timid, fainting, yet believing, hearts to look up and see Christ in glory—to pass over to the other side of His cross, the resurrection side of it, and to wake up to the glorious fact that they are evermore identified with Him. Would that they knew that His standing before God was theirs, His acceptance theirs, and that they are as clear from all charge as He is clear—His Father their Father, and His God their God !

And if these blessed truths are all revealed in the Holy Scriptures, how is it that they are not great realities to the souls of so many? Is it not because they are continually thinking of their own unworthiness, the feebleness of their faith and their little love to Christ? Self, in one or another of its insidious forms, fills their minds to the exclusion of all else. The shutters are closed and though the golden sunshine is flooding the scene without, none of it enters their dark and dreary room. Are you not sick of self? Are not your efforts to improve it miserable failures? Are you not quite in despair of ever being any better? Oh, that you could but see how God has dealt with that wretched self—so hopelessly un-mendable and evil! He has set it aside in the cross and death of Jesus. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him.” Why, then, should “our old man”—that unhappy, depraved self—be ever thought of more? Look up and see Christ in glory, and know that not only has He put your sins away, but that He is your life and righteousness *there*.

“Then let our souls in Him rejoice,
 And sing His praise with cheerful voice;
 Our doubts and fears for ever gone,
 For Christ is on the Father’s throne.”

A COVERT FROM THE STORM.

THE silver thread of redemption runs through almost every record of Holy Scripture. The Ark is an illustration of this in several ways.

First.—It was “prepared” beforehand with a view to meet the storm. So when Jesus came to set aside the ancient sacrifices, and by the offering of Himself to bear the storm of God’s judgment against sin, He said, “A body hast Thou prepared Me” (Heb. x. 5).

Second.—It was security and deliverance for all who entered in. So all who have fled for refuge to Jesus are safely sheltered. He is their Deliverer from coming wrath.

Third.—The waters of the deluge came from *above* and *below*. The fountains of the *great deep* were broken up, and the *windows of heaven* were opened.

So with Jesus. Uplifted as “Son of Man” on the Cross, the “Son of God” stood in our place and stead, whilst wrath according to God’s estimate of what sin deserved was poured out upon Him amid the darkness of Calvary. “All *Thy* waves and *Thy* billows are gone over Me.” Then from below, the “great deep” of human and Satanic hatred rose up against Jesus. It

was man's hour and the power of darkness. Priests persecuted, Pharisees wrongfully accused, Herod derided, Pilate scourged, soldiers mocked. They pierced His hands and feet. Deserted, denied, betrayed, we see in the crucifixion of Christ man's moral depravity reaching its climax. Though the Holy Sufferer despised the shame, He *endured* the cross, and felt—deeply felt—the ingratitude and hatred of man.

Fourth.—There never has been and never will be another deluge. So Jesus will never die again. The billows will nevermore flow over His soul. He exhausted the judgment due to His people's sins. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who put their trust in Him. And not only so, but Christ's death was our death, just as the deluge was "the end of all flesh."

"Jesus died and we died with Him,
Buried in His grave we lay."

For God, and for faith, our history as men in the flesh ends at the cross. God says of all believers, "Ye are not in the flesh." Our standing is "in Christ." God views us in Him.

Alas! the flesh is in us, and if we are not watchful we may dishonour God, and our own bodies, as Noah did. Stern self-judgment is always needful, for the flesh is incurably bad. But God has brought "*our old man*," as well

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as our sins, into judgment, and He would have us view things as He views them and see that in Christ's death the "end of all flesh" came before Him. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are on the earth, for *ye have died*."

Fifth.—When Noah left the ark, he entered a world cleared *by* judgment. This reminds us that "old things are passed away; and behold all things are become new." For the death of Christ is not only the door out of our old state of condemnation, but it is the entrance into a new creation, where all things are of God, where Christ is everything, and His excellencies and perfections fill the whole vision, where a new atmosphere surrounds us of life and peace, joy and gladness.

Judgment over, we read for the first time of an altar with a *burnt offering*. The burnt offering sets forth Christ in all the perfection of His work. Noah, in conscious deliverance from judgment, became a worshipper. The sweet savour of the offering ascended to heaven. So in a coming day the whole earth will be redolent with the praises of Christ. The material heavens and the earth are to be reconciled as the result of Christ's death. We are reminded of this by the blood sprinkled on the tabernacle—figure of the universe.

This reconciliation of *all things* shall be accomplished in God's way and time. "*All things*" (not all persons, as some erroneously

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teach) will be reconciled. The believer is already reconciled, but he looks forward to the day when all creation shall be in accord with the holiness of God; when a purged earth shall eventually tell out the full meaning of that scripture, "Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth away the sin of the world."

From the symbolic teaching of the ark and the flood we gather :

That there is no judgment for the believer, because Christ has borne and exhausted it.

That our history as men in the flesh is ended at the cross.

That we have commenced a new existence as belonging to a new creation, of which Christ risen is Head, and *in Him*, and in the sweet savour of His sacrifice, have passed into a new sphere.

Shortly we shall enjoy, in association with our deliverer from wrath, the blessings of a world purified by judgment.

Now we are passing onward through a "condemned world," heirs, like Noah, of righteousness which is by faith, joint-heirs also of the inheritance, which we shall share with the ONE who is Heir of all things. When He appears He will release this groaning creation from the bondage of corruption and bring it into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

H. N.

WORDS WORTH REMEMBERING.

HOW desirable it is that we should deal faithfully with ourselves, judging everything before God that is of self. And, withal, seeing that the truth, as it is in Jesus, pervades the whole heart and forms and fashions the life ; that the affections are governed and the character formed by the hope of His coming. Cherish a tender conscience. Remember this—whatever unfits for Christian duties, whatever cools the fervour of devotion, whatever indisposes us to read the Scriptures or engage in prayer, whatever we could not engage in with a perfectly clear conscience in the presence of a rejected and suffering Saviour, are not for us. The pleasures, amusements, recreations which we cannot thank God for should be avoided. When the thought of God, of Christ, of His coming, of the judgment seat, falls like a cold shadow on what we call enjoyment, we are out of our right place. Let us flee from it.

Let us never go where we cannot ask God to go with us. Let us never be found where we cannot act as Christ would have us. Let us pass each day as pilgrims consciously on the way to their heavenly inheritance. Let us press after closer communion with Jesus. Let the love of God reign in our hearts ; and

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thus shall we be kept from a thousand snares, exhibit a holy consistency, and become possessed of a peace and a joy which passeth knowledge.—*From the writings of C. H. M.*

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B. A.—Mark ix. 1.—“The kingdom of God come with power,” which the Lord here says some of His disciples should see, refers to the scene of glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John were there and saw the great vision. 2 Peter i. 16 speaks of it as “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *It was that in miniature.* For there the One who was about to suffer, to be rejected and to be killed, “received from God the Father honour and glory”—blest answer to His cross of shame! And with Him in glory were Moses and Elias—the former representing the saints of the resurrection and the latter the saints who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.

As to Matthew x. 22 and xxiv. 13, the word “*saved*” must be interpreted in harmony with the subject treated of. Clearly the salvation here is not that which the gospel of the grace of God now brings to men. The environments are manifestly Jewish. The disciples were sent forth “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and were warned against going into “the way of the Gentiles,” or into “any city of the Samaritans” (vv. 5, 6). This clearly distinguishes it from the

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commission given after the Lord's resurrection. They were then to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations. Such was the scope of their ministry. But this mission "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" was interrupted by the rejection of the Messiah, and by the nation's refusal of the overtures of grace in early Pentecostal days. It will be resumed in the cities of Israel after the present Church period has been brought to its end. Hatred and persistent persecutions will be the lot of the King's messengers then as it was of their representative brethren in earlier times. But he that endures to the end "shall be saved" out of all these. Let them hold on their way in service and testimony till the Son of Man appears for their deliverance. Then they shall be amply recompensed. Chapter XXIV. seems to have a wider range, but the same Jewish features are everywhere apparent. "The elect" of verse 22 are the elect of Israel, as in verse 31. They are now scattered all over the face of the earth, but they shall be gathered back to their own land by angelic agency and be blessed there. "This *generation*" of verse 34 is spoken of in a moral sense, and has no reference to God's children now. See chapter XVII. 17 for the usage of this term.

W. N.—With an exceedingly nervous temperament it is easy to fall into the habit of examining ourselves suspiciously, and to listen to all manner of questionings as to whether our faith is of the right sort, if, indeed, we have any kind of faith at all. And this leads to great distress of soul, as in

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your case. But if all the bitter things you write about yourself were true, it would but show how much you needed the Saviour. Thank God, no case is too hard for His care and skill to meet. That you have surely come to Him we do not for a moment doubt, but Satan is assailing you with fears, and in result you have become intensely self-occupied. This is miserable work indeed. Can you not cast yourself upon Christ, *just as you are*? He knows your state, sees every weakness, and He lovingly says to you, "*Come unto Me, I will give you rest.*" But how can He give you rest unless you trust His faithful word? The famished man must eat if he would be satisfied, and the thirsty soul must drink. So with us. No peace-giving words can ever give *us* peace apart from our believing them. The physician may mix the medicine to bring health to the dying man, but the dying man must drink it if he would be cured. No one can do that for him. Will you read our paper, "No Condemnation," in this current month? It may help you. If not, please write again.

J. S.—Zech. XII. 10, XIII. 6.—Yes, both these verses point to the same blessed Person, even to our Lord Jesus Christ—Israel's true Messiah. He is the One who was pierced in the house of those whom He here so tenderly calls His friends. The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem then shall see how great their sin in crucifying the One who was sent to bless them. They will mourn in the sorrow and grief and bitterness of true repentance. But they shall also read the

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story of Calvary in another light, and see in the dying of Jesus the Atonement that blots out so great a sin as theirs. Then Isaiah LIII. will express their feelings and their faith.

S. B.—Luke XIX. 10; 2 Cor. IV. 3.—The word “*lost*” in both passages is precisely the same. Not lost in its absolute sense, as we should speak of those who have passed beyond the reach of salvation. The prodigal son was “lost,” so also was the silver piece of Luke xv., and in Matthew x. 6 we read of “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” These passages show the meaning of the word. It describes the condition of all men, and tells us that all need to be saved.

A REDEEMED ONE.—Your kind and encouraging letter came to hand in due course, together with your generous contribution to our *Free Distribution Fund*, for which we heartily thank you. Our magazine shall be sent regularly during the coming year to the address you name. May the Lord richly reward you and abundantly bless your endeavours thus to spread abroad the printed ministry of His word. The need is very great.

J. E. A.—*Am I forgiven?* This is the question to which you are anxious to have a sure answer. We cannot give you one—no one can—and if we could your confidence would rest on the word of a poor, erring man, and what would be the worth of that? Nor will you ever get it answered by looking at yourself. What are you? What am I?

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What is the best of men ? A wretched, ruined, worthless thing in whom not an atom of good dwells ! And if by any means we could transform our loathsome self into an angel of light, it would leave the matter of our sins untouched. No change wrought in us can put sin out of God's sight. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, alone can do that. We therefore call upon you to look away from self to Christ. We point you to the words of God, written in His holy Book—simple words, sure words, needing no human help to make them plain. Here are some of them : “ Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Whosoever surely means you. Here are more : “ It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” You are one of them. Do you ask, What is it to believe on Him ? It is to trust Him, to lean wholly on Him and His atoning work. This do and you may then know on Divine authority that your sins are forgiven (Acts XIII. 38, 39). But the words of God will bring no relief unless received as true. Were they written for your sole benefit and brought to you straight from heaven by an angel's hand, they would profit you nothing unless believed. So long as you are occupied with yourself you will be an unhappy man. Christ alone is the source of happiness and peace. Having Him you need no other. See our answer to W. N., and please read “ *No Condemnation*,” on page 43. Our fervent desire is that you may receive the gospel in the faith of a little child. Then will your heart be filled with the peace and the joy which the belief of it always brings.

A BIBLE TALK ON PEACE AND DELIVERANCE.

LET us begin by comparing two scriptures which will bring our subject fairly before us. The first is Romans v. 1.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The second, Romans vii. 24, 25.

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? (margin). I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Peace with God, and deliverance from sin and the flesh within, are two great blessings which the gospel of God brings to us all. They go hand in hand, yet they are distinct. It is well for us to understand the difference between them, as also the way in which each is made our own. The cross of Christ of course is the great basis of both.

We may notice in the first place that the mischievous results of sin are seen in two directions, *externally* and *internally*.

Externally, sin has severed the once happy link that united man, as an intelligent creature, to his Creator. Satan succeeded at the outset in using it to cut the line of communication

between man and his true base of operations—God Himself, and ever since the human race has been in the position of the little city of which Solomon speaks. The great king has come against it, besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it (Eccles. ix. 14).

Sin has thus brought in distance, estrangement, and enmity on man's side against God, and all his relations Godward are in the direst confusion.

Internally, the wreck is no less complete. The sources of life have been poisoned; the mainspring of man's will and affection has broken. Chaos reigns supreme in the mind and heart of every sinner. Instead of his being joyous and free, moving with intelligent subjection in the sunlight of God's favour, he is in bondage. Instead of being master of himself, sin is his master. Instead of his spirit being in control of mind and body, it has become like a captain of a vessel, overpowered and battened down beneath hatches, at the mercy of a whole crew of evil passions and lusts.

Not many years ago the eyes of Europe, and indeed of the world, were specially drawn towards Russia. No nation presented just then a more pitiable spectacle. She was involved *externally* in a disastrous war with Japan, and *internally* in ruinous conflict, upheavals, and anarchy, until it looked as if

her very existence as a nation was threatened. Her state at that time not inaptly illustrates our present theme.

Read Romans, chapters I. to III., and you will find the awful state portrayed, into which sin has plunged man as regards his relations with God. Then the divine remedy in the death and resurrection of Christ is set forth, and the result of this is *for faith*, “peace with God.”

Then read chapter VII. What a revelation of internal anarchy and confusion ! Into what a tangle of conflicting desires, emotions, and struggles has not sin plunged us ! But out of all this we may emerge, thanks to the cross of Christ and the Spirit’s power (chap. VIII. 1-4), and the result here is “deliverance from the body of this death.”

Peace, then, is “with God,” the result of having all our relations with Him placed on a righteous and satisfactory footing through the work of Christ.

Deliverance is “from this body of death,” i.e. from this putrid corpse of corruption, which we each of us carry about within ourselves, the result of sin in the flesh.

There is, then, a clear distinction between these two great blessings, and yet both are declared to be “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” His cross is the basis of both. It was at one and the same time the complete

answer to all our guilt, so that we who believe are justified by God Himself (chap. III. 25, 26), and also the full condemnation of all that we were in ourselves as self-destroyed children of Adam (chap. VI. 6; VIII. 3), so that deliverance might reach us in the power of the risen Christ.

But though the basis of both is evidently the same, there is a difference between the ways in which they are received by us.

Peace, though it is preceded always by the anxiety which is produced by having the eyes opened to one's dangerous position in regard to God, is distinctly said to be by *faith* (Rom. V. 1). Many of us remember—do we not?—when out of the anxious depths our eyes were suddenly opened to gaze in faith on the once crucified, but now risen, Saviour. We saw every question settled, every obstacle removed, every cloud once between us and God rolled away; we could truthfully sing:

“ From sinking sand He lifted me ;
With tender hand He lifted me ;
From shades of night to plains of light,
Oh, praise His Name, He lifted me ! ”

In one word the result was—“ Peace.”

Deliverance, on the other hand, though it cannot be apart from faith, is largely linked up with *experience*. We wade through the mire of Romans VII. to reach the rock which rises before us at the end of the chapter. We

learn useful, but painful, lessons of "no good in the flesh" (v. 18), "no power in our best desires" (v. 23), even when those desires are the result of a new nature within, called here "the law of my mind," "the inward man." Then it is that, heartsick of sin and self, the weary soul looks for an outside deliverer, and finds one in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That deliverance is found in the knowledge of the meaning of Christ's cross as the condemnation of sin in the flesh, and in the power of the Spirit of God, who makes Christ so truly "a living bright Reality," that under His warm influence order begins to appear out of chaos, and victory is obtained over sin.

**Is it possible to have one's sins forgiven and
yet not have peace?**

Upon what, then, does forgiveness depend? Evidently upon simple *faith in Christ*. "Who-soever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" is what Scripture says (Acts x. 43).

Upon what does peace depend? Upon *faith in the gospel of God*, which sets before us a Saviour "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25).

The question then resolves itself into: "Is it possible to simply believe in Christ and wholly trust in Him as a poor sinner, without believing with equal simplicity the gospel

message which sets before us not only Himself, but His work and its results ? ”

The answer must be, Alas, yes. All too many pay as much, if not more, attention to their feelings than to the unchanging gospel, and therefore have not peace, though they fully trust in Christ.

Although this is so, such a state of things is not what God intends, nor what Scripture contemplates. It is the fruit of defective teaching, or the product of unbelief.

**Must peace and deliverance always be received together ?
or may they be possessed at different times ?**

No rule is laid down in Scripture, though they are evidently treated in quite distinct fashion in the Epistle to the Romans. “ Peace ” is dealt with fully, chapters I. to V., before “ deliverance ” is dealt with, chapters VI. to VIII.

In the actual history of Christians, it would seem that most frequently the question of sins, and how to meet God, entirely fills the vision till peace is known, and *afterwards* the Spirit of God raises the question of sin, and the flesh, and victory over both.

Yet there are not a few who would testify that in their cases both questions were involved in their anxieties and exercises, and it seemed as if light on both dawned together. The writer would testify that in his case he never

had settled peace until light began to break on the subject of deliverance.

Can it be possible for a person to be continually overcome by sin, as detailed in Romans vii., and yet have peace with God?

Not exactly. Taking the chapter as it stands, one cannot but be struck with what the speaker does *not* mention. In all the verses from 7 to 24, not one allusion does he make to the redemption work of Christ, not one word is uttered as to the Spirit of God. These painful exercises are evidently the soliloquy of one who, though "born again," and therefore with a new nature, does not know redemption, and has not the gift of the indwelling Spirit. Hence he is "carnal," "sold under sin," and absolutely *nothing* is right.

Yet the believer, having peace with God, may have an experience of this order, but modified, since he does know redemption and possess the Spirit. - Though *not sold under sin*, he is frequently falling under sin, and he may be nearly always in the gloom of ignominious failure, though not without one single ray of light, as is pictured in the chapter.

If a really converted person gets such an experience, must it not show that something is radically wrong?

Yes, indeed, but wrong with him, not with his Christianity. The pity is that so many do

not seem to have the experience. There is something wrong with them, but they don't seem to feel it.

The fact is, to "get into Romans VII."—as some Christians term it—is a sign of spiritual progress rather than the reverse. It betokens a sensitive conscience, and a real desire to walk in the paths of holiness, and the lessons which are learnt during the experience, though painful, are salutary.

Just as no one gets peace without previously being in the throes of soul anxiety, so no believer reaches that deliverance from sin and self, which issues in a robust type of Christianity, without such an experience as detailed in Romans VII.

What is the secret of getting this deliverance?

Simply looking away from self to Christ. Note the incessant repetition of "I" and "me"—particularly the former—in verses 7 to 24, and then in this last verse the sudden change. Sickened and hopeless, the speaker lifts his eyes off himself and seeks an outside deliverer. It is not, "How shall I deliver myself?" but "Who shall deliver me?"

Is deliverance a thing which, like grace, we get at a definite moment, and once for all?

No. Peace is the result of receiving God's testimony as to the finished work of Christ,

and often comes like the lightning's flash. Deliverance, on the other hand, not only depends on the work of Christ for us, but on the work of the Spirit in us. That is not something completed in a moment once for all, but a gradual work, which has not only to be maintained, but increased.

There is, of course, a definite moment when the soul cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" a moment when it begins to dawn upon us what it means to be "in Christ Jesus" (chap. VIII. 1), and we first taste the sweetness of the liberty which is the result of coming under the control of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (v. 2). That is the moment when deliverance begins, but it has to be maintained, and its measure should be increased so long as we are in this world.

Some believers have spent long years in vain struggles against the power of indwelling sin. What would you advise them to do?

Give it up; and look away to the great Deliverer! Lose yourself in the warm beams of His love and glory—that is deliverance indeed.

A well-known minister of the gospel uses an allegory which aptly illustrates this. Its substance is as follows:—

"The drops of water on the surface of the ocean looked up at the fleecy clouds passing

over the face of the sky, and ardently longed to leave the dull leaden depths and soar with ease in their company. So they determined to *try*.

“ They called upon the wind to help them. It blew finely, and the frantic waves flung themselves in all their force against the rocks until it seemed as if the drops, now broken into fine spray, *must* reach to the clouds and stop there. But no ! back at last they fell in fine showers upon the cold, dark waves. At last they sighed and said, ‘ It never will be.’ The wind dropped and the storm was over.

“ Then it was that the sun shone forth in its strength, the sea lay placid beneath its hot rays, and lo ! almost ere they knew it, the drops were lifted by its mighty power, and without noise or effort they found themselves floating away as vapour into the blue sky.”

Deliverance is even thus. Keep in the warm sunshine of the love of Christ to you, and soon you will be saying, “ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ” (Rom. vii. 25).

F. B. H.

“ There is so much that is harsh and unkindly in the world that those who are Christians indeed should be very earnest, so to bear themselves, that they *adorn* the doctrine they believe and live by, make their life to be, as it were, sweet songs of peace and love amid the discord—sweet gleams of light amid the gloom.”

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

WE believe that Scripture is given by inspiration of God. We do not believe it possible that this Book—world-wide and eternal in its character—could have been written by holy men unless they were moved by the Spirit, who searcheth the deep things of God, and guided by Him who was, and is, and is to come. We believe Scripture to be inspired. And our faith in the inspiration of Scripture has its basis and root in our faith in God Himself. It is because we have experienced the divine power of the truth Scripture contains, and because in the reading of Scripture we have heard the voice of God ; it is because God speaks to us in this written word that we believe it is God's. This faith is a conviction, an inward beholding and seeing, a knowledge which far transcends in light and strength, in certainty and firmness, all human evidence and argument. We cannot communicate this faith to our neighbour ; we can only testify of it. But on no lower ground can we build the assertion that Scripture is God-inspired ; not on the testimony of the Church, not on the evidences of the historic faithfulness of the record, the

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fulfilment of prophecy, the effects of the sublime teaching on human minds, valuable as all these are. The inspiration of Scripture is an object of faith; and faith can only rest on the word of God, the testimony of the Spirit to the soul.

When we are asked: "Is this inspiration verbal, or does it refer only to the divinely-revealed truths and promises?" it is not necessary for us to enter into distinctions which Scripture itself does not make. It is impossible for us to form a theory of inspiration. Even of that influence of the Spirit of which we possess personal experience in our own conversion and daily renewal, it would be impossible for us to frame a theory; for the work of the Spirit is mysterious. We cannot trace the beginning or end of His path (John III. 8); His intercession is "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. VIII. 26); we cannot explain His indwelling in the heart; and as His love is infinitely tender, entering into our deepest and most individual peculiarity and need, so it is impossible for us to analyse His constant vivifying influence, guidance, and rule. If it is thus with the work of the Spirit, of which we have experience, why should we attempt to form a theory of inspiration of which none of us have experience? Most probably the prophets themselves could give no other reply to our inquiry than the

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statement which Scripture contains: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon them; they spake not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The Holy Spirit, who reveals truth and spiritual reality to holy men, moves them also in speaking; influencing also the words, so that they are correct and adequate expressions: the spoken and written word is an adequate manifestation of the word inwardly revealed. To separate thought and word, matter and manner, is at all times a very difficult and perilous thing. Hence, as Martin Luther said against the rationalists of his day, "Christ did not say of His Spirit, but of His words, *they* are spirit and life." Scripture is *God's* word; it is a gift, and a revelation of Himself. It is God's *word*, the revelation of eternal and spiritual truth in a written record.

The language of Scripture, accordingly, is perfectly unique. It possesses an indescribable something which is not found in any merely human writings. The Spirit who seeth all things in their depth and reality, and who knoweth the end from the beginning, speaks here in a way so profound and comprehensive that the wisdom and experience of all ages cannot exhaust His meaning. And yet is it with such simplicity and definiteness, that all childlike hearts find guidance and consolation in their daily path of duty and trial. The style of

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Scripture betokens its inspiration. Here is a depth, a solemnity, a heart-winning sweetness and familiarity which we meet nowhere else. Here is the voice of One who speaketh with authority, and communicates to us out of an inexhaustible fullness what is profitable to us in our present condition. The Scripture is to other books as Nature is to the works of art, as the ocean is to the lake. The Scripture sees all things from a great height, and breathes the atmosphere of eternity. In the best human books, in the loftiest poetry, in the most fervent and devout utterances of man, there is always something unreal, artificial, self-conscious ; something morbid and necessarily ephemeral. Scripture is the only true, real, eternal Book.

The Apostles and the Lord Himself teach us that the *record* of Israel's history and of God's dealings with Israel is under the special and infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost. It must be evident from the preaching of the Apostles to Jews and Gentiles, and from the epistles they addressed to the churches, that they believed Scripture inspired in the fullest sense. They regarded the men by whom the Word was written as the instruments, but the Lord, and more especially the Holy Ghost, as the true Author of the whole organism of the Jewish record.

And further : as in music not only the

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notes, but also the pauses, are according to the plan and mind of the composer, and instinct with the life and spirit which breathe through the whole, so the very omissions of Scripture are not the result of chance, or of the accidental ignorance of the writer. They are according to and in harmony with the wisdom of the eternal Spirit who is the true Author of the record. The Holy Ghost teaches by not stating these points.

I may also add a word on the manner of quotation. Scripture passages are quoted by the Lord in the gospels and by the Apostles not always with verbal accuracy. They do not in every case give an exact repetition of the expressions used by Moses or the prophets. This appears at first sight a difficulty, and not in harmony with the doctrine of inspiration. But on investigation it will be found to confirm this truth; for here also the Spirit is revealed as the Spirit of truth and liberty. The original meaning of the Spirit is developed with increasing clearness and fullness. The Lord and His Apostles quote the Scripture according to the deepest and truest meaning of the inspired Word, and according to the new requirements of the dispensation and the condition of their hearers.

Above all, remember that the Lord Jesus, our one and only Master, the Son of God, who is the Truth, honoured, confirmed, and ful-

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filled the Scripture. Remember how Jesus referred to Scripture when He was teaching the people, or refuting gainsayers, or resisting and conquering Satan, or instructing and comforting His disciples. Remember how He appeals to Scripture as the ultimate judge, declaring as an axiom that the Scripture cannot be broken. Remember Christ's references to Scripture on the cross, and when, in the conviction of His having fulfilled all that by the Holy Ghost was written of Him, He uttered that great and blessed word, "It is finished." And after His resurrection, appearing unto His disciples and witnesses, He opened unto them the Scriptures, beginning with Moses, unfolding unto them His suffering, and giving and commanding them to preach, *because they understood now the Word*. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day," and thus preach repentance and remission of sins in His name.

On the testimony of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles, I receive the Scripture as God's word. Not as a critic dare I approach this Book as if it were an ordinary book, which I may hope to master and fathom. It is above me, and I cannot exhaust its fullness. It knows me, even the hidden things of the heart, and judges me, bringing me into contact with the all-seeing God (Heb. IV. 12, 13).

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But while I thus stand in awe, beholding the grandeur and infinite depth of the Scripture as one organic, Spirit-built temple, and the beauty, perfection, and exquisite skill which characterize the most minute part of this structure, I feel at home as in a peaceful and fragrant garden. I am not paralysed by the divine perfection and the infinite depth of the Word. For such is the love, such is the perfection of God, that even from a child I may know the Scriptures, and be made wise by them unto salvation. And while it may be given to me in some favoured moment to take a comprehensive view, and to behold somewhat of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, I know that every word of God is pure, every word He has uttered is perfect. Thus I possess the whole in every little fragment; though weak, ignorant, and limited, I have perfect peace and the light of life. And often I find the truth of that saying of Luther's, so characteristic of that great lover of the Word, "In Scripture every little daisy is a meadow."

SAPHIR.

"Any gospel which speaks of Christ as the Physician of all without pointing out the necessity of each coming to Him for the cure, may flow *around* the heart like music. It will never penetrate *into* the heart like balm, and heal its wounds. The truth must wound before it can heal. Many thronged Him. But one touched Him. He felt the touch. She felt the cure. So must it be with you."

THE LORD'S TABLE.

AN inquiry recently addressed to me at a public Bible reading of Christians showed that the inquirer considered the Lord's Table a place where those who partake go with the object of *getting* spiritual nourishment.

I replied that this was not the character of the Lord's Supper, seeing that those who partake of the symbols of Christ's death are present in the character of worshippers, to remember Him who loved them and gave Himself for them, and has fitted them to enter the Holiest, and there to render to Him the homage of satisfied and adoring hearts.

It may be profitable to consider four points of much interest presented to us in Scripture in connection with the Lord's Table.

1. The remembrance of Himself.
2. The announcement of His death.
3. The communion of His death.
4. The unity of those partaking.

In the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians we learn that the Apostle Paul received, from the Lord Himself, what He there communicates to the saints at Corinth. This in no wise sets aside the fact that the Lord Jesus instituted the feast on the night of His betrayal, when His disciples were around Him; in fact, it

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confirms it. The assembly had not, however, then been formed, and it is therefore important to see that the Apostle, who unfolds the mystery—"Christ and the Church,"—and who knew not Christ "after the flesh," is the one chosen by the Lord to unfold fresh truth in relation to the Church's thanksgiving feast.

"This do in remembrance of Me," is repeated, and is, without doubt, the main import of the feast. Christ was going away when He instituted the Supper, and looking on through the night of His absence, desired an abiding place in the affections of His people—our hearts, alas, so prone to forget Him! He well knew that He would have to say to His saints at Ephesus, by the Apostle John, "I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love," and He chose material symbols of His body and His blood that, at His Supper, the thoughts and affections of His own might be carried back in communion with Himself to that moment, never to be forgotten in the history of Eternity, when He bowed His head and dismissed His spirit, having won the victory over sin and all the power of Satan by His obedience unto death.

At that moment the whole question of good and evil was solved and settled. God was infinitely glorified, and man, in the person of Christ, as the result, is seen glorified in God. Righteousness was established on an immutable

basis, and the foundation was laid for the unfolding and accomplishment of the eternal counsels of God for the glory of the Son and the eternal blessing of the redeemed. *There*, in that moment to which nothing can be compared in time or in eternity, He gave Himself for His Church. Can we wonder that He, whose love would never grow cold, should institute a feast, to be celebrated during His absence, when He by His Spirit, would by the act of breaking bread, carry our hearts back, when gathered together, to Calvary's Cross, to contemplate Himself, our Lord and Master, the lover of His Church, His bride, *dead*?

Volumes might be written on this marvellous fact, but here we simply consider the one thought, the symbols, the bread and the wine, present to us His body given for us, and His blood shed for us. Himself once *dead*, and we feed in remembrance of Himself, in that state, proof to our wondering hearts that He went through all that was needed for the glory of God, and our salvation in love that many waters could not quench.

When contemplating, in communion with His Father in Gethsemane, the cup He had to drink, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and "being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." We witness the marvellous union of prayer in the depths of His holy anguish that the cup

might pass from Him, and the absolute subjection of His perfect will.

(2) But the Apostle adds another thought to the words "remember Me." We do this when we break the bread and drink the wine and feed, with worshipping hearts, on what they symbolize ; but he adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show [or announce] the Lord's death till He come."

It has been asked to whom is the announcement made ? But this does not appear to be the point. The breaking bread is not for display to any one. It is in the Lord's own presence and for "*His own*." If we accept the language as it stands, we get *the fact* and the force of it. We announce, in the breaking of bread, *His death* ; the death of the Lord in this world ; *His death* at the hands of man ; *His death*, the condemnation of the world and the measure of the sin of the world and its breach with God : "*His death* till He come."

If *His death* were before our souls continually, with all its consequences for God and man, what a solemnizing effect it would have upon us, severing us in heart and soul from the world, whose rulers crucified the Lord of glory, and putting us into the attitude of the Thessalonian saints who "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for the Son from heaven."

"Till He come," in connection with *the fact*

announced, carries the heart on to the moment of the rapture of the Church, and onward to the establishment of the kingdom on earth, and the consequences of His taking His rights, whether in relation to His enemies or to the restoration of His earthly people, and to the world-wide blessing, when the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh and "all nations shall call Him blessed."

(3) In the tenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the Apostle looks at the Table of the Lord from a different point of view. Another has said that the term " signifies that identification with Him in confession which was found in the priest partaking of the altar and the heathens eating of what had been offered to idols." Hence we do not find here the remembrance of His love in death, and the holy affections inseparable from a true remembrance of Himself, but we have the thought of fellowship, or partaking, so as to be identified with that of which we partake, and also the unity of the body : "We being many are one loaf, one body, for we all partake of that one loaf."

The loaf is still symbolical of Christ's body : "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And in partaking of the one loaf, those who partake, though many, are one body. In this sense we express, or the act expresses, that all who are partakers of the one loaf are *one body*.

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But the two thoughts are distinct. The signification of the act of drinking the cup of blessing which we bless ; and the partaking of the bread and the unity of those partaking.

In Israel those who ate the sacrifices were *partakers* of the altar. In heathendom they sacrificed to, and had communion or partnership with, demons. The Church blesses or gives thanks for the cup which is put first in this passage, atonement being necessary to entitle us to all that flowed from it. And the bread, which is blessed, or for which thanks are given, is the communion of the body of Christ ; so that partaking is fellowship with the death of Christ. The Christian at the Lord's Table is identified with the Lord's death, drinks the cup of the Lord, and partakes of the Lord's Table in partaking of the one loaf.

Doubtless affections and worship flow from the power of His love, brought home to our hearts at the Supper ; but there is also the responsibility which flows from the privilege of partaking and the identification with His death which the partaking sets forth. We give thanks for the cup of blessing, for it is for us an overflowing cup of joy. We anticipate the glorious future, and rejoice in the results to the glory of God and the blessing of man, which flow from the shedding of the blood of the everlasting covenant. But there is *present identification* with His death, and we must not

only think of all that has come in on God's side, the putting away of sin, the removal of the distance between the worshippers and the Father revealed in the person of the Son. There is also the other side ; that in that death the history of man in flesh was ended before God, and that for believers " the truth as it is in Jesus," is their having put off the old man and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

We cannot talk of dividing our persons ; but that death, which we are identified with in confession at the Table of the Lord, is, for those who have entered into its meaning, the end of a status in flesh in which we had neither part nor lot in the promises, but were without hope and without God in the world. Identification with the death of Christ consequently implies our death with Him, entire separation from the world to God, and association with the One whose rejection by the world is witnessed by His death (Gal. VI. 14).

(4) Then, lastly, we have the truth of the unity of the body, expressed in the members *all* partaking of the one loaf. This must of necessity embrace all the members of the body in principle. All the saints at Corinth were one body, " the body of Christ and members in particular " ; not as apart from members elsewhere, but as expressing the body of

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Christ at Corinth. The place of every member of the body is at the Lord's Table, and, if all are not there, then those who are there only express the unity of the body and the truth as to the Lord's Table, by recognizing the Lord's presence, and that the partaking is expressive of the unity of *all* the members of the body. Indeed, otherwise the Lord's Table becomes, in principle, the Table of a sect or a party, which is condemned by the very nature of the act.

The contemplation of the divisions and parties amongst true Christians, and the failure to recognize the simplicity and blessedness of this most precious feast of thanksgiving, the central feast of the Christian Church, may well fill with sorrow and humiliation the hearts of all who love the Lord.

