

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

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

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

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

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

THE GOD OF THE VALLEYS.

“The Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys.”—1 KINGS XX. 28.

OUR lives are made up of hills and valleys. We are not always standing upon the lofty summits of spiritual delight, nor always in the cloudless enjoyment of the presence of God. There are depths as well as heights, valleys as well as hill-tops, in the Christian's life.

I do not refer to the changing *experiences* which seem to be the lot of many of God's children. Some days they feel happy, and their hearts are full of song and praise. But these bright seasons give place to dreary hours of depression, when everything seems wrong. They have made fresh discoveries of the badness of their hearts. They have again suffered defeat in the conflict with the foe, and they are at a loss to know what the matter with them is. Will things ever be different? Are their steps to be always dogged by failure and sin? And questions like these perhaps beget doubts as to God's love and goodness, or at all events as to their relationships with Him.

Now, experiences of this kind are not really

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Christian experiences at all, though they are the experiences of many who are undoubtedly Christians. Those who have them need to learn the secret of deliverance, and to be brought into the blessed liberty which is the heritage of the children of God.

But this paper treats of what is normal to us as Christians. Under the Israelitish economy there was a special order of *priests* whose privilege it was to draw near to God, and minister to Him in connection with holy things. These, and the Levites, were set apart for Jehovah's service. The rest of the tribes consisted of just ordinary people who had their everyday avocations to attend to, "*common people*," as they were called (Lev. iv. 27) in contrast to the priests. The Christian combines in himself the functions of both these classes. Every believer is a priest (Rev. i. 6), and as such may with boldness enter the place of His presence (Heb. x. 19). But he is also one of the "*common people*" in that he has to do with secular things as well as with what is more distinctly the service of God.

My readers will, I think, understand what I mean. There are seasons when we are able to leave earthly things behind, and be entirely occupied with the things of God. We dwell in thought upon the love of Christ, and all that His love has wrought in order to make us His very own, and we turn to God as the Source

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and Spring of all our blessing, the One whose deep love moved Him to give His Son for us, and we worship Him. By the Spirit of His Son sent forth into our hearts, we cry, "Abba, Father." We know He has made us His sons, and that He loves us with a love that can only be measured by His love to Jesus (John xvii. 23). In the joy of that blessed relationship we draw near to Him. Our hearts range through the length and breadth of all that He has purposed for us and we delight to think that we are destined to be conformed to the image of His Son, to be co-heirs with Christ, to dwell with Him for ever.

These are sunny hill-tops indeed. These are the "high places" where our souls delight to walk. But we cannot always be there. There are the daily tasks to be performed, the daily bread to be won in shop or office, factory or field. Then there are the duties of the home, family responsibilities to be attended to, a thousand things that claim our care.

As God's "priests" we have to do with the holy things of the mountain-tops; as "common people" we have to do with the ordinary affairs of life. These latter are what I refer to as the *valleys* of the Christian's pathway.

Now arises a question of supreme importance. Is our God the God of the valleys as well as of the hills? The Syrians of 901 B.C.

said He was not. The enemy of A.D. 1913 says He is not. We are told that "business is business, and Christianity is Christianity," by which is meant that the two things must be kept entirely separate, as if our lives were built up in two water-tight compartments, and as if the God whom we know as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in whose purposes of eternal love we rejoice, has nothing to do with our business, nor with the way we conduct it.

But is this so? Let us turn to the scripture cited at the beginning of this paper. The Israelites had just won a great victory over the Syrians. The latter could not understand why their vastly superior force should have met with such a defeat. The only explanation they could think of was that Israel's God was God of the hills. "*Let us fight against them in the plain,*" said they, "*and surely we shall be stronger than they*" (v. 23).

Now, of course, it is true that our God *is* the God of the hills, and maybe He has given us many a wonderful victory, as such. One of Satan's great objects is to deprive God's people of the enjoyment of their spiritual and heavenly blessings. He would occupy our minds exclusively with earthly things. Many Christians, it is to be feared, know little of God as the God of the hills. They know something of His goodness and providential

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care in connection with the things of this life, but to speak to them of His holy love, His eternal counsels, all that He has purposed for Christ's glory, and for us, in and through Him, is to speak to them a strange and unfamiliar language. The enemy has succeeded in blinding them to the highest and best of what is theirs to enjoy. They have never really won the victory over the Syrians *on the hills*.

There are those, however, who by God's grace have done so. They have appropriated in the energy of faith that heavenly land, and now they seek help of God that by means of the whole armour described in Ephesians VI. 13-17 they may in no wise be deprived of the fruits of the victory.

But is there not for such a very real danger in an opposite direction? What says the enemy, the Syrian of the twentieth century? If he has failed to gain the victory in connection with the high and holy things of God, he will attack us on the plains, in connection with ordinary affairs. "The Lord is God of the hills," he says, "*but He is not God of the valleys.*" And the awful fact is that some Christians are ready to believe, and repeat as truth to others, this saying of the Syrian foe! He would persuade us to shut *God* out of our business life! "Business is business," he declares. Of course. But is business for the Christian the same thing as business for the

worldling? Are his aims the same? Are his principles identical? Will not his methods be affected by his Christianity?

Because a thing is "generally done," is the Christian to do it? Because certain questionable transactions are "usual," is the Christian to sanction them? What must be the condition of soul of him who would hesitate for a moment to give a whole-hearted reply in the negative to these questions?

Yet cases are known where Christian men who *seem* to be quite at home on the hill-tops amid the wonderful things of God, and can *talk* most intelligently as to His purposes and counsels, have excused themselves for lack of strict integrity in commercial life with the plea that "business is business"! It is the ancient Syrian lie revived: "The Lord is . . . not God of the valleys."

But He is, and He expects that we should acknowledge Him as such, and transact our affairs in His fear, and glorify Him in connection with our everyday lives, by shunning every aim and method, every practice and line of conduct that His holy eye could not rest upon with approval.

What an unspeakable *comfort* it is to know that God is the God of the valleys as well as of the hills, and that we may speak freely to Him not only about *His* great and wonderful things, but about *our own* little, ordinary matters.

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What a relief to be able to consult Him in difficulty, to be supported by the assurance of His gracious care in times of stress, to put everything into His wise and loving hands when the burden seems greater than we can bear. Oh, what a loss is theirs who know not God as the God of the valleys! How great is the blessing missed by those who do not walk with Him in their everyday business life!

But there are deeper and darker valleys than those of our *everyday* life. Is God the God of these valleys too?

There is the valley of *failing health*. Things which we used to do with ease become a heavy burden to us. The hours of the day pass wearily by, only to be followed by nights of wakefulness and pain. Can God give us the victory in a valley like that? He can! He can! He can make us *feel* the tenderness of the everlasting arms underneath us. He can turn days of weariness into seasons of unspeakable joy. Like a mother, hushing her child to sleep with fond, loving words, He can soothe our chafed and murmuring spirits and whisper words of wonderful comfort in our ears. With all the suffering He can give grace, not only to bear it in patience, but to glorify Him in it.

Then there is the still deeper, darker valley of *bereavement*. Is God the God of *that* valley? Can He illumine *that* dark place with the light

of His love? Ay, that He can. He can draw near to us in such a way that we know the reality of His presence as never before. He can fill our sorrowing hearts with sweetest comfort.

How terrible the grief, in time of bereavement, of those who do not know God as the God of the valleys. The enemy takes occasion by their loss to sow seeds of distrust and rebellion in their hearts. And their sorrow remains without comfort. Some object of their love is torn from their embrace by the hand of death, and they stand in the presence of their loss—alone! No knowledge of divine love to lift their hearts above their sorrow, no sustaining grace to help them bear it. They know not the God of the valleys.

Be it ours, then, Christian reader, not only to walk with God upon our high places as did Habakkuk of old (chap. III. 19), but to walk with Him also in the valleys. Some of the greatest victories recorded in Scripture were *valley* victories. The valley of Ajalon was the scene of Joshua's conquest of the five kings of the Amorites. The valley of Elah was the scene of David's triumph over the Philistine champion.

And in connection with the valleys of our lives the greatest victories are to be won. And God is there to help us win them, for, praise His Name, He is the God of the valleys as well as of the hills!

H. P. B.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

“For 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.”—2 COR. V. 10.

SO then one thing is certain—if we are to take the words of the Apostle in their plain and obvious meaning—we shall all be manifested, every one of us, before the judgment seat of Christ. That is not a fact to be treated with levity.

We distinguish at the outset between the judgment seat of Christ, before which the saints shall be manifested, and the great white Throne of Revelation xx. that shall summon the dead, both small and great, to stand before it. Nor should we confound either of these with the judgment of the nations—the sheep and the goats of Matthew xxv. They are different scenes, belonging to different times, as every intelligent Bible student knows.

In case any should not have noticed it we may observe that the judgment of Revelation xx. deals only with “the *dead*, both small and great.” On the other hand, the judgment of Matthew xxv. does not concern the dead—it treats only of the *living* nations and the brethren of the King.

To some of our readers the thought of

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standing before the judgment seat of Christ may seem to disagree with our Lord's words in John v. 24. There we are told that the believer "does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life" (N.T.). And that, of course, is true. The forgiveness of his sins, his acceptance with God, and the certainty of his present and ultimate salvation are not matters of doubt reserved for the day of judgment to decide. The believer, if we may so speak, has already pleaded "guilty" at the bar of God. And guilty indeed he was. But he knows that the One who could have condemned—holy and just is He—is the One by whom he has been justified. Who then shall now condemn? Who lay anything to his charge? (Rom. VIII. 33-4). If justified *from* his sins he cannot be judged *for* them afterwards. The two things are mutually contradictory. Into judgment, in that sense, no believer ever comes.

The judgment seat of Christ, then, implies no uncertainty as to the believer's everlasting happiness. Saved by grace and kept by the power of God through faith, he waits in patience for the coming of the Lord and the day of glory.

Here let me remark that believers stand toward God in the twofold relationship of sons and servants. And each suggests a different train of thought. For instance, here is a friend of mine who is head of a commercial house. As his boys grow up he drafts them into his busi-

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ness and gives to each a place according to ability and age. These sons are now his servants also, and subject to promotion or discharge. As sons he is their father ; as servants he is their master. There are differences, too, between the sons themselves. One may hold a higher position than another and receive a larger salary. But when they sit by the fire-side and at the family table there is no difference. All alike, from the eldest to the youngest, are children in the house of their father. Distinctions, rightly recognized in business, have no place in the family circle. Here it is not master and servants, but father and sons, and all the boys are brothers.

And so is it in *our* Father's house, the home of His children who are loved by Him—every one of them—even as our Saviour Himself is loved (John xvii. 23). In this connection there is no difference. All are equally, before Him, “holy and without blame.” And He will rejoice to have them around Himself, not as angels, but as sons—each one supremely happy, and all of them conformed to the image of His Son—the Firstborn among many brethren (Eph. i. 4, 5 ; Rom. viii. 29).

Where does the judgment seat of Christ come in, in all this ? Nowhere. It does not connect itself with salvation and the Father's house, but with service and discipleship and our manner of life. Both the parable of the talents

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in Matthew XXV. 14-30, and that of the pounds in Luke XIX. 12-27, show this. The former tells of a day of reckoning, the latter of an examination of the servants to see how much each had gained by trading. Here our responsibility as servants necessarily has its place.

But let us look at some passages that treat of the subject with more or less directness.

I.

“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by [or against] myself ; yet am I not hereby justified ; but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God.”—I COR. IV. 3-5.

The Apostle Paul thought it a very small thing that the Corinthian assembly should summon him to stand at their bar and to submit to be examined at their hands. A greater Judgment Seat made theirs look very small indeed. Nor did he claim to be competent to judge and pass an award on his own actions. For if his conscience had nothing to accuse him of, yet that was not in itself enough to prove him blameless. “He that examines me,” said he, “is the Lord.” Things may have escaped the Apostle’s eye which the Lord saw. Even

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the judgment of the best of men is not infallible. The Lord's judgment is. Therefore he counsels them to judge nothing before the time. The Lord is coming, and at His tribunal the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light and the counsels of the heart made manifest, and then every man shall have his praise from God. Solemn considerations indeed, which we shall do well to remember. Happy ones, too, by which our souls shall be strengthened if we walk uprightly.

II.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are."—I COR. III. 10-17.

The bearing of this passage is not upon the life of all saints in general, but upon those who are in a special sense the servants of the Lord.

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Of all saints it may be said “ *Ye serve the Lord Christ,*” but there are gifted men who labour in word and doctrine—they are called to such service in a way that ordinary folks are not. And there are others who take the place of servants and are held responsible for the place they take, though, in fact, they are but unconverted men—teachers of religion, but themselves unsaved. It is of *workmen* that Paul here speaks, and he mentions three sorts. He himself had laid the foundation, but others built upon it, and their labours are likened to gold, silver, precious stones, and also to wood, grass, straw—some worthless, some good. The first is a true workman, his work abides, it stands the test and he shall receive his reward. The second builds with perishable material and his work is burned up. Yet he himself shall be saved, even as Lot was saved, though his possessions perished in the fire that consumed the cities of the plain. The third is one who defiles or corrupts the temple of God. He builds not merely with worthless material but with that which is corrupting. His end shall be destruction, for he is an evil servant and an unsaved man. Of such Paul speaks in Acts xx. 29, 30, and the Apostle Peter in the second chapter of his second epistle.

It is well that we should see that men are dealt with according to their profession. If any one calls himself a servant of the Lord he

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is bound to accept the responsibilities attaching to that position, even though he be but a Christian in name. Or we might easily take the wicked and slothful servant of Matthew xxv. 26 to be a saved man after all. And there are those who have fallen into that mistake and would fain have us believe that the unprofitable servant, cast into outer darkness, will emerge out of it when his character is perfected. But there is the clearest evidence to the contrary. Is it possible that any one who knows his Lord and Master could describe Him as hard and unjust, reaping where He had not sown, and gathering where He had not strawed? This is proof enough that he knew nothing of the One whose servant he professed to be.

III.

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For 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."

2 COR. V. 9, 10.

The remembrance of his having to be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ was one of the great factors that influenced the Apostle's life. For human opinion he cared nothing, but if he could win the approbation of Him whose bond slave he loved to style himself, that would be indeed a prize worth possessing. For this he earnestly strove. Oh, that it were so with

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us ! For *we*, too, must be manifested there, and the days of our life, buried in the grave of the forgotten past, shall live again and tell their tale before the judgment seat of Christ. Deeds done in the body shall have their answer there, be they good or bad. What shall be said in that great day about our strifes, our contentions, our divisions to which, alas ! we have attached His sacred Name ? What shall *we* say about them as we look into His eyes who bade us love one another as He had loved us ? One gentle word of reproof from His lips might well break our hearts ! What shall we say about our worldliness when He reminds us that He gave Himself for our sins, so that He should deliver us out of the present evil world ? What shall we say about our lack of devotedness, for the want of which we took so little interest in His saints so dear to His heart, and cared next to nothing for dying men and women hastening, by the broad road, to their grave and the doom beyond ? The very thought of it even now might move us to bitter tears such as sinful Peter shed when the Lord looked upon him in His unutterable love ! But there is another side to which it is a relief to turn. What disclosures there will be of His unfailing grace—how He succoured us in hours of danger, guarded us when unseen evils threatened our way, folded us in His bosom and carried us as a shepherd carries his lambs

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over rough and rugged roads. Oh, what sights will then appear that shall fill these poor hearts of ours with adoring praise !

“There with what joy reviewing
 Past conflicts, dangers, fears,
 His hand our foes subduing,
 And drying all our tears,—
 Our hearts with rapture burning,
 The path we shall retrace,
 Where now our souls are learning
 The riches of His grace.”

But if the judgment seat of Christ was a mighty factor in the life of the Apostle Paul, there was a still mightier one, of which he speaks in the same chapter (2 Cor. v. 14). Here are his words : “For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead ; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” *The love of Christ*—this was the mighty moral force that energized his whole life and led him to live, not unto himself, but unto Him who died for him and rose again. And where this is wanting there may be abundant labour and blamelessness of walk without one shred of *devotedness to Christ*. Service then becomes legality and the life a constant striving for a reward and a high place in the Kingdom of God by and by. And this is the fatal blot in much

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of the current teaching on the judgment seat of Christ. While not denying the *final* salvation of every true, believing soul, it goads the conscience on, it places upon the shoulders a burden far from light, and frightens us, in case of failure, with threats of many stripes and of our having no place with Christ in His throne and kingdom. This is law, not grace, the drudgery of a slave and not the joyous service of a heart under the all-powerful sway of the love of Christ.

Rewards there will be and places of distinction in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But these are set before us as encouragements, *never as motives*. And as for those who sit at His right hand and at His left in His kingdom—places which the mother of Zebedee's children coveted for her two sons (Matt. xx. 21)—what shall their functions be? For seats of honour will not be idle seats even in that bright day. Now the Lord Himself has told His watching servants that He will make them sit down to meat while *He* comes forth and serves them (Luke xii. 37). Never will He lay aside His servant character, but even in those scenes of unfading glory He will minister to their chiefest joys. And it may be that those who have served Him best on earth in serving His saints, shall still serve Him there in ministering in endless ways to the happiness of His own. Those who are the

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highest in the kingdom may be likeliest to Him in that respect.

To the overcomer in Pergamos it is promised that he shall have "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. II. 17). Of all the gifts and rewards which the gracious Lord shall give this seems to us the one that will be most deeply prized.

"Called by that secret name
Of undisclosed delight,
(Blest answer to reproach and shame)
Graved on the stone of white."

Thrones, crowns, public recognitions—these will be valued as the gifts of His hand, but this exceeds them all—some secret link between the soul and Christ, some hidden spring of joy which no one else will know.

Now we close. How many things have been left unsaid! But our pages will allow no more. May it be ours to receive the "white stone" of our Lord and Master's approbation. Should He say to us in that day, "Well done, good and faithful servant," what more *as His servants* will there be to seek, though He may give us more? Other joys connected with the family of God and with the Assembly as the Bride of the Lamb there will be, no doubt, for divine grace is so rich in its giving that it will place in our hands a full and an overflowing cup that shall call forth our endless praise.

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

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

WHAT a lofty standard of love is set before us in those words ! We are to love one another as Christ loved us. Now, *how* did Christ love us ? Well, He loved us notwithstanding all our infirmities, all our failures, and all our sins. He did not love us because we had none of these things, but in spite of them all. His was a love that rose above every barrier, and proved itself superior to every hindrance. Many waters, even the dark waters of death, could not quench the love of Jesus. He loved us and gave Himself for us. Now, this is to be our model. We are to love one another as Christ loved us.

But there are two kinds of spurious love against which we have to watch. These are *sectarian* love and *clique* love. We are in danger of loving persons merely because they hold the same opinions as we do ; or because their habits and tastes are agreeable to us. The former is the love of *sect* ; the latter the love of *clique*. Christian love is to love the image of Christ wherever we see it—to love others not because they agree with us, but because they are agreeable to Christ and reflect His blessed image.

“HE CAN’T KEEP SAVED!”

SPEAKING with a professed Christian some time ago, I made inquiry as to the well-being of another whom in former times we both had known intimately. “Well,” was the reply, “H—— is doing pretty well in some ways. Poor fellow, he has only one great trouble, and that is, he *can’t keep saved!* Why, I don’t know how many times he has had religion, but he always seems to lose it again. I feel very sorry for him.”

“If what you say is true, he certainly is an object of pity; but did it never occur to you,” I asked, “that perhaps the trouble is he has never really been saved at all? Or if ever saved, he has been confused by bad teaching, and instead of losing salvation he loses the sense of communion with God, and, for lack of knowledge, gets into darkness?”

But my friend was very positive that neither of these hypotheses explained the case, and he cried in amazement, “You surely don’t mean to say that if a man has salvation there is no danger whatever of losing it!”

In reply I endeavoured to direct him to a few scriptures which in the course of this brief article I desire to bring to the reader’s notice; but as the issue of our conversation was quite unsatisfactory, I refrain from quoting more of it, preferring to seek, by divine grace, to press

home a few words upon the consciences of any in a similar state, or troubled in the same way as the man of whom we were speaking.

Everywhere one meets poor discouraged souls who tell a like story. Their trouble is a very real one and needs the most tender, gracious ministry. Anxious indeed they are. “ Disturbed as to eternal things ” seems to describe their continual condition. At times they hope that all is well ; when perchance the influence of some stirring address or melting meeting is upon them ; and at such moments they do enjoy a little cessation from spiritual anxiety, but even then there is the continual fear, soon to be practically realized, of losing *it* all again. I emphasize the *it*, for here I believe the whole trouble lies. Instead of resting in the finished work of the cross, and the One who accomplished it, who there was “ made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him ” (2 Cor. v. 21), they are continually taken up with some fancied inward work which they hope is an evidence of salvation, but which if it be no longer manifested leaves them in a worse condition than ever. And, alas, many who should know better, encourage them in their course and thus but help on the delusion.

Did it ever occur to you, my reader, that of all the *bona fide* conversions noted in the New Testament we never read of one of these back-

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boneless people who could not *keep saved* after the work was once accomplished? Quite the contrary; of those really saved the Apostle Peter writes: “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you, *who are kept* by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time ” (1 Peter I. 3-5). They were kept for the heavenly inheritance, and it was reserved, or kept for them—and both by God Himself—so that all danger of missing connections was eliminated.

But carefully observe, those so addressed are people who are “ born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. And this is the word which *by the gospel is preached unto you* ” (1 Peter I. 23, 25).

They did not merely “ turn over a new leaf,” or “ make a start for the kingdom,” or “ decide to lead a Christian life ”; but they were “ begotten,” and that by God, even as we read of others in John I. 12, 13, “ As many as *received Him*, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name, *which were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the

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will of man, but of God.” New birth, then, is a work of God, and true of all poor sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving in faith the word of life.

And such, being born anew, have a lively, or a living, hope. Hope here may well have the force of assurance, even as in Colossians I. 27, “ Christ in you, the *hope* of glory,” evidently far different from the vague expectation people often have in mind when they use the word—for it is a hope grounded on the sure word of God, and therefore one that can never be disappointed.

That for which these believers hope is an *inheritance*—something for which another has laboured, but which they are given freely to enjoy, not something they have themselves earned. Salvation, whether present or final, is altogether the fruit of the Saviour's toil ! This inheritance is reserved in heaven ; it is stable, secure, and can never be forfeited, for they who are to share it are kept by divine power till they shall enter upon it. Surely here is security !

We see, not a poor weak people struggling to keep saved—to hold on to an undefinable something which they designate for convenience' sake by the word *it* ; but a company of blood-redeemed sinners washed from their stains, free from all guilt, born of God, and He, by His own omnipotent power, keeping or

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guarding them all along their homeward journey.

This, indeed, is but the answer of the Father to the prayer of our Lord Jesus in John xvii. 11 : “ Holy Father, *keep* through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me.” And assured we may well be that not one who has ever been really saved will be left to perish. But let the reader carefully distinguish between God’s salvation and some human or satanic counterfeit, whereby many are deceived.

All are born again who have believed the record God hath given of His Son. Such are among His sheep to whom He has given eternal life, and who, He declares, shall never perish (John x. 27-29 ; 1 John v. 9-13). And uninstructed indeed must be the believer who, having Christ for his Life, his Sacrifice, his Propitiation, his Justification, his Sanctification, his High Priest, his Advocate and his Head, would speak of, or in thought entertain, the possibility of losing *it* and not being able to keep *it*. Rather will he rejoice that he himself is *kept by Him* who has said, “ Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost ” (John xvii. 12).

Restless anxious one, cease then thy striving and rest without anxiety in the finished work of the cross, and the unfailing word of God, which declares that “ all that believe are justified from all things ” (Acts xiii. 39). He

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has made peace by the blood of His cross, and "being justified by faith we have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). This wondrous peace I can never lose, for *it is not in my keeping*, and I, the believer and the recipient of such grace, can never be lost, for I am *kept* by power divine.

H. A. I.

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M. E.—If circumstances over which you have no control prevent you from partaking of the Supper of the Lord with other Christians with whom you happily walk, you may greatly regret it, but there is nothing to reproach yourself for. Are there no others in your own little town—not even two or three—who, not as Baptists, not as Wesleyans, not as Episcopalians, for these names are unknown to Scripture, but as simple members of Christ, could meet together to remember Him in the Breaking of Bread? If there are such, it is their privilege to do so, and He Himself would be with them according to His faithful word: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). If you know of none such, we would affectionately suggest your praying that some may be exercised about the matter and that you may get to know one another. The Breaking of Bread in remembrance of our precious Saviour who loves us so much is not a privilege only to be enjoyed when some official is present to administer. Alas! the Supper of our Lord has been shorn of its simplicity and

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beauty by human arrangements which, however well meant, have not the sanction of the Word of God. May God graciously guide you and give you understanding as to His will. Psalm xxxii. 8 is a fine word for faith to plead before the throne of grace.

J. A. E.—Matthew vi. 13.—“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” No right-minded person could ever think that God would at any time tempt us to do wrong. “Temptation” is here used in the sense of trial from which the one who thus prays desires to be spared, as also to be saved from evil, or the evil one. And if we feel our weakness it is very natural that we should thus pray. We learn from James i. 13 that God tempts no man to do evil. He may allow faith to be tested, as in Abraham’s case in Genesis xxii. 1, and He may also suffer a saint to be tried and sifted, as Job was and Simon Peter too. From such ordeals we may well pray to be spared. For though Satan has his limitations and cannot go further than he is permitted, as is strikingly seen in Job’s case, yet who would not shrink from such temptation even though that man is called “blessed” who endures it (James i. 12)? Such is the way we understand those words in Matthew vi. 13.

P. L.—Philippians iii. 18, 19.—We look upon the persons of whom the Apostle here speaks in such solemn terms as individuals who had crept in among the saints, had taken up the Christian profession, but whose life was a shameless denial of it. They called themselves Christians, but their ways were a flat contradiction of those great

truths that cluster around the cross of Christ. Self was the centre of their circle, the things in which they gloried were only to their shame, they were earthly minded. What could the end of such be? The truths they avowedly accepted had no power over their lives, and they held them in word only. They were not apostates, for they had not renounced the Christian faith; nor do we think they were converted persons who, listening to the world, had strayed away from Christ. Of no converted person could it be said, "Whose end is destruction." Now, that is what the Apostle does say of these.

In reference to Psalm XL. we may be certain that in verses 6-8 it is Christ who speaks. Hebrews x. 5, 9 places that beyond dispute. We can understand difficulties being felt in applying verse 12 of our psalm to Him. But they vanish away when we remember that He in unfathomable grace took our place and became our Substitute upon the cross and confessed our sins as if they were His own. Personally He was ever the Holy One who knew no sin, and every detail of His life here below answered perfectly to the will of God. In Him God ever found His delight. Had it been otherwise He could not have stood in our stead. But in coming where we were in our guilt and distance from God, He had to suffer the consequences, in order that atonement might be made. Viewed *in this light alone*, we can take the language of verse 12 as that of our Lord Himself.

X.—We hope to answer your series of questions in an early issue.

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LUKE XV.

THE parables that compose this chapter are of incomparable beauty. No matter how often they are read they never weary, never grow old and stale. They are full of music, which seems to get richer and more mellow as the years go by. Here are fields and gardens where the grass is always green and the flowers are always blooming, and the air is full of the singing of the birds. We bow the head and bless God for the fifteenth chapter of Luke.

See! the tax-gatherers and notorious sinners draw near to hear Him, and He welcomes them every one. No fastidious preacher is He, disdaining to preach to the common people and to moral outcasts, for these are the very folks He wants and for whom He has wonderful words of life. Of such coarse clay He can make vessels of mercy. But in so doing He will provoke the murmurings of Scribes and Pharisees, and there will be a storm of scornful words! Never mind. He will have an answer that cannot be gainsaid.

“What man of you,” says He, “having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness

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and go after that which is lost until he find it ? ” That is exactly what any of them would do. If there is one sick child in the house the mother thinks more of him than of all the rest who are strong and hale and hearty. Her care, her concern, her anxious solicitude all centre in the ailing child. And if the sheep is found and the dying child is nursed back to life again, is there not rejoicing ? And shall heaven be less beautiful than earth ? Shall a shepherd’s heart, a mother’s heart, be tenderer than God’s ? That can never be. “ There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Do not pass over that saying too quickly. If we are travelling through a waste howling wilderness we do not mind how fast the coach goes, but when we come to hills and valleys of surpassing loveliness we cry out, “ *Go slowly here.*”

Joy in heaven ! joy in the presence of the angels of God ! Is joy, then, a stranger in those celestial courts, a visitor whose face is only seen on rare occasions ? No, heaven is her home, her own dear native land ! But there are times when her hand strikes the deeper chords, and the hearts of the angels are stirred with sublimer pleasure. What is the cause of it ?—some great event that thrills nations from centre to circumference ? Nay, this is the cause—some wayward one, some wanderer on the broad road of folly brought to repent-

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ance and to cry from a stricken heart, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" Then there is joy in the presence of the angels of God.

And the second story of the missing piece of silver tells the same blessed tale. Pains-taking on the seeker's side, and joy that must be shared with others when the lost is found.

But in the third the interest deepens. No sheep now, no silver piece, but a man like ourselves whose heart and will have been captured by the world and who is determined to have his fling. And he has it. Away from the old home, away into the far country he goes and spends his money recklessly—on the turf, at the gambling-table, and in more than doubtful companionship—burning the candle at both ends. Then comes the crash! No more money, no more houses or lands to throw into the melting-pot, all, all is gone to the last penny. See him now, sent into the farmer's fields to feed swine! And there *he comes to himself*, the delirium is over, the fever is gone, the awful spell is broken. Blessed moment in any man's history! Now his eyes are opened and the work of repentance begins. Now he sees the depths to which he has sunk and to which his folly and sins have brought him. What distress, what grief, what agony of mind follow! And were this all he would surely go down under the dark waters of despair. But thoughts of his father's house,

and the plenty that reigns there, steal into his mind, and he resolves to go home. Blessed resolve! For though a man has sinned ten thousand sins there is grace enough in God to pardon every one of them. Let him not despair, let him not fling away hope. There is bread enough and to spare yet, though he is now perishing with hunger. But God is his *only* resource. Vain to seek any other. There is no other, either in heaven or on earth. The sinful, ruined soul is shut up to God, and if there is no forgiveness with Him, then into the bottomless pit he must go.

But will God, indeed, show mercy to the worst of men—to those who have lost everything and who have not one shred of moral worth? Similar questions may have agitated the mind of the prodigal son as he turned his back on the far country, the scene of his follies and his sins. Behold the blessed answer! The father sees him while yet a long way off and runs to meet him, and falls upon his neck and covers him with kisses. In broken accents he confesses his sins and conceals nothing. Then the best robe is brought forth, and the ring and the shoes, and then the fatted calf is killed and there is music and dancing! Such is the home-coming of the prodigal, such the grace of his father's heart—grace that is beyond all telling! Oh, what a tale it is! It needs more than human

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lips to tell it and to unfold its wondrous meaning. It is the revelation of God's heart of love, and of that grace which abounds over all our sin. This is the perfect love which casts out fear—that clothes us with the best robe—that places the ring on our hand, and shoes on our feet, so that we, forgiven, reconciled, and loved, might be even now as dear children in the house and home of our Father on high.

And all this is revealed in pictorial language that it might come home the more easily to our poor dull hearts and be mixed with faith there. Christian, is not all that true of you? Are you not the one who has been welcomed thus and so richly blessed? You are not afraid to confess this, are you? No feelings of our unworthiness must enter here. It is God acting in grace—not dealing with us according to our deservings, but according to His own large and loving thoughts. Did the prodigal *deserve* the welcome, the kisses, the robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the music, and the dancing? No; grace was reigning, and all these were showered on the prodigal freely. So is it in our case.

Why should we take a lower place than His love would give us? Is God pleased by our doing so? A seat just inside heaven's door is all some dare hope for when the journey of life is over—they are worthy, so they think, of no more. But they are not *worthy* of that.

What good deeds have any of us done that we should be worthy even of a back chair in that heavenly home? Oh, let us cast away every thought of our deserts. If God delights to make manifest the riches of the glory of His grace by bringing us near to Himself, as His children, and fitting us to be there, who are we that we should raise our voice against it under the plea of our unworthiness? It is the cry of self, hateful self, clothed in the garments of a false humility.

If any ask whether the same story of grace is told elsewhere in language that is not pictorial, we answer, yes, and turn at once to Ephesians i. 3-6. Listen to this:—

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself, 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.”

EPHESIANS II. 4-7.—“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

And all these things are said of those who once were dead in sins, children of wrath, having no hope, and without God in the

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world! No wonder the Apostle adds, "By grace ye are saved." It is, indeed, grace from first to last.

Should it be further asked how grace so rich can be shown to sinners so guilty, we point to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as our answer. There, in the strength of a love which could not be overcome, He made atonement for our sins, and opened up a clear path for God to act towards us according to His own good pleasure. Every hindrance has been swept away by that Cross, every righteous demand met, and now Grace is on the Throne to dispense the best that heaven can give to the repentant prodigals of earth.

Let us beware of the spirit of the elder son. When he heard of what had happened he was angry, and would take no part in the rejoicing. In his eyes it was entirely uncalled for and out of place. For he had never transgressed at any time his father's commandment, and yet no such feast had ever been made for him! His pride was wounded and he resented it. It was thus with the Jew of old. His anger was kindled when he heard of the gospel, with its boundless blessings, being freely offered to the Gentiles. It is the same with every heart that has never known its own deep need of God's pardoning grace. But God will be God in spite of man's murmurings, and He will show mercy to whom He will show it.

Christian, let us pray that our hearts may be deeply imbued with the grace of God. Then we shall be tender and compassionate towards others. All that we are or shall be, all that we have or ever shall have, we owe to the grace of God alone. It behoves us, then, to make merry and be glad when the same grace flows out to others. In our relations with our fellow-Christians and, indeed, with all, let us cherish the spirit of grace. Legality binds up no wounds and pours in no oil and wine. It is grace alone that can administer these.

REPENTANCE—ITS NECESSITY.

PERHAPS there is no story in all Scripture that is calculated to produce a more profound impression on the mind of the devout reader than that of the repentance of the great and proud capital of Assyria—Nineveh.

To think of a whole city, from the king to the peasant, sitting in dust and ashes and crying mightily to God for mercy! It is a sight that might well make angels rejoice and wonder.

It is deeply important that we should see *how* such a result was brought about. That God is the great Worker at all times, no true

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Christian can doubt. But that He uses means is just as certain.

The humbled prophet Jonah enters that great city, wherein were sixty thousand souls who could not discern between their right hand and their left, and proclaims his simple yet profoundly solemn message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

If such a warning did not actually call men to repentance, it was well fitted to make them repent, and turn from their sins to God. His message was not mingled with mercy, for no mercy was offered even upon their repentance. Speedy judgment was the sole burden of it. No doubt, the manner of the man was in keeping with his mission. But of this we are not told.

There is no room for doubt that in countless instances it is the thought of judgment that God has used to awaken souls. The conscience must be reached and men made to feel their guilt. How shall they feel it if it is not brought before them? The solemn consequences of sin must be pressed if men are to repent. When judgment was preached to the Ninevites they could not but inquire why judgment was about to overtake them. Conscience would supply the answer.

In speaking to a young clergyman not long since, I remarked on the heart-sickening indifference which was stealing over the people

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with regard to eternal things. I spoke of the spiritual injury that the misuse of commercial prosperity had brought upon the country in leading men to self-gratification and pleasure of every kind while God was forgotten. With this he fully agreed. I then said that the sermons of a certain dignitary against eternal punishment had produced very evil results, and had helped to make people indifferent. Men were now saying that there was no hell, and that we need not bother ourselves about religion.

On this he remarked that he thought men were not made religious (meaning, of course, that they did not come to Christ) through fear, but through love. I at once quoted Hebrews XI. 7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved with fear*, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Nor is Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians v. less plain: "Knowing therefore *the terror of the Lord*, we persuade men." To this he had no answer.

When the angels said to Lot, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed": what moved Lot to flee? Was it fear or love? When the angels gave that stern and solemn message,

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did they not mean him to feel that his life was in imminent danger? Such a message was not calculated to draw, but to drive him from the place on which judgment was about to fall (Genesis XIX.).

Doubtless, Lot's wife also heard the plain warning, "Look not behind thee." But her lingering looks showed that though she was being hurried out of the doomed cities for fear of judgment, her heart was still there. Lot's wife became a standing monument to all whom it may concern that God is not to be trifled with nor His word set at naught.

There is a general idea that because Scripture says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," therefore the preaching of judgment has no part in such a work. The evangelist, so it is said, ought not to speak in the way of warning, nor should he beseech men to flee from coming wrath. That sort of preaching, by which God wrought such wonders in the past, is considered unintelligent, old-fashioned, and out of date. They would have us believe that our only business is to set forth the facts of the gospel, and the love of God, and leave the results to Him.

Now we have already said that God is the great Worker. Scripture over and over again sets this forth. We will quote one passage in proof. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither

is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase ” (1 Cor. III. 6, 7). But this does not in the least weaken the responsibility of the one who proclaims the message, nor that of those to whom he is sent. God is sovereign in His action, yet man is a responsible being and will be judged as such.

It is quite clear that John Baptist and our blessed Lord called sinners to repentance, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come. It is remarkable that on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls were convicted in their conscience, Peter did not at once administer the healing balm of the gospel to them, but said, “ Repent.” Peter ran the lance down deeply, and did not heal too quickly.

Paul, after relating his conversion and his previous career before Agrippa, gives him in one verse a summary of his Christian life when he says : “ Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision : but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, *that they should repent and turn to God*, and do works meet for repentance ” (Acts XXVI. 19, 20). Both of these chief apostles adhere strictly to the terms of the grand commission received from the risen Lord, “ that repentance and

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remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 47).