But the truth remains, and the feast remains, and the One who loved us and gave Himself for us remains faithful, He cannot deny Himself, and His word, "This do in remembrance of Me," still, thank God, finds a place in many a heart and will hold its sway there "till He come."

May we be watching, like unto men that wait for their Lord. "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." His word is, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let

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him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

O let Thy love constrain
Our souls to cleave to Thee ;
And ever in our hearts remain
That word "*remember Me.*"

J. S. O.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. M. W.—We do not believe that if the Apostles of our Lord were on earth they would countenance *theatricals* as a means of raising money to help on any form of Christian work. For our part we look upon it as an unworthy method, reflecting on the character of God, and degrading to any true Christian who resorts to it. True, such entertainments may receive the patronage of the world, but surely God's work is not dependent on expedients of that kind. Both Isaiah xxxi. and Jeremiah xvii. 5-9 give solemn warning against going down to Egypt for help and making flesh our arm. Better, far better to lay the need before God in humble, fervent prayer, and before His people too, and then, if the work be His, He will send the necessary funds somehow. How much better is it to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man or in methods of a worldly sort !

SUBSCRIBER. — The address on *Regeneration* which you kindly sent for our perusal is admirable in tone, but some of its statements may well be

questioned. For example: "The seed of regeneration is sown in baptism. It may be hidden a long while beneath the soil, it may never emerge above the soil, but it is sown." This is the doctrine of baptismal regeneration pure and simple. Now the necessity of the new birth is very plainly taught by the Lord Himself in John III. Without it no man either sees or enters into the kingdom of God. The Apostles—Peter, James, and John—also speak of it in their epistles, but nowhere is this great, this vital change ever said to take place in baptism. Exactly the contrary. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter I. 23). Such is the way the first of the three speaks of it. "Of His own will begat He us with *the word of truth*" (James I. 18). So says the second. While the third tells us that the children of God are "*born of God*," without alluding to the means employed (1 John III. 9). The great point with him is that such are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*" (John I. 13). All who have *received Christ* have been thus born—not all who have been baptized. Indeed, baptism is never even a figure, much less the means, of the communication of life to the soul. It speaks rather of *death*—death with Christ. Our Lord, in John III., tells us that it is of water and of the Spirit that men are born again. Here water is used in a figurative sense, as in chapters IV. and VII.—*it is the word of God*. This is the instrument to effect the new birth, not, however, apart from faith and the power of the Holy Spirit.

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Another thing : the new birth, absolutely essential as it is, does not wholly meet our case. The impartation of divine life to the soul in no way touches the solemn question of our guilt before God. Here atonement comes in—the meeting and satisfying the just claims of God’s throne in respect of our offences. This has been accomplished, blessed be God ! by the sacrifice offered once for all at Calvary. In virtue of this the gospel of a full and free salvation is now preached to men, and as many as believe it are forgiven and justified from all things. Grave, indeed, must our offences be to call for such an offering as Christ alone could make. Let the seriousness of this weigh upon the conscience, let the offender acknowledge his guiltiness to God, and let him believe the glad tidings—then is he a justified man, and one who has been born of water and of the Spirit.

It is of the utmost importance that on these points the trumpet should give no uncertain sound. How often have we known people called upon to live a Christian life while, in fact, they were dead in trespasses and sins ! This is to put the cart before the horse and to cry “ Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” But if a man is forgiven, reconciled to God, and at peace with Him, then indeed he may seek to lead “ a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” This is then both his duty and privilege.

We regret that want of space obliges us to reserve other answers till our next issue.

“THIS BLESSEDNESS.”

ROMANS IV. 9.

THIS is a word we do not often hear. So many people complain of feeling wretched ; so few, alas, confess that they are blessed. Yet “wretched,” or “blessed,” we are all. We need not be the first, we may and should be the second.

These are two conditions, or states, and it is well to ask, “In which am I ? ”

The pen of David—the sweet singer of Israel—describes, in words of profound interest, each of these two states experimentally. In Psalm LI. he puts into words the deep exercise through which he himself had passed before God, in the acknowledgment and confession to Him of his guilt.

To his conscience that guilt was awfully real. “My sin is ever before me,” said he. It caused him constant misery. “Against Thee, Thee only,” he cried, “have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.”

He knew that God takes cognizance of sin, all sin, every sin ; and that He holds us responsible for all we think and say and do. Nor can the sinner, as such, escape the Judg-

ment Bar. It was the deep and agonizing sense of this that made David miserable, and that left him in a state of absolute wretchedness.

It is a bitter cup to drink—this facing of one's personal guilt. It is crushing, but it is necessary.

Repentance is the first step on the right road. It means a “right-about,” a going down, a veritable humiliation before God; but ten thousand times better to go into the dust in time than into damnation for ever. Notice, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke XIII. 3).

These words define the conditions. Wise, indeed, the man who repents before God in time!

Well, then, in this Psalm we find David's state of positive and intolerable wretchedness—that of a guilty and unpardoned sinner weighted by the fearful load of conscious iniquity.

But he cried to God and sought His forgiveness. “Purge me with hyssop”—the least of herbs—as though he were willing to be reduced to nothing—“and I shall be clean.”

‘Wash me,’ he prayed, “and I shall be whiter than snow,” because the purity needed for God's presence is far greater than earth's cleanest, purest, whitest covering. Nor did he pray in vain. His cry was heard, and he was

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graciously answered, as he lay in the dust of self-aborrence.

Oh, how thankful we should be for the mercy of God—how thankful for the blood of Christ !

“ And Nathan said unto David, ‘ The Lord hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die.’ ” Such was God’s message through His prophet to the guilty king.

David was pardoned before God, though his hateful sin brought unspeakable sorrow upon his house and family. “ Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Still, he was pardoned, and he knew it, and felt it, and rejoiced in it.

Hence in Psalm xxxii. he writes, “ Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” The word “ blessed ” may be translated “ happy,” though the word in the text is richer and deeper.

David, the guilty sinner once, is now the object of mercy. He is forgiven consciously, and can write of “ the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works ” (Rom. iv. 6). He tasted this beatitude. It was his realized experience.

I can assure the reader that the sense of the forgiveness of all one’s sins, for time and for eternity—the imputation of God’s righteousness without a single merit on our own part—yields joy too deep for language. “ They began

to be merry ” in the father’s house, when once the poor penitent prodigal was restored. To him, and to all such, the condition is one of pure and unmingled “ blessedness.”

Can it ever be lost ?

Well, can the Spirit ever be grieved ?

“ Where is the blessedness ye spake of ? ” inquired Paul of his Galatian converts. Ah, where ? Alas, they had bartered the blessedness of grace for the blight of legal observances, liberty for bondage, joy for sorrow, and Christianity for Judaism—a sad exchange indeed. How easily is the power of life frittered away, and the Spirit of God slighted.

Yes, such blessedness can be lost, and will be lost, most certainly, unless its possessor is kept faithful and humble.

Then can *he* be lost ? That is, thank God, another question altogether. The salvation of the true believer is not contingent on his faithfulness, but on God’s settled purpose. On the other hand the present peace and comfort of his soul depend entirely on his fidelity to Christ. Relationship is one thing, communion another.

May we so live day by day that “ this blessedness ” may be our constant experience.

“ O keep us, love divine, near Thee,
That we our nothingness may know,
And ever to Thy glory be
Walking in faith while here below.”

J. W. S.

AN UNBREAKABLE CHAIN.

THE first link in this chain you will find in the end of Romans VIII. 28. It is called *Purpose*—a word that carries our thoughts back to the far-off past. It tells us that God had counsels and plans of His own, and that from the wreck of sinful humanity He would gather out a people in due time that should be conformed to the image of His Son, to share His home and His glory—joint heirs with Christ.

They were “ *pre-destined* ” to this great end. “ Pre ” simply means before, and “ destined ” refers to the end in view. This word, which has needlessly troubled so many Christians, ought to be a great comfort to them. It very preciously assures us that God’s purpose is to conform us to the image of His Son. We are to have a body of glory like His, and then our every thought, feeling, and desire will be in perfect harmony with the mind of God. This is God’s gracious thought for us. We are not only to see Jesus, and to be with Him, but we shall be like Him. He is the Firstborn, we are the many brethren. Just as in an earthly family we perceive a family likeness, so, in the

heavenly family, all will be in the image of Christ.

The first link is connected with Eternity, and the second with Time. It is named *Calling*.

Those who are "called" are destined to share in this purpose when it receives its full and blessed accomplishment. God has many ways of calling us. Some are called suddenly, like Saul of Tarsus, and arrested in their mad career by a mighty hand. Others, like Timothy, nurtured in Christian homes, cannot remember any moment when they were thus powerfully affected. But they trust in Jesus, rest in His finished work and are occupied with Him in glory. This is sufficient to assure them that they are among the "called." It is through no works or merit of their own that they have heard this call. They attribute it (and rightly so) to the gracious action of God's Spirit, and know it to be the fruit of God's great love and rich mercy.

The proof that we are among the "called ones" lies in our having heard and believed. We have *heard* the voice of Jesus. "My sheep hear My voice." We have *believed* that God sent His Son, the Saviour of the world. We rejoice that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John III. 16). We thus

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know that we have everlasting life through believing in Him and we enjoy and enter into it by the Holy Spirit.

Then, if we love Him that begat, we love those also who are begotten of Him. Our souls are purified in obeying the truth, and we love the brethren—"the brethren" meaning all God's children.

Love is the second mark of one who belongs to God's family.

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and *love* to all saints are the two qualities which mark those who are called.

The third link is *Justification*. "Whom He called, them He also justified" (v. 30). This and the calling go together, and are the two links in this matchless chain formed on earth. A justified man is not merely cleared of all charges, but one who has been *righteously* cleared. How can this be true of a guilty sinner? First, because there is grace in God; we are justified freely by His *grace*. But God is holy, and He cannot be gracious at the expense of righteousness. So it is through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. We are justified by *blood*—the precious blood of Christ shed at Calvary, when with pierced hands and feet and thorn-clad brow He gave His life up in death. We appropriate this by faith, and believe in the grand facts of the death and resurrection of Christ. He was delivered for *our* offences,

raised again for *our* justification; therefore, being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God. Moreover, it is God Himself who provided this Saviour, according to His determinate counsel, and when complete atonement for our sins had been made, He raised Him from the dead *without them* !

God is our Justifier. He challenges the whole universe to bring a charge against one whom *He has cleared*. He is the Supreme Judge, the final court of appeal is His, and there is no setting aside the verdict He gives. He justifies all who believe in Jesus. Do you believe in Jesus? If so, you are justified. If Satan harasses you or doubts beset you, turn to verse 34 and read, "It is Christ that died, *yea, rather*, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The "*us*" are the called ones. He died. He lives. He intercedes. These are the three great facts our souls are to rest in.

He *died*—our sins, then, have been visited with the judgment they deserved. He *lives*. Not one of those sins remains to be atoned for. He left them all behind, so to speak, in His grave. He *intercedes*. He is our Advocate and Great High Priest, who is saving to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. We are not left to travel through earth and get to heaven the best way we can, we have a loving Saviour! Turn your eye to Him, rely on His

love to bring you safely through. Look only, and ever, to Jesus ; rest solely and wholly in His power to carry you over the most stormy sea. He will never let you go, you shall never perish, for “whom He justified, them He also *glorified*.”

Our last link is in the glory. God, who purposed our blessing, called us by His grace, justified us in full accord with His righteousness, will never give us up. He will bring us safely to glory. This should be a great joy to us. We are to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We are to anticipate, with happy, believing hearts, the glory which we shall share with Christ in the near future.

There is glory upon glory, as there has been grace upon grace. Who can conceive what it will be, when, no longer viewed darkly, as through a glass, we behold, face to face, every precious trait of divine excellence in Jesus. The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. In Him we shall see all perfection. And we shall behold His glory according to that gracious word : “ Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me ; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world ” (John xvii. 24). This will be our supreme joy.

Then, too, all the Father’s glory will be displayed. He “ who only hath immortality,

dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," will be seen in the Person of our Saviour. He is the Image of the invisible God, the exact expression of His substance, the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily.

Then, during the thousand years of Christ's reign over the earth, when He comes in His own glory, His Father's, and that of the holy angels, He will be displayed as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Hosannas shall yet rend the air to Israel's glorious King. The Son of Man shall have universal dominion, the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth. He shall indeed be declared to be the Son of God by resurrection when those unnumbered "called ones" shall have shaken off corruption at His mighty voice, and come forth from their graves witnesses of His glorious power.

What a prospect is before us ! What a glorious hope ! It is God's settled purpose to have many sons in glory. For this, God's gracious call has gone forth, and every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is justified, and is fitted to share in the glory that is to come. Any moment we may find ourselves there where neither disease nor death, sorrow nor sin, shall ever enter. Yes, we *shall* be glorified as surely as we have been *called* and *justified*.

H. N.

“TILL HE COME.”

“Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”—REVELATION XXII. 20.

O MASTER! our barques are tossing,
On a dark and stormy sea,
Where the billows roar like thunder,
And hidden dangers be;
Oh! when shall we reach the haven,
Where gleam the lights of home?
And the Master's voice makes answer—
“Ye shall anchor *when I come.*”

O Shepherd! thy flock is scattered
All over the mountains high;
And the sheep are faint and weary,
And the lambs are like to die;
Oh! when shall they reach the pastures
From whence no foot may roam?
And the Shepherd's voice makes answer—
“They shall gather *when I come.*”

But the path is full of danger,
And they wander to and fro;
For the lights are quenched in darkness,
And friend is turned to foe;
And the cruel wolf is stalking,
Till hearts with fear are dumb;
And again the Shepherd answers—
“It is only *till I come.*”

O Head of Thy Church, Belovèd!
Thy Bride has been waiting long;
Oh! when shall her night of sadness,
Be turned to a morn of song?
Her heart has been ever yearning
For the portals of her home—
And the Bridegroom's voice makes answer—
“Behold, *I quickly come!*” D. C. S.

SERIOUS QUESTIONS.

CAN we look at *the unconverted* around us, hastening unconsciously to destruction, without being moved? Can we think of the doom that awaits *an ungodly world* and not weep? Did Jesus weep over one city, and shall not our tears flow for a whole world that lieth in wickedness and is hastening to judgment? The door of mercy still stands open. And shall we not use the opportunity to warn our fellow-men and earnestly beseech them, as the Apostle Paul did, to be reconciled to God? Knowing the judgment which awaits the world, is it possible that we can selfishly enjoy the thought of our own security and leave the grace of Christ and the Father's love unproclaimed, or sinners UNENTREATED to flee to the shelter of His open arms?

Oh! for more earnest love to Christ and deeper compassion for souls! Brethren, the time is short. Soon will the only opportunity be gone that we shall ever have of confessing our Master and seeking His glory in the midst of a world which rejects Him. May His own spirit animate us! May our hearts be *soft*, and *tender*, and *humble*! May communion with Him cause the fountains of compassion for those around us to gush forth! May we be stirred up to pray, and watch, and labour for Christ and for souls!

ANON.

GOD'S PLAN AND PROVISION FOR EVERY LIFE IN CHRIST.

IN Ephesians II. 10 God tells us that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Every believer is saved to serve. He has been created in Christ for good works, which God has before prepared. Every Christian has a special life to live, and a special work to do. God has a plan for every life in Christ, and that plan no one else can fulfil. If God has a purpose for every drop of rain, for every blade of grass, for every beam of light, surely we may believe that He has a purpose for those who are heirs of eternal glory.

The figure of the head and the members in the human body helps us here. Every member has its own place assigned to it, and its own functions to perform. The weakest member is indispensable to the welfare and harmony of the whole body. And so it is with the Church, the mystical Body of Christ. Every individual member has his own place given him, and his own work to do. The feeblest and most obscure has as much need of the grace that flows from the Head in heaven as has the strongest and most prominent, and he

may surely count upon receiving it. The believer who is weak, ignorant, or unknown is often tempted to forget that he is as much the object of the care and enabling of God as the foremost champions of the faith. Every Christian should expect *all* grace to *abound* towards him, just as if he were the only saint on the earth. God wants to be everything to every one of us at every moment. Carey's motto was, "Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God." May God deliver those of us who are "nobodies" from doubting His power or willingness to make us useful and faithful servants simply because we are not prominent.

How often we desire to have the *sense* of power before we venture to obey! We want to walk by sense instead of by faith. When thus tempted may we at once turn to God for the grace to *will* to do His will, and then, in spite of our feelings, to obey without hesitation, knowing that He *is* enabling us. "Begin the web and God will send you thread."

When we have recognized the fact that God has a purpose for each of our individual lives, and have put ourselves entirely at His disposal for Him to work in and by us His good pleasure, what is the next thing to do in order that we may enter upon the Divine plan? Do the next thing; and then the next, and the next, until, our work increasing

NEVER GIVE UP.

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and our sphere enlarging, we shall come to realize what is our life-work.

The truth, when realized, that God has a plan and provision for each believer, will, by giving definiteness and sustained energy to the life, prevent it from being a mere patchwork of effort and apathy.

E. A.

 NEVER GIVE UP.

NO doubt your pathway is difficult. But as in natural things, so in spiritual—the man who overcomes difficulties is the one who makes headway, not the one who faints under them and gives up. But neither you nor I can persevere save as we depend upon the Lord—our Head—and on the power of His Spirit given to us.

Hebrews XII. 1 exhorts us to run with *endurance* the race set before us, looking off unto Jesus. To make progress we need purpose of heart.

There may be much to disappoint us both in people whom we know and in the circumstances that surround us. At times we feel it very keenly, and then we are apt to be discouraged and ready to give up in despair. But the Lord will give us grace to rise above these discouragements, if we only seek His face and are subject to His will.

I trust you may soon learn that our disappointments are often His—appointments. By giving up, you will gain nothing, and it will lead to self-occupation and sorrow of heart. Besides, you forget the effect your example will have on those you have sought in past days to help.

As to the little service you have rendered, has your motive been to do what you could for the Lord Himself, or only for His people? If for the Lord, He will miss it, and if it was to meet Him you used to assemble with His saints and partake, with them, of the Supper of the Lord, surely you will not willingly grieve His heart by your absence! He says, “*This do for a remembrance of Me.*”

Let me commend to you the prayer of two men of God :

Moses said, “ Lord, shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee ” (Exod. xxxiii. 13).

Paul said, “ Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? ” (Acts ix. 6).

“ Are you standing at ‘ Wits’ End Corner,’
 Christian, with troubled brow ?
 Are you thinking of what is before you,
 And all you are bearing now ?
 Does all the world seem against you,
 And you in the battle alone ?
 Remember at ‘ Wits’ End Corner ’
 Is just where God’s power is shown.”

A. E. C.

SURRENDER.

“ I T’S a reality, Jack. I can bear witness to it. You remember, in the old days, how Willie Young used to speak to us boys about the Lord, don’t you? Well, I never forgot his kind and faithful talks. That dear man’s life has lived itself over and over again in my memory, creating impressions and longings I could not account for; and, Jack, the time came when I was brought to a sort of standstill in my soul’s history. The truths which dear Willie pressed so earnestly upon us came home to me in all their force; that there must be a new start, a fresh beginning with God, and that Jesus was ready to receive all who came to God by Him. And the Lord preached that loving message over to me, after all those years of wandering; *and I was cornered*, Jack. The Lord’s love was too strong for me, and smashed me to pieces. I had to yield. I simply appropriated Christ as my own personal Saviour, and entered into the joy of God’s salvation. Yes, it’s all real, Jack. Wouldn’t *you* like to be right about these matters? Life is uncertain, and long eternity lies ahead of us, and sooner or later the question must be faced, for we have all sinned, and the wages of sin is death. But

there is a *righteous* way of escape, Jack. Why not turn to Christ *now*, and have the matter settled? "

" That's very well for you, my dear fellow ; but it seems all dark to me. I haven't forgot Willie Young and his kind words and consistent ways ; and I firmly believe that what he said, and what you are saying now, is the honest truth ; but, somehow, I feel as if the great blessing you speak of wasn't meant for the likes of me. I know I am not worthy of it ; and how could I fight my way into it ? "

" There's no fighting to do, Jack. You and I have done too much of that already, treating God as if He was our worst enemy, instead of being by far the truest Friend we ever had. It's not fighting, but SURRENDER, that is wanted on your part. Lay down your arms of rebellion, and put yourself like a little child into the arms of Jesus, and your soul will be at rest. The death of Christ has settled every claim against us as sinners, and you only need to put in your plea as such to make the blessing of God your own."

Reader, what about *you*? Are you treading the happy path of wisdom, or are you on the broad high road that leads to everlasting night? One or the other it *must* be. Unsaved one, while the door of salvation still stands wide open put in your claim for the blessing which God waits to bestow.

G. F. E.

OUR DEAREST WISH.

OUR wishes are descriptive of ourselves. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he," the wisest of men said centuries ago. It is true to-day. There are times and circumstances so solemn and searching that a wish expressed at such times or in such circumstances unveils our innermost being. Our wish describes what we are in the hidden depths of our soul. It is so when death comes or friends are parting never to meet again. It is so in a great spiritual crisis, or in times of sore trial.

Before reading on let each reader ask himself, *What is my dearest wish?* If only one wish could be granted by one able to grant anything, what would it be?

Paul expressed his dearest wish. Circumstances rendered the expression of it, as recorded in Philippians III. 8-14, the unveiling of his innermost being. As we read the words we seem to feel the throbbings of his heart and the intensity of his all-consuming desire. He is drawing near the end of his life. It had been a busy, eventful life. It was for him, indeed, a solemn moment. Solemn it is for any of us when but a few grains are left in the hour-glass of life, when our eager eyes are looking upon a vast eternity, soon to be

entered, when labour is to cease, when things appear as they really are, and all past activities are fixed beyond reach of change, be they approved or condemned.

Christ had won his heart. He counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Yea, he still counts his having suffered the loss of all things as nothing, and the things themselves as dung, that he might *win Christ*. He longed to be found in Him, clothed in the righteousness which is of God through the faith of Christ. Not clothed, indeed, in his own righteousness, which is of the law. His heart is absorbed by its glorious Object. He unveils his innermost being. His dearest wish he expresses in language that knows no restraint. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

He held nothing back, and nothing held him back. No matter how rugged the path that led to the goal. No matter how steep the hill, or if the way led through death itself he would follow it to the very end. A bitter *end* so far as circumstances went it doubtless was, but a glorious *beginning* as he entered eternity.

And he has been most amply justified in his wish. We may rest assured that every wish short of Christ will be like an empty bubble

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in the end, and like the apples of Sodom, full of ashes. We want to live for Christ and for eternity. It is only as Christ is our object and love the controlling power that this can be brought to pass. What, then, reader, is your dearest wish?

A. J. P.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. H.—2 Cor. v. 10.—Although this verse is part of an epistle addressed to the Church of God at Corinth and to saints elsewhere, we have no doubt it has a much wider application. When the Apostle says, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," he means *all*. When he says, "That every one may receive the things done in his body," he means *every one*. Christ's judgment seat is the ultimate tribunal before which all must stand, and there each one shall receive his recompense for things done in the body during his lifetime upon earth—a very solemn consideration indeed! Paul himself never lost sight of it. He remembered his own personal responsibility to His Master, and always earnestly endeavoured to be agreeable to Him. Little did he care how he stood in the thoughts of others. It was a very small thing to him to be judged of men or of man's day. "He that judgeth me is the Lord," said he, and when He comes He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make

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manifest the counsels of the hearts ; and then shall every man have praise of God. Thus Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians iv. Well will it be for us if we ponder these sayings and lay them up in our hearts. For we, too, shall be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ, and the things we have done in our body, whether good or bad, will there be reviewed, weighed in the balances, and valued at their true worth. Then will our earthly life stand out clear of all clouds and mist. We shall see it as it is now seen above ; we shall know even as also we are known. What revelations await us there ! They will stir our hearts to praise. It is so even now. The remembrance of God's patience with us in our unconverted days and of His tender dealings with us ever since—guarding, guiding, restoring, forgiving, and leading us by sure steps to an ever-growing knowledge of Himself, moves us to adore His name. How much more when all is fully known ! Nor shall we tremble if in that great day all our sinful deeds should pass before our vision, and we see them in a clearer light than we ever saw them in our repentant hours on earth. We shall only the better know the riches of the grace that has pardoned every one, and the preciousness of that Blood that has made atonement for them all. The thought of the judgment seat of Christ, then, awakens no fear and causes no dismay. It makes us serious, it is intended to do so. It reminds us that the warfare in which the Christian is engaged is no child's play, and that the life he lives is no butterfly existence, but a life so ordered and spent that it may receive the "Well done" of his

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Master in that day when He shall come with His reward.

Other feelings possess us when the judgment seat is viewed in relation to men who obey not the gospel. There is "*the terror of the Lord.*" Unsaved ones shall then be shaken out of their self-complacency, and if hills and rocks could fall upon them and hide them from His face they would gladly have it so. Paul remembered this. It impelled him to persuade men. He besought them to be reconciled to God. "*The terror of the Lord*" to him was no phantom. He knew nothing of the theories of these modern days by which anything of the nature of "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" is swept away. The judgment seat, the opened books, the impartial trial, the inexorable sentence, the everlasting punishment of the wicked, were great realities to Paul. They should be to us, they will be if we love the souls of our fellow-men.

But though "the judgment seat of Christ" is a wide term, embracing the various future judgments of which Scripture speaks, we should bear in mind that the believer will not be manifested at that tribunal either at the same moment or in company with the unsaved. A whole millennium stands between. Nor will it be decided at the judgment seat whether the one who believes in Jesus is to be welcomed to heaven or shut out of it for ever. This matter is settled on earth. It is settled the moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Our sins are then forgiven, eternal life is ours, we are saved with an everlasting salva-

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tion and loved with a love from which nothing can ever separate us. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ, into whose hands all judgment is committed, is Himself our Saviour. He has died for us. He has borne the stripes by which we are healed. In Him we are taken into God's favour, and brought into the family of God as dear children. On these points we need not now enlarge. They have been treated of in papers appearing in this magazine, and will be in future papers, if God permit. Should this answer not be full enough, kindly write again.

W. M. H.—It is a vexed question you ask concerning women preaching and praying in the presence of men. In apostolic days the practice was not in vogue—at all events, there is no mention of it in the Bible. Rather the contrary. “I will that men pray everywhere,” said Paul to Timothy. *Men*, mark you, not women. True, in Philippians iv. the Apostle speaks of “those women which laboured with me in the gospel,” but are we therefore to conclude that they stood by his side in the market square and preached? They *laboured*, and every evangelist will tell you what effectual service women are able to render.

Now, it is certain that our Lord may endow Christian women with great gift. The four daughters of Philip the evangelist are a case in point. They prophesied (Acts xxi. 9). Theirs then, was gift of a high order. Did they exercise it in the assembly? Certainly not. 1 Corinthians xiv. 34 is conclusive as to that. But they exercised it in their proper sphere, to God's glory and the blessing of many. This we may not doubt. And

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is it not better that the Divine order should be observed? Here and there in Old Testament days we find women coming to the front—mothers in Israel. Deborah was one of them. And when Barak shrank from obeying God's call to go against the foe unless Deborah went with him, she replied: "Surely I will go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest *shall not be for thine honour*; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Judges iv. 9). And so is it ever. It is a loss and a reproach to Christian *men*, and a mark of great weakness, when women move in a sphere intended for men alone. Every feeling of womanly delicacy prompts them to serve their Lord and Master in paths where they shall not be exposed to the bold gaze and criticisms of a mixed crowd. And surely this is right. Those who defend the practice plead the doctrine of expediency, and point to the success achieved as a sufficient answer to every objection. But it is a perilous doctrine, and easily carried further than they themselves would care to go.

J. H. L.—We are in entire agreement with you in distinguishing between gifts and local charges. Evangelists, pastors, teachers—these were gifts bestowed by the risen and ascended Christ according to Ephesians iv. Local charges, such as overseers and deacons, were quite another matter. An evangelist, or pastor, or teacher who lived at Ephesus would not have ceased to be one had he gone to live at Rome. Not so if a man were an overseer or a deacon. He held office only in the city in which he lived. There is nothing

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of a local nature associated with gift. Wherever an evangelist, pastor, or teacher finds himself, he is free to exercise his ministry, yea, is bound to do so if a door be opened unto him of the Lord. But, you ask, if elders were appointed in apostolic days, what is to hinder their appointment now? In answering your question we ask another: Who is authorized to appoint them? No scripture that we know of gives the least intimation that the assemblies were to choose and appoint to that office. The Apostles appointed as in Acts xiv., and Titus was left at Crete for that express purpose (Titus i. 5), a plain proof that the believers at Crete were not warranted to do so. Are we, then, without elders? We do not say that. If there are godly men who seek the welfare of the saints in many happy ways, we should gladly own and recognize these, but that is a different matter from assuming power to formally appoint them to office, where there is no scripture that directs us to do so. Of course, if we take sectarian ground, with rules framed by ourselves, to govern and regulate the particular society to which we belong, then things are simple enough, and none can object. But is that the right ground to take? Is not the assembly of God one, and do not all true believers belong to it? Alas! so far as visible unity is concerned, it is a broken, ruined vessel. Essentially and indivisibly one as indwelt by One Spirit, by whom all believers are formed into one body, of which Christ is the one living and only Head, the assembly is outwardly divided into sects and parties, through the sin of man and departure from the truth. We should feel this state of things, and be humbled

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before God about it. But suppose we, ignoring the fallen state of the assembly, assume authority to appoint overseers, or bishops as they are sometimes called, over whom would they exercise jurisdiction? Assuredly not over the assembly of God in the place in which they live, for the simple reason that many believers would not submit to their rule because they do not belong to their community. Such being the case, is it not our wisdom to pretend to nothing, but be ready to thankfully acknowledge any gift, whether it be evangelist, pastor, or teacher, that shows itself in its exercise, and to honour any other servant of the Lord who, moved by the love of Christ, seeks to serve His people in other ways? All this may be very happily done without pretending to have power to appoint to office, which, so far as Scripture shows, was only invested in the Apostles or their direct delegates.

K. D. M.—“How are we to know what is God’s will in matters upon which the Word of God is silent?” is a very important question, and many ask it besides yourself. For there are matters about which the Scriptures give no definite verbal guidance. True, the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It does teach us how we should walk so as to please God, and it does furnish us with principles of priceless value. But it is never intended to exempt us from prayerful exercise and continued dependence upon God in relation to many details of common life in which we need Divine guidance, and may confidently expect to receive it. Take some exam-

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ples : a change of situation, a contemplated removal from one neighbourhood to another, or the forming of friendships of a close and tender kind—how are we to be guided as to such things ? We know of but one way : let it be made a matter of fervent prayer, with the heart truly subject to the will of God, and prepared to have its wishes set aside if it be good that they should be. “ When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light.” Only let the eye be single, having no double object, only let the will and glory of God be sought, and then we may expect to be led to a right judgment. “ I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with Mine eye ” is a very precious promise. Let us plead it at the throne of grace with a heart that invites the light of God to search it, and we shall not plead in vain. As to Isaiah L. 10, mark the character of the one addressed—he fears the Lord, he obeys. If such a one has no light for his present path, let him be still, and wait and trust. Ere long the silver streaks of the morning shall be seen, and the darkness of his night shall end.

J. J. B.—2 Cor. v. 3.—Does not the Apostle here show that his heart was not wholly at rest as to all at Corinth who professed to be the Lord’s ? He is speaking of the resurrection state, when both good and bad will be clothed with their body. But how many in that great day will be found naked, having no Christ to clothe them ! Let the lax and easy-going Corinthians take care that none of them be among the number. It is a word for their consciences.

NOT I, BUT CHRIST.

SOME people are very much concerned because they cannot point to any particular time when they were converted. For that reason they sometimes wonder whether they have ever been converted at all. We think they trouble themselves needlessly. There are those who are able to tell the very hour when this great transaction took place. They could show you the spot where God met with them, and tell you all the attendant circumstances. The Apostle Paul could have done this. So could the jailer at Philippi, and Lydia of Thyatira would remember that eventful Sabbath day when some stranger-men joined the little band of worshippers by the riverside and spake to them of Jesus and the resurrection. And her heart was opened to receive the message (Acts xvi.). But it is not every one who can. Perhaps the reader cannot. After all, it does not much matter whether you were led to see yourself a sinner and to trust in Jesus, as such, months or years ago. That is not the prime point. This is it: Do you trust Jesus just now, at this very mo-

ment? Are all your hopes centred in Him *now*? Do you *now* see that apart from Him you must for ever perish, but trusting Him you are for ever saved?

“On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

If that is our song, then we may be quite sure we belong to Christ and are among His loved ones, even though we cannot name the hour when this became true.

And let us also remember that no two conversions have ever been exactly alike. God's way of dealing with souls varies according to His manifold wisdom. With some it is an instant transition from night to day. With others it is gradual—first the silver streaks of the morning, afterwards the golden sheen in the eastern sky, and then the sunrise. Some pass through an agony of conscience about their sins and sinful state. The pains of hell get hold of them. They tremble on the edge of the dark abyſs. Of such was John Bunyan, of Bedford. Others are attracted by the grace of the Lord Jesus, and they are drawn to Him by a power which they neither can nor would resist. Of such was the one written about in Luke VII. 36-49. Let no one be unhappy because his conversion does not answer in every feature to that of somebody else. It is what we should expect. There are not two blades

of grass alike, nor two leaves on all the forest trees, and could we put the sand of the sea-shore under a microscope we should not find a perfect resemblance between any two of its countless grains. So is it in the kingdom of grace.

There is another thing about which some souls anxiously inquire. *Have I accepted Christ?* Now that is not the thing to be inquired about at all. Such a question is apt to cast us in upon ourselves, and then we need not wonder if darkness and uncertainty ensue. Indeed, it may be doubted whether Christ is ever offered for *our* acceptance. The inquiry should rather be, Has God, against whom we have all sinned—has *He* accepted Christ? The Saviour's sacrifice, while offered on our behalf, was certainly presented for God's acceptance, not ours. If a man be heavily in debt, who is it that has to be satisfied—himself or his creditors? If we have sinned against God, who is it that has to be propitiated—the sinner or the One sinned against? Now we know of a surety that God has accepted Christ. He is much more than satisfied with the atonement Christ has made. And if God is satisfied, ought not we to be?

Have we not, then, to accept Christ? asks some one. Nay, but we would not put it in that form. The acceptance is on God's side. To us the gospel is preached—glad tidings

concerning Jesus, who died for our sins and has been raised from among the dead and is now in glory. This gospel we believe, and in believing we *are* forgiven, justified, saved, and have life through His name. The tendency of our wretched hearts is to turn from Christ to self in some shape or form. We shut ourselves up in a dark dungeon and then sorrow because the sun does not shine !

The gospel is a royal proclamation sent out to all the earth. Its terms are grandly simple. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses " (Acts XIII. 38, 39). Nothing could be plainer. Thus forgiveness of sins is announced and the assurance given that all who believe are justified from all things. These are blessed tidings indeed ! They are *God's* glad tidings—sent by Him to guilty, ruined, lost, perishing men. They bear His signature and seal. Let us believe them. If not we shall starve in the midst of plenty and perish from thirst with water all around.

And that is what so many are doing. Instead of believing the gospel, they are for ever thinking of themselves, of something *they* must do, or be, or feel in order to find peace.