Paul does not show the Gentiles that God should work repentance in them, but that they should repent. He laid that on them as a duty and responsibility. If they did not do so, as many did not to whom he preached, that was not a fault for which he was answerable. He fulfilled his mission when he placed the burden on them, and in a certain place he shook off the very dust of his feet against them, saying he was clear of their blood.

The pressing of repentance is in view of judgment to come, and it shows that man is a sinner. If men do not judge themselves, judgment will be their eternal portion. Take Acts xvii. 30: "God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained."

If the apostles kept so closely to the Lord's commission and pressed repentance toward God before the reception of forgiveness, those who preach now, to say the least, will not be far wrong to follow in their footsteps. "Testifying, both to the Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21).

Woe betide the man who stands up to preach

to a congregation of unconverted people and does not faithfully warn them of coming judgment and press repentance in view of it! He will not be able to clear himself of their blood at the judgment-seat of Christ. Alas for the congregation who gets smooth things spoken into its ears Lord's Day after Lord's Day! Far better that the people should stone a preacher with stones because he faithfully told them the truth, than that they should be able to reproach him on a dying day for having prophesied smooth things to them, saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

Time is short. Eternity with all its solemn issues is near at hand. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh when He shall take account of His servants. The night cometh when no man can work.

In view of these things, may God stir up the hearts of all who preach to be more faithful, and at the same time to be tender and compassionate towards the souls of their fellow-men. If our Master wept over a whole city doomed to destruction because it would not repent, may the fountains of our hearts gush forth as we think of a world ripening for judgment. May our tears not be restrained, at least in private, and our Father which seeth in secret shall reward us openly.

P. W.

THE YOUNG CONVERTS OF ANIWA.

AFTER careful examination I set apart nine boys and girls about twelve or thirteen years of age, and advised them to wait for at least another year or so, that their knowledge and habits might be matured. They had answered every question, indeed, and were eager to be baptized and admitted; but I feared for their youth, lest they should fall away and bring disgrace on the Church. One of them, with earnest eyes, looked at me and said: "We have been taught that whosoever believeth is to be baptized; we do most heartily believe in Jesus and try to please Him."

I answered, "Hold on for another year, and then our way will be clear."

"But," he persisted, "some of us may not be living then. We long to be baptized by you, our own Missi, and to take our place among the servants of Jesus."

After much conversation, I agreed to baptize them, and they agreed to refrain from partaking of the Lord's Supper for a year, that all might have knowledge of their consistent Christian life. Though so young in years, this discipline, I thought, would be good for them, and the

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Lord might use it as a precedent for guidance in future days.

Of other ten adults, at this time admitted, one was especially noteworthy. She was about twenty-five, and the elders rejected her, because her marriage had not been according to the Christian usage in Aniwa. She left us weeping deeply. I was writing late at night, as was my wont, in that oppressive tropical climate ; and a knock was heard at my door. I called out "*Akaiera ?*" (Who is there?).

A voice softly answered, "Missi, it is Lamu. Oh, do speak with me."

This was the rejected candidate, and I at once opened the door.

"Oh, Missi," she began, "I cannot sleep, I cannot eat ; my soul is in pain. Am I to be shut out from Jesus ? Some of those at the Lord's Table committed murder ; they repented, and have been saved. My heart is very bad, yet I never did any of these crimes of heathenism ; and I know that it is my joy to try and please my Saviour Jesus. How is it that I only am to be shut out from Jesus ? "

I tried all I could to guide and console her, and she listened to all very eagerly. Then she looked up at me and said : "Missi, you and the elders may think it right to keep me back from showing my love to Jesus at the Lord's Table : but I know here, in my heart, that Jesus has

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received me ; and if I were dying now, I know that Jesus would take me to glory and present me to the Father."

Her look and manner thrilled me. I promised to see the elders, and submit her appeal. But Lamu appeared, and pled her own cause with convincing effect. She was baptized, and admitted with the other nine, and that Communion day will long be remembered by many souls in Aniwa.

It has often struck me, when relating these events, to press the question on the many young people, the highly privileged white brothers and sisters of Lamu. Did you ever lose one hour of sleep, or a single meal, in thinking of your soul, your God, the claims of Jesus, and your eternal destiny ?

And when I saw the diligence and fidelity of these poor Aniwan elders, teaching and ministering during all these years, my soul has cried aloud to God : " Oh, what could the Church not accomplish, if the educated and gifted elders, and others in Christian lands would set themselves thus to work for Jesus to teach the ignorant, to protect the tempted, and to rescue the fallen."

From J. G. Paton's *Autobiography*.

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Fellow-Christian, the faithful missionary to whom we are indebted for this narrative, has

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ceased from his strenuous labours, and now rests in the presence of the One he loved and served. But his touching message appeals with clarion voice to you and me to-day. May we not take home to ourselves his pointed, truthful comparison, between the highly privileged believers in Christian lands, and the once devil-deluded, sin-possessed savages of heathendom whom grace had transformed into loving disciples, and bright witnesses for Christ? Let it recall us to the greatness of our heavenly associations ; our manifold responsibilities, and the immensity of the possibilities open to us.

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This brief record of what God can, and *will*, accomplish, where willing hands and hearts are found ready to do His bidding, may well inspire us to go forward with a deep-toned consecration of heart and life to the Lord and His service. Especially would we plead with the young believer. Let us observe that when God blesses a soul, it is with a definite end in view. It is that responsive affection might be created towards Himself ; and this is brought about by the Holy Spirit, whose delight it is to take the things of Christ and show them to us. The result, if the Spirit is unhindered, is two-fold : first, the living water given unto us springs up into everlasting life ; second, out of the inward parts flow rivers of living water.

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Like water rising to its source, the heart of the believer who is under the influence of the love of Christ is made to overflow with praise and worship to God the Father ; and this, we are assured, is the real starting-point for true and effective service.

Again, it is no small honour to be left in the world to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus, and those who truly value the place of dignity and relationship in which grace has set them, will not be slow to take advantage of the peculiar privilege of the first day of the week, when, with our blessed Lord in the midst, we call Him to mind and celebrate His mighty triumphs. “ *If ye love Me,*” said the Lord to His disciples, “ keep My commandments ” ; and though “ *This do in remembrance of Me* ” is not a commandment but a priceless privilege conferred on us by the One who has loved us as none other could, yet to neglect it is to wound that tender Heart. The young converts of Aniwa did not do this. On the contrary, they esteemed it their highest joy and their most coveted privilege to show forth with others the Lord’s death until He should come. Let each of us, young and old, who know the Lord, lay these things to heart

“ See, the feast of love is spread ;
 Drink the wine, and break the bread :—
 Sweet memorials, till the Lord
 Call us round His heavenly board.”

G. F. E.

ARE THE SCRIPTURES WHAT THEY CLAIM TO BE?

WHAT do they claim to be?

They claim to be God-breathed, not merely the result of God's overruling control of His servants' work, but the direct outcome of the divine breathings through them (2 Tim. III. 16). They claim to be inviolable and irrefragable, with no possibility of mistake in any statement that they contain (John x. 35). They claim to be free from all admixture of human dross, even as silver, perfectly purified, is free from every foreign adulterating substance (Ps. XII. 6). In short, they claim to be the Word, not of men, but of God.

But can their claim be substantiated?

A negative answer is given by many who *seem* to speak with authority. Theirs is the learning of the schools with the accompanying dogmatism that disdains as unintelligent all disagreement with its conclusions. Theirs are the suffrages of the so-called Christian world, which by no means objects to have the Bible, with its conscience-searching words, declared to be unhistoric, untrustworthy, imperfect. They marshal their guesses and introduce them to us as "facts"; they expound their theories and call them "ascertained results"; they

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parade their learning, and would fain have us believe that they possess the monopoly thereof.

When these "facts," and "results," and "discoveries" are weighed, to what conclusion are we driven? Does the old Book stand? Or have its critics made out their case?

Let me tell you a singular story that shall help us to answer this question.

During 1912, Professor Sollas (Professor of Geology at Oxford University) and Professor Breuil made a discovery in a cave near the Mumbles. "Ten horizontal bands of vivid red" were found painted on the walls, and the learned professors, after examining the marks, gave it as their opinion that they were exceedingly ancient, dating probably from the Palæolithic Age of human history.

The discovery, and the opinion of the two celebrated geologists, came in for a good deal of ridicule when certain incredulous persons began to bring to light some "well-ascertained facts."

"Evidence accumulates," says one account; "that Johnny Bale (a Mumbles boatman) was the artist, and that his masterpiece was quite innocently accomplished in the year 1894. The hard fact is that Johnny Bale appears to have created this memorable work merely by cleaning a paint-brush which he had recovered from the wreckage of a barque." So said the critics!

Further particulars as to this barque were forthcoming. It was the *Althea*, and it went ashore on the Mumbles. Two men, who had helped to salve the ill-fated vessel, offered their testimony. They stated that red paint was everywhere on the *Althea*; her chain-plates, bowsprit, gear, and yardbands were all of this colour, and that among the articles washed ashore from the wreck were paint-brushes and two drums of paint. Further, one of the witnesses declared emphatically that *he saw Bale make the horizontal marks!*

This seemed conclusive. Here were "ascertained facts," "direct evidence," and "assured results" enough to satisfy the heart of any incredulous critic.

But wait a moment! "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him" (Prov. XVIII. 17).

What had led the two professors to form their judgment as to the antiquity of the marks was no mere guesswork. It was true that they closely resembled some red bands, admittedly belonging to the Palæolithic period, in the great gallery of Foul de Gaume, in the south-west of France. But this was not all. Professor Sollas had noticed that the red paint was *covered by a layer of stalactite*. Further investigation showed that this layer was in some places as much as two millimetres thick!

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Any one who knows what a succession of centuries it takes for a deposit of stalactite to be formed will understand that the proof was complete that the red bands were of great antiquity, in spite of the "facts," and "evidence," both circumstantial and direct. *True* learning was vindicated in its verdict, and the shallower reasonings of critical incredulity shown to be thoroughly delusive.

Need I point out the application of the story to my thesis? The Holy Scriptures come to us with their claims of great antiquity and divine authority. Devout scholars have found in them every evidence of the truth of their high claims: thousands have listened to their divine teaching, and heard the voice of God speaking therein to their souls. The intrinsic unity of the Book, the marvellous harmony of its various parts; the loftiness of its doctrines; the authority of its tones; the whelming array of its miraculous perfections, all proclaim that this is no ordinary volume, no handiwork of Jewish scribes, no comparatively modern production seeking to speak with the voice of hoar antiquity, as the ass in the fable, clothed with a lion's skin, essayed to roar like the king of beasts.

But all this goes for nothing with the critics. Mr. A. has shown this, Professor B. has demonstrated that, and the reverend Dr. C. has discovered something else. Yes, and the

“ facts ” and “ conclusions ” of these gentlemen are on a par with those of the critics of the Mumbles !

Why, instead of reiterating their theories, do they not endeavour honestly to answer those who have pointed out their fallacies ? Why is no crushing reply forthcoming to a work like J. Urquhart's eight-volume *New Biblical Guide*, which brings fact after fact from the archæological records of the past to demonstrate the historicity of the Scriptures ?

The truth is, dear Christian reader, that *the old Book stands*. You need not fear for it, nor modify in the least your whole-hearted reverence for it, as God's Holy Word.

In one passage, and one only, in the whole of the Bible, do we find in the original language the word of which the English form is “ critic.” The passage is Hebrews IV. 12, where we read that the Word of God is a *discerner*—“ *kritikos* ” is the term—of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is the most profitable kind of criticism ! Let the Word of God occupy the critic's chair, and let your thoughts and intents and the whole of your life be subject to its holy criticisms. In this way you will experience its power, and will no more need proof of its divine origin than you need proof that the sun is shining when you go abroad on a bright August morning !

H. P. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. Mc.I.—Matthew xxiv. 34.—We believe Dr. David Smith to be entirely mistaken in his opinion that this verse should have been placed higher up in the chapter. Such an idea is a daring blow at the perfection and accuracy of Holy Scripture. Surely Dr. Smith should know that “*this generation*” is habitually used to denote a moral class, and not a space of time covered by thirty years or so. Numerous examples of this use of it are to be found in Scripture. Deuteronomy xxxii. 5, 20, and Psalm xiv. 5 are cases in point.

N. H.—John xx. 22.—The words “He breathed on them” are eminently suggestive of Genesis ii. 7, where it is said, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” They also remind us of Ezekiel xxxvii. 10, “And the breath came into them and they lived.” Now in John x. 10 the Lord tells us that He came that His sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. May not the Lord’s breathing upon His disciples, after His resurrection, signify that the hour had come for this *more abundant life* to be given unto them—a life into which the Holy Spirit should lead them and of which He would be the power? For we must not construe the Lord’s act and words as implying that they then and there received *the* Holy Spirit, for we know from elsewhere that He could not come till the Lord Jesus was glorified on high (John vii. 39). But it was the sure pledge that the Spirit should be shortly received, whose goings

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forth would be life and peace (Rom. VIII. 6-10). And may not this great gift also imply needed power for service, inasmuch as the Lord had just said, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"? They were His sent ones, His apostles, and to fulfil the high functions of this calling the Holy Spirit should be their equipment.

J. M.—Are you not going a little too far in characterizing as "sheer lunacy" the views of those who believe that the signs of Matthew XXIV. are not intended for the Church of God but for the remnant of Israel, after the Church has been translated to heaven? Is there nothing to be said for this view? Let us refer to those signs in Matthew XXIV. Do you seriously think that Christians are to look for the idolatrous image to be set up in the rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem? Will it be Christians living in Judea who are then to flee to the mountains? Is it Christians who are to pray that their urgent flight might not be on the Sabbath day? Are *they* likely to go astray after false Christs? We observe, too, that you do not base your objections on Scripture, but rather on your own reasonings. Now, undoubtedly the catching away of the saints will be a tremendous event, and will naturally cause a great stir. But we think you do not take into account the "strong delusion" which will fall judicially on unbelieving men so that they shall believe a lie (2 Thess. II. 9-11). Satan's "signs and lying wonders" might easily allay the fears that are aroused. Moreover, the signs will not be for apostate Christendom, but for those of Israel in whose hearts will spring up the hopes relating to the promises made of old

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unto their fathers. In great trial and tribulation they will cry to God for deliverance, and ask, How long? To such these signs will be a stay, and the sure evidence of the nearness of their redemption.

X.—We are sorry that our limited space will allow but a brief answer to your several questions on the Colossian epistle. Had they been sent one or two at a time, we might have dealt with them more fully. We give the questions, that our replies may be the better understood.

What would the Colossians have understood by "the reward of the inheritance"—what "inheritance"? (III. 24).

We presume the inheritance spoken of in 1 Peter I. 4, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." These Christian bondmen might have but little hope of earthly reward for their faithful service, but they should receive their reward in another sphere in another day.

"Putting off the body," etc., in "the circumcision of Christ."—Had this circumcision any reference to Luke II. 21?

We think not. The allusion is to the death of Christ, and to the fact of our having died with Him. See Galatians v. 24, where it is said that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," and Romans VI. 6, which tells us that "our old man is crucified with Him."

Paul's prayer, I. 10; Epaphras's prayer, IV. 12. Do they not appear to have the same object in view?

Yes, these prayers run on the same lines. And as these two servants of Christ prayed for the saints of their day, so we should pray for the saints

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of our day, that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

If the Colossians were Gentiles, what could they have understood by "the handwriting in ordinances"? (II. 14). Were they proselytes?

In most, perhaps all, of the early assemblies there were converted Jews. There was an endeavour at Colosse to fasten the yoke of an earthly religion on the neck of the disciples. Hence the Apostle shows that the Jewish religious system, divine in its origin, had been nailed to the Cross of Christ—a bond cancelled for ever.

"The new man renewed in knowledge after," etc.—What does this mean?—how can the "new man" be "renewed"? and where does "after the image" come in?—is Christ the Creator here? (III. 10).

The new man is a new one—not the old made better. It is new in character. "Renewed" has the force of "that which is wholly new, never was there before" (J. N. D.). And it is new in knowledge, having spiritual apprehensions which are in harmony with the mind of Him who created him. We do not think Christ is the Creator here.

"The mystery of Christ" (IV. 3)—is that the same as the mystery, I. 26? and has the "mystery of God," II. 2, anything to do with either?

We presume so. The first and second unquestionably, and we are inclined to include the third also.

What does "your order" mean?—church "order," or orderly conduct? (II. V. 5).

It is a military allusion, having reference to soldiers marching in order, keeping step. The Colossian saints were so walking, and their faith in Christ was steadfast.

SAFE ANCHORAGE.

WE want the reader to take his Bible and devote a few minutes to a passage in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews (*vv.* 7-15). We would ask him to read it carefully and earnestly ; for we are persuaded that, if he is really anxious about his soul's salvation, he will find in this scripture the true ground of peace—divinely safe anchorage. We are not going to offer any lengthened exposition of the passage, but merely a brief statement of its contents. We believe the reader will find three great subjects or branches of truth presented, namely : (i) The *will* of God ; (ii) the *work* of Christ ; (iii) the *witness* of the Holy Ghost. In other words, we have the source, the channel, and the authority of the soul's full and everlasting salvation. We have the eternal Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—engaged in the great work of laying the foundation of our peace. This, surely, is something worthy of serious thought.

And first, then, as to the source of salvation. It is of all importance to the anxious soul to lay hold, with clearness and power, of the fact that the glorious plan of redemption had its origin in the will of God. Redemption was no after-thought with God. He, blessed be His Name ! was not taken by surprise when man

fell. He had not then to devise what He would do. The plan had been drawn long before. Far back in the counsels of His infinite mind, the whole matter was weighed and settled. Such is the evident force of Hebrews x. 7: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God." From before all worlds—before the entrance of sin, it was ordained that Christ should come and do the will of God, and that will had respect to man's salvation.

This is an immense fact for the heart to seize. It proves so blessedly the love of God to the sinner. He might have left us to perish, as we justly deserved, because of our sins; but instead of that, no sooner had sin entered than forth came the glorious plan of redemption through the bruised seed of the woman—a plan laid in the mind of God from all eternity and written down in the volume of the book.

To carry out this marvellous plan, the Eternal Son—ever in the bosom of the Father—came forth from the dwelling-place of ineffable love. He came to do the will of God, cost what it might. It was His meat and His drink to do it. He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of His Father; and—all praise to His Name!—He has done it. He has perfectly accomplished the will of God. He has finished the work, and thus laid the

solid foundation of our peace. What all the sacrifices under the law could not do, Jesus, by His one offering, did. "Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein ; which are offered by the law ; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified [set apart] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. And every priest *standeth daily* ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins ; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God ; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (*vv. 8-14*).

Here we have the channel through which redemption flows to us, namely, "The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." It is not through the Church—not through the sacraments—not through rites and ceremonies—not through the ordinances and offices of religion—not through works of righteousness of any sort whatever, prayers, fastings, alms, or aught else of man's doing or devising, but "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." Mark the force and import of the word "*once*."

There can be no repetition of the sacrifice. To think of a continual sacrifice for sins is to deny the plain statement of the Holy Ghost in Hebrews x. If we are to be guided by God's Word, then it is most plain that sin has been put away by the one perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. The proof of this is seen in the fact that Jesus is seated on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The daily standing of the Jewish priests has been displaced by the eternal session of the Son of God—the many sacrifices of the Levitical ceremonial, by the one offering of Jesus Christ. The priests under the law could never sit down, because their work was never done. Jesus, having finished His work, has sat down for ever. Here lies the true secret of rest for the conscience. Christ is seated. He will never again rise to address Himself to the work of sin-bearing. When He rises, it will be to receive His people to Himself, and then to execute judgment on His foes.

And now one word as to the authority on which we receive this perfect redemption—this full salvation. It is the witness of the Holy Ghost, which, be it carefully noted, is the Word of God, the Holy Scripture: "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their

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hearts, and in their minds will I write them ; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

Hence, then, if it be asked, " How do you know that your sins and iniquities are all put away ? " we reply, " By the witness of the Holy Ghost—the testimony of Holy Scripture." This is a point of cardinal importance. The authority on which I rest for the salvation of my soul is as truly and as absolutely divine as the channel through which that salvation flows, or the source from whence it emanates. It is not the voice of the Church—the decrees of general councils—the dogmas of the schools—the opinions of the Fathers—the commandments, the doctrines, or the traditions of men ; neither is it the frames, feelings, or imaginations of our own minds. It is not any of these things, nor all of them put together, which constitutes the ground of our belief in the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation ; it is the testimony of Holy Scripture. True, it is by the grace of the Holy Spirit we receive and rest in that testimony ; but it is God's Word we believe, else it would not be divine and saving faith at all. A faith that does not rest simply on the Word of God is a spurious, worthless, delusive faith. True faith is that which believes God, and rests in what He says because He says it. If I want something of

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man to accredit God's Word—to assure me that God has spoken—then I am not a believer at all. Saving faith—the faith of a Christian man—is built on God's Word and nothing else.

Beloved reader, we beseech you to weigh the foregoing remarks. There is nothing novel or striking in them ; but there is that which is able to save your precious soul, and to give you a peace which not all the craft of Satan, or all the sophistry of men, can ever disturb. May God bless His own Word !

C. H. M.

SHOULD EACH CHRISTIAN PRAY FOR
A BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT ?

SCRIPTURE does not speak of “ *a* baptism of the Spirit.” The Lord Jesus was indicated by John the Baptist as the One who baptizes with the Holy Ghost. In keeping with this, He told His disciples before His ascension, “ Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence ” (Acts i. 5). On the Day of Pentecost *the* baptism of the Spirit took place. This baptism was shared in later by Cornelius and other Gentiles, so that, looking back years after, Paul could write, “ In one Spirit WERE we all baptized into one body ” (I Cor. XII. 13, R.V.).

If, then, the baptism of the Spirit be that which took place on the Day of Pentecost, it

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is obvious that each Christian cannot intelligently pray for a baptism of the Spirit.

Each individual Christian, however, receives the Spirit to indwell him as the anointing, the seal, and the earnest (2 Cor. i. 22, 23). But we would not counsel him to *pray* for this. In one scripture, it is true, the believer was bidden to ask for the Spirit, but that was before the Spirit was given (compare Luke xi. 13 with John vii. 39). Now that He has been given, consequent upon faith in the gospel (Eph. i. 13), the Christian has the Spirit. He certainly should not pray for that which he has.

If any one has not the Spirit he cannot be called a Christian, and such a one we would counsel not to pray for the Spirit, but to immediately comply with the declared conditions for His reception, viz. believing the Word of truth, the gospel of our salvation.

There is, however, one thing for which each Christian may well pray. Since the very epistle, which starts with the fact of the believer having received the indwelling Spirit, goes on to exhort him not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. iv. 30), but rather to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18). we may all make it a matter of continual and earnest prayer that we may be kept from every hindering and grieving thing, and enabled so to live that the Spirit may have full control over us and fill us to the glory of God. F. B. H.

FAITH AND THE NEW BIRTH.

(An answer to a Correspondent.)

NO one can rightly disconnect faith from the new birth. We have both Peter and James to tell us it is by the Word, as also the Lord Himself in John III. Only He goes further by the use of the symbol "*water*," for water covers the cleansing effect of the Word, and the Spirit is brought in also as the power of the application of the Word. But it is all waste of time to discuss which is antecedent, faith or the new birth. Just as with the man of the withered hand, which is the aptest illustration of what we are speaking about, you cannot disconnect the command "Stretch forth thine hand" that carried with it the power, from the faith that answered to it. Neither could be without the other, i.e. for any effect to be produced. As J.N.D. has pointed out, John I. 12, 13 binds up together the receiving, believing, and being born.

1 Peter I. 23 has always been the stay of my soul as to the new birth; but there are many elements that go to make up the Christian position *as far as Peter presents it*. Read the first chapter and you will see that redemption has been applied, and then faith is said to be in a God that has raised up Christ from the

dead and given Him glory by which—if not set in their place in Him, much less risen with Him, or united to Him in glory—they have been begotten or born again to a living hope, even to a soul-salvation that will take them to an inheritance in heaven by the appearing of the Lord Jesus. All this—at the basis of which as to God's work in the soul the new birth lies—tends to produce a very bright state of soul. It would be such as we reach from a different point of view in Romans v. 1–11, before the light of the full Christian position is brought out in chapter viii. Later on, in Peter, we are said to have died to sins, for which, of course, the soul must have gone through somewhat of the experience of Romans vii., though this last is not reproduced in Peter's comparatively brief epistle. But it did not need that experience to receive, and rest by faith in, the great cardinal facts of the gospel.

Paul cannot refer to the new birth in saying, "In Christ *I* have begotten you through the gospel," but simply that having been blessed to their conversion, they stood in relation to him as his children in Christ. But I do not doubt he alludes to it in its fundamental place in Titus iii. 5, "The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"; though looking at the water and the Spirit of John iii. in their outward effects rather than as the mighty instrumentality of the new birth

of God, while he adds the shedding of the Holy Ghost upon us. Paul's work could not in any way be connected with being born anew, or Peter's or any man's. It was wholly of God, in the operation of sovereign grace. Surely there may be an interval, and sometimes a long one, between the soul being born again *and its coming to see* the finished work of Christ lifted up as the serpent was, or in other words, bringing in the light of John VI., as you do, between the essential life becoming mine at the new birth, and *my entering into it* as eternal life. Depend upon it, half the difficulty in the way of souls arises from the way these two sides of the truth have been confounded in discussion, and that as to many parts of the truth. For so we must speak still, for we only "know in part." Where do you find the gospel that Peter preached going so far as the lifted-up Son of Man in the necessary judgment of all we are? When he touches Romans VI., in chapter II. 24 of his epistle, it does not go further than His bearing our sins, that we being dead to *sins* should live unto righteousness, from which you rightly distinguish John III. 14. Thus, I think, now you have my thoughts as to the close of 1 Peter I. But it shows how impossible it is to separate the new birth of the soul from faith in the truth presented to it. The Word without faith produces nothing.

J. A. T.

WORLDLINESS IN DRESS.

EVERYTHING about the Christian should be in keeping with the profession that he makes. Even the deportment and manner of dress are mentioned in 1 Timothy II. 9. Christian women in their adorning are to be marked by modesty and discretion, and not by the meretricious ornaments of gold, or pearls or costly clothing. This is to be much remembered.

Some eighty years ago, when the light of the Heavenly Calling, and of the Lord's coming for His people, broke in upon the slumbering saints, it aroused true, warm-hearted affection for Christ, such as had not been witnessed for many a day. Great spiritual energy was shown in going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and all that was felt to be unsuited to Him was given up. The fact that they were strangers and pilgrims took a real hold upon those who were thus awakened. The cost was not calculated. Prudence calculates, but true devotedness never. "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" is its language.

A proof of the power these heavenly realities exercised over the minds and hearts of God's people was soon seen. There was an auction at Plymouth, lasting for three days, of jewelry, plate, and other things deemed unneces-

sary for those who belonged to heaven, and the money obtained from the sale was devoted to the work of the Lord. It was a little sample of Pentecostal grace, power, and joy, and of the Spirit's work in awakening believers, leading them to gird up their loins, and to have their lights burning, and the lamp of testimony bright and clear, ready for the coming of the Lord.

The remembrance of Israel's devotedness when they shook off the shackles of Egypt was delightful to His heart. "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord" (Jer. II. 2, 3).

If the coming out from Egypt and entering the wilderness to be with God and to be His peculiar treasure was sweet to the memory of Jehovah, can we believe that the Pentecostal devotedness, and that which was akin to it eighty years ago, was not delightful to Him? He loves what is the fruit of the Spirit in the saints—true devotedness to Himself. And *devotedness* only considers what is suited to the One that is its object.

It has been well said of those who were so affected at that time, that they had closed the front door on the world. We shall leave it to each one to say whether in these later days the back door has not been opened to let it in again.

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It cannot be denied that whatever is worn for mere display is for the exaltation of self, and not of Christ. It is the evidence of spiritual decline. Even worldlings can perceive the inconsistency of ornamentation and display by those who profess to be no longer of the world.

The saying is a true one that "every trace of Egypt is a reproach to the Christian." It is a reminder of his bitter bondage. The goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold brought disaster on the warriors of Israel when fighting for the promised land. Similar things have had similar effects on those who are professedly God's warriors to-day. In contrast; one of the greatest of them said, "Silver and gold have I none," and another described himself as "Poor, yet making many rich."

Why does the Holy Spirit forbid the wearing of gold, pearls, and costly array? Let us open our Bibles and, with our eye upon the words in the Epistle to Timothy, ask God, whose words they are, why He placed them there, and whether He meant them to be obeyed or not.

Let us be honest, and abandon the feeble talk about legality, too often used as an excuse for worldliness. Remember that it is the Word of God we are looking at, and that we cannot slight it, or turn aside its keen edge except to our own spiritual hurt and God's dishonour.

Why have the most spiritual leaders ever known in the Church always discarded such things? Why did they give up all that would have given them a standing in the sight of their fellows? Why have they been so highly commended for their simplicity, even by those who were not moving with them in the truth of the Heavenly Calling? Is it not that they thus put into practice the truth they professed?

One great danger of the wearing of gold, pearls, and costly array, is that people are thereby given an undue place, even in the assembly, as James in his practical epistle affirms (James II. 2).

James must have been grieved to see it, or he would not have written about it. In the assembly no one should receive respect for anything save devotedness to Christ and true spirituality. Nothing of man should be recognized in that sphere where Christ is Head.

One has said that it is no excuse for worldliness to say, "Oh! I can afford it." There is no self-denial there. Self-denial in daily practice is the denying of what exalts self. If that be wanting, a badge of true discipleship is lacking. Said the One who had not where to lay His head, "If any man will come after Me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross and follow Me."

Our bodies are the Lord's. They are the

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dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, and are for the display of Christ. We are exhorted to present them to God a living sacrifice, and not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. XII. 2). A complete change is to be seen outwardly as the result of the new mind which rules the body. The old mind made it the slave of sin and folly, the new makes it serviceable for the good pleasure of God.

We ought to seek to please God rather than the world of which we no longer form a part. We ought not to bring what is worldly into the assembly where God dwells, nor to deck the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit with what the Spirit Himself condemns. If we do, it is in disregard of His Holy Presence in us, and of the Word of God.

In the coming age, all that is worldly in appearance will be swept away from the children of Zion (Isa. III. 16-24). If we seek to live in the power of the kingdom, out of which shall be cleared all things that tend to obscure the coming age, when the glory of Christ shall be universal, how differently shall we conduct ourselves!

Whatever exalts us in the world hides Christ, a thing which no one devoted to Him would allow. *Love to Him* will lead us into the obscure path that He so joyfully accepted, doing the Father's will. "The world knoweth us not,

because it knew Him not." Oh, that whole-heartedness to Him were rekindled afresh in our hearts! Oh, that the one absorbing thought of our minds may be to give Him pleasure! The devotedness of each with respect to dress and outward appearance, helps others by the influence it sheds abroad for good. Every bit of worldliness in dress affects for evil those who are inclined that way. We either encourage people by our influence and example, or we do them harm.

Alas, the tide of worldliness has broken in upon the Church of God; its marks are visible to all. Many mourn over it in secret, though they may not have the courage to lift their voices in public against it.

Special conferences may be held for prayers and humiliation, and abject confession of worldliness made, but is it put away? We too rarely hear of jewels, gold chains, and other articles of personal adornment being sold for the Lord's work. We still retain the marks of the world, and in measure it may be said of us, "This people draweth nigh to Me with their mouth, but their heart is far from Me."

Let each judge himself, or herself, by the unerring standard of Holy Scripture. What it forbids to be worn on our persons let us lay aside. This is not legality, but the service of love, and the truest liberty.

P. W.

PAUL—HIS MINISTRY AND MANNER OF LIFE.

PAUL'S farewell words to the elders at Ephesus (Acts xx.) were spoken at the close of his ministry as a free servant. He tells them they will see his face no more, and uses the occasion to unfold to them the scope of his ministry. His address is of the greatest possible value to us. There is not a hint in it of apostolic succession, but he commits them to God, and to the word of His grace as that which is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all the sanctified ones. If Paul was going, they could still count upon God, and upon His Word, which provides all that is needed for the Church during her sojourn on earth.

Paul then enumerates the different parts of his ministry. Like a wise builder he started by laying a solid foundation. He insisted upon "repentance toward God." His Master had commenced His ministry in the same way (Mark i. 15): "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, had followed with the same message (Acts ii. 38).

Paul, both publicly and privately, to Jews and Greeks, preached—

Repentance toward God.

He insists upon its necessity, and does not tone its meaning down. "Repent!" he thunders out to his public audience. "Repent!" is his cry to his individual hearer, and whilst doing so he directs the repentant soul to the Lord Jesus Christ as the resting-place of faith. Repentance and faith are twin sisters. We must not separate them. Faith rests in a testimony to a Divine Person who has died and is risen. That Person is none other than the lowly Jesus, whom God has exalted and made both Lord and Christ, after His atoning work on the Cross had been accomplished. A poor sinner, repentant and broken down before God, with his eye directed to a risen Saviour as the sole and only object of faith, is just the one who is prepared to listen to the—

Gospel of the Grace of God.

It brings to us the glad tidings of redemption, forgiveness, and justification from all things for all that believe, and it tells us that these blessings are according to the riches of God's grace. Later on, when writing his epistle to these Ephesian saints, he dwells very largely on grace. He tells them, "By grace ye are saved." The grace of God is the exercise of His holy love when the occasion of it is found in

the faults and sins of those towards whom it acts. Grace brings a salvation worthy of its Giver. A sovereign may confer an honour on a subject. He may do it for his own pleasure, without claim or merit on the part of the recipient. If without desert it would be an act of pure grace. It is thus God has acted toward us.

The gospel is expressive of the joy and delight of God to bless, and in it we are reminded how love has stooped to enrich us. We are taken into favour in the Beloved; are set before God, in all the worth and value of the person and work of the Son of His love (Eph. I. 6). Eternal ages will witness the extent of this grace. It differs from mercy. Mercy may express itself in reprieving a criminal, but grace would bring him into the palace and shower favours upon him. This is how the grace of God has abounded. Mercy reached us when guilty and condemned. Grace brought us into the children's place, blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies with Christ, and will eventually completely deliver us from every trace of the degradation to which sin had brought us.

The next thing of which he speaks is—

The Kingdom of God.

Only the subjects of grace can enter and abide in this kingdom. The kingdom of God

is not exactly the same as the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is usually presented in connection with a *Divine Person on earth*. When the Lord was here the kingdom was here. Now it is brought to us in the power of the Holy Ghost. He alone can bring us into it, or maintain us there. The truth of the kingdom differs from that of the gospel. The gospel blesses by what it *brings*, not by what it *finds*. The kingdom claims the allegiance of those whom the gospel blesses. Paul insisted that its subjects had no right to live to themselves; they belonged to another, even to Him who died for them and rose again.

There are four marks of a true subject in the kingdom: righteousness, peace, joy, power (Rom. XIV. 17; 1 Cor. IV. 20). These are effects produced *in* the believer resulting from what Christ has secured *for* him. The gospel proclaims peace made, and righteousness imputed without works, whilst the kingdom demands practical righteousness, and peace follows in its train with power and joy. Peter refers to the kingdom when he desires to be found of Him in peace (2 Peter III. 14); Paul, when he desired to finish his course with joy.

A kingdom always supposes subjects. The gospel primarily addresses those who are not subjects. At the same time the kingdom of God is a kingdom of grace, for the Son of God's love holds the reins above, whilst the Spirit

of God governs below. In the measure in which we are under the control of the Spirit and the sway of Christ, *to that extent only can we be in the kingdom experimentally*. It is not an outward and visible rule, as it will be in a coming day, but hidden and spiritual. A Christian in true subjection to God will be known by the four marks of Righteousness, Peace, Joy, and Power.

Nothing on our part can alter the gospel of God's grace, but the smallest act may demonstrate we are not carrying out the principles of the kingdom. The gospel is linked up with the goodness and the grace of God—the kingdom with His rights and claims. It was "among" the saints Paul preached the kingdom (*v. 25*), and to sinners the gospel. He then adds he had not shunned to declare—

All the Counsel of God.

Counsel takes us into another region and carries our thoughts back before all worlds.

We learn that before sin entered, counsels and purposes existed—secrets known to God and plans formed for the blessing of man.

What a vista they open out ! The Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies is ours ; and of our being holy and without blame before God in love. It speaks of the adoption in virtue of which many sons shall fill the house above, and

of their present favour in the Beloved. Christ is presented as the Head and Centre of everything, both in heaven and on earth, and a company of the redeemed—His co-heirs—associated with Him in the inheritance, and in whom He will display the surpassing riches of His grace throughout the eternal ages—His body and His bride. This, and much more, these counsels embrace.

Such is Paul's ministry. It starts with man estranged from God, needing repentance, and presents Christ as God's "Man of Opportunity," the One whom He had "made strong for Himself," the sole Object of faith. It shows us how God is acting in grace, apart from works, and announces a gospel wholly and entirely God's from first to last. Its object is to bring man (who is like a wandering star) back into subjection under the gracious sway of the Spirit of God. It ends with unfolding things which eye had not seen nor ear heard, and which the heart of man was incapable of conceiving.

We have to listen, believe—lay hold of these things in the power and unction of the Spirit. We must not stop at repentance and faith. They are excellent foundation-stones. There is no need to lay them again, as Hebrews VI. 1 tells us. Having laid them, we are to go on. Go on to apprehend the fullness and freeness of the grace of God ; go on to become obedient

to the faith, and *experimentally* enter the kingdom of God ; to yield complete and unqualified obedience to the sway of the Holy Ghost—nor stop until we enter into all the fullness of the counsel of God.