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No wonder that doubts and fears beset them. Does the reader happen to know any of these unhappy folks? You may recognize them by their speech, for they have a dialect of their own. "*I*" and "*me*" are their favourite pronouns. They cannot say five words without them. In this respect they bear a striking likeness to the one whose experiences are described in Romans VII. Nearly forty times within as many moments does that dejected man talk of "*I*" and "*me*"! The great vision of his soul is full of self from one end of it to the other. So it is with them. And as in his case so in theirs, a harvest of wretchedness is the only result. What else could be expected? And so it must go on till, sick and tired of themselves, they cry out for a deliverer, and find one in Christ.

Oh, let us turn away from self—let us loathe it, hate it, and never listen to it more. Christ is rest to the weary. He is the Fountain of living waters where the thirsty may drink and be satisfied. He is bread for the hungry, clothing for the naked, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Here our souls, worn out by constant effort to be other than they are, may lie down and be at rest. Not I, but Christ! *Not I, but Christ!* The lesson is learnt at last. May it never, *never* be forgotten more.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

“WILL you please speak to my sister? She is so low and unhappy, it makes me quite sad to see her.”

We inquired the cause of her unhappiness. In reply her sister answered for herself, and said, “Oh, sir, I have committed the unpardonable sin; I feel sure there is no forgiveness for me!”

“Please tell me what you mean by the unpardonable sin. Many use the expression without knowing what sin it refers to.”

“Well, sir, I feel sure I have committed it, because I enjoyed religion once; but those happy hours have fled, and now I am most miserable. I came to Christ, received the pardoning love of God into my heart; but it is all gone and I am wretched!”

“Let me ask you a question. When reading in the twelfth chapter of Matthew that they brought unto Jesus one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb, and He healed him, ‘inasmuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw,’ did you charge Jesus with working that miracle by Satanic power? Did you say, or think, that it was Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, who enabled Him to do it?”

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“ Say that ? No, indeed ! I should not think of saying such a thing ! ”

“ Then most certainly *you* have not committed the unpardonable sin. If you read verse 28 of Matthew XII., you will see that Jesus healed this man by the power of the Holy Spirit. To attribute this miracle to Satan is to commit the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. This is a sin which hath no forgiveness.”

“ Oh, if that is it, I never committed that sin ! ”

“ I felt sure you had not. Had you done so, you would not experience the sorrow you now feel.

“ Now note what Jesus says, ‘ *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven* ’ (v. 31). It is clear that among the sins you have committed you have never thus blasphemed. For every other kind of sin there is forgiveness, even for blasphemy, if it be not of the nature of which we have spoken. The grace expressed in those words, ‘ *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven* unto men,’ cannot be surpassed.

“ Let us now inquire what has led to your present state of soul. What is the real cause of your distress ? Did it not begin by the neglect of prayer, of your Bible, and the society of God’s dear people ? You say you

came to God as a lost sinner, felt His love in your heart, but afterwards you got right away from Him, and lost all your joy."

"Yes, that is just my case."

"Then you are a backslider, not a blasphemer. Now, there is free forgiveness for every repentant backslider.

"Open your Bible at the fourteenth chapter of Hosea. What is the charge? 'Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity' (v. 1). What is the remedy? 'Take with you words, and turn to the Lord' (v. 2). Tell God *how* you got wrong, *where* you got wrong, and how far you have *gone* wrong. Conceal nothing. 'If we *confess our sins*, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1. 9). This is promised to those who unbosom their guilt and tell God the whole truth.

"What will God's answer be?

" 'I WILL HEAL THEIR BACKSLIDING,
' I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY.'

"How simple, yet how blessed! You are to take with you words, and confess to God those sins which have drawn you away from Him. Having told Him all, listen to His answer. He tells the poor backslider, 'I will love you *freely*,' as freely, and fully, and unreservedly as I did on the day when you first turned to Me as a poor lost sinner.

"*Love you freely* are words worthy of being

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written in gold. They tell of the infinite compassion, and profound depths of mercy, and restoring grace of our Saviour-God.

“How these words invite you to return and assure you of a gracious welcome. Ponder them. They are intended to teach you the gracious reception which awaits *you* and every repentant, self-judged backslider.

“Your part is to ‘take with you words.’ To confess what it was which led to your present unhappy state. Get right down to the bottom. Reach the point of departure in the presence of God your Father.

“Sins committed by a Christian are graver than those of an unconverted man. They are sins against light and love—the sad doings of a child against a loving parent. These sins snap the link of communion, but, thank God, they cannot break the link of relationship.”

“What do you mean? Am I not a lost sinner needing to be saved over again?”

“No; God never treats us as lost sinners after we have been once freely and fully forgiven, and brought into His family as a child. A sinner is like a man covered with a black robe. His sins envelop him from head to foot, but in repenting and believing he is cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. Henceforth he is a saint, or holy one, and is clean every whit. If he should sin it is like a mud spot on a white robe; the spot must be dealt with

and be removed. This is brought about by '*the water of the word*,' accompanied by confession. Confession ensures forgiveness and cleansing. 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Faithful and just to the Saviour who once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, and thus fully and completely atoned for them. It is therefore due to Him we should be both forgiven and cleansed.

"This result will surely follow if we confess our sins."

Her sorrow vanished when she learned the true character of what is called "the unpardonable sin," and with a deep-drawn sigh of relief on her part, and a warm shake of the hand, we parted.

How much needless sorrow would be averted if Christians paid more heed to the plain statements of God's Word as to these things.

How much happier, if the special and particular cause of unhappiness were sought out and confessed the moment communion is interrupted. If you, dear reader, are not as happy as formerly, let us earnestly entreat you to get alone with God. Find out the root of your departure, confess all to God, and listen, in believing confidence, to those precious words—

"I will heal their backslidings,
I will love them freely."

H. N.

FILL THE WATER-POTS.

(Notes of an Address to Sunday-school workers.)

EVERY one who takes up any service for the Lord ought to be able to give some reason why he serves Him. Let me say at once that no service save that which flows from the constraint of love—the love of Christ—can possibly be acceptable to the Lord. But because He has loved us, we do love Him ; and love delights to serve. Love, then, must be our motive. Anything short of this is utterly unworthy. And if we are constrained by the love of Christ we shall serve Him for His sake alone. “ Ye serve the Lord Christ.” Fellow-workers, we need to have this ever in mind. We are so apt to serve before others, to do our work in order to gain their approval. When this is the case the quality of the service is very poor indeed. But if, in the Sunday-school class, or the week-night service, we serve as under the eye of the One who reads the heart and knows the hidden motives we shall take care that the ointment of our service is free from the flies that give it an ill odour.

There are men to-day who preach to thousands. They are much before the public eye ; their names have become household words, and they seem to be used of God in widespread blessing. But your service is hidden and un-

ostentatious. Are you ever tempted to envy these servants who have a great name? Envy them not. Keep in mind that you serve the Lord Christ. He is taking note of every bit of true service done to Him. In His well-adjusted balances all service is weighed, and He knows its true value. Everything you ever did for Him has gone down to your credit in His book. You shall have your recompense—He will speak words of approval which you will treasure in your heart and memory for ever. How blessed to have a Master so tender and gracious! May we be satisfied with His commendation. Those who are praised of men have their reward now; may we be content to wait for ours.

Now service amongst the young is pre-eminently a work of faith and labour of love. Patience of hope, too, is called for. You need these three Christian graces very much developed in your soul. It is a work of faith—you cannot count upon anything in the children, your faith must be in the Lord. It must be a labour of love, because the children are tiresome sometimes, and if love is not at the back of it, you will grow weary in the service. There must be the patience of hope, because you look forward to the result of what you are doing.

Secondly: *The material that we have to work with.* Children are, in the first place, empty

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vessels. Now, grown-up people are not empty, they are full of their own notions, and very well satisfied with themselves. But with children it is not so. They are empty, and it is our blessed privilege to fill them. Think of the water-pots in the second chapter of John. You remember what the Lord Jesus Christ said to the servants, "Fill the water-pots with water." They obeyed to the letter. There was a blessed enthusiasm about them, for *they filled them to the brim!* What did they fill them with? That which the Lord would turn into wine. It is your business also to fill the water-pots to the brim. Fill them with that which the Lord can turn into wine.

I have heard it said that it is useless to teach children the Scriptures. It is all a dead letter to them, say these wise folks. My answer is, Paul said to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." Your business is to fill the children with the water of the Word—the blessed truths of the gospel—which the Lord can turn into the wine of salvation. We may be sure that if *we* do not fill the children some one else will. The devil is looking out for water-pots, and he will fill them with the poison of infidelity and sensualism, which will kill and destroy. Let it be ours to fill them with the water of the Word.

We shall not be able to fill them with water

unless we are first filled with the water of the Word ourselves. If we read trashy literature, we must not be surprised if our children turn to folly. You know better than to do that. You feed your soul upon the precious Word of God. Alas, there are those who take up the service amongst children who feed their souls upon mere garbage. No wonder if the children grow up for the world and the devil. Read, by all means. Read anything that can help you in your service, but feed upon the sacred Scriptures, and make the Bible your chosen book. And do not forget that you must also be in personal contact with the blessed Lord, of whom the Scriptures speak. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Let us, then, be like the servants of John II., who filled the pots to the brim and then brought them to Jesus. We cannot change the water into wine, nor could they. We must do what they did—we must bring them to Jesus; and that necessitates prayer. Oh, beloved fellow-labourers, we shall not be successful unless we are found in dependence and prayer before Him.

We have to remember that the children are not only empty, but they are every bit as much dead towards God as grown-up sinners. You will find it very instructive to search out in your Bible all the cases of children raised from the dead. Study them well, and they will yield you much profit. Gehazi, the servant

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of Elisha, put his hand to this work. Elisha said to him, "Take my staff and lay it on the face of the child." Ah, but Gehazi had not the spirit for this. He was a self-centred and an ambitious man. We can well understand his pride as he walked off with Elisha's staff—the staff that had smitten Jordan, and divided the waters—that mighty staff which had done such wonders! It was in his possession now! Doubtless he imagined he was going to do great things with it as he laid it on the face of the dead child! But there was neither voice nor hearing. Is it possible for us to take the Word of God—that which is mighty to give life—and use it without effect, so that there is neither voice nor hearing? *It is possible.* If the staff is to be of any use we must be in touch with the One in whom is life and power. God grant that we may not be powerless, like Gehazi!

Elisha was very different, and he acted in quite another way. He laid himself on the child, and walked about the house and prayed to God. His every movement denoted the intensity of his exercise, the earnestness with which he sought the life of the child and his dependence upon God. It will be well for us to learn the lessons, for these things are recorded in His Word for our learning.

The third point shall be, *The spirit in which we serve.* The one who deals with children

must be like his Lord if he is to be successful. There was Peter, he could stand up on the day of Pentecost and preach so that 3000 souls were converted; but Peter, in earlier days, had driven the children away from Jesus. We must be very careful that there is nothing in us to drive them away. They doubtless shrank in fear from the disciples, but can you not imagine how eagerly they would run to the outstretched arms of the Saviour? Do you think the children were afraid of Jesus? Was there anything in Jesus to drive the children away from Him? You know that Mark's Gospel sets the Lord Jesus before us as the true Servant, and in the tenth chapter we see how He dealt with the children. He put His hands upon them, drew them to His arms, and blessed them. They had a place in His heart. Have the children a place in your heart? If you are like the Lord they will have. Then they will feel that we love them, and we shall seek, in dependence on the Lord, to communicate to them the blessed things that have made us happy—the things of Christ. The Lord grant that we may be able to do that. But we must be near to Him, for it is at the feet of the blessed Lord that we learn and are trained for service.

Lastly, let us think of *The result of your service*. It was Dr. Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, who once said, when he looked upon

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the faces of the boys in his school, that he felt there might be among them a future prime minister—a future commander-in-chief—a future leader of the thoughts of men. But you can say something better than this, as you look on the faces of the children. Yours may grow up to serve the Lord. Who can tell what may come out of your class? Here may be a soul-winner; there, one who shall be a constant comfort to the people of God; another who, perhaps in an obscure place, shall shed the light of the life of Jesus, and last of all and best of all shall shine in the glory of God for ever. This is the great and ultimate end of all our service. If we keep this in view, how earnestly we shall seek that all the children may be the Lord's. “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.”

J. T. M.

“NOT NOW.”

MARK V. 18.

NOT *now*, my child,—a little more rough
tossing,

A little longer on the billow's foam,—
A few more journeyings in the desert-darkness,
And *then* the sunshine of thy Father's home!

Not now,—for I have wand’ers in the distance,
 And thou must call them in with patient love ;
Not now,—for I have sheep upon the mountains,
 And thou must follow them where’er they rove.

Not now,—for I have lov’d ones sad and weary,
 Wilt thou not cheer them with a kindly smile ?
 Sick ones, who need thee in their lonely sorrow,
 . . Wilt thou not tend them yet a little while ?

Not now,—for wounded hearts are sorely bleeding,
 And thou must teach those widow’d hearts to
 Sing ;

Not now,—for orphans’ tears are thickly falling,
 They must be gathered ’neath some sheltering
 wing.

Not now,—for many a hungry one is pining,
 Thy willing hand must be outstretch’d and free,
 Thy Father hears the mighty cry of anguish,
 And gives *His* answering messages to thee.

Not now,—for hell’s eternal gulf is yawning,
 And souls are perishing in hopeless sin,—
 Jerusalem’s bright gates are standing open,—
 . . Go to the banished ones, and fetch them in !

Go with the Name of Jesus to the dying,
 And speak that Name in all its living power ;
 Why should thy fainting heart grow chill and
 weary,

Canst thou not *watch with Me* one little hour ?

One little hour ! and *then* the glorious crowning,
 The golden harp-strings and the victor’s palm,—
 One little hour !—and *then* the Hallelujah !

Eternity’s long, deep thanksgiving psalm !

C. P.

LOVE OUT OF A PURE HEART.

I PETER I. 22.

I WOULD like to say a few words about the latter part of this verse, which I pray may be helpful to some. "Love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Love, as understood by a great many to-day, is not the love of which Scripture speaks. To take the line of action adopted by our Lord and the early saints (according to their Lord's command), by exercising scriptural discipline, or lovingly warning against "the leaven of the Pharisees" of to-day, is to be misunderstood and to court unpopularity, and gain a name for being bigoted, narrow, and uncharitable. At least, we shall be so regarded by those who appear to understand Romans XIII. 8-10 to mean that if one shows what he imagines to be love, he is thereby fulfilling the law!

I fear many of those who cry up "love" forget that Scripture says that love is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22), and therefore cannot countenance sin. Faith works along the pathway of love, but never of sin; therefore "love" and "sin" cannot go hand in hand.

The word "fervently" literally means to "stretch out," and the first thought that comes

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into our mind is : love is not self-centred, but stretches out to "one another." Then love also stretches out in front of the believer as a pathway along which he is to travel, and so all his dealings will be tempered by love (Gal. v. 6, 13). Is it not a sad fact that we often limit love, and so step over and outside of it ? Then comes that hasty word, that back-biting bit of gossip, that hard, bitter feeling, or that thoughtless act whereby some brother stumbles, and maybe the Lord is blasphemed. Or a brother is in need of financial help, which you could render only you remember you are "going out," and so shut up your bowels of compassion, or you find refuge in sundry other "legitimate" excuses (1 John III. 17; Luke XIV. 18). Where can we stop if we limit love thus ? There is more in those words, "We know that we have passed from death unto life *because* we love the brethren" (1 John III. 14), than at first may appear. Perhaps Peter, when he penned these words on which we are now commenting, had in mind the incident of Matthew XVIII. 21, 22. Do we forgive thus ? It may be easy to forgive once, or twice, but to obey our Lord's words needs a stretching-out love. Can we not also remember some experience in our own lives of God's stretching-out love ? (1 Tim. I. 14).

But there is another thought I would like to emphasize. Our love is to stretch out in point

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of time, to lay hold of the judgment-seat of Christ, and let this influence us in our dealings with our brethren. We are to realize that each one must give an account of the things done in the body. We think with sorrow of the loss some will suffer whose works are burnt up. We desire to give an account with joy and not with grief. In view of this we cannot suffer sin upon a brother, and we shall exhort one another the more as we see this hour approaching, and as we realize that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Do you love thus? Then you will know something of what Paul felt when he said, "The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

And may I say a word to those who are so taken up with "evangelistic" work? Do you know you cannot have love for poor perishing souls (in quality or extent) unless you love in a scriptural way those related to you by Divine relationships. On the other hand, we do not always sufficiently realize that such-and-such a poor sinner has a soul that needs saving; or we are too slow to see where penitence has already begun; or too much influenced by "what they were," and so forget "what they might be by Divine grace." Let us watch against these limitations of love, and see that we do indeed love one another with a pure heart fervently.

ANON.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. L. C.—“*Should a Christian take part in Politics?*” It is kind of you to write and ask us to reconsider some of the statements in the introductory pages of this pamphlet, and to give at so great a length your reasons for so doing. The request is amply justified, and if the Lord has laid it on your heart to write, as you believe, then it behoves us to examine with becoming care the views from which you feel obliged to dissent.

We cordially agree with you in saying that “every soul from Adam downwards that will ever be in glory” will owe his being there to the sacrifice of Christ. We believe it with our whole heart. Not one among the unnumbered hosts of the redeemed but what will adoringly confess that were it not for the precious blood of Christ he must have perished for ever.

We also believe that the saints of Old Testament times became saints exactly in the same way as we do—they were born of the Spirit. Impossible that any should be eternally blessed without it. We are not quite sure, however, that *the doctrine* of the New Birth was “well known in Israel,” as you seem to think. Be that as it may, we have not the smallest doubt that all the saints “from Adam downward” were born again even as we are. In this, too, we do not differ in the least.

But when you ask, “What do we Christians know that is beyond anything ever heard of in by-gone times?” and whether we actually think that

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we know "more than Enoch knew who walked with God three hundred years and prophesied of the coming of the Lord with His saints to execute judgment?"—then we do differ. You put these questions with some warmth as if the bare thought of such a thing savoured of spiritual conceit and pride from which we needed to be purged. But what can you say to our Lord's words to His disciples: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Luke x. 24)—what do you say to that? Do not our Lord's words plainly intimate that He was revealing things unknown before? We believe they do. He was bringing forth "out of His treasure things *new* and old" (Matt. xiii. 52).

Do us the favour to turn to 1 Corinthians ii. and read the ninth verse: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." This, as you know, is a quotation from Isaiah lxiv. For what purpose does the Apostle quote those words? It is to show that things long hid from the eye and ear and heart of man *are now made known*. They are no longer kept secret, for "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." And yet you would have us believe that these "deep things of God" were known by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, and by all the worthies of ancient times! Was Paul then mistaken? Was it spiritual conceit that led him to think and say that the revelations made in New

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Testament times lead us into regions of light and blessedness unknown to saints in earlier days?

May we trespass still further on your patience by a reference to Ephesians III. 5? The Apostle is speaking of "the mystery" concerning Christ and the Church. It was made known to him by immediate revelation from God, so he tells us. And then he adds, "Which in other ages *was not made known* unto the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." This seems plain enough. Are we then to place our hand upon the shoulder of Paul and say, "My dear, good man, you are all astray. Do you think you are speaking of things not known in past ages? Can you imagine that Enoch, who walked with God three hundred years and prophesied, knew nothing of 'the mystery'?" We dare not speak to the Apostle in that fashion, and can scarcely believe that you would.

And so you think we are wrong in saying that the saints in pre-Pentecostal times had not the indwelling Spirit as saints afterwards had. In support of your contention you refer us to 1 Peter I. II, which speaks of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, to John Baptist filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, to Zecharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and "dear old Simeon" of Luke II. We had not forgotten these honoured names. Nor were we unmindful of the fact that all these were among the special vessels of the Holy Spirit in their day. We own it as frankly as you could wish. In no way do we deny that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. He could take up men like Moses, Samuel,

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David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, and all the rest of the writers of the Books of the Old Testament, and use them to utter His word and to write what He would have them say. But these varied and sovereign actions of the Holy Spirit are not to be confounded with His presence now on earth, and His indwelling *all* believers. *Then* it was certain individuals who were the honoured agents of the Spirit, but *now* the Gift is unlimited. Every believer is sealed with the Spirit, nor is a man owned as being in the Christian state who has not received the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). Why, even the Lord's own apostles, who were with Him during the years of His earthly ministry, had not received the Spirit. Indeed, in the ways of God, the coming of the Holy Spirit could not take place till the Lord Jesus was glorified. This is expressly stated in John vii. 39 in words that leave no room for doubt. But when the work of redemption was accomplished and Christ had taken His seat at the right hand of God, then the Spirit came. Ever since that great day—save in the case of the Samaritans in Acts viii.—the reception of the Spirit has immediately followed faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Of this, Cornelius and his near friends are proof (Acts x. 44). We may also cite Ephesians i. 13, and Galatians iii. 26 with chapter iv. 6.

And you believe us wrong also if we say that the saints of the Old Testament were not taught to call on the Name of the Father as those who stood toward Him in the known relationship of dear children. It is quite true that we do find, here and

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there, in the Jewish Scriptures an allusion to God as being a Father unto Israel. But is not that rather to the *nation* as such than to every individual Israelite? And does not John 1. 12 tell us that it was to as many as received Christ that He gave the right to be the children of God, even to them that believed on His name? None other had the right to take that place. Would you have us say that He did not give it after all—that they had it before? Surely if the privilege were theirs already He could not have bestowed it, for how can any one give to another that which is already his? Moreover, if they called on the Father, as we now are graciously entitled to do, is it not strange that we do not find the worthies of those bygone days ever addressing Him by that hallowed name? Look at the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, of Ezra, of Nehemiah, of Daniel, and read the Psalms of David too, and see if in drawing near to God they called Him “Abba, Father.” The Almighty God, the Eternal, the Most High God, Jehovah, these are some of the names by which He was known in those days. But the Father’s name, and what that name implies, as known now by the believer, was reserved for the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father to declare.

Nor is this the end of our wanderings. We have strayed far from the paths of truth—so you judge—in believing the Church to be composed of the saints of the present dispensation only. We do indeed hold that the Church was formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and that all believers from that day to the coming again of

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our Lord constitute the Assembly of God. You resent this and affirm that if the Old Testament saints "were not in the Church they must be lost, for Paul tells us that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." That is a strange argument. If we say that a man loves his wife, do we mean that he loves no one else, not even his children? We believe that the whole company of the redeemed are loved with an everlasting love. He loved them well enough to lay down His life for their sakes, that they being forgiven and cleansed might share eternal glory. But that is not saying that all the redeemed belong to the Church, the body of Christ. "On this rock *I will build* My assembly," said our Lord to Peter—not "I am building it." It was something He would do at a then later day. Since Pentecost all believers are members of One Body, of which Christ in glory is the one living and only Head. Were saints before that time, joined to one another by one Spirit, members of the same body and united to Christ in heaven? By no means. There was, in fact, no such Christ there to be united to. Ever there, the Son, from all eternity—there in His essential deity, but no one could be united to Him thus. It is as the risen and exalted man that the Church is united to Him, His body and His bride. Nor did prophecy point to any such thing. The mystery concerning Christ and the Church "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed" (Eph. III. 5). Verse nine of the same chapter tells us it was "hid in God"—a profound secret to be made known to His saints in due time. Until the Cross of Christ, the middle wall of

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partition between Jew and Gentile was rigidly maintained. The Cross has utterly overthrown it, and now of Jew and Gentile there has been made "*one new man*" (Eph. ii. 14, 15). This position was as new to the believing Jew as to the believing Gentile. And both had access by one Spirit unto the Father—a privilege never enjoyed before. All these beautiful and characteristic features of Christianity you would efface either by bringing down the saints of the present period to the platform of the saints of Old Testament times, or by reversing the process and attributing to the saints of those days all the privileges belonging to the Assembly. To all such endeavours the Epistles to the Galatians and the Hebrews are wholly and irresistibly opposed.

Finally, you object to the Church being called the Bride of the Lamb because of certain allusions to a similar relationship in the Old Testament. If the saints spoken of there are not part of the Church, then, you say, Christ has two Brides. But is not this a very unhappy, not to say unholy, way of reasoning? For after all the figure of a Bride is but a figure of speech, and in its use we have to guard against unhallowed thoughts. It is used to express what the Assembly is to Christ as being wholly His, and if employed in reference to others in other days the object of its use is plain enough. But we need not pursue this further. May we in conclusion commend to your notice a small pamphlet called *The Mystery of God*, by J. A. Trench, price twopence, to be had of our publisher? It may help you more than any further remarks of ours.

FORGIVENESS—AND MORE.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God : and such we are. . . . Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”—1 JOHN III. 1-3 (R.V.).

DO not let us limit our thoughts of God's grace to the forgiveness of sins. We shall be great losers if we do. No doubt it is an immense thing to be forgiven. Everybody feels it to be so who knows the sorrow that always attends true repentance. Forgiveness is the first need of the soul. David speaks of the blessedness of it in Psalm xxxii., and Paul quotes David's words in Romans iv., saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” And “this blessedness” both of them had experienced, and they were therefore well able to speak of it.

Does the reader shrink from taking the same ground? Is forgiveness a thing *hoped for* rather than enjoyed? It ought not to be so. The gospel gives certainty and not a doubtful hope.

Observe the argument in Romans iv. The
XXVII. G

Apostle contends that "this blessedness" is not received as *wages* from a master's hand. Now the common creed of multitudes is this: "Serve God all your life and you may hope to be forgiven when you die." It thus becomes a question of wages. You have worked and you reap your reward. Now the gospel runs on wholly opposite lines. The forgiveness that it brings is a free gift "to him that worketh not." It comes on another principle altogether. The God who forgives is the Justifier of *the ungodly*—not of the pious, the good, the diligent user of the means of grace—but of the ungodly. And if we believe the glad tidings concerning Christ who died for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6) and on God "who justifies the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5), then we are indeed forgiven. This blessedness is ours. It is as sure as that the sun shines in the heavens. Who can read the passages we have quoted and doubt it?

[But do not let us stop there as if "this blessedness" were the summit and crown of all that could be ever hoped for. It is the beginning and not the end. The prodigal was certainly forgiven when his father fell on his neck and covered him with kisses. But did not the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the music and the dancing in the father's house tell a further story? Is there no such thing as "*the riches of His grace*"? (Eph. i. 7).

Our passage speaks in a style and tone that arrests attention. Look ! See ! Behold ! It is as if the writer had fallen into a joyous ecstasy. “ See,” says he, “ the manner of the Father’s love ! He calls us His children—children of God ! ” Could there be anything more blessed either in heaven or on earth ? Angels, in the Old Testament, are sometimes called “ Sons of God ”—it is a title of dignity, but nowhere are they ever said to be children of God. This amazing privilege is ours ! The Father’s love has set us in this relationship, so that we might look up to Him as Father and know that He loves us as only such a Father could.

But for the enjoyment of this we need the faith of a little child. That no one is worthy of such a favour is true enough. But if our worthiness is the purchase-price of blessing, then we shall never be blessed at all. No one is worthy, and we may at once abandon all hope and fling ourselves into the black and surging sea of despair. Thank God, there is no need to do that. The atoning work of our Lord Jesus on the Cross has removed every barrier to the outflowing of God’s great love. The blessing He gives is not now measured by our meagre thoughts, still less is our worthiness the ground of it. No ; He blesses because of what Christ is, and according to the riches of His grace.

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The hopes and expectations of the repentant prodigal, in Luke xv., never went beyond the place of a hired servant. He felt that to be much more than he deserved. And so it was. But he had yet to learn the riches of his father's grace. And that is where so many are in the thought of their heart. A place just inside heaven's door marks the boundaries of their hopes. Oh, Christian, shake off these unworthy thoughts! Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us! Not a hired servant's place does His love assign to you. You are His child, dear unto Him, and loved as Jesus is loved (John xvii. 23).

And as if to confirm our hearts in this amazing grace the Apostle is led to say, "Beloved, *now* are we the children of God." Were it a state of future blessedness it would be a matter of hope. But the word *NOW* brings it right into the present moment. Here on earth, compassed about with failures and infirmities, God calls us His children. We shall not be more so even when we are in our eternal home and perfectly conformed to the image of our Saviour. His own love has formed this relationship, and the Spirit of His Son, sent forth into our hearts, gives us the consciousness of it and leads us to cry, "Abba, Father." It is the sense of this amazing grace that bows our hearts in worship. We adore Him who deals with us thus, and who

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finds the motive for doing so not in our deserving, but in His own great love.

Nor is this all. Our passage speaks of the future as well as the present. Here, too, there is no uncertainty. As surely as we know that we are now the children of God so do we know what God has purposed for us. It is not, says the Apostle, yet made manifest what we shall be. The hour for that is not yet come. But we are not in the dark as to what God's counsel about His children is. They are to be conformed to the image of His Son. They are to be like Him—the many brethren of whom He will be First-born. This is our calling and high destiny. And it will be realized when Jesus comes again. Then we shall be like Him. Oh, blessed hope !

Finally, the Apostle shows the practical effect of this hope. It sanctifies, it separates in heart, in life, in ways from all that is inconsistent with such a calling. Christ, for whose return we wait, becomes the object of the heart, and thus we grow more like Him even now.

Christ is our hope. Dark, dark indeed is the night ; but we wait and we watch for “ the bright and morning Star ”—the harbinger of an endless and cloudless day. How rich the grace that gives us as our present portion the children's place, and as to the future, the sure and certain hope of being like Him.

A BIBLE TALK ON "SIN" AND "SINS."

WE have no love for theological hair-splitting, and we shall certainly not be guilty of it in carefully distinguishing between these two things. Though closely connected, there is an important difference between them.

Both are mentioned in one verse of Scripture, Romans v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

"*Sin*" is that which at the fall of Adam gained an entrance into the world. Just as the poison of a snake, once injected into a man's body, will run through his whole system doing its deadly work, so sin—the virus of that old serpent the devil—has permeated man's moral being to his ruin. The result of this is "all have sinned." "*Sins*," of thought, word, or act, whether of omission or commission, are chargeable to each of us.

"Sin," then, is the root principle; "*sins*" the shameful fruits that spring therefrom.

This being granted, let us go a step further and ask, What exactly is this "*sin*" which has entered into the world?

1 John III. 4 answers this point, but, un-

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fortunately, it is one of the verses where our excellent Authorized Version leads us astray. The one Greek word translated by the phrase " transgression of the law " really means " lawlessness," and is so translated in the Revised Version and elsewhere. The verse, then, should run thus, " Whosoever committeth sin practises lawlessness ; for *sin is lawlessness.*"

There is an immense difference between these two things. " Transgression of the law " is, indeed, the breaking of a clear-cut commandment. There can be no transgression of the law where there is no law to transgress. There was no law in the world from Adam until the days of Moses, hence there was no transgression and sin was not imputed ; yet sin was there in awful malignancy, and death its penalty was there. This is just the argument of Romans V. 13, 14.

What, then, is lawlessness ? It is simply the refusal of all rule, the throwing off of all divine restraint. The assertion of man's will in defiance of God's. Sin is just *that*. Such was the course to which Adam committed himself in eating the forbidden fruit. How bitter the results !

! Instead of being like a planet, shining with steady light, and moving evenly onward in its orbit, controlled by the sun, man has become like a " wandering star," pursuing an erratic course he knows not where ; though Scripture

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significantly says " to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever " (Jude 13).

Instead of being master, he is mastered by the evil thing to which he has yielded himself. Sin has dominion over him and continually breaks out into sins. And, sad to say, it exerts such a deadening and stupefying influence upon the conscience that sinners seem unconscious of their plight apart from the grace of God.

When God's grace does act, and the Spirit works in life-giving power in a soul, the first cry is that of need and pain. The past years rise up before it, burdening the conscience. SINS become the question of the hour, and the trouble does not cease until the value of the precious blood of Christ is known, and the soul can say, " My sins are forgiven me for His name's sake."

Then, afterwards—this is undoubtedly the experience of most believers—the question of SIN is raised. We discover that though our sins are forgiven, the root principle from which the mischief springs is still within us. What is to be done with that? This is a question indeed.

It is something gained if we discern that SIN lies at the root of our troubles. Some Christians seem to be too much occupied with the fruit to consider the root.

Some years ago a youth approached an elder Christian, complaining that in spite of all his

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prayers and efforts sins were continually creeping into his life and behaviour. SINS, SINS, was the burden of his cry !

" Upon what tree do apples grow ? " was the only answer he got.

" Why, an apple tree," said the astonished youth. The question seemed so ridiculously irrelevant.

" And on what tree do plums grow ? "

" On a plum tree." His astonishment deepened !

" And on what tree do sins grow ? " was the next question.

A pause. Then, with a smile, he said, " On a sin tree, I should think."

" You are right, my lad," said this friend. " That's just where they do grow."

Note the point. The sins that we Christians have to deplore and confess are not little isolated bits of evil foreign to us, inserted somehow into our lives by the devil. Their cause lies much deeper. They spring as fruit out of that which is within us. Sin is within us. Let no man say otherwise when Scripture says, " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us " (1 John 1. 8).

What, then, is the remedy for SIN ? The answer is, in one word, DEATH.

Death, or better still, the resurrection change, which will be the portion of us who are alive

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and remain when Jesus comes. It will end sin as far as we are concerned, absolutely and for ever. The last trace of its presence in us will then be gone. Every Christian looks *on* in the happy anticipation of that. Do we all as joyfully look *back* to the hour when death the great remedy came in—the death of Jesus?

" In that He died, He died unto sin once ; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God " (Rom. VI. 10).

The matter, therefore, stands thus : He died *FOR our sins*, atoning for them ; He died *TO sin*, and therefore taught by the Spirit we recognize that we are identified with our great Representative, and faith appropriates His death as ours. We, too, then, are " dead to sin," and cannot any longer consistently live in it (see Rom. VI. 2). We therefore reckon ourselves " to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord " (Rom. VI. 11).

There is just this difference : the sin to which He died was purely an external thing. " In Him is no sin " (1 John III. 5). With us it is not only external, but internal too. Sin is the ruling principle of the world without us ; it is also, alas, the ruling principle of the flesh within.

But there is more than this. The death of Christ was not only our death to sin, but it was the total condemnation of the sin to which

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we died. Romans VIII. 3 runs, " God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin [*marg.*] condemned sin in the flesh." At the Cross SIN, in its full hideousness, stood revealed, for lawlessness reached its flood-tide height then; and in that holy sacrifice its judgment was borne, and its condemnation expressed.

Let these distinctions, then, be carefully noted. *Sins* have been borne and their judgment exhausted. *Sin* has been exposed and condemned, and to it we have died in the death of Christ. The Cross was all this and more. What heavenly wonders encircle it !] How does it stand alone, unapproached and unapproachable !

". . . the Tree
Centre of two eternities
Which look with rapt adoring eyes
Onward and back to Thee."

We read in John i. 29 of "the sin of the world," and in Romans viii. 3 of "sin in the flesh." Is there any difference between these two? and how do you distinguish them from the sins of an individual?

The expression "sin of the world," in John i., is about as comprehensive as can be. Sin, the root of it, and every offshoot, down to its finest ramifications in the world, is to be taken away by the Lamb of God. His Cross is the basis of it, and He Himself will do it, as foretold in Revelation XIX-XXI.

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" Sin in the flesh " is somewhat different. Sin is, of course, the same in essence wherever it is found in the universe of God, whether in demons or men, but as far as this world is concerned " the flesh "—the old fallen nature of the children of Adam—is the great vehicle in which it resides and works, producing sins in individuals universally.

Picture to yourself an immense electric-power station. Imagine a whole network of live wires, quite unprotected, radiating in every direction from it all over a vast city. Shocks, consternation, death, would be in every direction !