You say, How ? Paul answers, not by pointing to successors in apostolic office, power and authority, nor even to “ faithful men.” He stands on the seashore. He sees the Church he had sought to pilot through many dangerous shoals, tossed and battered by every wind of doctrine—grievous wolves without, and false friends within. He has but one resource—*God*. He commends those beloved Ephesian saints—and with them the whole Church of God—to *God* Himself and to the *Word of His Grace*. The Church is God’s ; He purchased it with the blood of “ His own ” ; His Word expresses the grace He had shown her ; it unfolds her privileges and high destiny, contains full directions for every exigency. To that Word they are commended. It was to be their guide and guard, chart and compass. It was able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all the sanctified. It more than took Paul’s place and, unlike him, it abides.

Having glanced at Paul’s ministry, let us now see the way and manner in which he carried it out.

Self-renunciation marked him. He made no

account of his life. His only object was to please his Master and serve His interests ; all else was subservient to that.

Lowliness was another characteristic. He assumed nothing. He was a sower, planting grains from the heavenly garner ; he wept as he sowed ; his whole soul went with it. His were not sermons or lectures merely—they were divine messages ministered with living unction in all humility of mind.

The third mark was absolute *freedom from covetousness*. Silver and gold had lost their charm for him, except as he could use them to minister to others. He was a giver. He emulated his blessed Master ; he treasured up His words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and laboured with his hands to support the weak, and gave—like the One he served—all that he had ; and last of all—his life.

Faithful and blessed servant ! What an exponent of the doctrines he preached ! No selfish occupation with his own blessings, no thought of superior light, no vain boast of greater knowledge, no looking down upon others who had not reached his measure. Instead, the earnest, heartfelt desire, that every poor sinner should be reached by the gospel, and every saint profit by what he taught as the minister of the Church. For this he prayed, wept, laboured. Read Acts xx. carefully,

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prayerfully, before you put this paper down. Meditate on the scope of his ministry ; weigh his manner and spirit—his aim and object—his entire devotedness—his whole-hearted consecration—and surely your prayer will be, as mine :

“ Lord, help me to follow and serve Thee, in the breadth and scope of his service, and in the spirit and manner in which Thy servant Paul carried it out.”

H. N.

 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. M.—Scripture is quite silent on the subject of instrumental music in connection with *Christian* worship, although in *Judaism* it had its appointed use and place. It is well to remember that Christian worship is a spiritual exercise, and can only come from Christian hearts under the gracious sway of the Holy Spirit. No others can worship God, and we do them a serious injury if we lead them to think they can. How shall any whose sins are not forgiven bring praise, worship, adoration to One whom they do not know ? Christian worship is the worship of the Father (John iv. 23), it is worship proceeding from the hearts of those who have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. x. 19). Such worship can only be offered in the power of the Holy Spirit given unto us. Instrumental music in such a connection would be rather an intrusion than a help.

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We remember reading in the Memorials of Frances Ridley Havergal of a dream which that gifted lady had. She thought herself in one of our old English cathedrals, whose beautiful architecture was the wonder and admiration of all beholders. And down the aisles rolled the peals of the organ and the sweet, clear voices of the choristers singing the appointed service. Every ear was charmed, and the religious emotions of all were deeply stirred. But suddenly a voice was heard saying, "*The Lord is here.*" And then did the dreamer wish that the music would stop, and the choristers cease to sing, and the cathedral pillars would vanish away. Her one desire now was to behold *His* face, and hear *His* voice alone! Such is always the powerful effect of the divine presence.

Nor is it otherwise with our gospel services. There is often the wish and endeavour to make them attractive to the multitude. And various expedients are employed to achieve the end in view. But our conviction is that where there is spiritual power these agencies will not be sought. Their introduction into meetings accustomed to go on without them marks, we fear, the decline of that which is spiritual, and a lack of confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. In saying this we do not plead for dullness. No gospel meeting should be dull. There is nothing so bright and beautiful as the story of the love of God, nothing so affecting as the story of the Cross, and nothing more fitted to move the hearts of men than when a Spirit-filled preacher reasons of

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“righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.”

CONSTANT READER.—We heartily thank you for your very kind note and kindly criticism. It is more than a cheer to us to know that you keep a vigilant eye on our pages—jealous lest anything should be published by us that would not bear the test of Holy Scripture. Now we know the writer of “*Who is wise?*” quite well, and we are sure that he neither teaches nor holds that a true Christian can ever finally fall away and perish for ever. But, alas ! the human heart—deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—is quite capable of saying, “Let us do evil that good may come.” It can turn the grace of God into lasciviousness by making grace an excuse for sinning. And some do this. They stand in the ranks of Christian profession ; they have even preached to others, but now they are slaves to some besetting sin which is wrecking their life, bringing misery into their homes, and reproach upon the Holy Name of the Lord. Yet they avow themselves to be saved, though they pursue such an evil course ! We cannot so regard them. The dog returns to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (2 Peter II. 22). Do I mean by this that a new-born child of God may cease to be His child ? Do I mean that one who is an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ may yet find himself an outcast from God, lost and for ever condemned ? Nothing is further from our thoughts. But the Christian, born of God and indwelt by His Spirit, will, through grace, hold on his heavenward way. He is kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation (1 Peter I. 5).

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We italicize those words, for if he is kept by divine power, it is by faith that he is so kept, not apart from it. Now faith is a living and an ever-active principle, and "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. VII. 20). It is true that a sincere Christian, whose faith in Christ is not to be doubted, may get out of communion with God. He may in a sudden gust of temptation deny Christ, as Peter did, or fall into sin like the man at Corinth, but the one went out and wept bitterly (Matt. XXVI. 75), and the other repented with uncontrollable grief (2 Cor. II. 7). Those who have tasted God's *saving* grace shall surely experience His *restoring* grace, and the sheep of Christ shall never perish. But we must give no countenance to a loud profession and a loose and worldly walk. The believer is saved with an everlasting salvation, but we must do nothing to bolster up an evil-living man in a false and carnal security, though he once professed to be a Christian, and still believes himself to be saved. In these remarks we are sure you will cordially agree.

CHICAGO.—Many thanks for your kind and welcome contribution to our free grant Calendar fund. Your heart would greatly rejoice could you read the letters that are now pouring in upon us from abroad, telling us of the great blessing the daily texts have been in times of danger and persecution, and also when devoted servants of Christ have been laid on dying beds far away from kith and kin. At such times the texts seem to have been heaven-sent, speaking to the heart as only God's Word can. Your kindness will go down in His book as fruit to your account.

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2 CORINTHIANS IV. 16, 18; V. 10, 14.

I AM going to point out to you briefly certain things that you will find in this passage—things which helped to make the Apostle Paul the saint and servant of God that he was. We must not suppose that he had an easy path, any more than some of us. Perhaps, in the warehouse where you are employed, you have to rub shoulders with ungodly men. Many things happen, day after day, that try both your spirit and your temper, and you may sometimes wish you were in other circumstances, thinking that if you were your spiritual life would be more vigorous, that you would grow and get on faster in the things of God. But we are poor judges as to *that*, and we may well remember that if in a lawful position, we are where the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is all-sufficient for us.

Now, in fact, the Apostle Paul had a very rough time of it, and he could say what we could not, at all events with the same fullness of meaning. Look, for instance, at verses 8, 9: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Think for a moment of what those terms suggest—troubled

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—perplexed—persecuted—cast down ! And then glance at verse 11 : “ We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.” Now, of course, we cannot say that. The Apostle Paul’s path was indeed a great deal rougher than ours. The storms of persecution for Christ’s sake continually howled around him, and he tells us in Romans VIII. 36 that he and his fellow-Christians were looked upon as so many sheep for the slaughter. So the apostle had much to endure, but he found in his pathway that Christ was all-sufficient.

Now, I shall speak particularly to those who, through grace, have made a start in the Christian life. Of course, the first thing for any of us is to know the Lord Jesus as our own personal Saviour. Nothing is more mischievous than for unconverted persons to be called upon to try to live a Christian life. No one can lead a Christian life until he is a Christian. You must first be born again. You must know Christ as your Saviour, and receive at His gracious hands the forgiveness of your sins and the salvation of your soul, and when you can say that Christ is yours, then you begin to live the Christian life.

But without further preface let me name some of the things that made Paul the saint and servant that he was. They are four in number. We shall find the first in verse 16 : “ For which cause we faint not ; but though our out-

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ward man perish, yet *the inward man is renewed day by day.*" Thank God, there is the inward man, born of the Spirit. The apostle here speaks of it as being renewed day by day. And so I hope it is with us. The outward man, as we well know, needs daily renewal. Therefore we go to bed and sleep, and sit down, most of us, to two or three good square meals in the course of the day. Now, if the outward man needs to be renewed thus, so does the inward man. Somebody may say, "But how does the renewing take place? What contributes to it?" I believe two things. First of all, *prayer*, which is the very breath of the Christian. If we neglect the throne of grace—if we seldom bow our knees in prayer to our God and Father in heaven, you may depend upon it that we shall suffer great loss. But there is more. You will remember a verse in the end of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." There is then a renewal that comes from waiting on the Lord. Now I believe that "*waiting on the Lord*" means more than simply bowing our knees in prayer to God in the morning, and again at night. We must also wait upon Him with His Word before us, to hear from Him, to receive through the pages of His

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blessed book some communication from Him whose words are spirit and life. You have but to read the first Psalm to see that the one who meditates upon God's truth is likened unto a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf never withers, and who brings forth fruit in his season.

May I, then, ask you to remember that the inward man should be renewed day by day? When God's redeemed people were journeying from Egypt to Canaan the manna fell every day, and every day they gathered it up. So must it be with us. May God graciously incline our hearts to pay frequent visits to the throne of grace. We can do so, you know, not only in our own bedrooms, but when we walk along the busy street, or when serving in the warehouse or office where we are employed. All the day long, though our minds be engaged with business, we can be in the spirit, if not in the attitude, of prayer, and God's Word may be treasured up richly in our heart and memory.

Now for our second point. You will find it at the end of the chapter, verse 18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Observe the contrast between things seen and not seen, and mark what is said about them. The things which are seen are temporal, they perish and pass away; it is the unseen things

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that are eternal. And the Holy Spirit is given to us Christians in order that we might enter into them. Now these were the things at which the apostle looked. His eye was on the invisible. Men of the world would not understand this. They might say, "How can any one look at things that are not seen?" It is a mystery which they cannot explain. But it is simple enough to the Christian. We are called upon, then, to have the eyes of the heart fixed upon the unseen—upon the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. They are all revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit is given to us that we might know them. Let these, then, be that on which the eyes of our heart rest. Of course, we have to do our daily business, and do it well. A Christian servant should be the best of all servants, and a Christian master should be the best of all masters. There is no doubt about that, and thus, in our daily calling, we should glorify the name of our Lord Jesus. That does not militate at all against what I have said.

The third thing that had a powerful influence upon the apostle is named in verse 10 of chapter v. He had just been saying that he laboured, he earnestly endeavoured, he strove, he made it his chief business that, whether present or

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absent, he might be well pleasing to his Lord and Master. "For," adds he, "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." Now the apostle was not only a saved man, just as you are, but he was also a servant of Christ, as we all are in our little measure. And so he said in substance, "I may not find that everybody will pat me on the back, and say, 'Well done,' and I do not make it my aim to win the esteem of men ; my one ambition is to be acceptable to my Lord and Master in that day when I shall be manifested at His tribunal." So should it be with us, for *we* must all appear there, and our life pass under the scrutiny—shall I say the judgment?—of our gracious Lord and Master. Perhaps somebody may say, "But how does that agree with what we get in John v. 24, where we are told that we shall never come into judgment?" Ah, we Christians will never come into judgment on account of our sins. It was for these that Christ died. The judicial question is past, blessed be God, but then our life will come under our Master's judgment and review. The apostle did not lose sight of that. He was anxious that his life should receive his Master's approbation. God help us, then, to keep these three things in view: First, the inward man, renewed day by

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day ; second, the eye of the heart on unseen and eternal things ; third, we must all be manifested at the tribunal of our Master.

One other thing, and this is my last. Verse 14 : “ The love of Christ constraineth us.” It is blessed to have the heart under the powerful influence of the love of Christ. Of all the mighty factors in the life of the apostle, that was the mightiest. He says elsewhere, “ The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” And so he judged that if the Lord Jesus Christ had died for him, and he was, by God’s grace, among them that lived, it became him not to live unto himself, but unto Him who died and rose again. It ought to be so with us. True, we do not move in the same circle as the apostle ; we have neither received his great gifts nor his call to service ; but if our lot is cast in the humblest sphere, let us live and move in it, to the glory of Him who died for us and rose again. How needful it is to remember that the name of the Lord Jesus is written upon us, and that at home, in business, in the church, or in whatsoever circle we have to be, we are to carry ourselves so as to please our gracious Lord and Master. Those, then, are the four things brought before us in this passage, all of which contributed to make the Apostle Paul the saint and servant that he was, the last but not least, *the constraining love of Christ*.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK.

SOME may question how far the Sunday-school can be viewed as an integral part of the work of evangelization. I can only say it is mainly in this light I regard it. I look upon it as one great and most interesting branch of gospel work. The superintendent of the Sunday-school and the teacher of the Sunday-school class are workers in the wide gospel field, just as distinctly as the evangelist or preacher of the gospel.

I am fully aware that a Sunday-school differs materially from an ordinary gospel preaching. It is not convened in the same way, or conducted in the same manner. There is, if I may so express it, a union of the parent, the teacher, and the evangelist in the person of the Sunday-school worker. For the time being he takes the place of parent—he seeks to do the duty of a teacher ; but he aims at the object of the evangelist—that priceless object, the salvation of the souls of the precious little ones committed to his charge. As to the mode in which he gains his end—as to the details of his work—as to the varied agencies which he may bring to bear, he alone is responsible.

I know that exception is taken to the Sunday-school on the ground that its tendency is to interfere with parental or domestic training.

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Now I must confess that I cannot see any force whatever in this objection. The true object of the Sunday-school is not to supersede parental training, but to help it where it exists, and to supply its lack where it does not exist. There are, as we well know, hundreds of thousands of dear children who have no parental training at all. Thousands have no parents, and thousands more have parents who are far worse than none. Who can think upon all these precious souls without wishing a hearty God-speed to all *true* Sunday-school workers, and earnestly longing for more thorough earnestness and energy in that most blessed work?

I say "true Sunday-school workers," because I fear that many engage in the work who are not true, not real, not fit. Many, I fear, take it up as a little bit of fashionable religious work suited to the younger members of religious communities. Many, too, view it as a kind of set-off to a week of self-indulgence, folly, and worldliness. All such persons are an actual hindrance, rather than a help to the sacred service.

Then, again, there are many who sincerely love Christ, and long to serve Him in the Sunday-school, but who are not really fitted for the work. They are deficient in tact, energy, order, and rule. They lack the power to adapt themselves to the children, and to

engage their young hearts, which is so essential to the Sunday-school worker. It is a great mistake to suppose that every one who stands idle in the market-place is fit to turn into this particular branch of Christian labour. On the contrary, it needs a person thoroughly fitted of God for it ; and if it be asked, " How are we ever to be supplied with suited agents for this branch of evangelistic service ? " I reply, Just in the same way as you are to be supplied in any other department—by earnest, persevering, believing prayer.

I am most thoroughly persuaded that if Christians were more stirred up by God's Spirit to feel the importance of the Sunday-school, if they could only seize the idea that it is, like the tract depôt and the preaching, part and parcel of that most glorious work to which we are called in these closing days of Christendom's history—if they were more permeated by the idea of the evangelistic nature and object of Sunday-school work, they would be more instant and earnest in prayer, both in the closet and in the public assembly, that the Lord would raise up in our midst a band of earnest, devoted, whole-hearted Sunday-school workers. This is the lack, and may God in His abundant mercy supply it !

We have much cause for thankfulness and praise for what has been done in the way

of Sunday-schools during the last few years. Alas ! there are those who have no sympathy with this branch of Christian service, who weaken the hands and discourage the hearts of those who engage in it. But on this I shall not dwell, inasmuch as my theme is the Sunday-school, and not those who neglect or oppose it. I bless God for what I see in the way of encouragement. I have often been exceedingly refreshed and delighted by seeing some of our very oldest friends rising from the table of their Lord, and proceeding to arrange the benches on which the dear little ones were soon to be ranged to hear the sweet story of a Saviour's love. And what could be more lovely or more morally suited, than for those who have just been remembering the Saviour's dying love, to seek, even by the arrangement of the benches, to carry out His loving words, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me" ?

There is very much I should like to add as to the mode of working the Sunday-school ; but perhaps it is just as well that each worker should be wholly cast upon the living God for counsel and help as to details. We must ever remember that the Sunday-school is entirely a work of individual responsibility. This is a grand point, and where it is fully understood, and where there is real earnestness of heart and singleness of eye, I believe there

will be no great difficulty as to the particular mode of working. A large heart, and a fixed purpose to carry on the great work committed unto us, will effectually deliver us from the withering influence of crotchets and prejudices—those miserable obstructions to all that is lovely and of good report.

May God pour out His blessing on all Sunday-schools, and on all who are engaged in any way in the instruction of the young. May He cheer and refresh their spirits by giving them to reap many golden sheaves in their own special corner of the one great gospel field. * * *

THE SIMPLE FAITH OF OLD LI.

OLD Li was converted by hearing an impressive sermon on "Covetousness which is idolatry." After attentively listening, the old man was greatly concerned to think that, having given up idolatry, he might be betrayed into the same sin by allowing a covetous spirit to have a place in his heart. To avoid this danger he determined to keep no money of his own, and to possess no property. He accordingly turned over his house and little farm to his nephew, and devoted himself mainly to making known the gospel, sus-

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tained in a great measure by the simple hospitality of those to whom he ministered. He opened a refuge for the cure of opium smokers, and by this made himself a blessing to many unfortunates. His labours in the Yoh-Yang district were wonderfully blessed of God.

After some years, however, the "higher criticism," and the scoffing of materialism, reached the far-off field of the old man's endeavours. Some passages in the Holy Book were looked upon as fables, or at least but allegories, to impress an ideal or sustain a contention. Old Li was told that in the story of Elijah's miraculous provision it was not ravens that fed the prophet, but Arabs, who shared with him their own supplies. It was absurd to suppose that birds would act in the way described.

This point of view did not at all commend itself to the old man's simple faith. He himself was to disprove it, and bear direct testimony, in his own case, to the truth of the sacred narrative. A time came in his refuge work when he reached the end of his resources. There were no patients coming in for treatment, and all his supplies were exhausted. At this juncture Li's cousin, a heathen priest of the village temple, came to his aid. The priest brought him supplies of bread and millet. Every time Li would receive the gift of food,

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he would murmur, "Tien-Fu-tih en-tien"—
"My Father's grace."

At length the pagan priest became offended by these words. "I supply the food," he exclaimed, "and did I not bring it, you would starve."

"But it is my Father who puts it into your heart to care for me," returned the old Christian.

"Well, we'll see what will happen when I bring no more food."

For two weeks the priest did not visit Li. The latter had neither food nor money to buy it, but he trusted in God. With simple faith he went into his chamber and poured forth heartfelt prayer. As he knelt he heard an unusual clamour and cawing and flapping of wings in the courtyard. He rose and went to see what was happening. A number of vultures and ravens, common in that part of China, were flying above him in great commotion and as he looked up a large piece of pork fell at his feet. Thankfully the old man picked up the unexpected food, saying, "My Father's kindness." Glancing around, he saw a large piece of Indian meal bread dropped by another bird. Thus was old Li provided for by these feathered messengers of God, as Elijah was (1 Kings xvii.). Happy old Li! Who would not envy his simple, artless faith?

MRS. HOWARD TAYLOR.

AN EXPERIENCE, OR "THE COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES."

MANY of us know how in some quarters the relation of "experiences" has been overdone, and too often it usurps the place of the direct ministry of the Word. The tendency with those who see this error is to swing away off in the opposite direction, and give all ministry, and even testimony, a purely objective character. There is, without doubt, a happy medium between these two extremes. Scripture—ever wise—allows a place for both classes of testimony. We find the inspired Psalmist saying, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. LXVI. 16). The Apostle Paul too, in the Book of Acts, gives a detailed account of his conversion three times over. On the other hand, when compelled by the Corinthians to speak of his experiences, sufferings, and successes in the work of the Lord, he calls it "folly," and himself a "fool" for this glorying and much reference to himself. And when he comes to the highest and richest of his experiences, he will not speak in the first person at all, but says, "I knew a man in Christ" (see 2 Cor. XI. 18; XII. 1-11). The writer of what follows cannot tell of "visions

and revelations of the Lord," but he desires to relate simply an incident in his experience that may encourage many, and confirm their faith in the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, and in the inspiration of the Scriptures, as also in the tender mercy of the Lord toward His tried ones, who desire to go forward—"faint, yet pursuing."

To avoid even the appearance of egoism, the writer prefers to have his experience appear over the old familiar signature "*Anon.*," and so far as possible to conceal his identity. He will in this way feel free to speak much more freely than he could otherwise, and at the same time avoid making provision for spiritual vanity (latent in us all). And this is the experience :—

It had been a time of deep trial, both in the family and the service of the Lord. In the former there had been illness. The writer himself was just recovering from the effects of an attack of malarial fever, contracted on an evangelistic trip along a tropical river, and felt weak as a babe, and almost entirely bereft of ambition, either mental or physical. It had almost come to the point where "the grasshopper becomes a burden," "desire" fails, the strong man is "bowed," and, I trust, humbled, under the mighty hand of God. Then the work of the Lord seemed to languish greatly,

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our own efforts seemed puny, we were struggling on alone in the midst of Romanism on the one hand, and its more hopeless reaction, Atheism, on the other. And, taking it all together, there was little spirit left to sally forth again, single-handed, to meet the power of the enemy. But the time was fixed for another going out with the gospel which alone can save. A believing neighbour came in the evening before—one of the little flock—and we had prayer. We were disturbed, but after the interruption we continued waiting on God. This fellow-believer said on leaving, “ Brother, God heard that prayer ; Satan thought to prevent its going up, but be sure it went up to heaven, and will have its answer.” There was more earnest prayer in secret ; and in the morning the clouds had departed, the burden gone, the weight lifted, and we felt strong for the battle, and eager once more for the fray. And, to crown all, she whose part it was to remain at home and “ guide the house ” called our attention to the text for the day, on the *Simple Testimony* calendar : “ As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff : they shall part alike ” (1 Sam. xxx. 24). And, “ She that tarried at home divided the spoil ” (Ps. LXVIII. 12). It was like the very voice of God to us speaking from heaven, bidding us to go forth in this His might, and leave the

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helpless ones at home to His care and watchful keeping. And His blessing was with His Word preached, souls were blessed, and he that sought in weakness to water was himself wonderfully watered. And it all seemed as a voice of gentle rebuke saying to us, "Wherefore didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith?"

Dear fellow-believer, partaker of the sufferings, co-worker unto the kingdom of God, take courage! God is for us, victory is ours, and soon the dark, threatening clouds will burst, pouring richest blessings on our trembling and unworthy heads. Let nothing shake your confidence in either of these two facts: the Bible is the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is with the Lord's little ones in this wilderness world. The above experience attests the truth of this. There are 365 days in the year, so there were less than three chances in a thousand of such verses coming on the day when they were most needed and suited best. Who inspired those texts, and who guided the mind of him who selected them and placed them in their order in the calendar? Yes, God IS, His Word is altogether true, and the Comforter is indeed come! Blessed facts! May our souls lay hold of them in faith.

ANON.

CHRIST'S THREE APPEARINGS.

- (1) "Now once in the end of the world hath He **APPEARED** to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself " (HEB. IX. 26).
- (2) "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, now to **APPEAR** in the presence of God for us " (HEB. IX. 24).
- (3) "Unto them that look for Him shall He **APPEAR** the second time without sin unto salvation " (HEB. IX. 28).

THE greatest events that have ever taken place are the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On these events hang vast and everlasting consequences. No salvation can come to any of Adam's race save as the direct results thereof. Heaven would be bereft of the multitude that no man can number, and could never be vocal with the mighty anthem of the redeemed, were it not for what Christ accomplished when He died for sinners.

Christ's *first* appearing, then, was in view of His death on the Cross. It is said to have taken place "in the end of the world," or, more properly, "in the consummation of the ages." Man had been tested in various ways. Age succeeded age till the hour for the final testing arrived. The Son of God came into the world, and man's hatred against Him showed itself in fearful antagonism. Thus ended the day of probation for man, and in "the con-

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summation of the ages " *God declared Himself*, full of pity and patience, a God of infinite resource and power. The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, man's crowning act of wickedness, was thus turned into an occasion by God for the unfolding of His love. The work done by the Holy Sufferer on the Cross satisfied the claims of His righteousness, and enabled Him to freely forgive sinners of deepest dye.

* * * * *

Christ's *second* appearing—in the presence of God for believers—is consequent on the first. If His work upon the Cross had failed in the smallest degree, He could not have been our representative in the presence of God. But in virtue of the full and glorious success of His work on the Cross, He *represents* each believer on high.

Now representation implies maintenance. An ambassador at a foreign court represents his sovereign, and maintains relations between the countries. When relations are no longer maintained representation ceases. When war is to be declared the ambassador is recalled.

What peace and rest it is to the believer's heart to think of the high honour of having such a Representative at the court of the Majesty on high. Christ is appearing in the presence of God for us!

Are we weak and beset with infirmities?

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Are we filled with dismal forebodings? Let us remember our great High Priest, ever ready to sympathize, to succour, and to save.

Have we, alas! committed sin? He is our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. He is righteously our Advocate, because He has settled once and for ever the whole question of our sins. It is on the basis of His first appearing that He maintains us. Nothing can break down His representation, nor upset His maintenance of relations.

Observe, He is our Advocate *with the Father*, and His service in this connection is in view of our communion, when broken by sin. He exercises His advocacy that we may be brought to judge and confess our sin in the light of His grace, and of the Cross where it was put away. Thus the *communion* that befits the relationship in which we stand is restored.

To believe that the sin of a true believer can break down the representation of Christ on high on his behalf exhibits the gravest ignorance. For if ever this representation broke down it would be equal to saying that the work on the Cross had failed. If His representation depended in ever so small a measure on our conduct it would immediately cease, for our conduct is far from perfect. How sweet to turn away from self to Christ, the perfect One. His work is perfect, therefore His representation abides for all His people.

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Christ's *third* appearing will be at His coming in glory. We are in this world as strangers and pilgrims. Generations of the Lord's people have fallen asleep since Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians IV. 13-18. But the bodies of the saints in the graves are precious to the Lord. They have been redeemed by Him in virtue of His work on the Cross, and the hour draws nigh when He will complete the story of salvation by raising them and giving them a fashion like His own. We, too, who are alive and remain till the Lord's coming shall have our bodies of humiliation changed like unto His body of glory, and we shall be caught up, with the raised saints, to be for ever with the Lord.

In Hebrews IX. 28 we read, "He shall appear the second time *without sin*," that is, apart from the question of sin. Why does He not raise the question of sin at His second coming? Because He settled it at His first. To raise this question again would mean certain doom for us, for Christ will suffer and die no more.

Moreover, His coming again for His saints emphasizes the full value of the work done at His first appearing. So fully has He settled the question of sin for the believer at the Cross that it can never be reopened. So completely has every requirement been met that at any moment the believer may be translated from a scene of infirmity and sorrow, delivered from

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a body of humiliation, into a realm of perfection and glory.

. Our acceptance in Christ is complete. Righteousness forbids that sin should ever be imputed in the smallest degree.

The sense of all this, the knowledge of our standing in grace, will only work in us carefulness of walk, and beget in us a deep desire to be pleasing in our ways to Him who, by His death, has made us for ever fit for God's presence, and will one day transfer us there "in the twinkling of an eye."

We believe that time is very near. Everything bespeaks the imminence of the Lord's return. The knowledge of what His first appearing has effected, and His second appearing is maintaining, will enable us, without a particle of distrust or fear, to wait for His future appearing.

The three appearings remind us of a telescope. One follows the other, and all are mutually dependent on each other, as each part of a telescope draws out and is dependent on each other part.

May the Lord increase our true knowledge of His work and its consequences, and thus draw us in deeper affection to Himself, and give us to be more constant and earnest in watching for Him.

A. J. P.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ANSWER.

Is it a part of your cherished faith that eternal life—the gift of God—is the present portion of every believer, even the youngest of them? Do you not believe this to be the plain and blessed teaching of such passages as John III. 36, v. 24, and vi. 47? Are we not entitled to say, with such scriptures in view, that life eternal is ours, and that we have passed out of death into life? Is it not in very truth ours *now*, though in its fullness of meaning we still wait for it according to Jude 21?

And do you not hold the Holy Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, to be the Word of God—every part of it God-breathed? Not that it *contains* the Word of God, as the shell of a nut contains the kernel, but that it is in all its parts the veritable Word of God, to be received and tenaciously held as such?

Above all, do you not regard it as vital truth that Christ was the Eternal Word—that He was so before incarnation and after, and that in Him we see God and man in one Blessed Person—indivisible? An inscrutable mystery, indeed, which faith adoringly receives, and in the presence of which we wonder and worship—a mystery which no man can fathom—remembering the words, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father.” Is not this a truth which you cherish above all others, the foundation and topstone of our most holy faith?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Z.—MATTHEW XVI. 26.—A reference to the parallel passage in LUKE IX. 25 will show that the word “soul” here stands for the man himself, who is called upon to choose between this world and that which is to come. And should he set his choice on earthly things, and win the best the world can give, in what is he the gainer if, at the end, he himself be cast away—lost, for ever lost? But there is a further question: “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Can he redeem it? Can he buy it back? Can he give unto God a ransom for it? There are some who think they can. And so in their dying days, when their palsied hands are no longer able to hold fast what they have, they give of their passing wealth to build a “church,” to endow a hospital, or to further some religious or benevolent design. And they hope by so doing to make amends for the errors of a misspent life, of which *self* has been both the centre and circumference. It is but a delusive dream, from which they awake when the border-line is crossed and they enter the unseen world. So we understand this very solemn verse. See PSALM XLIX.—the whole of it.

LUKE XVI. 9.—The Revised Version gives the passage thus: “Make to yourselves friends . . . that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles”; and the New Translation of J. N. D., “Make to yourselves friends . . . that when it fails ye may be received,” etc. Both

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of them substitute "when *it* fails" or "when *it* shall fail" for "when ye fail" of our common version. We presume, therefore, this double witness should be received.

The teaching of the passage seems to be that money, called here "the mammon of unrighteousness," should be so used by its possessors that there will be an answering recompense in a day to come. Instead of spending it upon ourselves, in furtherance of our own ends and pleasures, we are to be mindful of others. "Distributing to the necessities of the saints," as it is said in Romans XII. 13. And Luke XII. 33 helps to make its meaning clear, as also Matthew XXV. 34-40. Nor should 1 Timothy VI. 17-19 be overlooked. Only let it not be forgotten that the right use of money is not the means or the title by which we are received into "the eternal tabernacles." These passages describe the character of those who will be welcomed there, not that which gives them entrance. As to verse 12, "that which is your own"—this for the Christian would be spiritual blessings. But some one will say, Are not these already ours, the gift of divine grace? In one sense, yes, but we shall not possess them—they will not be given unto us as the sure portion of our heart, if the mind is set on earthly things. Let us not delude ourselves. If money, "the mammon of unrighteousness," be our object, Christ cannot be. We cannot serve God and mammon. It is a moral impossibility. Lastly, your question on verse 18 we cannot answer, nor do we quite see why it is introduced here. We are inclined to think it is brought in more by way of illustration than of direct teaching.

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But as we cannot speak with confidence we prefer to say nothing.

P. L., Corunna.—We do not see the connection you speak of between the seven churches of Revelation II.—III. and the first seven chapters of Romans. The suggested analogy is quite new to us, and new things are not always seen at once. With the closing part of your letter we heartily agree. There is indeed uncommon danger in any of us being content with what we conceive to be a right ecclesiastical position, and in holding church principles which we may think sound and scriptural, as if that were everything. When this is the case, the position and principles acquire an ascendancy over the mind altogether out of proportion to their real value, and matters of infinitely greater moment are relegated to a subordinate place. Something more is required from us than positional correctness. We ought to walk in the fear of God, the Word of the Christ should dwell in us richly, and to crown all we should see to it that our hearts are under the influence of divine love, the blessed qualities of which are so beautifully described in 1 Corinthians XIII., a chapter that cannot be read too often. Love is the bond of perfectness, and if this be lacking any ecclesiastical position, even if quite scriptural, is but an empty shell, a body without a spirit, a poor and worthless pretension. Alas ! how many needless schisms have taken place among the saints of God, how many sorrowful breaches remain still unhealed, to the Lord's dishonour and the grief of gracious souls, for want of that love which

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“doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil !” Our Lord enjoins us to love one another, to love *all saints*, as He has loved both them and us. And His love is stronger than death, a flame which many waters cannot quench, an ever-living thing which no floods can drown. We may well ask whether we love *all saints* with a love resembling His. This is that which can remove difficulties when nothing else can do it. Two inches of snow falls, covering the whole land. Ten thousand men cannot sweep away—the sun rises, and it is gone !

“Do not be afraid of full grace. Be well sure that does not mar holiness ; whatever deadens the conscience does, but this does not. Would a child’s sense of a mother’s love weaken its desire to please her ? And as to power which we need, in grace alone it is found ; then press consistency with our calling as much as you like, you cannot do better.”

“Most Christians need to be enlightened as to salvation and their position in Christ. They confound their *standing* and their *state*. There are very few among them who understand the first verses of Hebrews x.”

“It might be very convenient just to have a director of consciences ; and we should thus be spared the discovery and the chastisement of our moral condition. Thus, if you are seeking how you may discover the will of God without that, you are seeking evil ; and it is what we see every day.”

LIFE AND THE INDWELLING SPIRIT.

ROMANS VIII. I-II.

THERE are two things in the second verse of our chapter that I wish particularly to draw your attention to—the first is, “*life in Christ Jesus*,” and the second, *the Spirit* in us as the power of that life. To impart life was the beginning of God’s blessed ways with our souls. Till then we were dead—alive to every worldly object, but dead to God. Now, in His sovereign grace the Spirit has laid hold of our hearts by some word of God or by the truth revealed in it, and there has been the communication to us of divine life. As we were born into natural life, so are we born absolutely anew. Except a man be born anew he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God (John III.). Nothing can be more important than this. Therefore I say again that the very beginning of all God’s ways of grace with us was the communication of divine life, with the nature which is inseparable from it.

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John I. 4). Precious truth! We see these two things, life and light, bound

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up together, and as surely as there is life so there is light in the soul. But now comes the evidence, in the same chapter, of our natural state. The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. Such was our condition in sin that if the light had simply shone into the world we should never have known its presence (*vv.* 10, 11). But love has come in with it and been active to bring the rays of the light into our souls. And so it is written, "As many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were *born . . .* of God" (John 1. 12). It is only as by His sovereign grace we are born of God that any of us ever receive Jesus.

Apart from life there is no real conviction of sin in the soul. But *life is not peace*, indeed, it is generally the beginning of soul-trouble; and that is where the first part of the Epistle to the Romans comes in. It lays the foundation in righteousness of all His ways of grace with the sinner, in setting forth His Son to be the propitiation, that every question of what troubled us (our sins) might be gone into and settled for His glory. Then there is God's acceptance of His finished work in raising Him from the dead (chap. iv. 24, 25)—the glorious proof given to the believer that our sins which He bore on the cross are gone for ever. "When He had by Himself purged our

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sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He never sat down there till He had purged our sins away.

Then, as we may see from Romans v. 12 on to chapter VIII., we find the deeper question raised, not of the sins, but of the root that produced them. Just as we needed the conviction of our sins to know forgiveness, so we needed the conviction of self in its utter evil and absence of strength, that we might be brought at last to give up the vain struggle to make anything of it, and to bow to the judgment of all *we are* as well as of what we have *done*, and to see that judgment executed when God condemned sin in the flesh in the death of His Son (Rom. VIII. 3). The moment I am brought to see that judgment executed in the death of Him who became my life, I am entitled to identify myself by faith with Him in His death, and to reckon myself to be dead to sin and alive to God in Him. Thus the ground is clear. Not only are my sins gone, but this flesh—this self that I could make nothing of—is gone too from before God. Now the eye turns from self and rests on the Person of my Deliverer (chap. VII. 25), while chapter VIII brings out the position and condition of the delivered man, the normal one of Christians.

We began by receiving His life, but then we needed to know His work for forgiveness and liberty, that we might enter into and realize our

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immense privileges. Here we find the wonderful elements that go to make up our position in Christ : " There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Condemnation must first reach Him before it can reach us. We have not merely come to an end of self in the judgment of the cross, but there is what God has introduced in the place of what He had to condemn. I am in Christ risen from the dead, passed beyond every question of sins and sin, the judgment of God, and the power of Satan. If I have lost my place as man in the flesh in the judgment of God, I have my new place in Christ and in all that He is as man before God, and in the Spirit as the power of that new place. *That is the position of every delivered child of God.* What a range of truth opens out to us in it ! For it is not all, that I am in Christ, but inseparably connected with it as the power of this position, the Holy Ghost dwells in me.

The two parts of His work come before us in the testimony borne to His glory in John 1. 29 : " Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and then verse 32 : " John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. . . . The same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Now, in the room of that which had to be taken away in judgment, He was to send the

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Holy Ghost to bring us in power into the whole of His position as the Risen Man.

Let us now go to John vii. 39. There we read that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." This shows us how entirely distinct a thing the gift of the Spirit is now in Christianity. He was not given while Jesus was here, or ever before. Jesus is glorified now, and the Holy Ghost is given as He never was before ; so you cannot look back to the Old Testament for it. In chapter xiv. 16 it is said : "He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you *for ever*." Come from that glory where Jesus is, the Holy Spirit can never be taken from the believer now. This is entirely distinct from being *born* of the Spirit. The unbeliever has to be born of the Spirit, but it is only in the believer that He can dwell.