Sin is something like the subtle and indefinable electric fluid making its influence felt in every direction.

The flesh is like the wire, the seat of the electricity and the vehicle through which it acts.

Sins are like the shocks dealt out in every direction, resulting in *death*.

The sin of the world is like the whole concern, wires, electricity, power-station and all ! A clean sweep of the hateful thing will be made. Such is the value of the Cross. Well might John say, " Behold the Lamb of God ! "

We commonly speak of the forgiveness of sins. Might we not as correctly speak of the forgiveness of sin ?

No ; for Scripture does not speak so. Forgiveness of *sins* is found continually in the

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Bible, forgiveness of *a sin*, too, forgiveness of *sin*, the root principle, *Never!*

A simple illustration may help. A mother is greatly tried by her little son, who is rapidly developing a most ungovernable temper. One morning, irritated because his sister is far more interested in her doll than in the motor-car which stands throbbing outside the house, he attempts to make her look at it, and in the struggle brings her head with a crash against the window, shattering the glass and severely scratching her face.

The boy is sent to his room by his mother, and on his father's return, shortly after, he gets very properly punished.

By evening the punishment has had its desired effect. He comes to his parents in tears, confessing his wrong, and seeing that he is thoroughly repentant, they forgive the angry act. But do they forgive the evil temper from which it sprang? By no means. That would be, more or less, to condone it. No; they strongly condemn it. They lovingly, yet firmly, show him its nature and its consequences, and they seek to lead him to abhor and condemn it as thoroughly as they do.

" God . . . condemned sin in the flesh." He did not condone nor forgive it; and the work of the Holy Spirit in us leads us to condemn it, even as God has condemned it, to the end we may know deliverance from its power.

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How do you reconcile the condemnation of sin in the flesh with the fact that believers may and do sin ?

No reconciliation is needed. *Condemnation* is not *eradication*. The same Bible that speaks of the condemnation of sin (Rom. VIII. 3) also speaks of the fact of sin being still in us (I John I. 8), and supposes that the believer may sin, in pointing out the divine provision for such a case (I John II. 1). It even plainly tells us that as a matter of fact we all do sin (James III. 2).

It is God's way to leave the flesh and sin still in the believer, that, practically learning their true nature, he may experimentally come into line with God's condemnation of them at the Cross, and find his life and deliverance in Another, so that he can say, in answer to the cry, " Who shall deliver me ? " " I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord " (Rom. VII. 24, 25).

Is sin never taken completely out of a believer ? It says in I John iii. 9, " Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

At death, when a believer is " absent from the body and present with the Lord," he is done with sin for ever. At the Lord's coming all believers will get their glorified bodies without one trace of sin being there. Until then we have the presence of sin in us, though it is our privilege to be delivered from its power.

The verse quoted does not in the least con-

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flict with the other scriptures we have considered. It simply states for us the *nature* of the one born of God. He does not practise sin. (" Practise " rather than " commit " is the real force of the word here.) It is not his nature so to do. In so saying the Apostle viewed believers in their nature as born of God, without reference to any qualifying feature which may assert itself in the wear and tear of life.

For instance, a man might walk along the sea-front of some fishing-village with a friend, and, pointing to a large net with innumerable cork-floats attached, say, " What a great boon to the fisherman is a substance like cork, which cannot sink." " Indeed," says his friend, " it can, for only an hour ago I watched the men recovering that very net from the bottom of the sea, the weights attached to the under side were too heavy, and, overcoming the buoyancy of the cork, dragged the whole lot down."

Who was right? Both were, allowing for their respective points of view. The former was thinking of the abstract qualities of cork, the latter of a curious and abnormal thing that happened in practice.

The Apostle John writes from the abstract point of view, and sin in a Christian is certainly not a *normal*, but a most *abnormal* thing !

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Christians, however, do sin all too frequently. Do such sins do away with the settlement reached both as to sin and sins with which the Christian starts ?

No. The Cross of Christ is the ground of all. There *sin* was condemned. There atonement was made, so that forgiveness reaches us when we believe. All, too, is the gift of divine grace, and " the gifts and calling of God are without repentance " (Rom. XI. 29), i.e. they are not subject to a change of mind on God's part. They are for ever.

Sins after conversion do, however, greatly upset the Christian's happiness, and dispel the joy both of forgiveness and relationship with God, until in self-judgment such sins are confessed, and through the advocacy of Christ we get the Father's forgiveness (see I John I. 9-II. 1). Painful lessons in this way we all have to learn, but there is profit in them. We discover thus the true nature of the flesh within us, and that the only way to keep from gratifying its desires is to " walk in the Spirit " (Gal. v. 16).

Did the Lord Jesus Christ in dying bear the sins of everybody? Would not that follow from the fact that He takes away the sin of the world, according to John i. 29?

Scripture puts things thus :

" He died for all " (2 Cor. v. 15).

" Who gave Himself a ransom for all " (I Tim. II. 6).

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" He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world " (1 John II. 2).

These verses indicate what we may call the Godward aspect of His work. It includes ALL within the wide sweep of its benevolent intention ; and propitiation has been made on behalf, not only of believers, but everybody ; the whole world.

When we come, not to the *intention* or *bearing* of His work, but its actual *results*, we find things put differently. When we view things on the largest possible scale, and *think imperially*, in the best sense of the word, John I. 29 does indeed apply, but that is quite in keeping with the fact that sin and all that are eternally identified with it find their part in the lake of fire.

If we think of things in detail, we cannot say He bore the sins of everybody, for Scripture says :

" Who His own self bare *our* [i.e. believers'] sins in His own body on the tree " (1 Peter II. 27).

Hence it is that again we read :

" Christ was once offered to bear the sins of *many* " (Heb. IX. 28). Thanks be to God that we find ourselves amongst them !

F. B. H.

A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS.

2 KINGS VII. 9.

FAMINE and distress reigned in Samaria. Besieged by strong enemies from without, destitution and death staring them in the face from within, the situation was one that might well appal the stoutest heart. Let us look at this picture honestly, for it illustrates, in a striking way, the history and condition of every unconverted one. The individual who knows not God is surrounded and hedged in by a trinity of evil. He carries within his bosom a heart that is "desperately wicked," and ever ready to respond to every evil suggestion of the enemy from without (Jer. XVII. 9). The combined forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil, are arrayed against all that is of God; and, unsaved reader, this triple power will accomplish your ruin unless you turn to God for deliverance.

If, however, you have begun to feel that Satan is a hard taskmaster, that the world with its pleasures, and the flesh with its lusts, are only increasing your misery, and augmenting your guilt, be persuaded to act like the four leprous men of Samaria, and take the initiative for yourself. If you have learnt that you are a helpless, undeserving sinner, and that God is the One against whom you have

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sinned, see now the present attitude of God towards you and every creature under heaven as set forth in 1 Tim. II. 3, 4.

Young reader, does the enemy whisper that if you give your heart to Jesus it will cast a gloom over your life, and rob you of your pleasures? Listen: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him. *But God hath revealed them* by His Spirit" (1 Cor. II. 9). The lepers ventured boldly into the very camp of their enemies, and instead of meeting death, as they might reasonably have feared, put themselves into immediate possession of "spoil in abundance." So we say to you, "This day is a day of good tidings; and we do not well to hold our peace." Through the atoning death of Jesus the power of Satan has been annulled, and every opposing force laid low, and now, if believingly you put yourself into the hands of the One who, perhaps, you thought was your enemy, and against whom you have sinned, the blessings of the gospel will be yours for time and eternity. And when you have tasted the goodness of God, and the love of Christ, it will be your happy privilege to carry the tidings to others: of an "open storehouse," and of fulness of blessing from the bountiful hand of a Saviour God.

G. F. E.

BACKSLIDING.

IT has been said that backsliding begins with the neglect of prayer. There is a measure of truth in that, but must we not go deeper down and further back?

No one ever prays—whether in the street, the open field, or private room—unless love leads as well as necessity. If we are right with the One to whom we pray, we shall be glad to seek His face.

Our own deep need, if truly felt, will oblige us to go to Him often, and whether in result He imparts to us that peace which passes all understanding, or gives us what we ask directly, the exercise will lead to a deeper love of His presence and a desire to be often found there.

The state of the heart tells much more than anything else. “The evil servant said *in his heart*, My lord delayeth his coming.” Alas, that is where the mischief begins! The heart is the battle-ground where all the power of the enemy is put forth. If we are not watchful he will get us off our guard, and steal in there, and in one way or another allure us from the only One who is worthy of all our affections.

If we become detached in any measure from Christ, then the enemy will seek to engage us with other objects so as to attach us to them. Who that has known anything of the subtlety

that beguiled Eve does not know this to his soul's grief at times ?

There are four marks of backsliding in the case of Peter which may help us :

1. *Self-confidence*.—This is a subtle thing. It is so natural to us—and is a part of our very selves. But there are times when self-confidence is more manifest than others. It is always the bane of Christian life and the destroyer of all spiritual power. Often it appears in simple things. We manifest ourselves by our words and actions as Peter surely did when he said, "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I."

But the eye of his Master looked deeper down, and He knew the real worth of those hastily uttered words. His eye pierced the heart and saw what was there. He appraised such professions at their true value. Therefore did He say to Peter, "The cock shall not crow until thou hast denied Me thrice."

Now the Lord truly loved Peter. But he must be made to feel his own utter weakness and nothingness. Had Peter been humbled by the words, who can say but what he might have been kept from all that befell him ? Let us all beware, and watch against the state of heart that would lead us to use vain and boastful words in any place or under any circumstances whatever. We are never safe unless constantly kept by almighty power. If the temptation

be presented and the power withdrawn we little know what we might do.

2. *Slothfulness* is the result of waning affections, and it ends in sleep. Sleep is not death. In death there is no affection to awake. You could not call to the dead and say, "Awake, thou that sleepest." But you could appeal to those who are asleep among the dead to do so, with perfect propriety.

It is a notable fact that when the Lord came and found the disciples sleeping He addressed Himself to Peter, who was so boastful of his love, and said, "Couldst not *thou* watch with Me one hour?"

How touchingly tender! How rebuking! What a manifestation of Peter! Yet did not his Master feel it most deeply? Of course He did. Nothing grieves us more than the lack of sympathy in those who profess to love us much. The blessed Lord had been in an agony, and none of those that professed to love Him could watch with Him. And is it not so with us at times? If He is not here now His members are here. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME." "Why persecutest thou ME?" Christ is in the saints. Wonderful mystery! He appreciates all done to the least of these as done to Himself! Let us consider it well and lay it much to heart.

3. *Activity*.—If activity is not the result of

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love to the Lord, and is not guided by the wisdom which love dictates, it is sure to show itself in the wrong way. Peter drew his sword and did great damage, yet he appeared to be doing what his love would dictate. He sought, in misguided zeal, to defend his Master. But he little understood his Master's mind. The cross was before the Lord Jesus. And God's glory and Peter's eternal blessing were all bound up in His going into death. It was not the time to use the sword. It was the time to suffer ; but this Peter did not know.

At Ephesus there was unwearied labour, and many other things that could be commended yet to the Lord's eye ; there was the greatest evidence of a declining state. The Lord Himself was not all that He had once been to them. He felt it deeply. "Thou hast left thy first love," said He, and He called on them to "repent, and do the *first* works." How scathing ! And yet they were so faithful to the truth that they shut the door against false apostles. Has it not a voice to us ? Active and outwardly correct in Church position and doctrine, yet they were not what they once were. First love had been left. Distance, in some measure, had come in between Him and them, though they may have been unconscious of it. There was not the heart-nearness to Him *He* desired. They may have been satisfied enough, *but He desired more of their company.*

How love longs for the company of its object in the closest and most intimate way ! His love is deep and jealous for our *entire* affection.

Could Peter ever forgive himself in after life, when he reflected on his fall and his shameless denial of his Master ? I trow not ! He missed his opportunity, though he did die in the end for His sake. The Lord forgave him most fully and restored him perfectly, but he may have carried the remembrance of it to the end of his life. May all this speak to us !

4. *Company*.—" Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the High Priest ; and he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire." Such was the company in which he found himself. Alas, it was poor company for a disciple to be found in ! If we are under the influence of the love of Christ we shall delight to be in Christian company. It is a great protection to us. We are nourished and warmed there, and in the power of love we help to nourish and cherish others. Unless we are near the Lord we shall not care for it. We shall be tempted to seek that of the world in a *social* way. This may be very inviting, but it is a snare and a real temptation if we are at any measure of distance from the Lord. Beware of it, we often say to ourselves ; yet saying so will not keep us. We must keep near the Lord and be under the influence of His

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love. Thus in the power of attachment to Himself we shall be saved from it.

Many who are professedly of the Christian company are ensnared by the world in one form or another. May we seek grace to shun it, and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

“O keep my soul, then, Jesus,
 Abiding still with Thee,
 And if I wander, teach me
 Soon back to Thee to flee,
 ‘That all Thy gracious favour
 May to my soul be known;
 And, versed in this Thy goodness,
 My hopes Thyself shall crown.”

P. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

AN INQUIRER.—The law, the testimony, the precepts, the commandments of Psalm XIX. are so many terms used by the Psalmist to describe the varied features of the Sacred Writings. They are like the facets of a diamond, which make it sparkle in fresh and ever-changing beauty whichever way it turns.

We look upon the Holy Scriptures, from the first line of Genesis I. to the last line of Revelation XXII., as the Word of God. True, there are things recorded there that are an abomination in God's sight. How, then, can the record of them be His Word? say you. In this way: They have been written under the guidance and inspiration of the

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Holy Spirit for our learning and admonition. Such records, however, are to be distinguished from the communications which come direct from God as the revelation of His will and counsels. But the Bible in its entirety is God's Book, and in a day like this, when misguided men are making every effort to discredit and to overthrow the Holy Scriptures, we would affectionately urge every lover of the Word not to spend time and thought in pedantic discriminations in which there is no profit. It is not the moment for such work. It reminds us of Nero fiddling while Rome was in flames.

W. M.—We are not aware of any authority to change “lead us not into temptation” into “leave us not in temptation.” Nor are the words hard to understand. Temptation here is not temptation to do evil. In that sense God tempts no man, as we read in James I. 13. But in Genesis XXII. it is said, “God did tempt Abraham”—that is, the faith of Abraham was put to the test in his being called upon to offer up Isaac. Out of that hour of temptation or trial Abraham came triumphantly, but who would not pray to be spared a trial like that? The knowledge of our own weakness might justly lead us to shrink from such temptation, though if it be God's will that we should be tested we may count on His sustaining grace. In that light, “Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation.” But that is a very different thing from being tempted to sin. Both kinds of temptation are named in James I. 12–15.

R. H.—Luke XVI. 9.—This verse must be looked

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at in the light of its preceding context—the parable of the unjust steward—as also of the Lord’s subsequent remarks as far as verse 15. Money is called the mammon of unrighteousness, because poor fallen man thinks so much of it, and in his covetousness often resorts to unrighteous methods to obtain it. It is contrasted with the true riches of verse 11—the unseen and heavenly things which are the portion of the Christian. In reality the silver and the gold belong to God, and men are but His stewards to use what they have to God’s glory. But the Lord speaks in general terms, and thinking possibly of “the Pharisees who were covetous,” styles it “the mammon of unrighteousness.” If any of it is entrusted to our stewardship, let us use it to God’s glory, so that when we have to leave it and the world in which it circulates we may be received into *everlasting* habitations. “That they may receive you ” simply means “that you may be received ”—a very common form of speech with Luke. See 1 Timothy VI. 17–19, and, indeed, the whole chapter.

As to the judgment seat of Christ, in 2 Corinthians v., we can say no more than we have already said. If you think “all ” and “every one ” must be restricted to the believer, Very well. Assuredly it takes them in. But we believe those words have a wider range, for the reasons assigned in our former answer.

W. E. W.—It is indeed very striking that the name of God is not to be found in the Book of Esther. But its omission serves to throw into greater prominence the blessed fact that the eye of God is ever on His people, even though on

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account of their failure He can no longer publicly own them as His. Never can they cease to be the objects of His providential care. These Jews remained in Babylon. They had not the energy of faith to return to Jerusalem, even when the way was open, but God secretly cared for them, and in a time of danger delivered them with a great deliverance. In this respect the Book of Esther teaches some touching and instructive lessons. No failures on His people's part can ever cause God's interest in them to cease.

S. B.—Is it not going a little too far to say that the great tribulation will begin the very moment following the translation of the saints to heaven, as described in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16? That it will be subsequent to this great event is not to be questioned, but how long after is not exactly said—though not a great while. The temple, rebuilt by the Jews in unbelief, and in which the Man of Sin will display himself, is not to be confounded with the temple described in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. At least we hardly think it can be the same.

L.—Luke xi. 13.—Ought we not to remember that when the Lord spake thus the Holy Spirit was not given as at Pentecost? Before this, certain individuals at divers times were filled with the Spirit, and in other ways were His vessels; but now every believer has received the gift of the Spirit. See our answer in last month's issue, page 136. In the apostolic writings we are never directed to pray for the Spirit; on the contrary, it is everywhere distinctly taught that the gift is already ours.

FAITH AND ITS COUNTERFEITS.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”—ACTS XVI. 31.

THE first great landmark in the history of the soul is reached, when the cry of the conscience-stricken jailer of Philippi is wrung from it: “What must I do to be saved?”

The reply is to-day, as it was of old: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou *shalt* be saved.” The words are plain, unequivocal, and it is recorded that the jailer “rejoiced, believing in God.” How, then, shall we account for the fact that the same happy result so rarely attends the preaching of our day? Why, too, is it that so few Christians, relatively, are in the enjoyment of settled peace with God? Why do many reach that state only after lengthy wanderings on rugged and devious paths, and some attain it not at all?

The causes are doubtless many and complex, and it would be no easy task to disentangle them. But in the course of nineteen centuries, it is not the way of salvation, but the method of its presentation, that has changed. And we believe that the *subjective* light in which the Gospel is freely presented to-day—the preaching of faith, instead of Christ—has been largely instrumental in producing the present state of things.

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Coin which has long been in active circulation can seldom retain a clear-cut superscription. Paul's memorable words still furnish the text for an ever-flowing stream of tracts and addresses, but there is a marked tendency to substitute "BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ" for "Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST." In other words, the act of believing is too often pressed at the expense (and sometimes almost to the exclusion) of the Object of faith. The exhortation of the evangelist is, "Believe, believe"; our very hymns follow up the admonition, reminding us that—

"Nothing now remaineth but salvation to receive.
And the way to get it is—just to believe."

But in all this there is a vagueness and an indefiniteness which, to the troubled inquirer, is perplexing to the last degree. He is hampered in his search after peace, by finding that salvation by faith has become embedded in a dialect which is well-nigh unintelligible. To tell the anxious sinner that he is "just to believe" is to baffle, rather than enlighten, him. The cry of "What must I do to be saved?" gives place to the equally despairing ones: "What must I believe?" and "How may I believe?"

It may help us, therefore, to examine the true nature of faith, and its place in the conversion of the soul; and it will assist us,

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by clearing the ground for our inquiry, if we consider in the first place what faith is *NOT*.

Faith is *NOT* historical belief.

Let us say at once, then, and emphatically, that the saving faith of Scripture is not a mere belief of historical facts concerning Christ.

The reader who does not hold the scriptural record of Christ's life on earth, with all its miracles, and of His death and resurrection, to be as really and as properly historical as *any* event in the sphere of history is either too incompetent, or too intellectually dishonest, to express an opinion at all.

The fierce light of the criticism which for the past half-century has beaten upon the inspired records of the life of Christ has had a striking, though inevitable, effect. The profound influence of the modern historical spirit on practically every branch of human knowledge is undeniable. And just because nowhere else was critical research so actively engaged as in the study of the historical Christ, in no other direction has its effect been so clearly manifested.

Never were historical records, as such, submitted to so searching a scrutiny as the Gospels; the moral issues raised in the soul by the simple story of the life of Jesus intensified the fierceness of the on-

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slaught. Yet never did records emerge from the ordeal in a triumph so complete. And in this connection the memorable words of John Stuart Mill, one of the most competent, if one of the bitterest, opponents of Christianity, are well worth quoting: "*It is no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the traditions of His followers.*"

Who, as Mill himself has asked, "is capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels"? To raise the question is to answer it. Imagine that Isaac Newton never lived! Who could have conceived his thoughts, wrought his wonders? None but a Newton.

In the words of one of the ablest of recent Christian writers on this topic: "Artistic inspiration is a fine thing; but it is simply nonsense—it is no use—to say that it reached such an unheard-of height in four Jewish writers of the first century as to enable them, and all of them harmoniously, to draw from their imaginations the lines and colours, the lights and shades, of the life of the Perfect Man. But they did it. *Only one thing accounts for their being able to do it. That is simply veracity.* They had a model, and they copied it faithfully. And because, first, the model

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was faultless, the reproduction, being faithful, was perfect too." *

To-day the historical facts of Christ stand vindicated beyond all question; the attack, from the historical standpoint, has failed ignominiously. To re-open it in 1910, and to commence afresh to weigh the evidence, is to demonstrate nothing save the critic's grave lack of a due historical sense. Faith in Christ, however, is not a mere belief of credibly attested facts concerning Him. Such a belief faith clearly involves, but it ~~must~~ strike its roots much deeper. For, as the instance of Mill demonstrates, an acceptance of the Gospel narratives as historically true, is by no means inconsistent with a complete refusal of the claims of Christ Himself.

Faith is *NOT* a reasoning process.

It was Swift who wisely observed that when a man has been argued *into* a certain belief, it needs only sufficient argumentative skill subsequently to reason him *out* of it. How differently might many a chequered Christian experience read, if only it *began* with personal contact with Christ Himself—instead of with a mental persuasion, on severely logical lines, that the conditions of salvation had ~~been~~ complied with. It is for this reason that the preaching of salvation as conditional upon

* Carnegie Simpson, *The Fact of Christ*, p. 30.

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the acceptance of a reasoned formula of words, is so deeply to be regretted.

The practice has given rise to the most dangerous, because the most subtle, counterfeit of faith, and it may be helpful if we give a concrete example of its working. The inquirer is hurried through a chain of propositions, which may be reduced to a standard form :—

All have sinned ; therefore, you are a sinner.

Christ died for sinners ; therefore, He died for you.

And, believing this, you are saved.

The undoubted germ of truth contained by each of the statements made use of, renders it exceedingly difficult to expose the insidious evil of the process as a whole. Scripture can be readily adduced in support of each link in the chain. It witnesses that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. III. 23) ; that “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. v. 6) ; and that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John III. 16).

But faith, to be a vigorous plant, must have a healthy growth (2 Thess. I. 3) ; it cannot be forced. “For by grace are ye saved, through faith ; *and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*” (Eph. II. 8). And it is against the practice of working the mind mechanically through a mere syllogism, composed of statements provable from Scripture, and of pressing onwards to a purely *logical*

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conclusion of salvation, that a loud and solemn warning is urgently needed. Wherein lies the fundamental error of such a method? Surely it is in the underlying assumption that souls can be reasoned into salvation, without the reaching either of the conscience or the affections; and in the substitution of an introspective process of the mind for the personal dealing of the soul with Christ.

Does not the supreme danger of such a method—devoid of attraction to a personal Saviour, and therefore of stimulus for practical daily life—lie in its putting off the soul with a mere theory of salvation? And is not its outcome that “faith” which, for its practical unreality, an inspired apostle has denounced in terms of the most uncompromising sternness? (James II. 14-26).

It is one thing to watch the lifeboat launch for practice on a summer afternoon, when the sea is like a pond; to admire the ingenuity of its latest improvements, and to accredit in an effortless and abstract way the fact that it is capable of saving life.

It is doubtless another and a very different matter to cling to the rigging of a sinking wreck, when the wintry sea is running mountains high; to watch the lifeboat bravely mounting the wave-crest, and to *believe* that here at length is your one hope of safety. The one case calls for mental assent to a

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fact ; the other demands active faith in the rescuers.

Here we reach the crux of the whole question. *Scripture nowhere states that the sinner is saved by believing in a doctrine of justification by faith.* Salvation is to be found, not in a doctrine or a creed, but in a Person—the Lord Jesus Christ. “ *Through this Man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ; and by *Him* all that believe are justified from all things ” (Acts XIII. 38, 39). “ Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved ” (Acts IV. 12).

Why, then, has the quest of peace in the history of so many of us remained so long a fruitless one ? How many an anxious soul has been urged through a series of propositions of the kind we have mentioned, which proved *logically* enough that the conditions of salvation had been fulfilled ! But when the process was completed, the soul was still in the Slough of Despond ; not one cloud had lifted ; the joy and peace of believing seemed as far as ever away.

What remained to be done ? Tract after tract was read to solve the difficulty. Often it seemed that you were nearing the goal, and that the next sentence, the next page, would yield the secret of settled peace with God. Or you have eagerly listened, week after

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week, month after month, to the exhortations of the preacher. You have hung upon his lips as he dealt with assurance of salvation, in the hope that the next word would supply the long-sought clue, and set your doubts at rest for ever. But the end of the tract or the Gospel address was reached, and you were still unrewarded !

Why did the answer never come ? Because the search was a mistaken one. Your soul has all this time been thrown back upon itself and its experiences. You felt that if only your faith were stronger, or if only its sufficiency could be evidenced by some mystic, inward rapture of the soul, all would be well. It is easy thus unconsciously to exalt faith to the position of the Saviour ; to subject it daily to a close scrutiny, watching its fluctuations with unwearying concern, and forgetting that Scripture deals, not with its quantity, but its *quality* (Mark XI. 22). The result is only too often that sheer preoccupation with faith in the abstract, is the one insuperable obstacle in the way of the soul's personal contact with Him who alone "satisfieth the longing soul" (Ps. CVII. 9). Truly, indeed, can many of us say—

" I sighed for rest and happiness,
I yearned for *them*, not Thee.
But while I passed my Saviour by,
His love laid hold on me."

The search for "rest and happiness" was

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foredoomed to failure, just because causes alone produce effects. Why, then, did He allow you these weary months, or even years, of dismay and unrest? The search for "the Philosopher's Stone" failed simply because the stone was non-existent; yet it resulted incidentally in other discoveries of great practical importance. And the fruitless quest of peace outside of Christ, has graven deeply on many a heart the priceless lesson that—

"None but Christ can satisfy."

In the higher mathematics there are some propositions which do not admit of direct proof. But they are not readily recognizable, and it is usually only when he finds that the customary methods of analysis are inadmissible, and one after another break down, that the mathematician is led to adopt, as a final expedient, what is known as "proof by induction." In the history of the soul, when peace has been sought on every side in vain, then, and often not till then, is the sinner ready to utter the cry of Job—so despairing and yet so swift to meet its answer: "Oh, that I knew where I might find—HIM!" (Job XXIII. 3).

The saving faith of Scripture.

We pass to the consideration of the faith of which Scripture treats. Salvation comes by "believing," but when eternal issues are

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involved, we must not allow ourselves to be put off with mere phrases. It is because faith, as a term, recurs so constantly in the Gospel address, and because its meaning is almost invariably taken for granted, that a careful explanation, so far from being superfluous, is essential. That faith is neither a notional belief about Christ, nor the mental acceptance of a doctrine or set of facts represented as necessary to salvation, we have already seen.

How, then, *shall* we define it? Faith is a living trust in a risen Saviour. Its function is to believe *in*, and not *about*, Him—to rely on Him, to confide in Him wholly for salvation, to venture on Him, to lean hard upon His finished work. But a few striking examples of faith from Scripture itself will assist us far more than colourless definitions.

* * * *

Faith trusts God in the teeth of appearances. It was typified when, on the Passover night, the Hebrew parent slew the lamb, dipped the hyssop in its blood, and with it besprinkled the lintel and the two side-posts of his door. The materialist dilates upon the insipidity of faith; the rationalist claims that since, without it, he can live as morally and as uprightly as those who possess it, such a line of demarcation between believer and sinner is an impossible one. The shallowest of sceptics may raise questions which the pro-

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foundest of believers finds it difficult to answer. And doubtless the blood-sprinkled lintel and its explanation excited widespread derision in Egypt on that fateful night.

But faith heeded the warning of the pending judgment, accepted the offer of salvation that accompanied it, and reposed on the Divine promise: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exod. XII. 13). And from the moment when faith had sprinkled the door-posts, in obedience to the Divine command, the safety of the first-born within was as complete as it was independent of his feelings!

* * * * *

Faith reposes solely on the atoning work of Christ, and its operation is beautifully pre-figured in the directions concerning the sin-offering. Before actually offering his sacrifice, the sinner was to commit an act of the deepest significance: "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering" (Lev. IV. 29). The act was symbolical of complete identification. It effected the transfer of the sin to the victim, and as the result, all the consequences of the offerer's guilt were borne by his offering. The lamb "without blemish" was substituted for the person of the sinful offerer, suffered in his stead, received his deserts. So "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Can the reader say of Him, by faith—

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“ My soul looks back to see
 The burden Thou didst bear,
 When hanging on th’ accursèd tree,
 For all *my* guilt was there ” ?

But stupendous as this is, it is only the very fringe of the blessings secured for faith by the death of Christ. We have to travel further.

* * * * *

Faith invests the believer with all the perfect acceptance of the Saviour Himself in the sight of God. The laying of the offerer’s hand on the victim’s head—the distinctive act of faith—preceded also the actual offering of the *burnt* sacrifice (Lev. i. 3, 4), and constituted them one before God, but in a sense essentially different from that attaching to the sin-offering. For the burnt sacrifice was a “ voluntary ” one, expressive of Christ, not as Sin-bearer, as in the former case, but as offering Himself to God for the accomplishment of His will (Heb. x. 7, 8).

When, therefore, the offerer laid his hand on the head of his offering, they were identified in point, not of guilt, but of *acceptance*. From that moment the offerer himself ceased to be regarded ; it became a question solely of the acceptance of his sacrifice by God. The offerer was contemplated only through his offering. Both were accepted, or both were refused. The mind of God concerning both must needs be identical. The acceptance of

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the offerer was not only inseparable from, but co-extensive with, that of the victim, on which his hand was laid.

What shall this mean for faith to-day? Jesus lives! And "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). His work is finished. "This Man, after He had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. x. 12), His present position evidencing His perfect acceptance. And the newest convert, the feeblest believer, is viewed by God in the very selfsame acceptance of Christ Himself. There can be no vestige or shadow of difference, for "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). Not less truly, then, than gladly, may we sing—

"Safe in Christ, the weakest child
Stands in all God's favour."

* * * * *

Faith is the outward look of the soul to Christ. We will not presume to search for a more fitting illustration than that adopted by the Lord Himself. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so* must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John III. 14, 15).

The longer the Israelite occupied himself with the venomous bite he had sustained,

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the more he must have become impressed with the hopelessness of his case. Healing was concurrent with the first look *away* from self. "It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Num. XXI. 9). Nothing more required to be done ; nothing else would suffice.

So long as the anxious sinner looks within, his despondency increases. He fears that while there may be hope for every other sinner under heaven, his own case is too hopelessly bad ; he has sinned so often and so peculiarly against the light, or his repentance is not yet sufficiently real. Look away to Christ ! Meditate much, not upon your own helplessness and sinfulness (which He alone fully comprehends), but on His all-sufficiency to save. Faith and self-occupation are mutually exclusive. Peace with God and spiritual progress are the result of an antecedent condition of the soul—of "*looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith*" (Heb. XII. 2). It was *after* the look away from the death-stricken camp to the serpent of brass, that "the children of Israel set forward" (Num. XXI. 10).

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Above and beyond all, faith involves an absolutely individual dealing with the Saviour.

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“ As many as touched Him were made whole ” (Mark vi. 56)—and personal contact with Himself is as indispensable to-day. Luke xv. records, in words of imperishable beauty, the search for *one* lost sheep, the quest of *one* missing piece of silver, the vigil for the return of *one* prodigal. “ *All* that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me,” says Jesus, but the swift change from plural to singular is beautiful and significant: “ And *him* that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out ” (John vi. 37). The Saviour has proscribed collectivism; the key-note of faith is a ringing, personal one: “ The Son of God loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me* ” (Gal. II. 20).

And we trace the same personal emphasis, characteristic of faith, running through all the Christian experience of the ages that have rolled by since Paul's words were penned. “ The greatest wonder in the two worlds of heaven and earth,” says Spurgeon, “ is this, that He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.” Even Calvin in his masterly commentary on the Galatians—usually so severely unemotional and theological—is strangely stirred as he pauses before this priceless gem of Scripture. Exposition becomes impossible. “ No words,” says he, “ can properly express what this means; for who can find language to declare the excellency of the Son of God? ” It is simply that He is “ altogether lovely.”

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"*The Son of God loved me.*" Faith is appropriative, muses upon His glorious titles, sets them over against the mighty stoop that love demanded. He is "the Image of the invisible God" (Col. I. 15); the One whom God "hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds"; "the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His [own] power" (Heb. I. 2, 3). Yet He "*loved me.*"

He "*gave Himself for me.*" The atonement was, as Dr. Chalmers has reverently put it, "a problem fit for a God." Christ has solved it. Faith accepts the Substitute, yet stands all amazed at the sacrifice. For in Him "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. III. 16). "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isa. LIII. 10). Entering the scene of His creation in all the weakness of the Babe of Bethlehem's manger, He left it, the Man of Sorrows, in all the humiliation of a shameful cross. God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. V. 21). The reason?

"No victim of inferior worth
 Could ward the stroke that justice aimed;
 For none but He, in heaven or earth,
 Could offer that which justice claimed."

Unique in His Father's counsels of redemption, He "*gave Himself for me.*" It is the language

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of faith epitomized. Faith in Himself is all that the Saviour requires ; and its very motive He supplies : “ We love Him BECAUSE He first loved us.”

* * * * *

Our survey must be drawn to a close, but not until we have put to the reader a question of vital importance.

On what are you resting for salvation?

Is it on the depth of your repentance, the strength of your faith, the happiness of your feelings—something, in fact, that you have done, or a state to which your own unaided efforts have enabled you to attain? Or do you rely solely on the merits of Another, on the blood of Christ in all “its solitary dignity”? “Wilt thou bring thy cowl, thy shaven crown, thy chastity, thy works, thy poverty, thy merits?” says Luther, “Paul hath nothing in his hands but Christ!” Faith may wax and wane; feelings must fluctuate; Jesus Christ is “the same, yesterday and to-day, and for ever.” And it is for a present, whole-hearted trust in Him that we plead.

But you have doubts and uncertainties? You would fain *feel* saved. Whatever the value of the thermometer, it certainly cannot affect the temperature. Turn from self to Christ. Remember that He who took

your place at Calvary, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). His present exaltation witnesses both the completion of His atoning work, and the perfection of His acceptance by the Father. Surely, with Christ seated in glory, it is not assurance, but *uncertainty*, that requires an explanation. If the acceptance of the Substitute be so complete, doubt has not room to lift its head.

Is further assurance needed? Listen to God Himself inviting you to share His rest in Christ. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. xxviii. 16). The foundation of redemption was laid broad and deep in the Saviour's death. His work is gloriously complete. Faith presumes not to improve upon it, seeks not to add to it, but, like the stone that the builder lays upon the foundation, rests with its undivided weight on the finished work of Christ.

Our closing counsel is, then—

"Venture on Him, venture wholly—
Let no other trust intrude."

"For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. x. 11).

E. W. T.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT.

IN the corn harvest the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves is performed anew, in a more gradual and less startling way indeed, but none the less wonderful on that account. In the one case the processes of germination and development are absent, and in a single moment a mere morsel, comparatively speaking, becomes a sufficiency for thousands; in the other case, the processes of nature are allowed to grow for weeks and months until the single grains deposited in the earth become waving harvest fields.