Then, again, in chapter xvi. 7 the Lord says : "It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." So great and inestimable is the blessing that it is *better* for us that He is gone, that He is glorified, for He has sent His Spirit to dwell in us always and never to leave us. And then we see what He does (v. 13) : "He will guide you into all the truth. He shall take of mine and show it unto you."

In Acts the great fact is, God the Holy Ghost has come. Ever since, His dwelling-

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place has been here upon earth and in the believer. Now you may ask: When does the believer receive the Holy Ghost? Turn to Acts x., where Peter was sent to Cornelius. This man had been born again, as had been evidenced in his producing many precious fruits of the divine life, and Peter was now to tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. Now read verse 43: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word." So we see that the Holy Ghost taking His place in us is connected with the remission of sins. The moment you received the remission of your sins, that moment the Holy Ghost took up His dwelling in you. "In whom also after that ye believed [that is, the "gospel of your salvation"], ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). The ray that convicted me of my sins revealed to me the Person of my Saviour, and became life in my soul. And when the testimony to His finished *work* is believed, the Holy Ghost dwells in me—come from the glory to be the power of Christ's life in me as well as a divine Person dwelling in me.

Thus we have the first great fact of our deliverance; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free (*v.* 2). We carry the flesh in us still; it has undergone no change; the two natures remain within us, each having its own

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character, as the last verse of Romans VII., coming after the deliverance is reached, states. But now I am entitled to reckon myself dead to the old, and am no longer in the flesh, but in Christ, and in the Spirit given to dwell in me and to be the power of the believer's walk; and through the Spirit I am enabled to keep the evil nature within me in the place of death. Secondly, we are free by the new range of objects presented to us (Rom. VIII. 5). The flesh finds its objects in the world that God has judged, and it is a sphere perfectly suited to it. But blessed be God, there is a sphere of things suited to the new nature, "the things of the Spirit," or else we should be like fish out of water. The Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. He is not merely the power of the life we have received in Christ Jesus, but He also communicates to us the things of that life—of its Home and hopes, new relationships, new joys, new objects where Christ is. We look at unseen things. We have our mind on things above, our citizenship is there. Therein we find the immense practical power of our deliverance; I am as a delivered person, free to enjoy the things that the Spirit thus ministers to me. And thus we prove the immense formative power of an Object, adequate to fill and absorb the heart. We see the power of the same principle in poor earthly things. He who seeks money is avaricious, he who

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seeks fame is ambitious. How much more so when the object is divine !

Using the ark as an illustration of these things : there were two principles at work, as shown in the raven and the dove. The raven, the moment it was given its liberty, found its food in the masses of corruption floating on the waters of judgment ; the dove found no rest for its foot in such a scene and returned again unto Noah and the ark. The raven is a figure of the flesh ; but we have learnt its character. If you have a robber in the house whose character you know, you will keep him if you can under lock and key. If by faith we reckon ourselves to have died with Christ, and having the Holy Ghost, we have power now to refuse the flesh its liberty, having proved its character, and to keep it in the place of death. The dove—the new life in the power of the Holy Ghost—finds no rest here. When Christ was here the Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove, and now that same blessed Spirit directs our hearts to where He is, to the One that will fill them for eternity ! Is He not an adequate Object ? Can He not satisfy now ? He delights to do it if you will only let Him. Are you allowing the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and form your hearts by the Son of God as your object, like Noah with his one window up above ; or are you trying to break a hole in

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the side to be interested and to find your objects in a judged world? The Holy Spirit will never depart from us, but we may grieve Him, and then all communion and joy and power cease. I believe there is no heart more miserable than one who has tasted of what Christ is as an Object, and turns away to be occupied with the things of the world.

One thing more belongs to this wonderful position. We now wait for the moment when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven; we know not the moment, but "the Lord is at hand." Then we shall have resurrection bodies, changed in the twinkling of an eye into His image, or raised in glory (*v.* 11). The first two parts of the deliverance by the Spirit as the power of life, and by the objects of that new life, are ours now. But we wait for the deliverance of the body, and then all will be completed. What a deliverance and what a Deliverer is ours!

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

"Firstfruits" of the resurrection,
 He is risen from the tomb;
 Now in Him a new creation,
 We are free—beyond our doom.

Jesus died, and we died with Him,
 Buried in the grave He lay,
 Now with Him in resurrection
 We have part in heaven's bright day.

J. A. T.

HINDRANCES TO FRUITFULNESS.

LOOK at that tree yonder. Every branch of it covered with beautiful blossom! How full of promise it is, bidding fair in process of time to be laden with precious fruit! But who does not know that something may happen to prevent the fruit from forming? Full of blossom in the spring, but no fruit in summer. It has been often so. A heavy frost comes, and the gardener rises in the morning to find all the blossom gone, and, of course, there will be no fruit.

No fault could be found with the gardener; no fault with the tree or the soil. It was an *outside influence* that worked the dreadful mischief.

Oh! the chilling frosts of this world! How much they are to be dreaded, especially for the young and promising amongst the people of God! Many bright young Christians we have known who have fallen under the withering influence of the world. We have seen the blossom go and all possible fruitfulness for Christ swept away. We have broken our heart over them and wept tears of sorrow.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John II. 15). This was said to the young men who were strong

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and had overcome the wicked one. Watchfulness is needed, for we have to do with a vigilant and subtle foe, who by the things of the world might soon lead us astray.

The temptation might take the form of reading, or a pleasant companionship. But if the reading or the companionship should not be suitable and helpful spiritually, it is sure to work mischief. Satan will have got in the thin edge of the wedge, and you will find it terribly hard to get it out unless you at once fly to the Lord, who is stronger than the foe, and confess how wrong you have been in allowing the world to displace Him in your heart, and ask Him to help you at all cost to break with it.

Then there are other outside influences that hinder fruitbearing. Satan has his parasites. They work in secret, but they eat out our spiritual vitals. What are they? "Fleshly lusts which *war* against the soul." Even Timothy was warned by Paul to "flee youthful lusts." "*Flee.*" As though he said, "When you see the danger, instead of minimizing it, or parleying with it, take wings and fly away. Get out of its reach. That is the safe course to pursue." Then he is exhorted to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. II. 22).

To be contented and cheerful in circum-

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stances of penury, to be unrepining and unmurmuring in circumstances when all around tends to oppress, to be liberal when we might easily find reasons to spend all on self—this is fruitfulness. Of the Macedonian churches, Paul said, “Their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (2 Cor. VIII. 2). This was indeed fruit that abounded to their account.

There are yet other things that hinder fruitfulness. Passing through a nursery during a very dry season I was told that hundreds of pounds’ worth of fruit was being lost for want of rain. The plants had been planted in a healthy condition, but growth and fruitfulness were hindered for want of water. Those words came before me, “I have planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” “*YE ARE GOD’S HUSBANDRY.*” God employs in His garden one man to plant and another to water, and both are needful. Each service is as important as the other. The one who is used to do either is only a servant in His hand, neither more nor less. If we make much of one to the belittling of the other we despise Him whose servants they are.

Rain is as needful to the plant as the sunshine. Too much sun would be death to the plants. Too much rain and no sun would also cause death. Rain is like the Spirit’s ministry through an Apollos. He did no planting so

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far as we know. Paul did that. But he did a most useful service in helping on the Corinthian saints.

Trees planted by a river are not so dependent on rain. The river supplies what they need. But even some rivers dry up if rain does not come. Jeremiah says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters." He never ceases from yielding fruit, and is not careful in the year of drought. While ministry is most needful to refresh the saints, the river of God is better. The Lord Himself is that. If we abide in Him and draw from His fullness by the Spirit's power through feeding on the WORD OF GOD, we shall be evergreens, and "our fruit will not fail."

Root-pruning is an important thing. In a garden I once observed a pear tree propped up and heavily laden with fruit. I inquired as to the reason for the props; and then I learnt that during a severe storm the tree had been blown down but not uprooted, and ever since it had borne a double crop of fruit. So far from the storm injuring the tree it only did it good. It had cleared the roots of what was sapping its fruitfulness.

How much spiritual growth is hindered and consequently fruitbearing for want of *root-pruning*—going to the root of things with God in private? One of old said, "Search me,

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O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting " (Ps. CXXXIX. 23, 24).

If He sees we are in earnest and real He will show us something that may be at the *bottom* of our hearts that requires to be cut away ; something that will not bear the light of His holy eye ; something that we are all unconscious of but that hinders our fruitfulness.

There is no reason why we should fear being searched to the very bottom by the blessed God. He loves us too deeply to do us anything but good. No one will treat us so tenderly as He. The hand of the one who prunes is never so near the vine as when he is pruning it. " Every branch in me that beareth fruit He purgeth." What is the object ? " That it may bring forth *MORE* fruit."

It is very needful though perhaps painful to be searched. Something that appears far more like a calamity than a mercy may befall us. It may be something hard to understand in the ways of divine and perfect love. But if it leads to exercise and heart-searching and self-judgment it will act like the storm on the pear tree. It will be productive of more fruit for the Master, who is the Husbandman. It will produce more lowly thoughts of self and kindly thoughts of others, more earnest desire after Christ and more unflagging devotedness

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to His interests ; more real separation from all that is un-Christlike. This is fruit.

Fruitbearing is natural to plants under proper conditions. The true condition for spiritual fruitfulness is to maintain a healthy spiritual state. This can only be accomplished by walking in the Spirit and abiding in Christ. " Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me — *WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING* " (John xv. 4, 5).

No one can manufacture fruit. *It must grow.* If we abide in Christ, then obedience to His holy will will be the fruit and proof of it. The life will be both fragrant and fruitful. Happiness is the sure result. If we abide in His love obedience becomes a delight, even as the blessed Lord delighted to do the will of the Father.

His love to His saints is only measured by the Father's love to Him. What a measure ! Does it not fill our souls with adoring wonder ? Let us dwell on His love until it becomes part of our spiritual being ! " As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in My love." It never changes, though we may change. If we have grown cold, let us get back at once to the warmth of His love ; so will we become more abundant fruitbearers to His praise.

P. W.

MODERN ATTACKS ON THE BIBLE.

THE Bible requires no other proof of its divine origin than that which it has been constantly giving since its introduction into the world thirty-five hundred years ago. Its power for good and true greatness is seen in the history of the nations and in the lives of individuals wherever it has been received.

With this evidence before the eyes of men it is wilful ignorance or determined unbelief to question either its authenticity or inspiration. It is with the "Word written" as it was with the "Word made flesh," that "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." These evil deeds are not confined to coarse crimes, but include the more refined forms of evil, such as pride, covetousness, desire for admiration, self-will, and insubjection to authority. In this is seen the true secret of the hostility of the human mind toward the Word of God, whether it be of the gross Paine-Ingersoll type or that of the more respectable, because more fashionable, Higher Criticism. The true believer cannot but feel while reading their arguments that the confessed inability of the critics to believe the Bible is more moral than mental. "If any man will do

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His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Such were the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to the people of His day who declared themselves unable to receive His teachings. So if men do not believe it is not for any lack of evidence, but because of their inborn dislike to the truth of God, which exposes the secret springs of their corrupt nature, and must therefore be subjected to the "test of modern science," or openly and unblushingly repudiated.

But the object of this paper is not to present proofs of the Bible's inspiration nor to analyse the motives of those who deny it. Our aim is rather to put the reader on his guard against thinking that he can accept the conclusions of the Higher Critics and still retain faith in or respect for the Bible. For a very common method with these teachers is to hide from the unwary the inevitable consequences to faith wherever their boasted "assured results" are accepted as such. To retain the confidence of a certain class of professing Christians, they affirm that the acceptance of their views will in no wise lessen respect for the Bible, but will rather enhance its value and cause it to be studied more intelligently.

But let us see now if the teachings of the destructive critics can be accepted and respect for the Bible retained. We are told that the Bible is full of historical, chronological, bio-

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graphical, ethnological, and scientific errors ; that the antiquity which it claims must be corrected by at least a thousand years ; that Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others did not write the books ascribed to them. The apostles are attacked, and deceit or pious fraud ascribed to them and to their writings. The critics would have us think that these " holy men of God," who " spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," believed, like the Jesuits, that " the end justifies the means." Their motives were good, they say, and in assuming to speak with authority and as inspired of God they had a laudable purpose in view. They were only conforming to the literary usage of the day in describing persons that never existed and events that never took place. Their object in this deception was to arouse the dormant patriotism of their readers or incite them to higher religious ideals, and therefore they were in measure justified, and must not be judged by modern standards of truth and uprightness. And to still further their cause with good people who may yet stand in doubt of them, the critics declare that it does not in any way detract from the value of their writings to believe these things of their authors, and that we may still profess honest reverence for the Book, though all faith in its veracity is gone !

But can we do such violence to conscience

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and understanding as to believe that a book of inaccuracies, many of them knowingly inserted by the writers for the purpose of deceiving their fellows, is a good book or worth the smallest price placed upon its cheapest edition? No; a book of such character would be dear at any price. We would at once say of it, "Away with such a book from the earth, for it is not fit that it should any longer live in the regard of an intelligent and truth-loving people. Gather up every accessible copy to burn as did Rome at the time of the Reformation, or as the Ephesians did with their books on magic at the beginning of the Christian era. Withdraw copies from all schools and public libraries, or if retained as curiosities of literature, label them as fiction that none may be deceived by the claims of the book to antiquity, inspiration, and authority. Make known throughout the world that it is no more authoritative than the Koran and other so-called sacred books of the Orient, or Joseph Smith's Mormon 'Revelations' of the West."

For this book, the Bible, is all or nothing. It is either true or false, the greatest gift ever given or the most stupendous fraud ever imposed. It claims inspiration for itself (2 Tim. III. 16). Is it inspired? It professes to speak with authority (Luke XVI. 29). Is it authoritative? It affirms that it is light. Is it darkness? It demands submission to its mandates.

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Has it any right to command? These are questions that call for answers; not answers such as the critics are accustomed to give, equivocal, indirect, meaningless, but direct and straightforward, Yes or No. There must be no begging of the question. No one wishing to save himself trouble may dismiss the subject with a wave of his hand, as not directly concerning him. The matter must be faced, and by every one bearing the Christian name.

We cannot receive the assertions of the Higher Critics and at the same time retain confidence in or love for the Bible. If their statements are true the Bible is false; if they are right, the martyrs and reformers were wrong, and we, with them, have been deceived. They have perished and we are yet in our sins. If the critics have fact on their side, the Christian's faith rests on fable. If, as they say, the Bible is a product of evolution, we are without a revelation from God. If their contentions as to the authorship and chronology of Scripture are right, then we have, with our pious forefathers, been deceived, we have believed lies; the martyrs have given their bodies to the wild beasts and the devouring flame for mere legend, Jewish folk-lore, Hebrew tradition, pious fiction, religious romance.

Did all those noble missionaries, some of them enduring greater sufferings than the martyrs under Nero or Mary, throw away their

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lives among the heathen to propagate a fancy, an idea, a product of evolution? Did they go forth with weeping, leaving home, kindred, and friends, only to spread among unenlightened tribes a pretty tale or a useful fiction? Had their teaching neither solid base nor ample justification? I refer not to those who go merely to reform men or to spread Western civilization, telling the pagan Hindoo or Chinaman that there is truth in all religions, but to those men of sterling worth who took their lives in their hands and in many cases laid them down, that the "heathen in his blindness" might know of the saving power of the blood of Christ. Alas, they too have died in vain if the book they took with them was not the Word of God, as they verily believed and taught those to whom they were sent.

Are all the sacrifices made by the Lord's poor for the cause of the gospel lost? Are they to meet with no future reward? Assuredly this is so if the "established conclusions" of the critics be true.

Have the charming Bible stories, for long centuries told as truth to artless childhood by mothers of purest love, been, after all, fable and fairy tale? It is even so, if the critical theories are to be believed.

Christian reader, there is more at stake than perhaps you have hitherto supposed. Issues are involved a thousand times more far-reach-

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ing in their consequences than most of us realize. And so fearful are the critics of men taking alarm at their statements, that every effort is put forth to allay the godly fears of the faithful, so that they may in no wise be hindered in spreading the deadly poison of their teaching throughout every quarter of Christendom.

It is for the purpose of showing the true import of all this boasted "criticism" that this paper is written. The critics have been fully answered over and over again by men as scholarly as themselves. It seems useless to repeat these solid, convincing replies. The foretold "strong delusion" is taking firm and deadly hold upon men everywhere who will not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. We can but leave them alone and labour to save others with fear, snatching them from the fire, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh of twentieth-century unbelief.

We have sought to put the believer on his guard, lest he countenance this terrible error in himself or his associations, or lest he in any way have fellowship with the most subtle and portentous denial of truth that has ever been put in circulation by the "father of lies" since the original parent lie in Eden.

God help all His own, each one in his sphere and measure, to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." C. K.

SIX SHORT RULES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

I.

Never neglect daily private prayer ; and when you pray, remember that God is present, and that He hears your prayers (Heb. xi. 6).

II.

Never neglect daily private Bible reading ; and when you read, remember that God is speaking to you, and that you are to believe and act upon what He says. I believe all backsliding begins with the neglect of these two rules (John v. 39).

III.

Never let a day pass without trying to do something for the Lord Jesus. Every night reflect on what the Lord Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself, What am I doing for Him ? (Matt. v. 13-16).

IV.

If ever you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room, and kneel down and ask God's blessing upon it (Col. iii. 17). If you cannot do this, it is wrong (Rom. xiv. 23).

V.

Never take your Christianity from Christians, or argue that because such and such people do so and so, therefore you may (2 Cor. x. 12). You are to ask yourself, "How would Christ act in my place?" and strive to follow Him.

VI.

Never believe what you feel, if it contradicts God's Word. Ask yourself, Can what I feel be true, if God's Word is true? and if *both* cannot be true, believe God ; and make your own heart the liar (Rom. iii. 4 ; 1 John v. 10. 11).

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W. W.—We should guard with the most jealous care the glory of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, against which the unholy reasonings of the human mind are constantly rising up like the restless waves of the sea. Against all attempts to fathom and to explain this, the profoundest of all mysteries, we are warned by the words, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father” (Matt. xi. 27). Therefore any endeavour to unravel the mystery of His Person is bound to fail. It is not a subject to be reasoned about, but to be received in unquestioning faith and cherished as the most sacred and vital of all truths. Now, as to Colossians i. 15, “the firstborn of every creature,” the verses which immediately follow show how this is and must be. He is the Creator, and the vast universe in all its parts is His workmanship, and by Him it is held firmly compacted together and holds on its stately way. “Firstborn” indicates that He who bears that title is Head over all. Do you require an example of this usage of the word? Psalm LXXXIX. 27 will furnish it. There Solomon, the tenth son of David (1 Chron. iii.), receives with the title of “firstborn” the right to his father’s throne. “It is not difficult to conceive that if the Creator God finds it good to take a place in the creation, the first belongs to Him. The Son took this place in becoming man,” and therefore among His glorious titles stands this “Firstborn of all creation.”