The miracle of the loaves was a sudden putting forth of God's bountiful hand from behind the veil of His ordinary providence; the miracle of harvest is the working of the same bountiful hand, only unseen, giving power to the tiny grains to drink the dew and imbibe the sunshine, and appropriate the nourishment of the soil during the long, bright days of summer.

The tendency of every one of us is to follow some leader, to echo his utterances, without, it may be, conducting any independent personal inquiry as to the truth and error of them. To the majority of men *some* word or another is a talisman which they use to charm by; they assume that it *must* mean what their accepted

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leader says it means, and that it is quite unnecessary to ascertain if it can ever mean anything else. No word has ever been more frequently used as a talisman than the word "*Church.*"

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

INQUIRER.—Do you not think that the prayers of the people of God take their form and character from the dispensation in which they live? If this be so—and for ourselves we do not doubt it—then the prayers of one dispensation might not be wholly suited to another. Compare the prayer of Solomon (2 Chron. vi.), of Ezra (ix.), of Nehemiah (ix.), of Daniel (ix.)—saints of a past dispensation—with the prayers of Paul in Ephesians I., III. How different they are! Yet how suited to their day.

Now when our Lord was finally rejected by Israel, when His redemption work was completed, and He had taken His seat at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit had come down, then a new dispensation began, bringing with it new hopes and its own peculiar calling. This change must necessarily affect the prayers of those whose lot is cast in this new day. Prayers suited to Jewish saints who were hoping for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel would be hardly suitable now, if we are to pray intelligently. True, in one sense the hopes of the Christian embrace all God's purposes, whether they concern Israel or the nations at large. We look, it is said, for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth

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righteousness " (2 Peter III. 13). Then, indeed, will God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Still, the immediate hope of the saints of the present dispensation is not the establishment of the Father's Kingdom, as in "*The Lord's Prayer*," but the coming of the Lord to translate His Church to heaven, and to bring her into the Father's house. Hence the Spirit and the Bride say "Come." This is why some Christians do not use "*The Lord's Prayer*" as a *form*, even though they may ardently desire every petition in it to be fulfilled.

We know, too, how easy it is for us to miss the power of the most hallowed words by frequent repetition. Hence there is some force in the suggestion that "*The Lord's Prayer*" was never intended to be used as a *form* at all. Nor should it be forgotten that in this Christian era we are privileged to pray in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, His name is not attached to "*The Lord's Prayer*," and that fact is not without significance.

Another reason is urged by some. It is said that we could not, in this Gospel day, pray to be forgiven "our debts, as we forgive our debtors." They plead that we *are* already forgiven, and, secondly, that if we were only forgiven according as we forgave others, then the measure of forgiveness would be small. We confess such reasoning has but little weight with us. Moreover, it is based on a misunderstanding. The forgiveness here is *parental*, and parental forgiveness we assuredly do need continually. It is true our sins as guilt are forgiven. Nor can they ever be laid

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to our charge. God is our Justifier, and every accusation finds its answer in Christ Himself. But though we are forgiven and are children of God, we, alas! stumble and fall, and then we need restoration and forgiveness. But this is *parental*, as we have already said, and not judicial. Now parental forgiveness is not received and enjoyed if we cherish a hard and an unforgiving spirit. And this should be remembered.

And now a word on your closing question, as to whether we do not need daily cleansing, even though we know that God has once for all saved us from the condemnation of sin. Yes, we do need daily cleansing, but not in the Blood of Jesus. There is another cleansing, of which we will speak in a moment. Remember the shedding of that precious Blood—in other words, the laying down of His life under the just judgment of God—was in order to meet every demand of the Eternal Throne in reference to our sins. This has been done once for all. And when we turn to God, and have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, then do we come under the efficacy of that Blood—we are justified in the power of it, as Romans v. 9 states. Now that is never repeated. If we need daily cleansing, we certainly do not need to be daily justified. We are justified but once, even as we are born again but once, and Hebrews x. 14 tells us that we are “perfected *for ever*.” There is no repetition of this. We know that 1 John i. 7 has been cited to prove the contrary, and much has been made of the word “*cleanseth*,” as if the Blood of Christ went on cleansing every day. This is a mistake, and were it true it would over-

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throw the plain teaching of Hebrews ix., x. It "*cleanseth*"—that is what it does, without reference to time at all. It is an abstract statement, such as "Water quenches thirst." In saying so, we do not mean that water is quenching somebody's thirst, but that thirst is quenched by water. So with the precious Blood of Christ—it cleanses from every sin. How else could we be in the light, as God is in the light? But recollect it is *judicial* cleansing once for all.

Now *moral* cleansing we constantly need, and this is by the *water* of the word, as set forth in the feet-washing of John xiii. And it is also figuratively seen in the use of the *water* of separation in Numbers xix. Here confession to God comes in, and the advocacy of Christ, too. If we have sinned, strayed, stumbled, and thus broken the tender link of communion, we must confess it to God. Where there is real confession and self-judgment, it is followed by forgiveness, and the moral stain is removed. But this must not be confounded with judicial forgiveness and cleansing. Is this plain? If not, please write again.

B. B.—So your friend does not believe the whole of the Bible to be the Word of God, because there are contradictions in it—an old objection, and a very superficial one. Now we have been a Bible reader for the last fifty years, and candidly declare that we have not come across a single contradiction. There are none. One Holy Spirit wrote the whole of it, from Genesis to Revelation, and we do not believe the Spirit of God ever contradicts Himself. Perhaps the "contradictions" to which your friend refers are such as we find in Proverbs

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XXVI. 4, 5, which warns us *not* to answer a fool according to his folly, and then bids us do so. Here is a verbal difference, to be sure, and there are many such. But any simpleton can see that these are two ways of dealing with a fool, and both of them are good and wise. Such childish objections can no more overthrow the Scriptures than paper pellets from a boy's pop-gun can shatter a mountain.

Possibly the imaginary contradictions of your friend are found in the differences of the four Gospels. But these have often been shown to be baseless. The four Gospels are a fourfold presentation of Christ. Matthew sets Him forth as King in relation to Israel, Mark as the Servant, Luke as Son of Man, John as Son of God. Hence some words and incidents recorded in one are omitted in another. These variations, so far from being contradictions, are proofs of the perfection and inerrancy of the sacred records. But an anointed eye is needed to see them, for God's things are only spiritually discerned (1 Cor. II.), they are hid from the eyes of "the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes" (Matt. XI. 25).

The second objection may seem harder to answer, but it is not really so. "Why should the children of the Canaanitish nations have been slain? What had they done that they should be treated so?" It is an oft-asked question, "Why should children suffer for the sins of their parents?" First of all, in the case of the Canaanites it might have been a merciful deliverance, for we assuredly do not believe that

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children even of heathen parents perish. " Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven " (Matt. xviii. 10). But apart from that, the principle complained of is seen at work every day. A man is sent to penal servitude. His misdeeds have not only brought *him* to a convict's cell, but they have plunged his wife and children into untold misery. They suffer for no fault of theirs, but in virtue of their relationship to him who did the deed. They share his fortunes for good or ill. But let us remember that it is on the very same principle that we are blessed. The second part of Romans v. shows this. If Adam's disobedience involved his posterity in its unhappy consequences, the obedience of Christ, the last Adam, brings untold and eternal blessedness to all who are in Him. What have we believers done that the gift of righteousness and eternal life should have been bestowed on us? Nothing, absolutely nothing! We receive the great gift gratuitously. The very principle your friend condemns is that on which every believer is blessed. Nor is there any other.

And, lastly, he thinks the exclusion of the Apocrypha from the canon of inspired Scripture warrants our rejecting anything we find in the Old Testament that we do not approve of. But surely your friend must know that the Apocryphal Books were never received as inspired writings and placed on a par with the Canonical Books of the Bible. If he does not know this, it is a proof of his rashness in dealing with a matter concerning which he has everything to learn. But those

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who pride themselves on their superior knowledge and broad views are often the most credulous of men. They accept statements, and give them currency, without the smallest investigation. The *ipse dixit* of some one who gives himself airs and poses as one who knows is quite enough for them. It only shows how little hold the truth has upon their souls, if they are ready to surrender it at the bidding of the first antagonist.

We are sorry your friend should be in a position to say that "no minister he has spoken to believes all the Bible." Very likely, and if infidelity is enthroned in the pulpit, little wonder if it be welcomed in the pew. "If the blind lead the blind, *both* shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. xv. 14).

C. G.—Your suspicions may well be aroused when any one quotes Greek to those who do not understand it, in order to build up some new doctrine. No knowledge of Greek is needed to determine the value of the words "for ever" and "everlasting," as used in our ordinary Bibles. No one is so devoid of understanding as to think that the Hebrew servant who refused his freedom and thus became his master's willing servant "for ever" became his servant for "the ages of ages." The same thing is true of Philemon and Onesimus. In receiving Onesimus back Philemon would receive him "for ever." But when this acknowledged use of the term is taken advantage of to insinuate that it means the same everywhere, then you may be sure that the one who does this is wholly unworthy of trust. In the majority of passages "eternal" means endless duration. So we read of the eternal God,

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the eternal Spirit, the eternal covenant. We read, too, of eternal redemption, eternal life, eternal punishment, and of eternal fire. The meaning here is plain—the thing to which the word “eternal” is applied abides. In Revelation v. 14 it is said they worship Him who liveth for *ever and ever*; and in Revelation xiv. 11 that the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for *ever and ever*; Exactly the same term is used to denote both the one and the other. No parade of Greek can do away with that.

As to Romans v. 13—“Sin is not imputed when there is no law”—these words certainly do *not* mean that those who lived before the law was given were not held responsible for their sinful deeds. Could Cain have pleaded that no guilt was attached to his slaying of Abel, because there was no formal law to forbid murder? Were those who perished in the waters of the Flood not responsible for their sins? And the inhabitants of Sodom, were they not answerable for the sins which brought down fire from heaven and consumed them all? Assuredly they were. Adam’s sin was a distinct violation of God’s known will; it was not simply sin, but transgression. Now sins from Adam to Moses were not *transgressions*, because during that period there was no law. Sins, therefore, were not charged to the individual’s account as so many items in a bill, or as infractions of a law under which men had been placed. Such we believe to be the meaning of the passage, but that is a different thing from the denial of their guilt and responsibility. To what lengths will not men go to bolster up their own ideas!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR YOUR MASTER?

“**A**LL power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Such were the words of the risen Lord to His disciples. And immediately He added, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” This was not optional, but imperative; not a mere matter of choice, but a command clothed with all the authority of Christ.

To preach is a necessity laid upon some. “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!” said Paul. But to work for Christ, if not to preach, is the privilege of every saved soul. There is a sphere for all and a work for each. There is none to whom something has not been entrusted. He gave to every man his work. None can look up to the Master and say, “I have not the privilege of doing something for Thee.”

You may not have five talents, nor even two, but what about the one? And for the employment of that one you are responsible. God has beautifully arranged and adapted spheres of labour, so as to meet all the diversity of capacity and talent among His people. Remember there is not a single

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inch of ground in God's vineyard for an idler ; not a niche in the great hive for a drone. To each He has given opportunity to do something. It may be only the silent, unobtrusive labour connected with the family circle, or that of speaking of Christ to a few children gathered in the home or class, of visiting the abodes of poverty, the bedside of the sick and dying, or scattering a few leaflets or tracts, or the unseen labour of an Epaphras fervently pleading in prayer for the salvation of some precious soul, and the welfare of God's saints.

What are you doing, then, for Christ ? What are you doing for the salvation of souls, and for the help of the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock ? Are your hands, your feet, your brain busy in the interests of Christ ?

Do you know what it is to pray ? to walk until weary ? to preach until your energies are spent ? to give what costs you something ? Where do you serve ? What is your employment ? Are you labourers in God's vineyard, not merely onlookers ? Workers, not simply critical scrutinizers of other men's work, not fault-finders with other men's methods, and ways, and doings ? We must not be narrow in our notions, nor cramped in our sympathies in relation to other workers and work, but each one doing all the good he

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can, to every person he can, in every way he can. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." And do not cease to work because you cannot fill the highest posts. If you cannot be a master builder, do not refuse to be a labourer.

So many want to be first and foremost, or they will not be anything at all. If they cannot sing from the highest trees, they will not sing from the bushes. If they cannot trill like the nightingale, they will not chirp like the sparrow. Such persons, instead of being a help, are a hindrance. Instead of speaking well of Christ, they are always thinking of their own dignity and importance.

Remember the words to the servants at the marriage feast of Galilee, "Whatsoever *He saith unto you, do it.*" This will necessitate the study of His Word for guidance in your service, and prayer and dependence such as that expressed in Paul's words, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

Alas! How many, in the energy of love to Christ, commence with works of devotedness to His Person, and gracious care for those in need, but the freshness of their affection wanes, apathy sets in, and the worker becomes a spiritual invalid.

The danger of this was before the Apostle's mind when he wrote to Titus and said, "These things I will that thou affirm constantly,

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that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus III. 8). Titus was not only to affirm, but *constantly to affirm* the necessity of believers being careful to maintain—not merely to commence or plan—but *maintain* good works.

To any who are forgetting these words of the Apostle, we would give the prescription which an eminent physician gave to a lady patient who detailed to him a long list of imaginary ills. He asked as to her symptoms and manner of life, and discovered she had both wealth and leisure. After patiently listening to the story of her complaints, he wrote a prescription, and in the gravest manner handed it to the patient, and left. Imagine her surprise when she read, "*Do something for somebody.*"

It was a powerful remedy, and quite cured the patient. More than once in after years the doctor wrote the same prescription, "Do something for somebody."

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

"No service in itself is small,
None great though earth it fill;
But that is small that seeks its own,
And great that seeks God's will."

S. S.

A BIBLE TALK ON LAW AND GRACE.

THERE are two verses which shed such light upon this subject that we must quote them at once.

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John I. 17).

“Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. VI. 14).

The first of these shows us the great dispensational change which took place at the coming of Christ. The second the result of that change so far as the believer is concerned. Under the new regime he obtains freedom from the slavery of sin.

In one respect law and grace are alike. Both set before us a very exalted standard—though even in this the latter excels. In all other respects they are exact opposites.

At Mount Sinai the law of Moses was given (Exod. XIX., XX.). God—but very little known, because still hidden in thick darkness—then laid down explicitly His righteous and holy demands. If men obeyed they were blessed; if they disobeyed they came under the law’s solemn curse (Gal. III. 10). As a matter of fact the law was broken and the curse merited

before there was time for the tables of stone to reach the people (Exod. xxxii.). The succeeding chapter tells us how God dealt in mercy with them. Under law not tempered by mercy they must have instantly perished.

Grace, on the other hand, means that God having fully revealed Himself to us in His Son, all His righteous and holy demands have been met in Christ's death and resurrection, so that blessing is available for *all*. To *all who believe* forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit are granted, so that there may be power to conform them to the standard—which under grace is nothing short of Christ Himself.

The very essence of law, then, is *demand*, that of grace is *supply*.

Under law God, so to speak, stands before us saying, "*Give!* render to Me your love and dutiful obedience." Under grace He stands with full hand outstretched, saying, "*Take!* receive of My love and saving power."

Law says "Do and live," grace says "Live and do."

Now we believers, as we have seen, are not under law, but under grace. Let us see how that has come to pass. Galatians iv. 4, 5 will tell us :—

"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that

were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

That which has made the change is in one word, *redemption*. But that involved the death of the Redeemer. He must needs be made a curse for us by dying on the tree (Gal. III. 13). Hence it is that the believer is entitled to regard himself as "dead to the law" (Rom. VII. 4). He died in the death of His Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. The law did not die, on the contrary, never was its majesty so upheld as when Jesus died beneath its curse. Two things, however, did happen. First, the law being magnified and its curse borne, God suspends His wrath, and proclaims *grace* to all mankind. Second, the believer died to the law in the Person of His great Representative. He is, to use the Scripture language, "married to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead" (Rom. VII. 4), i.e. He is now controlled by another Power, and that power is in a *Person*—the risen Son of God.

Connected with these two things are two great facts.

First, *the law is not the ground of a sinner's justification*. He is justified by grace, by the blood of Christ, by faith. This is fully reasoned out in Romans III. and IV. Second, *the law is not the rule of life for the believer*. Christ is that. Our links are with Him and

not with law, as we have seen (Rom. vii. 4). This is fully shown in Galatians III. and IV.

The Galatian Christians had started well, converted under the preaching of the Gospel of the *grace* of God by the apostle. Then came along the Judaizing mischief-makers, who were "zealous of the law," and taught circumcision and law-keeping. Into this snare the Galatians fell.

Paul's answer is virtually this, that the law was a provisional arrangement (III. 17), brought in to show up Israel's transgressions (v. 19), and acting as a schoolmaster "up to Christ" (v. 24), as it should read. Christ having come, redemption having been accomplished, and the Spirit having been given, the believer leaves the position of a child under age, or that of a servant, and becomes a son in the Divine Household, being thus put in the liberty of grace (IV. 1-7).

Inasmuch as the grace platform on to which we have been lifted is much higher than the law platform which we have left, to go back even in mind from the one to the other is to *fall*. "Ye are fallen from grace" is the apostle's word to such.

The parable of the prodigal son illustrates the point. His highest thought did not rise above law. "Make me as one of thy hired servants." He was received, however, in pure grace, and the son's place inside was

given. Suppose, however, that a few days after, under the plea of wishing to retain his father's affection and the place and privileges so freely bestowed, he had commenced working as a household drudge and rigidly conforming himself to the laws which governed the servants, what then? He would have "fallen from grace," and sadly grieved the heart of his father, since it would have been equivalent to a vote of "no confidence" in him.

How important, then, for us to have the heart "established with grace" (Heb. XIII. 9).

What do you say to the idea that grace came in to help us to keep the law, so that we might go to heaven that way?

Simply this—that it is totally opposed to Scripture. In the first place, the idea that keeping the law entitles a person to heaven is a fallacy. When the lawyer asked the Lord, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he was referred to the law, and upon giving a correct summary of its demands, Jesus answered, "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt *live*" (Luke x. 25-8). There is not a word about going to heaven. *Life upon earth is the reward of law-keeping.*

Then, secondly, grace came in not to help us keep the law, but to bring us salvation from its curse by Another bearing it for us. Galatians III. plainly shows this.

If, however, further confirmation be required, read Romans III., and notice that when law has convicted and closed man's mouth (*vv.* 9-19), grace through righteousness justifies "*without the law*" (*vv.* 20-4).

Read also 1 Timothy I. Law is made to convict the ungodly (*vv.* 9, 10). The Gospel of grace presents Christ Jesus who "came into the world *to save sinners*" (*v.* 15). Not, be it noted, to help sinners to keep the law, and so attempt to save themselves.

If the law was not given for us to keep and so be justified, what was it given for?

Let Scripture itself answer :—

"What things soever the law saith, it saith . . . *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*" (Rom. III. 19), "*the law entered, that the offence might abound*" (Rom. v. 20).

"Wherefore then serveth the law? *It was added because of transgressions*" (Gal. III. 19).

The law has, like every other institution of God, signally achieved its purpose. It can convict and silence the most obstinately self-conceited religionist. Grace alone can save him,

Then has grace set aside the law and annulled it for ever?

Grace, personified in Jesus, has borne the curse of the broken law, thereby redeeming all who believe from its *curse* (Gal. III. 13).

Further, it has redeemed us from under *the law itself*, and placed all our relationships with God on a new footing (Gal. IV. 4-6).

Now if the believer is no longer under law, but under grace, we must not suppose that the law itself is either annulled or set aside. Its majesty was never more clearly upheld than when the righteous One suffered as a Substitute under its curse, and multitudes will quail before its impeachment at the day of judgment (Rom. II. 12).

What harm is there in a Christian adopting the law as a rule of life?

A great deal. By so doing he "falls from grace," for grace teaches as well as saves (Titus II. 11-14).

He also lowers the Divine standard. Not law but Christ is the standard for the believer.

Lastly, he does violence to the relationships in which he stands by the grace of God. Though a son in the liberty of the Father's house and heart, he insists in putting himself under the code of rules drawn up for the regulation of the servants' hall!

Is there no harm in all this? We venture to say there is.

If you teach that the Christian is not under the law, may it not lead to all kinds of wickedness?

It would, IF a person became a Christian without the new birth, or repentance, without coming under the influence of grace and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Since, however, no one is a Christian without these things, the case wears a different aspect, and to reason in the way suggested only betrays deplorable ignorance of the truth of the Gospel.

The argument simply comes to this: that the only way to make Christians live holy lives is to keep them under the threat of the law, as if they had only a kind of sownature, and the only way to keep them out of the mire is to drive them back with sticks. The truth is that though the flesh is still within the believer, he has also the new nature, and it is with *that* that God identifies him. He has the Spirit of Christ to lead him, and hence he may be safely put under grace; for after all it is grace that subdues.

If people quarrel with this, their quarrel is with the scripture quoted at first.

“Sin shall not have dominion over you:

for ye are not under the law, but under grace "
(Rom. VI. 14).

Unconverted men may attempt to use grace as a cloak for wickedness. What truth is there which has not been abused by evil men ?

Does Scripture indicate how grace helps the believer in order so that he may please God ?

It does. Titus II. 11-15 supplies the answer. In Christianity grace not only saves but teaches, and what an effective teacher it is ! It brings our hearts under the subduing influence of the love of God. We learn what is pleasing to Him as set forth in Jesus, and having the Spirit we begin to live the sober, righteous, and godly life.

There is a very great difference between a family of children kept in order by fear of the birch upon misbehaviour and those who live in a home where love rules. Order *may* reign in the former, but it will end in a big explosion ere the children come to years. In the latter there is not only obedience, but a joyful response to the parent's desires, the fruit of responsive affection.

God rules His children on the love principle, and not on the birch-rod principle.

May we live our lives in the happy consciousness of this !

F. B. H.

THE LORD'S RETURN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THAT the presence and power of sin is the root cause of all the evils that afflict humanity few, we venture to think, would care to deny.

From the moment that our first parents were driven out of Eden, it has cast its withering blight over every phase of human existence. A great breach has come in between God and His creatures. By his sinful act man has put himself at a distance from his Creator ; with whom, while in innocence, he had enjoyed happy intercourse.

But the longsuffering of God *waited*, and man was allowed time to prove himself. Century after century rolled away, and the earth was filled with corruption and violence. Then God records His solemn judgment of man's condition in Genesis vi. 5, 12, 13. Later still the voice of God again breaks the silence, declaring, in plain and unmistakable language, that man, viewed under the eye of God, as a responsible being, was helpless, hopeless, and incorrigible (Psa. LIII. 2, 3 ; Rom. III. 10-23).

Into this scene of moral darkness and death God was pleased to enter, in the Person

of His beloved Son. But He who came to make known to fallen men the heart of a Saviour-God was despised and rejected, cast out and slain.

This crowning act of wickedness aggravated the seriousness of the situation, demonstrating to the full that man was utterly incapable of appreciating the goodness of God.

Dear reader, have you honestly, in the presence of God, owned all this as being true of *yourself*? You have sinned, and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. v. 23). Whether acknowledged or not, *it is true*; and sooner or later the matter must be faced; for "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

Thank God, there is every encouragement for those who own their condition and take their true place before Him. God's mighty love flows freely out to His sinful creatures. Not by the spotless life of Jesus—so perfect and so fragrant—could the righteous claims of God be met and sin removed from under His holy eye. Into the dust of death Christ went. He voluntarily laid down His life, to meet God's just demands. On the cross the waves and billows of judgment rolled over His soul, and there He said, "*It is finished.*" God was glorified in the death of Jesus; and, as the result of it, He is now in the place of power and exaltation—a Prince and a Saviour.

This is the *grand secret*, dear reader, explaining how and why God can be *just*, and the justifier of every one who believes in Jesus. And the glad tidings are now sounded forth throughout the wide creation, telling sinners of every clime and colour that there is forgiveness in the heart of God for *all*. Grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. v. 21). What a foundation for our souls to rest upon!

And He who was once on the cross as the Sin-bearer is COMING AGAIN to receive to Himself all who have put their trust in Him.

They shall exchange this sin and sorrow-stricken world for a home of eternal bliss with Christ. They shall bid farewell to pain, affliction, trials. Every form of pressure that makes the heart groan and the tears flow shall end. Then throughout the ages of eternity they will join in the hallelujahs of the redeemed, and celebrate the praises of Him who alone is worthy.

And, reader, He may come at any moment. Are *you* ready for that great event? Ere another sun rises the assembling shout of the Lord Jesus may be heard, and the myriads who have trusted Him will answer to His welcome call. The dead will be raised, and the living changed, and all caught up to meet the Lord in the air

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(1 Thess. IV. 15-17). Not a hoof was left behind in Egypt when Jehovah carried His people in triumph through the Red Sea, on their way to the Promised Land. *Not a single believer in Jesus* will be left behind when He comes for His own.

What about those who have turned a deaf ear to the Gospel message, who have slighted the call of God, and the tender pleadings of the once-crucified, but now risen and glorified, Saviour?

What about those who pass Time's boundary-line, having *heard* and *rejected* the Gospel, and that glorious Person who is the subject matter of it (Rom. I. 1-3)? They will have to face God's holy judgment. What shall be their end? "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. XX. 15). Nothing can add to the solemnity of these words. They warn us not to trifle with matters so awfully momentous.

God has been pleased to draw aside the veil of the future and portray for us, in language which cannot be mistaken, the miseries of a *lost soul*, as well as the blessedness of a man who had found favour with God (Luke XVI.). Many who wear the outward garb of Christianity will be *left behind* when Christ comes (Luke XIII. 26; Rev. III. 14-16). There are those who tell us of a "larger hope," and who ridicule the old-fashioned

story of salvation through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. They laugh at the "antiquated idea" that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 9), although it has been the rock upon which thousands have found a sure footing for eternity. Let none of us be deceived by the specious reasoning of clever men—too clever by half—who have turned their backs upon God, and flung overboard the revelation He has given of Himself. Their plausible, fine-spun theories are doomed to be driven away like chaff before the wind.

Meanwhile, let us plead with you, reader, if still unsaved. Whatever your past history may have been, however deep in sin and degradation you may have sunk, there is compassion in the heart of God towards you.

Now, while you read this paper, while still in possession of your faculties, while the longsuffering of God lingers, and before "the Master of the house rises up and shuts to the door," flee to the outstretched arms of Him who never turned a deaf ear to the cry of the needy. Let your soul be subdued as you contemplate a love that has no parallel, and let your lips confess Him as all your salvation and all your joy.

G. F. E.

JUDE'S NEEDFUL EXHORTATION.

IT is evident that the disposition of the Apostle Jude was to enlarge upon that subject most congenial to an apostle's heart, viz. "The common salvation." And it would have been of the greatest interest and profit to have had Jude's ministry on so deep and far-reaching a subject. But that was not the immediate mind of the Spirit. So instead of enlarging on the common salvation he is led to describe the present and prospective dangers threatening them "that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called." For there were dangers impending that called for words of warning, of exhortation, and of comfort.

With knowledge and prescience beyond the range of apostolic conception, the Lord bids Jude take up his pen to expose what should yet blossom out into the apostasy of the last days.

This Satanic superstructure, slowly developing through the centuries, was not without well-defined foundations. These the Apostle exposes in verse 4, viz. the "turning of the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord

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Jesus Christ"—fitting foundations assuredly for an apostate superstructure, deliberately laid by "certain men crept in unawares."

But if the active onward movement of apostasy needs foundations on which to build, so foundations are essential for the saints on which to build themselves up: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." The Apostle is not speaking of *receptive* faith, by means of which the Gospel and truth generally are received. That would be a poor foundation indeed, ever varying and precarious, upon which to build. It is rather the *subject-matter* of faith, "the faith once delivered to the saints," securely laid as unshakable foundations in the soul.

To three great fundamental truths of "the common salvation" the Apostle immediately turns, namely, "the Holy Ghost"—"the love of God"—and "the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ." These he links with three vital and important exercises of the heart—"praying in the Holy Ghost"—"keeping, i.e. *continuing* in the love of God"—and "*looking* for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Doubtless the Apostle was divinely guided in the selection of these special truths as best adapted to the needs of the day of which he speaks.

The presence of the Holy Ghost, which is implied, is referred to first; for the power of

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God on behalf of His people in the day of sifting and testing, is, without doubt, of primary importance.

This power is, moreover, brought into exercise on behalf of God's people by means of prayer. If a spiritual stand is to be made against the subtle or violent assaults of apostate principles, believers, individually or collectively, must, in the consciousness of their own weakness, avail themselves of the power that alone can sustain them.

But, again, Jude exhorts, "keep yourselves in the love of God." That love has been revealed in all its infinite measurements in the Cross; the work of redemption bringing the heart into the circle of divine love. It is not a question here of *seeking* that abode, but of *abiding* or *continuing* there, in the soul's consciousness. Environed by such love, the believer becomes speedily conscious of its protective effect and the subtle approach of evil becomes powerless in its assault. His heart, too, is jealous lest the love of God, well known and enjoyed, should find occasion to grieve by any lapse from practical holiness or truth on his part. For the love that freely gave is a love that is easily grieved.

Once more the Apostle presses upon the saints the urgency of "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The mercy alluded to can be none other than that

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of the rapture—the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ—a bright prospect, illuminating the heart of the believer, as also of the Church. The rapture of Enoch before the cup of the then world's iniquity was full; the salvation of Noah, and the deliverance of Lot, testify that "God knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation"; while the promise to Philadelphia remains for the comfort of the Lord's people, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from [out of] the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. III. 10).

This expectant "mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" speaks of deliverance out of a scene where all the activities of moral death in corrupting energy are flooding the world, introducing into the scene to which eternal life properly belongs. Hence the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is said to be "unto eternal life."

How truly wonderful and blessed is the Lord's solicitude about His own! "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end." The darker the circumstances, the clearer His interest on their behalf. He charges Himself with every needed provision for their preservation or deliverance. Not the least feature of this divine concern lies in the fact that His *redeeming grace* is accom-

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panied by His *revealing grace*. He exposes beforehand the gathering avalanche of apostasy and discloses the lines of light intended to illuminate the believer's pathway through the deepening gloom.

But let it not be forgotten that these provisions call for exercises, apart from which they are unavailing. There must be "PRAYING in the Holy Ghost"; "CONTINUING in the love of God"; "LOOKING for the mercy." These neglected, the believer will, as a consequence, drift more or less with the surrounding current.

But there are three distinct features of this dark movement which stand out in lurid contrast to the triple divine foundations upon which the Christian is urged to build. "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, *having not the Spirit*." Instead of keeping themselves in the love of God, they "turn the grace of our God into *lasciviousness*"; while the prospective mercy of the coming of the Lord finds its contrast in the execution of *judgment* and reservation to *the blackness of darkness for ever*.

But there are certain victims of this day of dark departure from God and His Word, whose circumstances call for discriminating care. "Of some have compassion, making a difference"; simple souls, these may be, led astray by willing instruments of darkness,

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whose object and effort it is to inoculate by means of influence.

Again, there are those whose garments have, through subtle seductions, become "spotted by the flesh," and these call for rescue from the devouring fire. They are to be distinguished from those described as "clouds without water"; "raging waves of the sea"; "wandering stars," whose doom is irrevocably sealed.

Finally, the Apostle breaks out into a doxology of praise. Strange as such an outburst may seem under such circumstances, we can but attribute it to an indomitable faith in the supremacy of God over all the evil, and in His *present* power to keep. Hence he speaks of God's people being presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"—a joy peculiar to the Deliverer, and in proportion to the darkness, danger, and disaster out of which the redeemed have been delivered.

The last verse reads like the victorious shout of a conqueror ascribing victory, and celebrating the supremacy of Him who never abdicates, and to whom belong "glory and majesty, dominion and power, both *now* and ever."

M. C. G.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

INDIA.—We doubt whether you have taken sufficient pains to understand the views you are so anxious to correct in your *Leaves of Healing from the East*. Now we ourselves believe that the Lord Jesus—that great Shepherd of the sheep—will securely keep and bring to glory every one who has been given to Him by His Father. Are we therefore to be charged with saying, “No matter how a man lives—he may lie and cheat and break every commandment of the Decalogue, yet if he be one of Christ’s sheep he will get to heaven at last”? So far from sharing in such sentiments we detest and abhor them.

We believe that Christ’s sheep shall never perish, and that none shall pluck them out of His hand, because He Himself says so in John x. 28. No language could be more explicit, no terms more plainly declare the security of the flock of God. The means used for their continuous preservation until they reach the fair pastures of the Heavenly Land are found elsewhere. Here in John x. 27–30 the fact is stated, that is all—they shall never perish, nor shall any one catch them out of the hand of their omnipotent Redeemer. Now the Apostle Peter tells us that they are “kept by the power of God through faith.” The *power of God*, mark you! Can any wile or stratagem or force of Satan overcome the power of God? The same mighty hand that framed the vast universe and holds it compact together keeps and will keep every

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blood-bought one till all dangers are over and home is reached at last. But it is *through faith* that they are kept. With locks and keys, with bolts and bars, and armed force men guard and keep their treasures. God keeps His saints through faith—that faith which He will never suffer to utterly die down, however fiercely it may be assailed. “ I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ” (Luke xxii. 32).

Why should it be thought that the feet of God's saints are only kept in paths of holiness so long as they are under the influence of fear—the fear of forfeiting every spiritual blessing and of being lost for ever? No doubt the fear of consequences deters many men from committing crimes which otherwise they would commit without compunction. But is that the principle which makes the Christian shrink from sin? Is there no other? What should we say of a son whose only motive for pleasing his father was the fear of being disinherited and driven from his home at last? Love is immeasurably stronger than fear, and it is the love of Christ that constrains us not to live unto ourselves, but *unto Him* who died for us and rose again. At least so Paul says in 2 Corinthians v. 14, 15.

Nor is it by the fear of losing everything that God has given to us that our spiritual affections are developed and our character moulded after the image of Christ. It is by another process altogether. “ If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God ” (2 Cor. v. 17). The believer is set

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in a new sphere of blessedness, outside the region of sight and sense altogether. The Father is there, the Son is there, and there, too, are the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. It is with these that the Holy Spirit now engages the heart of the Christian and thus forms him into the likeness of his Lord.

And what is a Christian? Not simply a forgiven man. He has been born again—born of God. A new life has been imparted, divine life, which, like every other life, has its corresponding nature. Now it is the nature of this new life to love holiness and to hate sin. Besides this, the Christian has been sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1. 13)—sealed unto the day of redemption. His body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Will such a one run greedily after sin and wallow in it as a sow wallows in the mire? Will he say, “I know God is my Father, Christ my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit my guard and guide, and heaven my eternal home. Therefore—because I am sure of this—I may sin at pleasure, for nothing can pluck me out of Christ’s hand”? Will any believer ever speak thus? Never! There is not a Christian man upon earth who would not loathe such sentiments with all his heart.

It will not be needful to say more, as the subject is further dealt with in the “Bible Talk on Law and Grace” on an earlier page.

HOPING ON.—You do well to be on your guard against anything a “Millennial Dawnist” would say. Their denial of the deity of Christ, of His atoning work as the foundation of all our blessing,

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of the existence of soul apart from the body, and of the possibility of any one knowing whether he will be saved or lost till the resurrection and judgment-day brands their system as fundamentally false. *Beware of it!*

You ask, "How will the Church be taken away when the Lord comes?" The answer will be found in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. No words could possibly be plainer. "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who 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." This statement is simplicity itself. It needs no explanation. Let us then receive it in childlike faith.

We do not believe that the Church will be called upon to pass through "*The great tribulation.*" The coming of the Lord would cease to be an immediate hope if it were so. We should be looking for signs and omens of that distressful event, and the heart would be filled with fear. From that hour the Church will be kept as Revelation III. 10 distinctly states. Let not your mind be shaken as to this. And if tribulation for Christ's sake should ever come upon us as on saints of earlier days, we may be quite sure of being strengthened to go through it with joyfulness. The Lord ever stands by His people at such times, never leaving nor forsaking them. So be of good cheer. He who died for you ever lives to bring you safely through. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

SPEAKING IN TONGUES.

ONE of our readers, living in Costa Rica, has sent us a copy of *Pentecostal Testimony* and asked us to make some remarks on the teaching of that paper.

The burden of its pages seems to be that, when the Holy Spirit is given to the believer, the sure sign of his having received the Gift is that he begins to speak in other Tongues. If he does not so speak he may conclude that he has not yet received the Gift, though he may have the Holy Spirit dwelling with him. Here are the writer's words :—

“ It is wonderful how much the Holy Spirit dwelling in a man can do for and with him. Many have believed they had received the Holy Spirit, when in reality the Spirit was only dwelling with them, witnessing to their acceptance of God in Jesus Christ. . . . The blessed Spirit will bring great blessing and joy into the heart of the person who is separated unto God through the precious blood of Christ. But all this is not receiving the Holy Ghost.”

“ Speaking in Tongues is the Bible evidence ” that the Holy Ghost has really taken possession. And this is often accompanied, so it is said, by

great physical disturbance. This is how one describes it :—

‘ I knelt before God, pleading the promise of Jesus . . . then the Spirit fell on me and I was overcome by the mighty fulness of power and went down under it. For three hours He wrought wonderfully with me. My body was worked in sections, a section at a time, and finally I felt my lower jaw begin to quiver in a strange way. Then my throat began to enlarge and I felt my vocal organs being, as it were, drawn into a different shape. O how strange and wonderful it all was ! And last of all I felt my tongue begin to move and my lips began to produce strange sounds which did not originate in my mind, and in a few minutes He was speaking through me in other tongues.’ ”

Now what can be said to all this ? One passage of Scripture comes forcibly to mind, “ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ” (1 John iv. 1). How shall we try them in this particular case ? Surely by turning to the Word of God to see whether the gift of the Holy Spirit is always evidenced by “ speaking in Tongues,” as *Pentecostal Testimony* would have us believe.

The silence of Scripture is often strikingly significant. Now, as our readers well know, the Gospel of John is the Gospel which above all the rest speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Chapters xiv., xv., xvi. are full of it. It is indeed one of the great subjects the Lord

speaks to His disciples about in view of His own departure. When given, the Holy Spirit should abide with them for ever. His dwelling should not be with the world, for the world could not receive Him. With *them* and in *them* He would be (xiv. 17). Mark, in passing, that the stress is not on the words *with* and *in*, as if the latter were an advance on the former. The contrast is between the world and the disciples. The Spirit should be with and in *them*. The Holy Spirit, too, would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance whatsoever their Lord and Master had said (xiv. 26). He should also testify of Him as they themselves should bear their personal testimony (xv. 26). He should convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (xvi. 7-11). He would guide the disciples into all the truth. In one brief word, His great mission should be this, "*He shall glorify Me*" (xvi. 14). Now, to say the least, it is a little singular that no allusion should be made anywhere in these chapters to speaking in Tongues. Indeed, so far as the Gospel of John goes, we should know nothing of Tongues at all. It is everywhere silent about them.

Of course, Scripture does speak of Tongues. They are named among the various signs at the end of Mark. And they receive very occasional mention in the Acts. Power to speak with other Tongues did go hand in hand with the

coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In this we see both the wisdom and the grace of God, as also a blessed contrast to the confusion of Tongues at Babel. If God would have His testimony concerning Christ reach the ears of "devout men, out of every nation under heaven," who were at that time dwelling at Jerusalem, He could devise means to accomplish it. There is no mystery about the gift of Tongues here, no room for surmise as to the end for which they were given. Every man should hear in his own dialect the wonderful works of God. It is a bright and blessed intimation that God would have His glad tidings carried to the very ends of the earth (Acts II. 11).

But does Scripture countenance the belief that all who received the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal days spake with Tongues? We think not. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts II. 38). So said the Apostle Peter to the listening crowds. Three thousand responded to that appeal. That they received the gift of the Holy Ghost we may not doubt, but are we therefore to conclude that the three thousand spake in Tongues? There is not a syllable to lead to any such conclusion.

Think of that remarkable work of God in Samaria of which Philip the Evangelist was

the chosen instrument. "The people with one accord gave heed to the things which Philip spake." Many believed and were baptized, both men and women. "And there was great joy in that city." But when they eventually received the Holy Spirit was it evidenced by the gift of Tongues? There is no record of any such thing. Scripture is entirely silent (Acts VIII.).

It was otherwise at Cæsarea. Cornelius, "his kinsmen and near friends," heard with attentive ear the story the Apostle Peter had to tell. They heard it with the hearing of faith. And in doing so "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts x. 44). Nor could there be the least uncertainty about it, for those Gentile believers spake with Tongues and magnified God. The fact of their doing so is noted with the utmost precision. It was clear, undeniable evidence that to the Gentiles had been given the gift of the Spirit—that He had fallen on them as on the apostles at the beginning. And the reason why the reception of the Spirit was attended with this outward sign on this occasion is not hard to find. For when Peter returned to Jerusalem he was contended with for going to the house of men uncircumcised. In the eyes of the circumcision it was a breach of fellowship and an act that compromised the testimony. But Peter's answer was unanswerable. God had given unto

them, said he, the like gift as He did to the apostles at the first, and who was he that he should withstand God ? (Acts XI. 17). Had this sign been lacking the reality of the gift might have been questioned. It was impossible to doubt it now.

And so was it when the Apostle Paul laid hands on twelve disciples who had only been baptized with the baptism of John Baptist. They, too, in receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit " spake with tongues and prophesied " (Acts XIX.). But in this case, as in that of Cornelius, there was a reason why it should be so. It is the only instance, so far as we know, of the Holy Spirit being given by the imposition of *Paul's* hands. His apostleship was called in question (1 Cor. IX.), and God took care that among the proofs of it the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of *his* hands should not be wanting. In this, as in other respects, he was nothing behind the very chiefest apostles. But on this we need not enlarge. Other than these three instances there is none, in the whole of the Acts, to show that power to speak with Tongues accompanied the gift of the Holy Spirit, nor in any instance whatsoever do we see that it caused physical disturbance such as *Pentecostal Testimony* speaks of.

And when the Apostle Paul himself received the Holy Spirit there is nothing to lead us to suppose that he spake with Tongues (Acts IX.).

Among the gifts received for the work to which he was afterwards called Tongues had a place, it is certain. He reminds the Corinthians that he spake with Tongues more than they all, yet he is careful also to tell them that he would rather speak five words with his understanding, so that others might be taught, than ten thousand words in a Tongue (1 Cor. XIV. 19). This shows how little importance he attached to such a gift in comparison with other gifts that had the edifying of souls in view.

We believe the whole weight of Scripture is dead against the contention that "speaking in Tongues is the Bible evidence" of the reception of the Spirit, save in the special cases adduced. Ordinarily it was not so, and to look for such a sign now is to be diverted from the simplicity of the truth. No doubt, when the Holy Spirit is received, effects follow, but they are of another kind altogether and infinitely more precious.

What end, then, did the gift of Tongues serve? They were "for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Such are the Apostle's explicit words (1 Cor. XIV. 22). The richly gifted but carnal Corinthian saints were using Tongues for other and childish purposes. Paul chides them and beseeches them to be men in understanding. He forbids the use of Tongues unless an interpreter is present (1 Cor. XIV. 28), and exhorts

them to covet earnestly the *best* gifts—gifts that edify, not those which at their best only fill a subordinate place.

There are things in *Pentecostal Testimony* with which we heartily agree. It rightly distinguishes between being born of the Spirit and being sealed with the Spirit. The former is the work of the Spirit in a man who is in a state of nature and by which he is brought out of it, the latter is the Spirit's indwelling consequent upon *faith in Christ*. For there may be faith—and assuredly the new birth is not apart from faith—without that faith laying hold of Christ as the One who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. A man may, through grace, be led to see himself a guilty sinner, subject to the judgment of God, he may receive the witness of the Word as to his state and have yet to learn that in Christ and in His atoning work alone is found the answer to God's just demands and his own soul's deep need. But when faith casts her anchor there, then the Holy Spirit is immediately received. In believing *the gospel of our salvation* we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of all the glory yet to come (Eph. i. 13).

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. v. 22, 23).

THE NEW NATURE AND THE OLD.

A BIBLE TALK.

MANY Christians experience a good deal of difficulty in daily life as a result of having no clear understanding of this subject. They are conscious of a whole host of desires and emotions of a strangely conflicting nature. The Apostle James may ask the question, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" They, however, seem to have no difficulty in accomplishing something of this sort; for in thought, word, and action they find the strangest possible jumble of good and evil until the whole problem becomes most perplexing.

It is a great help to grasp the fact that the believer is possessed of two distinct natures, the new and the old, the one the source of every right desire, the other the source of only evil. A hen would be sorely distracted if set to mother a mixed brood of chickens and ducklings. Their natures are distinct, and hence their desires and behaviour are very opposite, but not more opposite than the two natures of which we speak. And many believers are like that hen!

When the Lord Jesus spoke to Nicodemus He insisted upon the necessity of being "born

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again"—“born of water and of the Spirit,” and He added, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John III. 6). Let us carefully consider these important words.

In the first place they plainly indicate the existence of two natures, each characterized by its source. “Flesh” is the name of the one, for it springs from the flesh; “spirit” the name of the other, for it springs from the Holy Spirit of God.

Then it is evident that we rightly speak of “flesh” as the *old* nature, for it belongs to us as coming into the world of Adam’s race by natural generation; “spirit” is the *new*, and it is ours, if born of the Spirit, in new birth.

Again, these words clearly distinguish between “spirit,” by which we mean the new nature, and “the Spirit,” that is, the Holy Spirit of God. The former is the direct product of His wonder-working power; and never does He indwell a person in whom He has not previously wrought in new birth, producing the new nature which is “spirit.” Still, it would be a great mistake to confound—as some are inclined to do—the new nature with the Holy Spirit who produces it.

When you were born again, then there was implanted in you by the Holy Spirit this new nature, which is spirit, and one of the first results of this was the inevitable clashing of

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this new nature with the old, which you inherited as a child of Adam. Both strive for the mastery, each pulling in a diametrically opposite direction, and until the secret of deliverance from the power of the flesh within is learned, the painful jumble of right and wrong is bound to continue.

In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans that painful experience is described for us. Carefully read it, noticing especially verses 14 to the end, and continuing your reading as far as chapter VIII. 4. Do you not see in it a good many features which tally with your experiences ?

In that chapter the speaker reaches one very important conclusion. " I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing " (v. 18). The flesh, then, is utterly and miserably bad, and God allows us to wade through the mire of bitter experiences that we may thoroughly learn this lesson. " The flesh profiteth *nothing*," are the Saviour's own words (John VI. 63). " They that are in the flesh *cannot* please God," are words that corroborate the story (Rom. VIII. 8). This being so, out of it nothing but evil will come.

Flesh may be left uncared-for and untrained, it then becomes heathen, savage, and possibly even cannibal flesh. It may be highly refined and educated, it is now curbed, civilized, christianized flesh, but *it is flesh*, for that

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which is born of the flesh is flesh, no matter what you do with it. And in it—high-class flesh though it be—*no good dwells*.

What can you do with a nature like that, a nature which is simply the vehicle of sin, in which sin dwells and works? Let us answer that question by asking another. What has God done with it? what is His remedy?

Romans VIII. 3 supplies the answer: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

The law from the beginning strongly censured the flesh, but it could neither curb it nor control it so that we might be delivered from its power. But what the law could not do God has done. In the cross of Christ He judicially condemned it, "condemned sin in the flesh," i.e. He condemned it in the very root and essence of its nature.

Romans VIII. 4 gives the practical result of this. The cross being the condemnation of the old nature in the root of its being, we have received the Holy Spirit to be the power of the new nature, so that walking in the Spirit we fulfil all the righteous requirements of the law, though no longer under it as our rule of life.

God then has *condemned*, in the cross of Christ, the flesh—the old nature. But what can we do with it? We can thankfully accept

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what God has done and treat it henceforward as a condemned thing ourselves. The Apostle Paul indicates this when he says, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have NO CONFIDENCE in the flesh" (Phil. III. 3).

When one reads this scripture, commencing so positively with the words "We are," one is inclined to ask, "*Are we?*" *Am I* so thoroughly alive to the *true character* of the flesh—no good thing dwelling in it, on the one hand, and *God's condemnation* of it in the cross, on the other—that I have *no confidence* in it, even in its fairest forms? Depend upon it, here lies the crux of the whole matter. That point is not easily reached. Many a painful experience is passed through, many a heart-breaking failure is known, as again and again the flesh, like a Samson refusing to be bound, snaps the seven green withs of pious and prayerful efforts and the new ropes—so carefully woven—of good resolutions. But when once it really is reached the battle is well-nigh over.

The shattering of our confidence in the flesh is largely the shattering of the flesh's power over us. Then at once we look away from ourselves and our most earnest efforts for a Deliverer, and find Him in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has taken possession of us by His Spirit. The Spirit is the power; He not only checkmates the activity of the old nature (see Gal. v. 16), but

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energizes, expands, and controls the new (see Rom. VIII. 2, 4, 5, and 10).

Bear in mind that the new nature has no power *in itself*. Romans VII shows that. The new nature in itself gives aspirations and desires which are right and beautiful, but for power to fulfil them there must be this practical submission to Christ and His Spirit—this walking in the Spirit, which is largely the result of coming into real and heartfelt agreement with God's condemnation of the old nature in the Cross of Christ.

Some people are good-natured and religious almost from birth. Do such need the new nature of which you speak?

Most certainly they do. The very man to whom the Lord Jesus uttered those memorable words, "Ye MUST be born again," was exactly of that type. Morally, socially, and religiously everything was in his favour, yet the Lord met him point-blank, not only with an abstract proposition (John III. 3), but with the same truth in concrete and pointedly personal form. YE must be born again (v. 7).

That settles it. After all, good-natured and religious flesh is only FLESH, and will not do for God.

There is a widespread idea that everybody has some spark of good in him, and that it only needs developing by prayer and self-control. Is this scriptural?

It is very *unscriptural*, indeed it is *anti-scriptural*. Many passages might be cited, but I shall content myself with two.

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The first shall be *negative* evidence. In Romans III. 9-19, we have given us a full-length portrait of mankind in its moral features. The details are culled by the Apostle Paul from Old Testament Scriptures. First come sweeping general statements (*vv.* 10-12), then incisive particular ones in hideous detail (*vv.* 13-18), and not one word is breathed as to this latent spark of good. How unjust, how untruthful, if really, after all, it be there! The God who cannot lie describes His creatures and does not mention this supposed spark of good. The inference is obvious. *It is not there.*

The positive evidence runs like this:—

“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only* EVIL continually” (Gen. VI. 5).

The Apostle Paul puts the same truth in different words when he says: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth *no good thing*” (Rom. VII. 18)—not even *one* spark of good.

For those who believe the Bible such evidence is quite conclusive. Nothing more remains to be said.

Does a person get rid of the old at new birth, or are we to understand that a converted person has both the old and the new within him?

The old nature is not eradicated at new birth, else we should not read: “If we say that we

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have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us " (1 John I. 8).

Neither is it changed into the new nature. New birth is not like the philosopher's stone, which was fabled to turn every object it touched into fine gold. John III. 6, already quoted, proves this.

Both natures are *in* the believer just as both natures are in that standard fruit tree in the garden. Indeed, the process of "grafting" not inaptly illustrates the matter in hand, for by it the wild stock into which the choice and cultivated apple shoot is inserted is condemned. The knife is put to it and it is cut hard back for the process to take place. Further, instantly the graft is made the gardener no longer recognizes it as a wild stock, but calls it by the name of the apple variety he has grafted in.

So it is for us, both natures are there, yet God only recognizes the new, and we, having received the Holy Spirit, are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Rom. VIII. 9).

If the old nature is still there, surely we must do something. How should we treat it?

We are not, of course, to be insensible to its presence, nor unaffected by its activities in us, but at the same time no amount of human resolution or effort against it will avail us.

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Our wisdom is to fall into line with God's thoughts and to treat it as He does. Begin by recognizing that you are now identified with the new nature and entitled to disown the old. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. VII. 17). The new nature is your true individuality, not the old, just as the cultivated apple is the tree as soon as the graft is effective.

† This being so, your treatment of it is simple. The gardener keeps a sharp look-out on his newly grafted tree. If the old wild stock seeks to assert itself and throw up suckers from the roots, he ruthlessly cuts such suckers down as soon as they appear. So do you bring the Cross of Christ to bear like a sharp knife on the old nature and its sinful desires.

"Mortify therefore *your members which are upon the earth*" (Col. III. 3). The words I have emphasized answer pretty much to the suckers thrown up by the wild stock. What they are the remainder of verse 5 and also verses 8 and 9 of the same chapter specify. Mortify them—put them to death in detail.

For this you want spiritual energy, courage, purpose of heart, which in yourself you do not possess. Your only power is in looking simply to the Lord Jesus and placing yourself unreservedly in the hands of His Spirit.

"If ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live" (Rom. VIII. 13).

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Is it by a great act of our own will that we finally obtain the Spirit's power and overcome, or is it by yielding to God?

Let Scripture itself answer. "*Yield* yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. VI. 13).

"*Yield* your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. VI. 19).

"Being made free from sin, and become *servants* to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. VI. 22).

The idea that the necessary power is obtained by an act of our own will looks like a last desperate attempt to obtain a little credit for the flesh somewhere, instead of totally condemning it and giving God the glory.

Does the new nature in the believer ever reach such perfect growth as to render him quite proof against the desires of the old?

2 Corinthians XII shows very clearly that it does not. In that chapter we read that the Apostle Paul, privileged above all other Christians, was caught up into the third heaven—the immediate presence of God. After hearing there things so transporting that no human language could possibly express them, he was left to resume his ordinary life upon earth, and he tells us that God gave him from that point a "thorn in the flesh"—some special counter-

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balancing infirmity—*lest he should be exalted above measure*, through the abundance of the revelations.

Now, admittedly, Paul's Christianity was of a most advanced and extraordinary type, yet even so, and with a temporary sojourn in the third heaven thrown in, he was not in himself proof against that self-exaltation which is inherent in the old nature.

If he was not, neither are we.

Can you give any hints that will help us to distinguish practically between desires and promptings which spring from the old nature and those that spring from the new?

I cannot give you any that will enable you to dispense with God's Word and relieve you of the necessity of continually going to your knees in prayer with an exercised heart.

The Word of God it is which is "living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword." It alone can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12), and the throne of grace stands ever available that we may find grace for seasonable help (Heb. iv. 16). God's High Priest it is who graces that throne.

The Word of God and prayer, then, are absolutely necessary if we would distinguish and disentangle the thoughts and desires we find within.

Recognizing this, however, it may help us if we remember that just as the mariner's com-

pass is true to the north, so the new nature is true to God and the old nature true to self. All that which has Christ for its object is of the one, that which has self for its object of the other.

This being so, a thousand perplexing questions would be solved by asking, "What is the secret motive which actuates me in this? Christ-glorification or self-glorification. Which?"

F. B. H.

A PARABLE OF PROFESSION.

THE Bible abounds in parables. Jotham's fine parable of the trees electing a king to rule over them (Judges ix.), our Lord's three-fold parable in Luke xv., and many others, delight the mind with their vividness and simplicity, whilst their spiritual meaning instructs us in many ways.

Only yesterday I learned a lesson on such lines. We were striking a tent, at the close of a month's Gospel-work, and some one called my attention to two of the ornamental tops of the side poles. The paint on the one was faded, on the other fresh and good. The latter had had its place inside the tent—sheltered from the sun, the rain, and wind. The other had been exposed to all these,

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My friend said to me, "The weather would not affect a human being as it has affected these tops. It is the man who is always indoors that gets faded and sickly ; whereas the one who is out in all weathers, like the farmer, is fresh and ruddy."

I asked myself why this should be so. The answer resolved itself into one word—LIFE. In the painted pole-top there was no principle of life to enable it to withstand the elements ; in a living person there are latent powers of resistance.

It is just the difference between reality and profession. A living fish must swim against the stream ; a dead one floats with it.

The elements beat upon godly King Hezekiah. The storm broke upon him fiercely when Sennacherib, King of Assyria, took all his fenced cities, and Hezekiah had to strip even the gold from the pillars in God's temple, melt down the silver found in it, and empty his own house of all its treasures in order to buy off the invader.

Nor did he succeed with such tremendous sacrifice, for Sennacherib sent three of his generals with a mighty host to attack the capital itself. With proud and bitter taunts and shameless insolence they threatened Jerusalem and demanded its surrender. Hezekiah rent his clothes, covered himself with sack-cloth, and went into the house of the Lord to

pray. He was heard. The angel of the Lord visited the Assyrian camp that night, and with his breath slew 185,000 of them. The enemy was silenced and his power broken.

And still the elements beat upon poor Hezekiah. "Death's threatening wave" laid him low. In answer to prayer he was raised up again. In response to the raging of the elements, in answer to the discipline he said: "What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men *live*, and in all these things is the *life* of my spirit: so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live . . . the *living*, the *living*, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day" (Isa. xxxviii.). Doubtless he referred to physical life, but there is a spiritual interpretation, which I believe is the *essential* meaning in the mind of the Spirit.

Unlike King Hezekiah, the mere lifeless professor can only maintain his show when shielded from the elements. He is a sheltered plant. He cannot stand the sun of persecution or the wind of affliction. And alas! there is every provision made for such. Both Ritualism and Rationalism—each resulting in a worldly religion, in which the persecution of the Cross has ceased—affords covering ground for the lifeless.

It is said that a youth, who was covered with

gold-leaf and took part in a religious procession in an Italian town, died, in consequence of the adornment closing up the pores of his skin, and hindering the activity of healthy *life*. It is the same with Ritualism. It covers the Cross with gold or silver and studs it with precious stones, and calls it the crucifix. *Life* is smothered under forms. The Cross is connected with life and with the rough blasts of persecution ; the crucifix becomes the emblem of a showy and fashionable religion. It may look very pious for a person, adorned with costly laces and jewellery, to wear a beautiful crucifix, but there is no cross in that. Marble reredos, altar, vestments, alb, stole, incense, the majestic peals of the organ may please eye and ear, but there is no cross in them.

Rationalism, on the other hand, is very ensnaring. It invites the intellect to work in the things of God, and, in result, the Cross of Christ is whittled away. His atonement becomes but a sublime example. Christ is reduced to the mere status of a man, and the Bible is torn to shreds ! There is no life in that—death, only death.

And at the best I cannot admire the brains that expend themselves in the things of God—either in the line of music and millinery, or in the direction of Higher Criticism.

More godliness lay behind a simple Geneva gown than in all the ecclesiastical adornments

of the present day, and still more godliness marked the Apostle Paul, who wore not even a Geneva gown, and who would have trembled at the innovation, as pointing in the direction of the surrender of vital truth, against which surrender he so strenuously protested in his letter to the Galatian assemblies.

Reader, is your religion meant for Sundays and high-days? Do you patronize religion only when she walks in silver slippers? Or do you take up the Cross daily and follow HIM, even though the sun of persecution should shine hot and the winds of adversity blow?

These are searching questions in these down-grade days, when men with backbone are the exception rather than the rule.

May your spiritual life be expressed by nothing short of a holy passion. It was said of Him prophetically, who is our Exemplar and Lord, "Thou *lovest* righteousness, and *hatest* wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Ps. XLV. 7). The path of reality and life is the path of gladness. The saints of God should know none other.

"Should we to gain the world's applause,
Or to escape its harmless frown,
Refuse to countenance Thy cause,
And make Thy people's lot our own,
What shame would fill us in that day,
When Thou Thy glory wilt display!"

A. J. P.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. T.—(i.) No one acting in the way you describe could be happily welcomed back without some acknowledgment of his wrong and proofs of his repentance. If these are furnished our course is plain. We are in no doubt as to God's attitude towards repentant ones. If they be returning saints, He says, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely" (Hosea iv. 4). If a repentant prodigal, then it is written, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke xv. 20). Such is the grace of God and on those lines His people should ever act.

(ii.) Quite apart from the serious matter that very many years ago divided those Christians of whom you speak, the present principles of the one differ from those of the other. In the one case they act more or less as independent companies of believers, and we fear, in result, there is in some quarters a laxity as to discipline both in reference to doctrine and moral conduct. But the question cannot well be discussed in these columns.

(iii.) It is to the saints of the present period that the right has been given to take the place of children of God. This is explicitly stated in John i. 12. The saints of Old Testament days did not enjoy this privilege, not even the noblest of them, for the very simple reason that the name of Father had not been revealed and, therefore, the corresponding relationship of children could not have been known. It was the Lord Jesus—the only

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begotten Son in the bosom of the Father—who first declared the Father's name and gave to as many as received Him the privilege of taking the place of children of God. And the Holy Spirit is given to such that the consciousness of this dear relationship might be theirs, and that the cry of "Abba, Father," might come from heart and lip. You will search in vain for anything answering to this in the Old Testament Scriptures. It was a thing unknown.

KEIGHLEY.—To deny the existence of a personal Devil and to say that the only Devil there is to fear is the evil within our own heart, is to show deplorable ignorance of what the Scriptures teach. When the Lord Jesus was tempted of the Devil forty days, as stated in Luke iv., does that mean that He was tempted of evil within? And when it is said that the Devil, having ended the temptation, "departed from Him for a season," does that mean the evil within departed from Him to return for a fresh assault later on? From such conclusions every one who loves his Saviour would turn away in horror. Very likely we often do attribute to the Devil what springs from the flesh within, but our doing so is no reason for our denying the existence of the Evil One. We shall do well to remember the forewarnings of 1 Timothy iv. 1, and of 2 Timothy iii. 13, and iv. 3, 4. Please read those passages so particularly adapted to the present time.

R. R.—Romans iv. 25.—It cannot be too clearly stated that the *grace* of God is the source of the believer's justification, the *blood* of Jesus the meritorious cause of it, *faith* the principle on which the blessing is made ours, and *good works* the evidence

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that the faith we have is a living thing and not a matter of empty words. Now justification is not alone the clearance of the believer from every sinful charge. It is that, and in some passages it goes no further. This is so in Acts XIII. 39, where it is said that all who believe are justified *from* all things from which there was no justification by the law of Moses, however scrupulously one might endeavour to fulfil it. But justification involves more than that, even a new standing before God in a *risen* Christ. Hence it is said in Romans IV. 25 that He was "raised again for our justification."

These words some have found it difficult to understand. They do not see how the resurrection of Christ can be for our justifying if the ground of it be in the *blood* of Christ alone. And surely this would be so were justification only the clearance from offences. Now it has been often said that the resurrection of Christ is the grand proof that the sins He bore have been put away for ever. It is so, but it also had in view a new standing before God in Him who has been raised. Israel, under the blood-sprinkled lintel, were sheltered, but the passing over the Red Sea set them in a new place—they were brought to God (Exod. XIX. 4). Such, we apprehend, is the force of the words, "raised again for our justification." If the blood of Christ has secured our discharge from every liability, the resurrection of Christ has gained for us a place with Him on the other side of His Cross and grave. Such is the justification of all who believe.

TRoubLED ONE.—We know of no balm for a troubled heart like the everlasting love of Christ ;

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no resting-place for a stricken conscience save the finished work of Calvary; no foundation for our faith to rest upon other than the Word of that God who cannot lie. And there you must rest. Think of those three things. *The love of Christ* undergoes no change. It is as warm and strong and steadfast towards you as it was in the brightest day you have ever known. It shines upon you like the sun in the heavens, ever pouring down its life-giving beams. *The finished work of Christ* remains in all its undiminished efficacy, by which our sins have been completely removed from under the eye of God, never to be remembered more. And lastly, *the Word of God* bears the clearest witness to these glorious facts. And yet all this yields you no comfort, no rest, no sunshine! Your heart is as dark and cold as a winter night! Why is this? The secret is here. You do not receive God's Word in the faith of a little child, who never questions what is said, but believes it without a doubt. Could we place upon this page the precious promises of God; could we set the Gospel before your eyes in all its divine suitability to meet every need, it would profit you nothing unless received as a message sent by God for your soul. The medicine must be taken if the dying man is to be cured, and the food must be eaten if the hunger is to be relieved. Think then of Christ, your Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, and just believe, as a child believes the word of his mother, all that the Scriptures say about Him. May God bless you. Let us hear from you again.

THE VISION OF GOD.

“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

ROM. III. 23.

NO one will feel any difficulty about the earlier part of this sentence. That all have sinned is a fact patent to everybody, and none is so ignorant as to deny it. Nor would the most self-satisfied person on earth refuse to place himself among the *all* who have sinned. But what about the latter clause, “And come short of the glory of God”? What do those words mean? To come short of one’s duty is easily understood, and to come short of the righteousness which the Ten Commandments call for is not a hard saying; but this coming short of the glory of God—what is that? Here is a new measuring line, a new standard. How may we find out what it is?

The vision of God which Isaiah saw, and which he describes in chapter vi. of his prophetic book, may help us. Let us look at it.

Mark the time of this vision. It was seen in the year of King Uzziah’s death. When monarchs die the great events of their reign pass afresh before the eyes of men and become, for a moment, the talk of every tongue. Uzziah was one of Judah’s great kings. His reign, extending over a period of fifty and two years, had been extremely prosperous. In

war, in diplomacy, and in the more peaceful pursuits of life he had been marvellously helped. But prosperity has its dangers, and there is a foe whose citadel is within the human heart, who sometimes succeeds in compassing our ruin when others fail. Uzziah found this out to his cost. In an evil day he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense there. He should have known better. But pride had made him bold. With a rashness soon to be avenged, he seized the censer with its burning incense and, in the sight of others, stalked into the Holy Place where none but the High Priest should go. Leprosy was the immediate result. He was a smitten man. He felt it, he knew it, and he hasted to get away. From that hour his sun set to rise no more. The affairs of his kingdom passed into other hands, and Uzziah ever after lived alone, cut off from the house of the Lord, an unclean man, and an awe-inspiring witness of the *holiness* of God, which he had forgotten and which we too much forget.

It was while all this stirred the memory of men that Isaiah saw this great vision. The Throne was there before which all earthly thrones were as nothing. And on it sat Jehovah, the King, the Lord of Hosts, whose glory filled the temple courts. And by its side stood the seraphims with their many wings, proclaiming with a loud voice the holi-

ness of God. No wonder the prophet was seized with fear and with a great trembling. "Woe is me! for I am undone," he cried aloud. "Unclean! unclean!" had been the cry of the leper in olden days, and such was Isaiah's cry now. Never before had he realized this to such a degree. Among men he may have had a name for piety and for zeal in the cause of God. But all such things were now as withered leaves. His righteousnesses were but filthy rags. He was measured by the glory of God, and he came short of it. "Unclean! undone!" was all his faltering lips could say.

We pause for a moment here to ask you, reader, whether a similar conviction has ever laid hold of your soul. Are you fit for the glory of God? Can you stand in His presence? This is now the measuring line. It is no question of your having done your duty among men, or met the requirements of Sinai's law, but are you fit for the glory of God, or do you come short of it? If Uzziah was cut off for entering into the "holy places made with hands," are you clean enough to enter into heaven itself and stand before God there?

Listen to what Job said—that good-living, kind, generous man, whose sympathy and helping hand had made many a widow's heart to sing for joy. He, too, found himself one day face to face with God, and what

did he then say? "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job XLII. 5, 6).

Have *you* ever been there? Has a similar cry ever broken from your heart and lip?

Let us be thankful that the vision tells of something more than the soul's conviction of its unfitness for the glory of God. If the Throne is there before which no sinful man can stand, the Altar is also there, so that the deep need—now laid bare—might be fully met. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Blessed words! by which the stricken heart of the prophet was set quite at rest.

And that altar speaks to us in these bright Gospel days of a nobler offering than Jewish courts had ever known, and of richer blood than was ever sprinkled on their mercy-seat. Theirs was the shadow, ours is the substance. Christ has come for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He has come to satisfy the claims of the Throne by taking our sins upon Himself and bearing the solemn consequences of His so doing. Oh, what a tale Calvary tells! Draw near, my soul, with un-

shod feet draw near, and see thy Saviour there ! Harken to His cry. It is the cry of One forsaken of God. And why was *He* forsaken ? He—the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, the mighty upholder of all things—who in manhood here on earth had never swerved from the path of obedience and trust, why should He be forsaken of God ? Little wonder if angels stood aghast. Ah ! there is nothing like the Cross—the one beacon of hope, the only refuge for the lost. There the holiness of God, His righteousness, His love, everything that makes His name glorious, shines out in fullest majesty and strength.

And shall not all *that* speak peace to our soul in a far deeper measure than Isaiah ever knew ? He has made peace by the blood of His cross. No toil or tears of ours, no sorrow, no penitence, no change of life, can add aught to the worth of His sacrifice. To add anything to it is to tarnish its glory. It stands alone—centre of two eternities—to which the wondering eyes of prophets and holy men of old looked on, and to which the still more wondering eyes of the ransomed of the Lord shall look back in the most distant ages yet to come. Not now the live coal from off the altar, as seen in Isaiah's vision, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son—it is this that cleanseth us from all sin.

And every believer in Him is cleansed. Whiter than snow is the soul that has fled to Him for refuge. We are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Such is the plain declaration of Colossians I. 12. *Made meet!* Not a work in process of accomplishment, to be made perfect when our soul plumes her wings to fly upwards to the land and home we love. We have been made meet *now*. The Father's welcome and kiss were followed by the best robe, the ring for the hand, and sandals for the feet. The prodigal son—a prodigal no longer—was thus made meet for his father's house. Is it not so with us? Indeed it is. In spirit, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we enter even now our Father's home and taste the joys which shall be ours eternally ere long.

Reader, do you know anything of this blessedness? Or are you standing afar off, trembling and afraid, not knowing whether *your* iniquity has been taken away? How shall you ever know it? Not by frames, feelings, and experiences, for these are but fluctuating things. The *Word of God* is infinitely better than these. There you may read that your sins and iniquities He will remember no more. You will find those words in Hebrews x. 17. How simple they are! They are the words of One who loves you and who cannot lie. Will you not believe Him?

When cleansed and at rest in the presence of God another voice broke upon the prophet's ear. It was the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then did he answer, "Here am I; send me." He was ready to carry the Lord's message, and only waited till he should be sent. Is it so with us? Our God has need of messengers. And He will send them out—some to civilized but pagan lands, others to the dark regions where the cannibal lives, some to the scorching plains of Africa, others to the ice-fields of the Eskimos, and some shall labour nearer home. But they go as *sent of Him*. And if no call should come to us to run on distant errands, if our lot is humble and our sphere but small, yet to us may be given sweet messages of rest for weary ones. In the economy of nature the city sparrow has her place no less than the golden eagle. God's messages are not always borne in words, and we can live Christ if we cannot preach Him. But this is the order—first the conviction, then the cleansing, afterwards the consecration to God's service. Thank God, every believer is made meet for the heavenly inheritance; may each seek grace to be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. II. 21). "Here am I, *send* me."