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NEW MILLS.—The copy of *The Way of Holiness* which you kindly sent us has been attentively read. We need not say that we sympathize with every endeavour to promote holiness of life among the people of God. "Be ye holy; for I am holy," is a standing admonition to all His children (1 Peter i. 16). And if we fail in this we cannot excuse ourselves, for He is able to keep, and will, if in the hour of temptation we look to Him. But while this is true, we do not believe that the root principle of sin is taken away from any, nor can the best of men ever speak of himself as being pure even as Christ is pure. *The Way of Holiness* affirms he may, but Scripture teaches nothing of the sort. The two passages on which it relies are 1 John i. 7 and 1 John iii. 3. We will examine these presently. If it be true that the principle of sin is cleansed away, should we not expect to see it exemplified in the apostles of our Lord? But what does Paul say after he had been caught up to the third heaven? "There was given unto me," says he, "a thorn in the flesh." What for? "Lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. xii.). How should that be, and from whence comes the danger of spiritual pride if the principle of sin is gone? This shows the incorrigible nature of "the flesh." It is hopelessly evil. Look also at the Apostle Peter when at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11-13). He so dissembled with the other Jews and Barnabas that Paul had to rebuke him openly. How was this if the principle of sin was not there? Am I excusing Peter and Barnabas and the rest of them? Not at all. I am only showing that even in these devoted men the prin-

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ciple of sin remained. No doubt, if they had walked uprightly and in the fear of God they would not have dissembled as they did ; but, alas ! as the Apostle James tells us, in many things we *all* offend (James III. 2). We also learn from Galatians v. 17 that the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, a thing which never could be if “ the flesh ”—the principle of sin within—were wholly gone. Perhaps we shall be told that the apostles were on a low level and did not know so much as some modern Christians. If that be so, there is nothing more to say. For ourselves, we are content to be in the company of the apostles and to abide in their teaching.

And now a word on the two texts on which *The Way of Holiness* bases its contentions. 1 John i. 7 does indeed tell us that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin. But every intelligent Christian knows that in the types of old the blood of the victim met the requirements of God’s righteousness in respect of sin. So on the Passover night the blood was sprinkled on lintel and door-post—not for the eye of the Israelite, but for the eye of God (Exod. XII.), and on the great day of atonement (Lev. XVI.) the blood was taken in and sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat. To speak of the Blood of the great Antitype as inwardly cleansing us from the principle of sin is to mistake its place and application altogether. It is the basis of all blessing, as we adoringly acknowledge, and in virtue of it we are *judicially* cleansed from every sin. And so is every believer from the very first moment of his having faith. But *moral* cleansing is another matter.

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Nor is *The Way of Holiness* more fortunate in its use of 1 John III. 3. It stands on more than doubtful ground in saying that "just as Jesus had no carnality, neither need we have such a thing in us." On such words we refrain from commenting. We let them stand to tell their own tale. But look at the passage. It tells us that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Yes, we shall be like Him *when He shall appear*—not before. But if we have this *hope* in Him—a hope, and therefore not a present, but a future thing—what do we do? We purify ourselves, even as He is pure. If I am to be like Christ by and by, I seek grace to be as like Him as I can in my practical ways—to grow up into His image.

The beginning of all true desires after holiness lies in the New Birth and the indwelling Spirit of God. On this we need not now enlarge, but refer you to the first paper in our present issue, entitled "Life and the indwelling Spirit." If God permit, we hope to deal with the subject more fully before long.

R. R.—1 Corinthians I. 9.—No, "the fellowship of His Son" is not "a position one has to attain to after conversion." It is that unto which every saint is called. Out of Jewish and heathen fellowships, men were called in receiving the gospel with its priceless blessings, and were brought into another fellowship, even that of God's Son. How great, how sacred, how august must *that* fellowship be! And Scripture recognizes no other. It knows nothing in the nature of Episcopal, Pres-

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byterian, Baptist, Wesleyan, Free Church, or Brethren fellowships. There is but one—"the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Other fellowships, alas! have been formed, based on some particular truth or agreement in other matters. These are to our reproach. Narrow and sectarian they necessarily are. But "the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" embraces in its intention the whole assembly of God and excludes none save those who by wicked ways or by holding doctrines subversive of the faith bring upon themselves the discipline such conduct calls for. Why should we not be content then with the fellowship unto which we have been called? If we adequately apprehended the largeness and blessedness of it, we would never think of making any other.

In 1 John 1. 3 "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ"—this is quite another thought. Here it is fellowship *with*, whereas in 1 Corinthians 1. 9 it is "the fellowship *of* His Son." In 1 John 1. 3, fellowship means sharing in the thoughts, feelings, joys—so far as poor, feeble, finite creatures can—of the Father and the Son. If any think this to be a privilege too great, let such remember that if the Holy Spirit is the Author of these thoughts and feelings and joys, they must be in their very nature those of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit could beget in our heart no other. In us they are feeble and finite, in the Father and the Son infinite, but in their nature they are necessarily the same.

BETTER THAN A DREAM.

A CHRISTIAN lady, not long ago, dreamed that she saw herself encircled, above, beneath, and all around, as with a blaze of light. Brilliance inconceivable made a pavilion for her, and while standing there she saw all her cares, her troubles, and her sins wandering about outside that wall of light, unable to come near to her.

What would *you* say, may I ask, if you could, not merely *dream* this, but know it for a great reality? Think for a moment what it would mean. You see on every side of you that which betokens the presence of God. The God of omnipotent power, the God of unsearchable wisdom, the God of unfathomable love: for *Him* to be round about you, protecting you on every hand, would be safety and rest indeed. No fiery dart of the enemy, no accusing voice, no sentence of doom could reach you through that wall of defence.

But is this only a fantasy, a mere supposition, a beautiful dream? Let us see what the thirty-fourth Psalm says. Read verse 7: "*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.*"

What is meant by "the angel of the Lord"?

XXX.

G

I believe it conveys the thought of the felt, manifested, recognized presence of the Lord. When the children of Israel encamped by the Red Sea and trembled at the approach of Pharaoh's hosts, *the angel of God* stood between them and their foes (Exod. xiv. 19). Notice the reference made to this, hundreds of years afterwards, in Isaiah LXIII: "I will mention the lovingkindness of the Lord," exclaims the prophet, ". . . and the great goodness toward the house of Israel which He hath bestowed on them. . . . *He* was their Saviour . . . the *angel of His presence* saved them: in His love and in His pity *He* redeemed them" (vv. 7-9). So "the angel of the Lord" is the Lord Himself in manifested presence, and the Psalm tells us that He encamps round about those that fear Him.

Then, fearing *Him*, what else is there to fear? Having regard to Him, our Saviour-God, our Protector, our Shield, our Defence, to what danger from without need we have regard?

The writer remembers once sleeping with the possibility of a hungry shark being within a few inches of his head. *Sleeping*, did I say? Was sleep possible under such circumstances? Yes, for his head was on a pillow against the *inside* wall of an iron-built liner, and the shark was outside. Only the thickness of the iron plate between, but it was enough.

Have you not enough between you and the dangers that you fear? If *God* is between you and them, is He not sufficient? What He was to Abram, when He said "I am thy Shield," that He is to you.

Those who have visited the land of Judea have been struck with the beauty of Jerusalem's situation, girt with a ring of mountains on every side. And we read: "*As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people*" (Ps. cxxv. 2). Those mountains have not saved Jerusalem from the hand of her foes. Again and again the desolator has laid siege to the city with his engines of war, planted his standard upon her battlements, and slain her defenders with the sword. But the Anti-type, as always, surpasses the type. The mountains may fail as a defence, but the Lord—never!

What about our sins? Divine love has dealt with them in such a way that they can never be laid to our charge. They were all brought into remembrance before God, and laid upon the head of our blessed Substitute when He hung as the Sin-bearer upon the tree. *He* bore their penalty. *He* endured the judgment for which they cried aloud. *He* suffered for those sins of ours, and silenced their accusing voice for ever.

In this way God has put those sins outside, and ourselves inside, with Himself in between.

If His face shines upon us with unclouded favour and unspeakable love, behind His back our many sins are cast (Isa. XXXVIII. 17).

“What shall *WE* then say to these things? If *God* be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. VIII. 31).

Note the question. It is not “What shall heavenly beings or infernal powers say?” Nor “What shall Satan say?” Nor “What shall men who know us, and are well acquainted with the devious and crooked course of our lives, say?”

God has said something about us, namely, that He has justified us and is *for* us. Now the question is, “What shall *we* then say?”

Let our answer be, with the triumphant tone of absolute certainty ringing in our voice: “If God be for us, who against us? *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” Having given such a gift *for* us, the thought is impossible that there should exist anything for our good that He would refuse us. Salvation? Justification? Oh, yes, of course, all included. And much more than these. “*All things.*”

What about the trials of life from which none are exempt? Does God place Himself between us and these? Yes, indeed, we are taught so by that verse, filled with heavenly comfort and cheer, in Philippians iv. 7. I have

been reading this exquisite verse in several of our English versions, besides the one in common use. Each one seems to bring some new beauty into prominence. Let me place them before the reader's eye.

"The peace of God, which is surpassing all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (*Young*).

"The peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus" (*Darby*).

"The peace of God, that surpasseth every understanding, shall keep your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (*Kelly*).

"The peace of God, which transcends all our powers of thought, will be a garrison to guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (*Weymouth*).

"The peace of God, which is beyond all human understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and thoughts, through . . . Christ Jesus" (*Twentieth Century*).

Does the wonder of the truth contained in this verse begin to take hold of your soul?

Imagine some costly treasure, guarded day and night by a garrison of soldiers. Could any thief obtain access to that treasure? It would be impossible—*almost* impossible.

But, in connection with the matter we are considering, the *almost* becomes *absolutely*.

You are the costly treasure (your Saviour,

and none but He, knows *how* costly). Around you as a vigilant guard, keeping incessant watch against every foe, is that which is infinite, "which transcends all our powers of thought"—the peace of God.

The conditions laid down are simplicity itself. We have but to make known to God everything that would cause us trouble; *everything*, whether small or great. With all confidence, confidence that begets thanksgiving even while we utter our requests, we are to lay our difficulties before Him who knows them all. Then the matter is in His hands. His peace stands guard over our hearts and our very thoughts.

Truly "the Lord is round about His people." Go on thy happy way, then, my soul. The lady's dream is no dream, but a transcendent reality. God is round about me. Underneath me are His everlasting arms. Over my head floats His banner of love. He Himself marches before, and His glory is my reward.

Happy, happy people who have such a God for their Shield and their exceeding great Reward!

H. P. B.

FORGIVENESS AND A FORGIVING SPIRIT

**“Forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one
that is indebted to us.”—LUKE XI. 4.**

THIS does not refer to a sinner's forgiveness, when he first comes to the knowledge of the Lord, but to the disciple under the daily government of the Father. How misleading then it is to make an unconverted person take the ground of asking forgiveness like a child of God ! Under the gospel the way for the unconverted to receive the remission of sins is by faith in the blood of Jesus, by receiving the gospel itself. But the way this passage is commonly used confounds all truth by mixing up the world and the children of God, as if they were all alike disciples drawing near and asking forgiveness for their daily sins. The forgiveness of a child of God is what is spoken of here—the removal of what hinders communion, and not that which the gospel publishes to the most guilty that believe in the Saviour and Lord. It is the daily pardon which the believer needs—the habitual need of the soul, just as daily bread is that of the body.

“For we forgive every one that is indebted to us.” This evidently supposes one who has

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a forgiving spirit already. And God does hold His children to this. How can a man who does not forgive another pretend to enjoy the forgiveness of his own sins before God? There is a righteous government on our Father's part, and the particular sin which grieves the Lord is not forgiven till we confess it to Him. "If ye do not forgive," says our Lord in Mark XI., "neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." It is cherishing a spirit entirely antagonistic to the Spirit of the Lord. If there were a child in a family going on in a course of self-will, there would be a bar for the time to mutual good feeling. So with God our Father; if there be a persistently bad spirit towards another, so long the Father does not forgive. We are not now speaking of eternal forgiveness, but of communion and daily intercourse with Himself. It ruins the intelligence of Scripture to make it all a question of eternity. And it is worthy of remark that in the Epistles of the New Testament the remedy or duty in such circumstances takes the form of confession, which goes far deeper than asking for forgiveness. To ask for forgiveness is easy enough, but to confess one's fault in all its gravity is a very humiliating process. To confess, to judge oneself, is therefore beyond asking forgiveness.

W. K.

CHRIST IN THE LIFE.

EVERY one who makes any profession of Christ is an object of close scrutiny. Those who are scrutinizing his way of living do it unobtrusively and generally without comment. Often it is done for the purpose of detecting signs of insincerity or failure ; but sometimes it is for the honest purpose of ascertaining the reality of the power of Christ in the life of him who confesses Him. Thus, whether we desire it or not, and whether we are conscious of it or not, we are living epistles, known and read of men. What are they reading with those watchful eyes in your life and mine ? What conclusions are they drawing from what they read there ? And what influence are those conclusions exerting upon their attitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ ?

Let me relate a little personal episode which will strikingly illustrate what I mean.

A few years after I had come to a knowledge of the great salvation which has been wrought by the crucified and risen Son of God, I heard of the death of the beloved wife of a friend, a man much older than myself. I highly esteemed him, and looked up to him as one of the most eminent and honoured lawyers in the country, and entertained affectionate regard for him because of kindness and help extended towards

me when a law student, and in the early days of my practice. I was away from home when this news reached me, and though I did not know *whether or not he was a Christian*, I ventured, in writing him a note of sympathy, to quote those words of comfort given to us in 1 Thessalonians IV. 13-18.

I met him subsequently, and he at once referred to my letter, and expressed a desire to talk to me on the subject upon which it touched. This led to several long conversations. He was without faith, and had been endeavouring to find in the opinions of learned men a resting-place for the mind, and an answer to the profoundest questions which the heart raises. Consequently he was in a truly pitiable state of uncertainty, pointing out that one writer said one thing, and one another, and that no one seemed to have any solid foundation for his opinions.

I most earnestly urged him to turn from conflicting human opinions to the Word of God, assuring him with all the conviction that was in my own soul that we had God's own Word for everything that was important for us to know. I also endeavoured to show him, by that unfailing Word, that eternal life was given to all who believed on the crucified and risen Son of God. It was quite evident that the impression my testimony made upon him was due to the fact that I had strong convictions, and could

rest unquestioningly upon the revealed Word of God. After this much had been gained, he put to me this question : “ Did your acceptance of Jesus Christ make

ANY ACTUAL DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE ? ”

What a searching question ! And how clear it was that I could bring no help to that distressed and darkened soul had I not been able to assure him that, as the result of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, my life had been completely changed, that old habits of life and habits of thought had fallen away, that old things had lost their power to attract and to satisfy, and that, in short, the result was entrance into a new creation.

He went on to say that he had been closely watching church-goers for forty years ; that he could not see that the profession of Christianity *made any difference in their lives* ; that their manner of living could not be distinguished from those who made no such profession ; and he cited the case of a man very high in the councils of the nation, a personal friend of his, who was prominent in one of the largest churches of the city, but whose manner of life gave no evidence of being influenced in any way by his profession of Christianity.

Consider what this means—that a man of the highest culture, a close observer of men, living in the centre of the national life of this (so-called) Christian land, could ask, after

watching professing Christians for forty years, whether believing on the Lord Jesus Christ *made any difference in one's life!* What sort of Christians were these? For whom were they living, that after so long a study of their ways this keen observer was forced to the conclusion that Christianity was, for all practical purposes, a sham—a mere form of godliness without the corresponding power? (2 Tim. III. 5.)

I never saw that man again. A few days after this conversation he, too, was called away, and I do not know whether or not he had found refuge in the atoning blood of Christ. But I am sure that the same question is being asked by millions of others in this and other lands where there is a profession of Christianity. Eyes are fixed upon each one of us who names the name of Christ. They are eager eyes, hungry eyes, the eyes of imprisoned and perishing souls; and while these observers may make no comment, they are asking within themselves: "Does it make any difference in one's life?"

What answer do they get to that question as they regard your life and mine? What are they reading day by day, and what conclusion are they reaching? The answer will be found in the answer to that other question: "Unto whom are we living—unto self or unto Him?"

P. M.

GRACE IN ACTION.

TITUS II. 11, 14.

THE Bible, on its human side, is an Eastern book, abounding in imagery and figure ; and when we are told that grace teaches us, the language, of course, is figurative. Whether we live under law or under grace, *God* is the Teacher. But the passage emphasizes the truth that it is on the principle of *grace* that He trains us, not of law. And these two principles are wholly incompatible. Both are good and right, but they are inconsistent. The essential characteristic of law is the assertion of rights ; the essential characteristic of grace is the giving up of rights. “ *He gave Himself* for us, that He might redeem us.” This is the great manifestation of grace—the self-sacrifice of the Son of God.

And it is on this principle that He deals with us as now redeemed. It is a thorough paradox to a carnal man ; but the philosophy of the heart runs deeper than that of the head. An illustration may be useful to mark the contrast between the two principles. “ Thou shalt not steal ” was the command that pealed forth from Sinai ; and a curse followed upon transgression. “ Let him that stole steal no more ”

is the kindred command of grace. And now mark the sequel : “ but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, *that he may have to give to him that needeth.*” Law forbids our taking what is another’s ; grace goes further, and enjoins our giving up what is our own. And so, through all the practical teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the warnings, even against sins of the grossest kind, are based upon blessings freely given, or upon Divine relationships freely formed.

“ The grace of God *trains* us.” In three other passages of the New Testament this same word is used of God’s dealings with His people, and in these it is rightly rendered *chasten*. “ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,” is the Lord’s word to Laodicea. And in the solemn warning against unworthily partaking of the Lord’s Supper, the Apostle writes : “ We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world ” (1 Cor. XI. 32). Law would condemn ; grace chastens. And the other passage—Hebrews XII.—marks the distinction still more clearly. The fifth verse takes up the very words of the warning to Laodicea : “ Despise not thou the *chastening* of the Lord, nor faint when thou art *rebuked* of Him.” And mark the ground on which the chastening comes. It is not based upon sin committed, but upon the

relationship in which the one who has sinned stands to God. "For whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth" (cf. Rev. III. 19 again). "What *son* is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" But the difference does not end here. Punishment, strictly so called, has relation to the past; chastening to the future. Punishment is imposed because of sin committed; chastening is inflicted with a view to the good of him who is the subject of it. He chastens us "for our *profit*, that we might be partakers of His holiness."

The spirit of legality that is indigenous to our hearts has no more common or subtle phase than that of regarding chastisement as necessarily a punishment for sin. And the teaching of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, the Divine antidote for this error, is but little understood. Indeed, our beliefs in this respect are but the old doctrine of Eliphaz the Temanite: "Who ever perished being innocent? or, when were the righteous cut off?" That one who lay crushed and desolate beneath so terrible a storm of seemingly unpitying judgments could be "a perfect and upright man that feared God and eschewed evil" (Job I. 1) was a phenomenon entirely beyond the theology of the Temanite; and so he and his companions only forced Job back upon the assertion of his own integrity, and drove him still further from the God who was seeking

thus to make him “ partaker of His holiness.” And in the end, the “