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

“ **H**AVE you any *fear* as to your place in heaven when you think of appearing before the judgment seat ? ”

“ None whatever,” replies the intelligent Christian. But let me give you my reasons.

I. Every believer is justified from all things and accounted righteous before God. No one can lay anything to his charge (Rom. VIII. 33). The righteousness in which he stands is of God. It is “ unto all and *upon all* them that believe ” (Rom. III. 22).

II. He is “ a new creature ” in Christ (2 Cor. v. 17), a vessel fashioned by God’s own hand—His workmanship (Eph. II. 10).

III. He is now “ accepted in the Beloved ” (Eph. I. 6). The favour which rests upon Christ rests also upon him.

IV. The precious blood of Christ’s atonement has completely met all the holy claims of God. Christ has borne the judgment due to our sins, so that it can be said, “ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ” (Rom. VIII. 1). *They* shall never come into judgment, for God’s Word cannot be broken, and Christ’s work can never lose its value.

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Moreover, "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). This is written in order that all fear might be taken away from us. The perfect love of God casts it out now, and that love will know no change. We shall have "boldness in the day of judgment," not fear.

But you say, "If the believer is made the righteousness of God in Christ, if he be God's workmanship, why does it say in 2 Corinthians v. 10, 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad'? Will not what he has *done* determine his future destiny?"

Our manifestation before the judgment seat is not to settle the question of our fitness for heaven, for we shall be in heaven before it takes place. But our works will be reviewed there, and if bad they will be burned; if good, we shall receive a reward in the then coming kingdom (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15).

"But," you reply, "I cannot even now quite understand why it says in Romans xiv. 12, 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God'; and in 2 Corinthians v., 'We must all appear,' or, as I understand the words to mean, be 'manifested before the judgment seat of Christ.'"

Let me, then, by way of illustration, try to

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show you how an account may be rendered, and also all work done be manifested.

Suppose a man to be on the verge of bankruptcy. A friend hastens to his relief, and asks what sum will be needed to clear him of his embarrassments. The unfortunate man cannot tell, for he has been afraid to search and see the true state of his affairs. All he knows is that he is ruined and has nothing wherewith to pay.

His friend then tells him he will liquidate every claim. Not only so, he will lodge in the bank a certain sum of money for him to trade with. On leaving he says, "I shall return later, and let you know how much I have paid for you, and then you must give me an account of the way you have used the sum now placed to your credit."

The man is relieved. He knows that all his debts, no matter what their amount, will be paid. But were you to call the next day and ask to what extent he is indebted to his friend, he would reply, "I cannot tell how far my friend's kindness has gone, for I do not know what my liabilities were."

Nor can any believer tell you the sum of his obligations which Christ met for him on the Cross. But he can say :—

*"All my sins, so great, so many,
In His blood are washed away,"*

though the number of them he knows not.

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After a while his friend returns and gives him a detailed account of the various amounts he has paid. Then for the first time he knows the extent of his indebtedness, and exclaims, "What a friend you have been to me ! I had no idea how greatly I was indebted to you until now. How can I ever thank you enough ? "

The judgment seat will reveal how much each believer owes to Christ. So McCheyne sang :—

" When I stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe."

And then we shall also know what God's ways of grace with us have been, and how His love was occupied with us all our pilgrim days. All will be brought into the light. We shall see how He preserved us in times of peril, sent a sorrow to save us from dangers to which our course was tending ; and how needful every bit of discipline was ! Many things that are now unexplained will then be understood. What an unfolding it will be ! In His light we shall see light. And in result we shall the more adore and render fuller praise to that blessed Saviour who loved us so greatly and cared for us so tenderly and patiently through all our earthly days.

Nor is it only to make us acquainted with

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the fullness of Christ's work, the greatness of His redeeming love, and all the Father's care and goodness in our earthly journey that we shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. Every action will then be weighed and the motive which prompted it.

To revert to our illustration. The friend who relieved the debtor of his anxieties left him money wherewith to trade in his absence. After giving him proof of the way he had cleared him, he minutely goes through each subsequent transaction. Sometimes he finds a thing to blame and sometimes to praise. That in which the debtor had done ill he suffers loss and receives no reward. But this does not alter his friend's kindness in paying his debts and providing money wherewith to trade. It is his "works" which are now in question, and rewards for faithful service.

The Christian's works are to be weighed in the balances. He is a responsible steward, and must render an account of the way he has traded with his Master's goods. He is *saved to serve*; he knows very well that he is *saved apart from works*, for it is "to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly," that righteousness is imputed (Rom. iv. 5). But having been saved, he labours to be *acceptable* to his Master. Labour shall have its reward. Nothing done to Him will be forgotten. Every cup of cold

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water given in His Name will be remembered, and every act appraised at its true value. Christ will confess his name to His Father, and say to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Let us ever remember we are both sons and servants. Saved by pure sovereign grace, we are responsible to the One who has saved us. His word is to instruct us in every difficulty, and His Spirit to strengthen us to do His will. In all things we are called to set aside our own will, and in every good work to do what is pleasing in God's sight.

The judgment seat will precede the glorious manifestation of Christ in His kingdom, and will determine the various rewards of that day. Some will wear crowns indicative of Christ's approval. Some will have honours and dignities, and be made rulers over ten cities. Some will have a white stone with a "new name" engraven thereon known only to the receiver (Rev. II. 17). But these rewards are not to be mixed up with our acceptance in Christ. For we are saved by grace—without works. *Rewards* depend upon the character of our labour. Paul thought so seriously of this matter that he tells us his whole life was spent in the light of the judgment seat. He always viewed his actions as they would appear in that day (2 Cor. v. 9).

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Good for us if we ask ourselves, "How will what I am now doing, or what I purpose to do, look in the light of the day when both motives and actions will be weighed?"

Let us, then, well understand that it is our *works*, and not our *persons*, our *service*, and not our *salvation*, which will be in question then. Scripture is emphatic. The *person* of the believer will not come into judgment. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John v. 24, R.V.).

This Scripture cannot be broken. Its statements are clear and plain. Let us seek to grasp the difference between the judgment of works and that of persons.

Suppose your son is also your servant, and he is to be paid according to the quantity and *quality* of his work. Should he fail to produce a carving of which you can approve he will suffer loss. You cannot reward him for poor work, but he still remains your son. Your love to him is unchanged, and his place in the family is the same. It is purely a question of his work, not of his person or relationship.

Keep this distinction in mind, and you will readily see that a person's *work* might be judged, and he receive the things done in his

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body, whether good or bad, without judging and condemning him personally.

We are now the children of God, and shall be sons in the Father's house before the judgment seat of Christ is set up. However our work may be appraised there, it will not alter—blessed be God!—either our place or relationship. But it will make a difference to the rewards we shall receive, and the place we shall have, in the coming kingdom. What Christian's heart does not value Christ's approval? Shall we not labour to be agreeable to Him, and live now so as to earn His commendation then? Let us do this not because we fear condemnation, but because of His great love to us. However misunderstood we may be by the world around us, or even by our fellow-Christians, if we are sure a thing is according to His will, let us do it, being confident that the day will declare it. So we need not be troubled about the verdict of "Man's day."

H. N.

"*Our* business is to treasure up the Word; it is the Spirit's to bring it forth out of the storehouse and to apply it. Have you renewed your strength to-day out of God's Word? How know you what fiery darts Satan may aim at you? Or what will be needed to quench them? One little text, held *as God's own Word*, is often a panoply against infidelity in the day of battle."

CLOUTS AND ROTTEN RAGS.

(JEREMIAH XXXVIII. 1-13 ; XXXIX. 15-18.)

IT is an affecting thought that God takes notice of the smallest acts of kindness done to any saint or servant of His ; and especially if he be suffering for faithfulness to his Master. However trivial, He observes them ; and that we might know this the Holy Spirit has recorded the kindly deed of Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian slave.

Jeremiah the prophet was in reproach. He had faithfully warned Zedekiah that there was no escape from the judgment that was coming upon him and upon his people on account of their evil deeds. The Chaldeans might depart from Jerusalem, but they should assuredly return and take the city and burn it with fire. At this saying the princes were wroth, and they urged the king to put Jeremiah to death. "Then they took Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison : and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire : so Jeremiah sunk in the mire."

What a terrible state of things ! "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." So said David in 2 Samuel xxiii. 3. But Zedekiah, through fear of man, handed over Jeremiah—God's faithful witness

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—to these wicked men, who cast him into this low dungeon, there to die a lingering death ! And no one had courage to protest against this wicked deed.

Poor Jeremiah ! How his heart must have sunk as he himself sank in the mire. Naturally he would ask, Will Jehovah leave me here to die ? Never ! For though no one was found among his own people to plead for his deliverance, yet God would raise up somebody to do it. And so He did. For “ when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon ; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin ; Ebed-melech went forth out of the king’s house, and spake to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon ; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is : for there is no more bread in the city.”

Courageous man ! And his action is all the more to be admired, for he knew that the king was more guilty than the princes in the matter. No doubt, if any one had seen Ebed-melech wending his way to the king just then, and had known his mission, he would have considered it the height of folly. Unbelief would think so, and be ready to predict that Ebed-melech would soon be sharing Jere-

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miah's fate. But unbelief always leaves God out of its calculations. Faith knows that "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord . . . He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. XXI. 1).

And what was the result of this bold but happy mission? Was it doomed to fail, or to achieve a brilliant success? Listen. "Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die."

How these words must have gladdened the heart of Ebed-melech! How he would hasten to call those thirty men, who were to help draw Jeremiah up out of the dungeon!

And now comes the touching part of the narrative. Ebed-melech remembered that when the princes cast Jeremiah into his deadly prison they did not do it gently. "They let him down with cords." What cared they that the prophet's arms were cut and bruised? Their cords were the cords of hatred. Other cords must be used now. "So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence *old cast clouts* and *old rotten rags*, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under

thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon." They drew him up not with cords of hatred now, but with *cords of love*.

And how did that love show itself? one may ask. In "old cast clouts and old rotten rags"! True, there is not much to talk about in these. "*They did not cost much,*" perhaps some cold and cynical observer may remark. They *cost* nothing. In themselves they were utterly worthless; but they *expressed* a great deal. In these clouts and rotten rags the loving care of the heart of God for His poor suffering servant showed itself; while the tender heart of Ebed-melech the Ethiopian was the vehicle of its display. This is morally grand, indeed!

Beloved, has the tender love of God ever reached any of His servants through *you*? "Oh!" you say, "I have nothing." What! Not a few "old cast clouts and old rotten rags"? Then you must be poor indeed.

But it is not so much a question of giving or of doing, but of *the way* we give or do. Ebed-melech could have drawn up Jeremiah out of that dungeon with as little feeling as men haul up a ship's cargo out of the hold. But he drew him up just as Jehovah would draw up one of His poor wounded lambs—with the "*cords of love*."

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Little did Ebed-melech think, when he went into the king's house, and fetched from under the treasury those "old cast clouts and old rotten rags," that the Spirit of God would give them a place in the Holy Scriptures. Little did he know that twenty-five centuries after the people of God all over the world would be encouraged by the mention thereof to follow in his steps, and do what they could for the comfort and cheer of God's beloved servants.

It is sweet to see that the Lord did not forget Ebed-melech's loving act. "The word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxix. 16-18).

Here was Ebed-melech's reward for his service of love towards the Lord's prophet. What he feared most he should be saved

from ; and what he valued more than anything else, even his life, should be preserved.

And what was the secret of Ebed-melech's labour of love ? Faith. Faith in the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. " Because thou hast put thy trust in ME." His was a *faith* which worked by *love* (Gal. v. 6). Faith and love always go together (see Eph. i. 15 ; Col. i. 4 ; 1 Thess. i. 3). And " love to the saints " is one of the evidences of salvation ; as the Apostle wrote to the Hebrews after warning them of the danger of apostatizing : " But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of *you*, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister " (Heb. vi. 9, 10).

It is solemnly true that one may have faith so as to remove mountains, but if he has not love he is nothing. He may be great in his own eyes and in those of others ; but in the sight of God he is " NOTHING " (1 Cor. XIII.). But if, as the fruit of *love*, we can only bring a few " old cast clouts and rotten rags " wherewith to relieve the sufferings of a saint or servant of God, *He* will not forget it. What a God is ours !

" Ebed-melech " means " the king's servant." And a true servant of the King was

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he. He was a servant of Jehovah—the King of kings. May we seek to be servants of the King also, “not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God *from the heart*” (Eph. vi. 6), even though our service be but the service of “old cast clouts and old rotten rags.”

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the *least* of these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME” (Matt. xxv. 40).

T. C. M.

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R. M.—The doctrine of sinless perfection does not commend itself to us, for we have neither found it in the Scriptures nor seen it displayed in the life of any person we know. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive *ourselves*,” says the Apostle John—it is not likely that we deceive anybody else—“and,” he adds, “the truth is not in us.” And such is indeed the case.

But if you ever find this sinless perfection in yourself and then say, “*Now* I know I am saved and shall see the Lord, because I have become so holy,” you will be only building your house on the sinking sand. A subtle “sinless” self will have taken the place of Christ and of His finished work, and your confidence will rest on fancied attainments and not on the Word of the living God. This would be a most dangerous deceit.

You may answer, “Does not Scripture say that without holiness no man shall see the Lord?”

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Yes, it does say so in Hebrews XII. 14. We shall not stop to inquire whether to "see the Lord" refers to the soul seeing Him now in spiritual vision by the power of the Holy Spirit, or seeing Him by and by in heavenly glory. But if a man says that he is a Christian and yet lives an unholy life, we stand in doubt of him, and fear that he will neither see the Lord now nor in days to come unless he repent. If he would reach heaven, he must follow the road that leads there. "The way of holiness" is that road, and there the redeemed shall walk (Isaiah xxxv. 8, 9).

But the beginning of all holiness lies in the New Birth. The believer is born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. He is born of the Spirit, and the seed of God abides in him. Nor is that all—the Holy Spirit is given unto him, and becomes the power of this new life, awakening the spiritual affections suited to the relationship in which he has been set and forming him after Christ. Does, then, the New Birth and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit do away with the inward principle of sin? By no means. Hence it is written, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. v. 17). How could this be if "the flesh" were done away? The conflict would cease, for there would be no foe to fight. Does "the flesh" become improved by the Spirit's indwelling? Not in the least. It remains as bad as ever, for it is incurably evil, and its works are manifest. Of these the Apostle gives a list in Galatians v. 19–21. But if we walk in the Spirit, then we do not fulfil the desires of the flesh. It is kept in check, and no longer rages

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like a burning fever in our bones. And the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"—such are the things that now enter into the believer's life.

As to your second question, we can only say that God's Word is to be your guide in that as in all else. Be content to be what God has made you, and do not aim to be anything more. Be a simple Christian, one of God's children, a member of Christ. There is no other membership that Scripture speaks of. There is *one* body, and Christ alone is the Head of it. If you are a member of *that*, is it not enough? Walk according to that rule. You will find others who seek to do this. Read 2 Timothy ii. 22 and keep company with these. Cherish fervent affection for *all* saints—love them because they belong to Christ, because He loves them and has laid down His life for their sakes. If you cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, and seek to be true to your heavenly calling, you may find yourself in a narrow path, but it will be a very happy one. Only see to it that you have nothing less before your soul than the whole Church of God upon earth. Love that Church, so dear to Christ, love every member of it. Pray much for the Church of God—it is in a very low state—and if you can serve it in any way, the love of Christ constraining, happy will you be.

LIVERPOOL.—We believe, as surely as you do, that 1 John i. 7 means exactly what it says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." But we spoke of it as "*an abstract statement*,"

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and you now ask that this should be explained. We will explain it presently. Only allow us first to say that our object in speaking of it thus was to guard against a prevailing error founded on a misunderstanding of the passage. For example : we were reading lately a conference address given in Ireland by one well known in evangelical circles, in which the speaker said he had begun to read this very text in quite a new way. He read it now, so he said, as teaching us that the blood of Jesus was cleansing us from sin every day. Now we venture humbly to submit that such is not its true meaning. *Judicial* cleansing, it is true, is always by the atoning blood (Rom. v. 9). *Does, then, the believer in Christ require to be judicially cleansed from his guilt every day?* Is he daily sliding back into the guilty sinner's place and daily needing to be lifted out of it and justified afresh? For what else is judicial cleansing but that just act of God in absolving us from all our offences and setting us in divine righteousness before His face? And there is more. Boldness to enter into the Holiest—into the immediate presence of God—is also ours by “the blood of Jesus.” This is the great subject of Hebrews x. We draw near. Who were they who, in olden time, had the right to enter into “the holy places made with hands”? Only the priests—the common people stood afar off. But now the veil is rent and the way into the courts of the Heavenly Sanctuary is thrown open. Who can enter there? God's priests can go in. The blood of Jesus gives them the right to enter. Now, all believers belong to the holy priesthood, and all therefore may draw nigh. The blood of the great

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Sacrifice is their title. *Is this title forfeited and regained every day?* Now two things are needed to fit us for the Holiest. They are named in verse 22. The heart must be "sprinkled from an evil conscience" and the body "washed with pure water." What frees us from the first? The blood of Jesus. For how long? Let Scripture answer: "By one offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified." Does a work done for ever need to be done over again every day? Such a theory overthrows the main teaching of this precious and important chapter. And how is the second accomplished? By the "pure water" of the Word by which we are born again. Thus, having a new life and nature—for that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—and our conscience purged once for all, we draw near, as God's priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1. 5).

But what if we fail, and who does not? What if communion with God is broken and the soul is cast down? Is not the remedy, you may ask, to go again to God and beseech Him to cleanse us once more by the blood of Jesus? To go to God at once is certainly right, as also to confess our sin to Him with such sorrow and repentance that our failure calls for. And if we do so "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9). But *this cleansing is not judicial*. It is moral cleansing effected by "the washing of water by the word." See Ephesians v. 26. In short, it is the soul's restoration to fellowship with God, and not a fresh justification, not a fresh purgation of the conscience by the blood

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of Christ. It is of great importance to distinguish between these two things.

So, then, 1 John I. 7 is "*an abstract statement*" and you want to know what that means. To explain. We say fishes swim, birds fly, men walk. In the nature of things they do so. Well, these are abstract statements. So we say the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. It is the peculiar and exclusive virtue of the blood of Jesus to do this. In speaking thus we do not say the blood is cleansing, not that it has cleansed, we only state what it does. We trust this explanation will make the meaning plain; if not, write again.

G. H. A.—Acts XIX. 7.—We presume that when "the disciples came together to break bread" on the first day of the week they came together for that specific object. Had we met them at the door of the house where they were wont to assemble and asked, "Why do you come here to-day?" the answer would have been "To break bread—to take the Lord's Supper together—we who know and love His Name." And if that is the object that still rallies us, surely the Holy Spirit in His leading will not divert us from it. Any lengthened ministry of the Word before the breaking of bread would be, we think, out of place unless under rare and very exceptional circumstances. The saints—at peace with God, assured of their standing in His cloudless favour and with hearts abundantly satisfied—come together to remember the One who loved them even unto death. They come, not with empty baskets (Deut. XXVI.), nor with burdened hearts anxious to pour out their griefs and cares before a Throne of Grace. Such feelings and senti-

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ments are suited to meetings for prayer. Nor do they come to get a blessing, though they may be richly blessed. They come together to "break bread" and to have heart and thought engaged with their precious Saviour in His death. And when such is the case we believe His death will be the main theme and will give tone and colour to their worship. When the Lord's Supper is over the meeting may assume a somewhat different character. The worship of the Father may be more prominent, and if a word of edification, exhortation and comfort be given by the Spirit, there is opportunity for it to be spoken. But we make even these general observations with fear and trembling lest it should be supposed that we were laying down rules to be followed. Nothing is further from our thoughts. We believe in the guidance of the Holy Ghost. And we profoundly dread anything unreal and untrue. Still, our ways in Assembly should be in wisdom and spiritual understanding. We fervently desire that the worship offered at such times should be of a richer colour and of a more elevated kind. It is often lamentably low. But this end is not to be achieved by theories, however perfect. It is the spiritual state of the worshippers that gives character to their praises. Anything that will enrich their inner life and lead them into deeper and closer communion with God will necessarily affect for the better the worship they unitedly offer in Assembly. Let us labour and pray for this. These remarks, of course, more particularly apply to those assemblies where the principles of 1 Corinthians XIV are acknowledged.

A BIBLE TALK ON “BLOOD” AND “WATER.”

IT is an historic fact recorded by the Apostle John (xix. 34) that a soldier with a spear pierced the side of the dead Christ, and “forthwith came thereout blood and water.” From the solemn way in which the Apostle pauses to attest this fact as a personal eye-witness (see verse 35) we might naturally conclude that he attached some very special importance to it, even if no further reference to it were made.

We are not, however, left to surmise, as in his first Epistle the same Apostle returns to the subject and supplements the historic *record* of his Gospel with instruction as to the *bearing* of the fact. He says, “This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood” (v. 6). And further, in verse 8 he speaks of the Spirit and the water and the blood as the three witnesses to the Son of God.

The meaning of these words is not by any means apparent at first sight. Two things, however, do lie upon the surface.

1. Both blood and water are connected with the DEATH of Christ.

2. Though connected they are distinct, so distinct that they can be cited separately as witnesses. They must, therefore, be carefully *distinguished* in our thoughts.

We find in the Scriptures that *cleansing* is connected with both blood and water, e.g. :—

“ The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin ” (1 John i. 7).

“ That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word ” (Eph. v. 26).

Now let us seek to rightly distinguish between the two cleansings referred to. Speaking in a broad sense, we may say that they connect themselves with the two great effects of sin, viz. its guilt and its defiling power.

The Blood sets before us the death of Christ in atonement for our sins, thus cancelling our guilt and bringing us forgiveness. We are thereby cleansed judicially.

The water indicates the same death, but rather as that by which our sinful state has been dealt with in judgment and ended, so as to deliver us from the old condition and associations of life in which once we lived. Thereby we are cleansed morally and the power of sin over us is broken.

Toplady was surely right when he sang :—

“ Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

The virtue and power of the blood of Christ are set before us in Hebrews ix and x ; indeed, the efficacy of that Blood in contrast with the inefficacy of the blood of bulls and of goats is the great theme of those chapters. We find there :—

1. The Blood of Christ purges, or cleanses the sinner's conscience from dead works to serve the living God (ix. 14).

2. It has removed the transgressions of saints of old which had been for centuries accumulating under the first Covenant, i.e. the Law (ix. 15).

3. It has ratified a new covenant of grace (ix. 15–18).

4. It has removed the believer's sins and laid the basis for the putting away of sin in its totality (ix. 22 and 26).

5. It has so completely done so for faith that ONCE purged, the believer's conscience is cleared for ever so far as the judicial question of his sins is concerned (x. 2).

6. It therefore gives the believer boldness to enter into the very presence of God (x. 19).

7. It has once and for ever sanctified—set apart—the believer for God (x. 10 and 29).

Bear in mind that the great subject here is the believer's access to God in virtue of the blood of Christ. His judicial clearance is perfect by that one offering, and never needs to be repeated. Hence the word which

characterizes these chapters is "one," "once" (see IX. 12, 26, 28; X. 2, 10, 12, 14). Seven times over it is repeated, lest we should overlook the sufficiency and the singular glory that is connected with the precious blood of Christ.

But though judicial cleansing by Blood is the great theme of these chapters, the need for moral cleansing is not forgotten. We draw near to God having not only "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," but "our bodies washed with pure water" (X. 22). This is doubtless an allusion to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office recorded in Exodus XXIX. They were washed with water (*v.* 4) as well as sprinkled with blood (*v.* 20). They had the shadow, we have the substance—THE DEATH OF CHRIST. It acts in both directions, as BLOOD cleansing us judicially and giving us a perfect standing before God, as WATER cleansing us morally, by cutting us off from the old life in which once we lived, and bringing us into the new.

In the very nature of things this moral cleansing by water needs to be kept up; the idea of repetition is therefore appropriate enough here. We find it if we refer to the type. Aaron and his sons were bathed with water from head to foot at their consecration, as we have seen; *that* was not repeated, but nevertheless a laver was provided (Exod. XXX. 17-21), and there the priests washed

their hands and feet. The instructions were most explicit: "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation they shall wash with water, that they die not."

When we turn from type to antitype the same thought appears. In the upper chamber in Jerusalem, probably just before He instituted His supper, the Lord Jesus girded Himself, and, pouring water into a basin, began to wash His disciples' feet (John XIII). Peter's reluctance brings forth the truth that such washing is necessary if communion with the Lord in His heavenly position was to be enjoyed. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me" (v. 8). His rapid change to enthusiastic haste leads the Lord to say: "He that is washed (i.e. *bathed*) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (v. 10).

Here the twofold way in which cleansing by water is presented in Scripture is very carefully distinguished. Once for all we have been "bathed." The death of Christ has cleansed us from the old life, but for all that we need the application of that death to our souls day by day. We cannot approach the sanctuary nor enjoy "part with" Christ without it.

With these thoughts before us we may perhaps return to the words quoted at the beginning from 1 John v, and find a greater depth of meaning in them.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came by water

and blood ; by *both* these things was His coming characterized. The Spirit of God specially guards this point, saying : “ *Not by water only*, but by water and blood.” Why so ? May not one reason be — the tendency now fast growing and ripening into apostasy, to teach that Christ did come by water only ? He came, so it is now widely said, to cleanse man morally by setting before him the highest ideals, and living out those ideals Himself as an incentive to others. He came by such means to make “at-one-ment” between God and man. Such is their theory. The idea of atonement they scornfully reject.

Foreseeing this dark and deadly error, the Spirit says, “not by water only, but by water and blood.” Not by moral cleansing only, but by moral cleansing AND *expiation for sin*, and it is the Spirit that bears witness and “the Spirit is truth.”

And so the three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, remain : the Spirit the living, acting, speaking Witness ; the water and the blood two silent witnesses, and all three agree in one. They testify that He who came in this way is the Son of God, the fountain of eternal life, and that in Him eternal life is ours, who believe on the name of the Son of God.

Thanks be to God, we may fervently exclaim, that when a soldier with a spear pierced His side “forthwith came there out *blood AND water !*”

Has not the life-work of Christ, the mocking and scourging He suffered at men's hands, some part in His Atonement made for sins?

Precious as these are, the Scripture plainly says, "His own self bare our sins in His own body *on the tree*" (1 Peter II. 25). Nothing short of death is the wages of sin. It is sometimes urged that Rom. v. 19 teaches otherwise, "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." But a careful reading of the whole passage, verses 12 to 21, shows that it exactly confirms the scripture quoted from Peter. Paul is contrasting the two Heads, Adam and Christ—the sin of the one with its attendant train of disaster, the righteousness, the obedience of the other with its attendant train of blessing. It is a question of the "one offence" and the "one righteousness" (v. 18, margin). Christ's ONE righteousness was obedience even unto His DEATH.

If the Blood cleanses us from all sin, what need is there for the water?

Let us answer that question by asking another. Are you not conscious that you as much need cleansing from the *love* of sin as from the *condemnation* of sin? There is great need for the "water." That Christians should hate sin as God hates it is a crying need everywhere.

Then as to the daily cleansing of which the

laver speaks. Do we not need it in this defiling world? Is there not much about us personally that needs removing, to say nothing of the subtle influences of this world which often insensibly affect us? Every Christian with a sensitive conscience will surely agree that there is.

Is it not scriptural, then, to go to the blood for daily cleansing? It says "cleanseth" in 1 John i. 7.

Nowhere in Scripture do we find the idea of daily recurrence for cleansing to the blood of Christ. The argument based on the word "cleanseth" in 1 John i. 7 is not admissible. True, the word is in the present tense, but it is used simply to point out the inherent property of the precious blood. We so use the present tense in ordinary conversation. For instance, the other day a man brought a sack of quicklime into my yard, and deposited it in a quiet corner out of harm's way, remarking, "It will be all right there, the rain will soon settle it. Water slakes lime, you know."

What did he mean? Not that the water was going to slake that lime repeatedly, almost every day, for lime can be slaked but once; he just referred to the well-known property of water in regard to lime, a property that holds good at all times and everywhere.

It is thus that the Apostle speaks in 1 John i. 7.

But Scripture does speak of our repeatedly being washed in the water ; and if we insist on this distinction it is not for the sake of mere theological accuracy. To teach that we must have repeated recurrence to the blood for fresh applications thereof does great harm in a twofold way. First it dishonours the blood of Christ ; and second, it repeatedly puts back the saint into the place of the sinner to go through the cleansing and justifying process over and over again.

The truth is that “ by *one* offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified ” (Heb. x. 14). Let us hold fast to that.

**Tell us a little more about this daily cleansing by water.
How do we get it ?**

By the Word. The water and the Word are clearly connected in such a passage as “ That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word ” (Eph. v. 26).

The Word of God it is which brings home to our souls the death of Christ in its power and wealth of spiritual meaning. Sin in its true hideousness stands revealed, and our affections are cleansed thereby. “ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word ” (Ps. cxix. 9). We often overlook this cleansing effect of God’s Word, while eager, it may be, for a better textual acquaintance with it.

A believer once lamented to an old saint of ripe experience the difficulty she had in remembering the points of Christian teaching to which she listened. He bade her go with the sieve she held in her hand to the pump hard by and bring him a sieve full of water. She thought it a strange request, as by the time she reached him every drop was lost. He bade her do it again, again, and yet again. She affirmed it to be a useless task, when he explained his parable by pointing out that if not one drop of water had been retained, at any rate the sieve was MUCH CLEANER *for the process!*

Let us dwell much upon the Word of God. We may never become deeply versed in scriptural lore—that is a secondary consideration—our lives and ways will at all events be cleansed thereby.

In John iii. we read of being born of water ; is there a connection between that and what we are speaking of, or does it refer to baptism ?

It links itself with that of which we are speaking. By the water of the Word applied in the power of the Holy Spirit of God we are born again—made to possess a new life and nature which carries with it the condemnation of the old. It is typified by the bathing of the priests from head to foot (see Exod. XXIX. 4 and I John XIII. 10).

It does not refer to baptism. A quiet consideration of the passage makes this manifest. Notice (1) the Lord only speaks of *one* new birth. This new birth (2) is said to be "of water and of the Spirit." The water the instrument, the Spirit the Power, and (3) it is expressly declared by the Lord to be in its nature *indefinable* and completely *uncontrolled* by man (*v.* 8). Baptism is easily definable and completely controlled by man, and therefore NOT that of which this passage speaks.

Is it only when we sin that we need the water?

We *do* need it when we sin, but even apart from actual sins, being in a world of defilement we need it if we would worship, hold communion with, or serve God. Read Numbers XIX., and you will find in type the water as purification from sin; then turn to Exodus XXX. 17-21, and in type you have water removing every earthly defilement in view of drawing near to God in the sanctuary without reference to actual sins. In the New Testament John XIII. is more connected with the latter aspect than the former.

How dependent we are upon not only the Blood, but the Water!

F. B. H.

KOWIA, THE CANNIBAL CHIEF.

HE lived at the Mission-house with his wife and children, and was a great help and comfort to Abraham (my faithful helper) and myself. He was allowed to go more freely and fearlessly amongst the people than any of the rest of our Mission staff. The ague and fever—on me at Mr. Johnston's death—so increased and reduced me to such weakness that I had become insensible—while Abraham and Kowia alone attended to me. On returning to consciousness I heard, as in a dream, Kowia lamenting over me, and pleading that I might recover so as to hear and speak with him before I died. Opening my eyes and looking at him, I heard him say : “ Missi, all our Aneityumese are sick ; Missi Johnston is dead, you are very sick, and I am weak and dying. Alas, when I, too, am dead, who will climb the trees and give you a cocoa-nut to drink ? And who will bathe your lips and brow ? ”

Here he broke down into deep and long weeping, and then resumed : “ Missi, the Tanna men hate us all on account of the worship of Jehovah, and I now fear He is going to take away all His servants from this land, and leave my people to the ‘ Evil One ’ and his service.”

I was too weak to speak, so he went on,

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bursting into a soliloquy of prayer : “ O Lord Jesus, Missi Johnston is dead, Missi Paton is very ill, I am sick, and Thy servants the Aneityumese are all sick and dying. O Lord our Father in heaven, art Thou going to take away all Thy servants and Thy worship from this dark land ? What meanest Thou to do, O Lord ? The Tannese hate Thee and Thy worship and Thy servants ; but surely, O Lord, Thou canst not forsake Tanna and leave our people to die in the darkness. Oh, make the hearts of this people soft to Thy Word and sweet to Thy worship ; teach them to fear and love Jesus, and oh, restore and spare dear Missi Paton, that Tanna may be saved.”

Touched to the very fountains of my life by such prayers from a man once a cannibal, I began, under the breath of God’s blessing, to revive.

A few days thereafter Kowia came again to me, and, rousing me out of sleep, cried : “ Missi, I am very weak, I am dying, I come to bid you farewell, and go away to die. I am nearing death now, and will soon see Jesus.”

I spoke what words of consolation and cheer I could muster ; but he answered : “ Missi, since you became ill my dear wife and children are dead and buried, most of our Aneityumese are dead, and I am dying. If I remain on the hill and die here at the

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Mission, there are none left to help Abraham to carry me down to the grave where my wife and children are laid. I wish to lie beside them, that we may rise together in the great day when Jesus comes. I am happy, looking unto Jesus. One thing only deeply grieves me now : I fear God is taking us all away from Tanna, and will leave my poor people dark and benighted as before ; for they hate Jesus and the worship of Jehovah. Oh, Missi, pray for them, and pray for me once more before I go."

He knelt down by my side and we prayed for each other, and for Tanna. I then urged him to remain at the Mission-house ; but he replied : " Oh, Missi, you do not know how near to death I am ; I am just going, and soon will be with Jesus, and see my wife and children. Now, while a little strength is left, I will lean on Abraham's arm, and go down to the graves of my dear ones, and fall asleep there ; and Abraham will dig a quiet bed, and lay me beside them. Farewell, Missi, I am very near death now ; we will meet again, in Jesus, and with Jesus."

With many tears he dragged himself away, and my heart-strings seemed all tied round that simple, noble soul, and felt like breaking one by one, as he left me there on my bed of fever all alone. Abraham sustained him, tottering to the place of graves. There he lay

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down and immediately gave up the ghost, and slept in Jesus, and there the faithful Abraham buried him beside his wife and children. Thus died a man who had been a cannibal chief, but by the grace of God transfigured into a character of light and beauty. What think ye of this, ye scoffers at missions, ye sceptics as to the reality of conversions? He died as he had lived, since Jesus came to his heart, without a fear as to death, with an ever-brightening assurance as to salvation and glory, through the blood of the Lamb of God, that blood which had cleansed him from his sins, and delivered him from their power. I lost, in losing him, one of my best friends and most courageous helpers; but I knew *then*, and I know *now*, that there is one soul, at least, from Tanna, to sing the glories of Jesus in heaven; and oh, the rapture when I meet him there.

This brief sketch, from the pen of an honoured servant of Christ, of the closing days of one who had been sunk in the depths of heathen darkness, is worthy of earnest consideration. Our first impulse is to kneel down and thank God for that Gospel which is able to achieve such glorious results, to bless His name for every loyal-hearted servant sent forth by Him to preach Christ in dark and savage lands, and to earnestly beseech Him never to suffer them to substitute for His Gospel any of the

plausible inventions of modern days. Whether in heathen lands or in countries called Christian, the same Gospel is needed, for men everywhere are spiritually dead till the Gospel reaches their heart in life-giving power. They may be cultured, educated, and refined, but if they have never bowed the heart and knee to Jesus the Son of God, they are in the same condition as this Tanna chief when the servants of God first found him. There can be no mistake as to this. "*Dead in trespasses and sins*"—such is God's description of man's state, and there is no exception (Eph. II.). Environments count for a great deal in men's estimation, but God looks at the heart.

The poor benighted savage revelling in bloodshed and cannibalism, and the polished gentleman of the twentieth century, who knows not God, alike need to be born again, and alike they need the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ to fit them for God's Holy Presence. To acknowledge this as being true of ourselves is the first step on the heavenward road.

Beloved fellow-Christian, let us rejoice that God's arm is not shortened, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear. The heart of a Saviour-God is moved to its deepest depths at the cry of a needy soul, whatever his nationality may be. Be it ours, each one of us, in our measure, to publish throughout the whole world the glorious Gospel "until He come." G. F. E.

A CALL TO CONFESSION.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him sha^t not be ashamed" (ROM. X. 9-11.)

MARK this beautiful word "whosoever." It most assuredly takes in the Jew. It meets him wherever he may be, a poor exile, at the very ends of the earth, under circumstances where obedience to the Law, as such, is simply impossible ; but where the rich and precious grace of God and His most glorious salvation can meet him in the depths of his need. There, though he cannot keep the Law, he can confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead ; and this is salvation.

But then, if it be "whosoever," it cannot possibly be confined to the Jew, nay, it cannot be confined at all ; and hence the Apostle goes on to say, "There *is* no difference between the Jew and the Greek." There *was* the greatest possible difference under the Law. But that difference no longer exists, for a double reason : first, because "all have sinned and

come short of the glory of God," and secondly, because "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

How blessedly simple! Believing, calling, confessing! Nothing can exceed the transcendent grace that shines in these words. No doubt it is assumed that the soul is really in earnest, that the *heart* is engaged. God deals in moral realities. It is not a nominal, notional, head belief, but divine faith wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost—a living faith which connects the soul, in a divine way and by an everlasting link, to Christ.

And then there is the confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus. This is of cardinal importance. A man may say, "I believe in my heart, but I am not one for parading my religious belief. I am not a talker. I keep my religion to myself. It is entirely a matter between my soul and God, and I do not believe in that perpetual intruding our religious impressions upon other people. Many who talk loudly and largely about their religion in public make but a sorry figure in private, and I certainly do not want to be identified with such. I utterly abhor all cant. Deeds, not words, for me."

All this sounds very plausible, but it cannot stand for a moment in the light of Romans x. 9. There must be the confession with the mouth.

Many would like to be saved by Christ, but they shrink from the reproach of confessing His precious Name. They would like to get to heaven when they die, but they do not want to be identified with a rejected Christ. Now God does not own such. He looks for the full, bold, clear confession of Christ, in the face of a hostile world. Our Lord Jesus Christ, too, looks for this confession. He declares that whoso confesses Him before men, He will confess before the angels of God ; but whoso denies Him before men, He will deny before the angels of God. The thief on the cross exhibited the two great branches of true saving faith. He believed with his heart and confessed with his mouth. Yes, he gave a flat contradiction to the whole world on the most vital question that ever was or ever could be raised, and that question was Christ. He was a thoroughly pronounced disciple of Christ. Oh, that there were more such ! There is a terrible amount of indefiniteness and cold half-heartedness in the professing Church, grievous to the Holy Ghost, offensive to Christ, hateful to God. We long for a bold decision, out and out, unmistakable testimony to the Lord Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit stir up all our hearts, and lead us forth, in more thorough consecration of heart, to that blessed One who freely gave His life to save us from everlasting burning !

C. H. M.

“GOD MY EXCEEDING JOY.”

A RICH expression this when one thinks of what God is and what the worshipper was !

How can it be that one who, by nature, dreads the very name of God, and whose only conception of Him is, at the very best, but one of severity, can find his exceeding joy in Him ?

Yet that such is the case there have been, and are, witnesses abundant.

The words themselves are taken from Psalm XLIII., and the sentence runs : “ Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.” The path to God is by the altar, and this must be carefully noted. The altar suggests worship, but not only so. It teaches sacrifice, and offerings, and approach by blood ; for, in point of fact, there is no access to God at all save on that ground. Hence we read in Hebrews x. 19 : “ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” Of old, the High Priest dare never come to the typical most holy place but once a year, and, mark, “ not without blood ” ; now the Christian has adequate title by “ the blood of Jesus ” to enter into the Holiest—the immediate presence

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of God—at all times ! He has boldness, or liberty, to do so.

High our privilege—we who once were but “ sinners of the Gentiles ” and alienated in mind by wicked works ! Purged from our myriad sins by the precious blood of Jesus the Son of God, we find ourselves at home in the divine presence in absolute peace and joy.

Oh ! what wonderful virtue there must be in that blood, seeing that it forms our only but all-sufficient title to enter the Holiest ! Other title there is none. Let us lay highest store by it ; let us adore the Lamb of God for His all-atoning death and for the power of the Sacrifice which, through faith on our part, can take the vilest sinner from the greatest moral distance and fit him, then and there, for the Paradise of God. Could such a device have entered the brain of man ? Never !

Then, how appalling, how mad the sin that would count that blood “ a common thing,” and thus fling away the only hope and the greatest title that God could grant ! Yet such is the folly of the day. Wonderful altar ; precious stepping-stone to these glorious altitudes—“ unto God my exceeding joy ” !

Leaving the Psalms, what do we find in the New Testament but words very similar, though more explicit : “ We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation ” (Rom. v. 11).

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The thought is the same ; it is joy in God, not merely rejoicing in hope of His glory, but in God Himself, and thus on the solid, eternal basis of that which the Lord Jesus Christ has done. By it we have received the reconciliation—the kiss, the robe, the ring, the sandals—all tokens of our welcome and pardon and glad home-bringing, together with, the best of all endowments, the feast of the Father's House itself, the heavenly Banqueting House of love and joy divine !

"God my exceeding joy"—words sweet and intelligible and true.

"We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," an experience known and enjoyed by all His own people, and to be better known when all that flesh obscures shall be gone for ever.

What clouds are dissipated by that altar ! What a solution we find therein to the difficulties which sin has raised !

The veil is rent from top to bottom, God is revealed, the sinner is brought nigh ; he is pardoned, blessed, redeemed, and, best of all, he can speak of God as his "exceeding joy."

What a salvation ! May we learn its depths and heights, and joys and glories, with increasing delight day by day.

J. W. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L.—We are not disposed to admit for a moment that Satan is omnipresent. If we deny it, then, you are unable to understand how he can tempt a man to sin in London and another in New York at the same time. But this difficulty of yours flows from the supposition that in every temptation Satan himself is the tempter. Now Scripture will not support you in that belief. *Out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, and a host of other wicked things, as the Lord says in Matthew xv. 19, and assuredly the human heart is not Satan. “Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed” (James i. 14). Even a true Christian has “the flesh” in him, and its works are only evil (Gal. v. 19-21). Satan *may* tempt a man to commit gross sin, but we are not justified in laying every temptation at his door. Except in rare cases it comes from our own sinful nature. And do you really think that Satan *himself* is the immediate agent in alluring men to commit those sins that proceed only too readily from the human heart? We believe he has much more serious business in hand. He is the master of bolder enterprises, fraught with larger and more momentous consequences. Of course, we do not forget that he has many agencies under his control. But after all, Satan is but a creature having his limitations, and to invest him with any attribute of deity is to go far beyond the teaching of Holy Scripture.

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(ii.) There were sacrifices in Israel that could be called *national*, and in these all were embraced, both women and men. Then for sins of ignorance and acts of trespass other offerings were called for ; but how women stood in relation to these offences we cannot say if not under the same obligation.

(iii.) Psalm LV. 12-14 may be applied to Judas in a general way, but not, we think, specifically. Directly a closer application is attempted, a thousand difficulties spring up and warn us to keep in safer roads.

ANON.—Speaking strictly, there is but one *baptism* of the Holy Spirit. It is that of which we read in I Corinthians XII. 13, “ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Such is the baptism of the Spirit by which all believers of every nationality have been formed into one body—each believer a member of it, the Holy Spirit being the living bond of union, and each sharing in the one great Gift.

We entirely agree with you that the baptism of Acts II. 38 is that of water. But the Apostle Peter, in calling upon the people who had crucified their Messiah to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, declared that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Three thousand repented, and were baptized and received, we presume, the promised Gift. But there is no mention of their speaking with tongues.

You affirm that tongues are a seal, and the

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outward sign that God's Spirit has baptized us. But you omit to refer us to the scripture which says so, and we cannot recall any. Nowhere are tongues spoken of as a *seal*. They are a *sign*, not to believers, for they need no sign, but to them that believe not. This is said in so many words in 1 Corinthians XIV. 22.

No doubt, you are right in distinguishing between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The former ought to be seen in the lives of all of us, but "gifts" are another thing. These certainly are not possessed by all believers, nor are they ever intended to be. "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" (1 Cor. XII. 29). So, while the indwelling of the Spirit is the common privilege of all believers, the "gifts" of the Spirit are in no wise common. They are bestowed according to God's sovereign will.

You tell us "there are thousands at the present time who would testify to their having received their baptism of the Spirit, and also to their being sealed with tongues." Certainly we have no wish to undervalue the experiences of any, but in matters of this kind we are on safer ground if we take the Scriptures as our guide. So far as our own reading goes, we must avow that we have found nothing in that unerring Book to lead us to believe that power to speak in tongues is "the Bible evidence" of our having received the Spirit.

The evidences of which Scripture speaks are of another and far more blessed kind. If asked,

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What are they? we answer, first, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us" (Rom. v. 5); secondly, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). We are His sons, and *we know it*. Nothing can be more blessed than witnesses of this kind. And only the true believer can possess them. Other evidences, such as prophesying in His name, casting out demons, doing many wonderful works and possibly speaking in tongues, a mere empty professor might be able to show (see Matt. vii. 22).

For what end, then, were tongues given in early days? Not that those who spake in them might know that they had received the Spirit. They were given as a means of propagating the Gospel and as a witness to the power that accompanied it. Now we have not heard of these modern tongues being used in this way, though it is not necessary to go to heathen lands to use them. At any of the docks of our great seaport towns, large numbers of foreign sailors are to be found. It would be deeply interesting to know that some of our friends who speak with tongues went to these men and so spake that every man heard in his own language the story of the great love of our Saviour-God.

One word more. We go heart and soul with you in wishing that all Christians would let go everything that hinders blessing, so that God's Holy Spirit might have His own way with them. It is the very thing that is wanted. But we do not expect to see a return to Pentecostal times. Not

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back to Pentecost, but on to the coming of the Lord—such is the true goal toward which we press. Meanwhile, let us pray for the Church of God. Its condition is very low. Let us bear her sins and sorrows upon our heart before God in confession and intercessory prayer, and humbly wait on Him to bless.

W. M.—You ask whether in Acts II. the Apostles and others spoke in different dialects, or did the strangers from other lands receive power to understand though the language was not theirs? We believe the miraculous gift was upon those who spake, and not on those who heard.

As to 1 Corinthians XIV., the Apostle does not forbid tongues in the assembly, though their sphere would be more properly elsewhere. They were a sign to them that believe not (v. 22). But he restricts their exercise, and altogether forbids it if there were no interpreter. We should note the difference between “gift” of any kind and its use. The gift is permanent, its exercise occasional. Now it is evident that the Corinthians, when speaking in tongues, were not always doing so under the leading and in the power of the Spirit.

R. T.—Your fears in reference to the tongues movement are not groundless. We view it ourselves with increasing suspicion and distrust. The grotesque physical disturbance that is the prelude to the Holy Spirit being received is enough to show that it bears no heavenly brand. A pastor, in describing how he himself received the Gift, says :

“I told God, while I would do nothing of myself,

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I would yield to Him in spite of the devil. Then God filled my lungs with air and began to work them like bellows, at the same time by His own power opening my mouth. Only one word was given me to say, '*Glory.*' I began quietly to yield to its utterance. As I yielded God increased the air in the lungs and the physical operation of them, that sent it out in a rush with such power that it seemed the shout of 'glory' would almost lift the roof."

We ask in all seriousness whether anything of this nature is connected with the Holy Spirit of God in any Bible account whatsoever?

It is urged in its defence that much spiritual good has resulted from it. One correspondent tells us that it has led to more time being spent with God and over His Word. But many who have embraced the most deadly doctrines tell us the same story. Nor need that surprise us. For if Satan would palm himself off as an angel of light to lead men into mazes of error, we may be sure he would speak and act as an angel of light. Good words and fair speeches would not be wanting. Already there are indications of unsound doctrine and spiritual pride, for we are told that it is the followers of this movement who will be caught up when the Lord comes—others will be left behind. But we say no more.

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. III. 13, 14).

“I WILL JUST GO HOME ON THAT!”

THE late Miss F. R. Havergal, the writer of many choice hymns, lay on her dying bed. A friend was reading, by her request, the forty-second chapter of Isaiah. When verse six was reached the dying lady held up her hand as a signal for the reader to stop. Then she whispered, “Called . . . held . . . kept . . . used! Well, I will just go home on that!” And so her happy spirit passed into the presence of the One whose praises she had so sweetly sung.

What wonderful words to “just go home on”! They are a staff and a stay to the pilgrim, not only for the last stage of his heaven-bound journey, but for all along the way.

Let us see what we can learn from them. As they stand in Isaiah XLII. they refer prophetically to Christ Himself. He was Jehovah’s chosen Servant, and was, while He trod the lowly path of obedience, not only the called One, but held, kept, and used. In speaking thus of the Lord Jesus, we must ever remember who He was, though He emptied Himself and came to earth in a servant’s form. It was infinite grace that brought Him into the position of perfect dependence, so that it

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could be said, even of Him : " I, Jehovah, have *called* Thee in righteousness, and will *hold* Thine hand, and will *keep* Thee."

But consider these four words, Called, Held, Kept, Used, in connection with ourselves.

You, dear Christian reader, are one of the Lord's people, a child of God, saved to share, by and by, the glory of Christ. But how were you brought into this position ?

On your part, there was the simple exercise of faith, accompanied by repentance toward God. Your conscience was burdened, maybe, with the thought of your guilt, and you fled, as only a wretched sinner can do, to the ever-open arms of the Saviour. You received the warmest of welcomes. You found cleansing from all your sins through the precious blood of Christ, and the very words of God Himself assured you of forgiveness.

Underlying all this, however, there was, on the part of God, a *call*. His call reached you while you were yet in the by-paths of sin, and brought you from your darkness into His marvellous light. A few scriptures may be cited in proof of this. " God, who hath saved us, and *called* us with an holy calling " (2 Tim. i. 9). " Whom He did predestinate, them He also *called* " (Rom. viii. 30). " God, who hath *called* you unto His kingdom and glory " (1 Thess. ii. 12).

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Now “ the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” That is, He never goes back on His own call. And whom He calls He justifies, and will ultimately glorify. So that the call of God is like a rock beneath our feet. Are we disheartened with many a failure ? Are we almost tempted to give up trying to please God ? Then let us remember that our salvation does not depend merely upon *our* choice, or *our* decision, but upon the gracious call of God. He has been pleased to form this link between our souls and Himself, and having formed this first link, He will not fail to complete His work and bring us to the last link in the chain of blessing, even His eternal glory.

Meanwhile we are “ held ” and “ kept ” ; held as the hand of a child is held by one who is guarding it in a dangerous place, held as one holds a treasure that one would on no account lose, held by a power against which no might of man or demon can ever prevail. Kept, too, as a faithful shepherd keeps his sheep, but kept, not in a mere mechanical way, but through the exercise of faith on our part (1 Peter 1. 5).

As to the way in which our souls are kept we gain some instruction from the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 11. With triumph she exclaims : “ He will keep the feet of His saints.” This was a lesson she had learned. And in her

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psalm of praise she gives some indication of how it is done.

One means by which the Lord keeps the feet of His saints is *by making their path rough*. Hannah's path was rough indeed, beset with sore trial and difficulty. It is on the smooth paths that our feet are most likely to slide.

Have you ever seen, in frosty weather, handfuls of rough grit flung upon the roads ? By this means the feet of many a horse are kept from slipping.

And does it seem as if a handful of grit had been thrown down in front of *you* ? Is your path beset with trial and trouble of one kind and another ? Remember that by means of such things as these, “ He will keep the feet of His saints.”

But with Hannah there was something further. She says : “ He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed ” (*v.* 10). What did she mean ? No king reigned in Israel in her days. Nothing, as far as we know, had been said as to any Anointed One of God.

The Spirit of God had evidently brought before her soul a vision of what was yet to be, and, like Abraham in a still earlier day, she saw the day of Christ. Her heart was singing of that blessed One, God's Anointed, who shall indeed be His chosen King, and shall reign gloriously.

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Appreciation of Christ, occupation of soul with Him, is, then, another means by which our feet are kept. It is related of the zealous and devoted martyr, John Mollens, that he never mentioned the name of Jesus without tears. We may never have such a deep sense of the preciousness of Christ as he, but the Holy Ghost, who dwells within us, delights to turn our thoughts to Him, and as we study Him and learn something of God's wonderful counsels, which have Him for their Object and which are disclosed to us in the Scriptures, our feet are preserved from many a snare.

But besides being “ called,” “ held,” and “ kept,” God is pleased to *use* us. It is not necessarily for some great thing that He may see fit to employ us. But it is our happy privilege, as His children, to be used of God in His service.

Surely this is a matter that calls for exercise on our part. I cannot tell how God may use you, nor can you tell how God may use another. Each for himself must wait in the presence of God, to be directed by Him.

Sorry indeed shall we be by and by if we suffer the thousand and one things of this life to hinder our being used by God. In that case we shall have missed one of the greatest honours and most glorious privileges ever granted to mortal man.

Let us, then, carry these four words in our memories, and may God make them an inspiration and a cheer to us on our homeward way : “ called, held, kept, used.”

H. P. B.

A SAD MISTAKE.

“ I REMEMBER talking with a marine, who told me that the most terrible engagement in which he had ever been was one between the ship to which he belonged and another English vessel, when, on meeting in the night, they mistook each other for a French man-o’-war. Many persons were wounded, some slain, and both vessels sustained serious damage. When the day broke great was their surprise to find the English flag hoisted from the masts of both vessels, and that through mistake they had been fighting all night against their own countrymen. It was of no avail now that they kept together : the mischief was done. Christians often commit the same error. They mistake their fellow-Christians for an enemy ; it is night, and they cannot see to recognize one another. What will their surprise be when they see each other in the light of another world ? How will they salute each other when better known and understood after having wounded each other by mistake and in ignorance in the dark night ? ”

NEW BIRTH AND THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

TO be born again is the first essential work of the Spirit of God. Without it there is no life towards God and no possibility of advance in the things of God. It is the universal want, the indispensable condition in order to any soul's having part in the blessing of God at any time and in all dispensations.

Hence, in John^{III.}, when Nicodemus came to our Lord, wishing to be taught of Him, our Lord at once begins there. Nicodemus owned that Jesus was a teacher come from God, by whom he wanted to be taught. But our Lord stops him in a peculiarly solemn manner, saying, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, astonished, asked how such a thing could be. His unintelligent question is answered in still stronger terms: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There we have clearly the explanation of what it is to be born again. It is to be born of water and of the Spirit. Nicodemus still expresses his amazement at this. That a Jew, a moral, religious Jew, who was no heathen, should need to be born afresh—that he, a master in Israel, should

need so vital a change, this was indeed a blow that arrested Nicodemus at the very start. Our Lord shows that he ought to have known these things, for they had been declared in the writings of the prophets. Mark this, because it is a thoroughly satisfactory answer to those who wish to connect the being born of water with baptism. How could he, as a Jew, know anything of Christian baptism? It did not even exist at the time. How could that be known which was not yet brought out? But he ought to have known what was meant by being born of water and of the Spirit, and to have felt the absolute necessity of it. What, then, was meant? This: that no matter where, when, or who, every one who should see or enter the kingdom of God must be born of water and of the Spirit—must have the Holy Spirit communicating a new life to him. And how is that life produced? By an ordinance? No. By Christian walk? No. By what means, then? By prayer? Nay; but by the reception of God's Word revealing Christ. Therefore it is written that we are born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). So that water is clearly used in this passage in John iii. as figurative of the Word of God applied by the Spirit. The two are joined together so that we may see

that it is the Spirit applying God's Word in quickening power to the soul. Our Lord insists that every one who enters the kingdom must enter by that door.

But in John iv. we pass on to another operation of the Holy Spirit. "If thou knewest the free-giving of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The living water is plainly the Holy Spirit, whom Christ gives. Here it is not the quickening operation of the Spirit, indispensable for all times, but a special privilege that Christ bestows personally. And it will be found, in the discourse of the Lord which follows, that the Holy Ghost is given to believers now as the means of worshipping their God and Father in spirit and in truth. Thus we have in John iv. a totally different operation of the Spirit from that which is found in John iii.

The consequence of this most precious opening out of the truth is, that we know the Holy Spirit to be in us as the spring of communion and power of worship. What a joy!—the Holy Spirit dwelling in believers, and the Father seeking such to worship Him. He is gathering children, forming them for His own praise, putting the Holy Spirit within them to give the consciousness of their relationship with Himself and, having this, to draw

near to Him as their God and Father. Do you know this ?

Some confound hearing the gospel or other truth with worship. But they are totally different. In worshipping God, Christians offer up to God services of praise and thanksgiving. Worship is what goes from the believer to God ; whereas in the gospel or other ministry it is a message coming down from God for the good of souls. The confounding of these two things is a serious evil.

It is very startling to many to find that, after they have been born of the Spirit, there is such a thing as being sealed by the Spirit. These, as we have said, are two operations of the Holy Spirit. The first is when a man is brought to a sense of sin. He has no happiness at all, perhaps, but a real sense of ruin ; yet his heart cleaves to God. That man is born of God—truly converted ; no comfort as yet, perhaps, in his soul, but his heart is open to listen further to the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. He believes it. When then ? He is sealed of the Holy Spirit as a believer, not only in Christ, but in the gospel of our salvation—the work that Christ has done. To be born of the Spirit and sealed with the Spirit are two different things.

And now that the Holy Spirit is given to be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life, is it for us to entreat the Holy

Spirit to be given unto us? Is it right for Christians to be praying for an outpouring of the Spirit? It is quite right to pray that we may not grieve Him, and that we may not quench Him. To pray that we may be strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man is according to the Word of God; but we ought not to say one word that implies the Holy Spirit is not here when He is. A most grievous cloud of darkness rests on the minds of many children of God as to this subject. They do not believe their privileges; they do not know that the Holy Spirit dwells in them. There is a mist over their eyes, and they are asking for the very blessing that is already given. This is neither wisdom nor faith. It is quite true that we may ask God to bless the gospel to the unconverted and to regenerate them. But to pray for a pouring out of the Spirit is altogether a different thing. It is an unintelligent prayer, founded on unbelief of the truth that the Holy Spirit *is* sent down. But when the heavenly saints have been taken to be with Christ at His coming, there will in due time follow an outpouring of His Spirit on a new people, when the Jews and Gentiles will be brought as such distinctly to the knowledge of Jesus. But as long as the Church is on the earth there never will, nor can be, such a thing. Nor is this a mere matter of speculation. It is connected in the

deepest possible way with our worship and even our peace.

We shall find that faith in the presence of God's Spirit, or unbelief of it, is that which puts to the test saints in the present day. It behoves us to consider well whether we really do enter into the mind of God about it. Let us understand that what constitutes us Christians is not only that we believe in Christ, but that we are now sealed with the Holy Spirit. He regenerates an unbeliever by faith in Christ, but He seals none but believers. This is the decisive proof of a man's being a Christian.

Adapted.

“That a person may be born again, and not have received the Holy Ghost, is perfectly certain according to Scripture, for ‘whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,’ and this the disciples did while Christ was on earth. But they had not the Holy Ghost, nor could have, for He did not come until the day of Pentecost, though they had life and were clean through the Word. And in Samaria, after the Holy Ghost was come, they believed and were baptised; but the Holy Ghost was fallen on none of them—nor did they receive the Spirit till Peter and John came down. So with Paul—he was converted by the appearing of Christ to him on the way, and three days afterwards Ananias was sent that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

J. N. D.

A NEGLECTED FIELD.

ONE form of evangelistic effort seems to have slackened very considerably of late years. Few, very few gospel tracts and booklets are now given away. In earlier days it was quite a common thing for Christian folks to carry a handful of good, soul-saving and peace-giving papers along with them to give to those whom they might meet in street and 'bus and train. Who thinks of doing so now? There are some, but not many. Why is this? "Times have changed," says one. True, they have. Men have grown more sceptical, and they treat religious things with a measure of disdain. But is that a reason why we should be less concerned about them? And may there not be other causes to which our lack of zeal can be attributed? Have we not lost sight of God and of His power to bless the humblest effort? Have we not lost faith and heart and courage? Easy then to say: "What is the use of our giving away these printed pages? They do no good, and we rarely hear of any lasting results." But such language only betrays our inward state.

Three or four weeks ago a friend of ours chanced to be in our house. I do not know

what gave rise to it, but she told us the story of her conversion. It was on this wise. Some one gave to her husband several gospel tracts, and he put them into his pocket and took them home. "What have you brought these things home for?" said the wife with a tinge of scorn in her tones. "We have plenty of books." Now one of these tracts bore the somewhat singular title of "*Ye must be born again.*" It struck her. She read it and became deeply impressed. She was awakened up to see her need and to realize her true condition before God. Her conscience, now thoroughly alive, gave her no rest. How could she get right with God? That was the supreme question now agitating her soul night and day. At length she was led to take up another of the despised tracts that had been given to her husband. It was called "*The true ground of peace.*" She read it, and she saw that the true ground of peace lay in the finished work of Christ. In Him was the answer to every need of her soul. He had come that our sins might be put for ever away by His bearing what was due to them upon the Cross. Christ, dead and risen again and alive for evermore, was henceforth the Object of her rejoicing trust. She found joy and peace in believing.

What encouragement this story brings! What an incentive to renew our labours in this too neglected field! God is just as able

to bless now as then. But let the seed we sow be watered with our prayers. Here, perhaps, we have been slack. Let us henceforth do this simple service with greater seriousness of spirit and with fervent desire that the seed sown broadcast o'er the land may yield harvests of golden corn for the granary of God.

Nor let us think only of the gospel and the never-dying souls of men. There are thousands of God's sheep famishing on the bleak and barren moors of Christendom. Sunday after Sunday they go to their accustomed places longing for spiritual food. Instead of receiving it they are offered quotations from Browning and listen to dreary discussions of social and political questions, and sometimes to something worse. And thus they starve and languish and pine away. Who shall care for the sheep of the great Shepherd's flock? Shall we leave them as if their state were no business of ours? Before we finally decide to do so let me suggest that we should read Ezekiel xxxiv., and then if we can be content to do nothing for them, so be it.

No false modesty shall deter us from speaking of the contents of this magazine as it appears month by month. We believe the papers that it contains, from the pens of various contributors, are just the thing for tens of thousands of God's famishing saints who have

yet to be led into the knowledge and enjoyment of the great truths that form the very foundation of the soul's blessedness and joy. Can you not give a copy every month to some of these needy souls? Can you not send one by post to a friend or casual acquaintance? A halfpenny stamp will take it to any address. Few difficulties lie in this path of service, and few are too poor to engage in it. Instead of ordering one copy, order two or three and give them prayerfully away. You will not miss the pence. And should you reap no reward here beyond the present joy of serving the Lord Christ, you shall be recompensed in that day when our life on earth shall be manifested before the tribunal of Christ, who will render unto every man according as his work shall be.

And let us who are able to pay for our tracts and books pay for them ungrudgingly. There is such a mania for getting everything at the lowest possible price and with the largest possible discount. Our commercial instincts lead us in that direction. But in the things of God especially we need to guard against the keen business spirit that grinds down to the very bottom. Let us not offer to the Lord that which costs us nothing. So said King David, and we should not say less. For what does this eager desire for cheapness mean? *Many evils* which we shall not name, but

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which will easily suggest themselves to any who will take the trouble to think.

May the Lord encourage us in the coming year to enter this open door of service with zeal and devotedness. Let us ponder the need. How great it is! There are multitudes of souls from shop and office and warehouse and factory rushing along the downward road. And there are the sheep of Christ's flock, with few to lead them beside the still waters and to make them lie down and feed in the green pastures of His truth and love. May the love of Christ constrain us to do what we can for all such.

THE MISSING NAMES.

EZRA II. 61-3.

HOW came these names to be omitted? Was it in consequence of any neglect of these men or of their ancestors? We do not know all the particulars of the history, but the facts actually recorded are sufficient to raise some very useful reflections, even if they do not enable us to point to the real cause of the omission.

It appears that five hundred years before an ancestor of these children of Koz had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite.

This was the same Barzillai who entertained David and his retinue when he fled from Absalom. He was a wealthy man, "a very great man," as the sacred history tells us.

Now, was there no connection between this wealthy marriage and the disappearance of the names of his descendants from the roll of the priests. The children of Koz, we read, were called after Barzillai. They might have been at first registered on the roll of the sons of Aaron, and probably not have ceased to be reckoned amongst the descendants of Barzillai, but it seems probable that they gradually came to regard descent from Aaron as of less importance than their position as descendants of a wealthy landowner.

The first ancestor, perhaps, loved the peaceful retirement of Gilead, and delighted to "abide among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleating of the flocks," more than to frequent the courts of the house of the Lord.

There is but little wisdom in affecting to despise riches; they are God's gifts, and should excite thankfulness as well as humility. They have their dangers too—the rich enter "hardly," that is, with difficulty, into the kingdom of heaven. The man who becomes rich acquires new thoughts and feelings and prejudices, and his children are quick to catch his spirit. They are careful to maintain their position, and to have their names enrolled

among the wealthy, with^r corresponding carelessness as to being identified with those whom God has made kings and priests to Himself!

Perhaps the neglect may have occurred in Babylon, where the captives found it as hard to believe that Jerusalem would be rebuilt as their fathers to credit the prophecies of its destruction.

Jeremiah himself needed distinct encouragement to buy a field from his uncle. And the Temple! Was it ever to rise, and would the priests ever minister there?

But the appointed years of captivity come to an end—the Temple is about to be rebuilt, and the priesthood is once more in honour; and now we see the consequences of the way in which the names had been registered. The sons of Habaiah are, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

How many a one who has begun well, of Christian parentage and associations, has gradually preferred that which comes from a position in the world to the honour which comes from God only, until it can with difficulty be said where they are in their souls or what they really possess of divine things! The priest with Urim and Thummim alone can judge. “The Lord knoweth them that are His.” Meantime they lose that which is typified by eating of the most holy things.

ANON.

“SHOULD CHRISTIANS GO TO THE THEATRE?”

THIS question, strange to say, one still hears occasionally, in spite of the fact that it has been asked and answered so often throughout the centuries. The early Christians believed that the excitement of the theatre, the stirring of the emotions, the appeal to the senses, and too often to the sensuous, destroyed that quietness of mind, that poise of soul, which have ever been essential to spiritual well-being.

Tertullian, who lived about A.D. 150, relates that a Christian woman, on her return from the theatre, was found to be possessed with an evil spirit. An exorcist, being called in, asked the demon how he dared to take possession of a Christian. He, speaking through the lips of his victim, made answer : “ I had a perfect right to, I found her in my kingdom.”

The story may be partly legendary, but that it embodies a warning to which we do well to take heed, in these days of spiritualism and demonology, cannot be doubted. It would seem that, owing to the unfaithfulness of God’s people, the setting aside of the truth

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as to the Holy Spirit, and the general and widespread giving up of God, that Satan is rapidly regaining this power even in countries where the restraining of the Holy Spirit had for a time given deliverance. Therefore beware, Christian, of being found in his territory, lest you—oh ! appalling thought !—should be his victim. Your only safeguard is to be kept by the power of God—the greater than that which is in the world—and to be living habitually in that kingdom of God’s dear Son, into which He has translated you. It may be that, though truly converted, you have not yet, as a matter of soul-experience, come into this kingdom, this gladsome place in which there is no lack, no room to wish for the things of that other kingdom from which you have so lately come. You must then turn to Him of whom God loves to speak as the Son of His love, and yield yourself to Him, and in the knowledge of Him you will find His kingdom and all else that your soul needs.

May He grant it, for His Name’s sake.

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

B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. S.—1 Corinthians vi. 9, 10.—It is utterly impossible that evil-doers such as are named in these verses should inherit the kingdom of God. The paths of unrighteousness lead away from that kingdom and not to it. Now Corinth was the home of such, and into the midst of these depraved classes the apostle went with that gospel which is able to deliver those who believe it from the consequences of sin and also from its power. Washed, sanctified, and justified these believing Corinthians were. Should they, then, think little of the sins from which they have been washed? That could not be. Moreover, their bodies were members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost. Could they use them for unholy purposes? To do so would be to raise doubts as to whether they had been saved at all.

But coming closer to your question. A true believer *may* fall into sin of this kind. It is a serious thing, sorrowful and deplorable in the extreme. There is forgiveness and recovery, we need not say. But what repentance, what heart-agony it entails! And if he should happen to be one who has been engaged in public service for Christ, it is all the more solemn, as bringing greater reproach on the holy name of the Master whose servant he professed to be. We do not say that such a one may never be restored to paths of service again, for the grace of God is very great, but the scars caused by sins of this nature are hardly ever effaced on earth.

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B. B.—It always seems to us a backward movement for any one who has been long associated with the people of God “in breaking of bread” to go back to baptism, which, if it be anything, is surely the rite which introduces into the Christian circle, if, indeed, a man is not born into it in being born in a country where Christianity is the professed religion of the nation. In heathen lands this could not be, and baptism is the door by which one leaves heathen for Christian ground. But if your conscience is not at rest as to the matter it would be well for you to be baptized—if you believe it to be the will of God—and thus the question would cease to trouble you.

R. M.—James v. 14-16.—Do you not think that the case supposed here is that of one who had brought upon himself the chastening hand of God? He is sick, and no medicine can cure him, because he is under the discipline of his God and Father on account of unrepented sins, and sins that should be confessed to others. If at length his conscience is awakened, and he views his course in the presence of God, he may call to his bedside the elders of the assembly, who may pray over him and—adopting a common custom—anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. It is then added, that the prayer *of faith* shall heal the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be one who has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. The gracious end in view had been reached, the discipline had done its work, and the assembly, in the person of the elders, recognized

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it, and the individual was healed and his sins remitted.

We do not, therefore, look upon this case as one of ordinary sickness to which we are all liable. If any should ask whether, in this our day, the "elders of the assembly" should be called in by the sick man, and whether they should do what is here enjoined, expecting the same results to follow, our answer is this: If a man is sick who has committed sins unrepented of and unconfessed, if his conscience has become alive to what he has done, if he believes that God's loving but strong hand has brought him to his bed, from which no doctor's skill alone can raise him up, he may call for godly men in the assembly and ask them to pray over him. If they come *and can pray in faith*, then the prayer of faith shall heal the sick, and the Lord will intervene. Anointing with oil is a small matter in itself even in a country where the practice is commonplace—it is *the prayer of faith* that is effectual. But all this assumes that a gracious work has gone on in the sufferer's soul by means of the discipline he has undergone. And so the Apostle goes on to say, "Confess your faults one to another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." But this is serious work and a very different thing from the miserable and pretentious caricatures of which we sometimes hear in these days of religious deceits.
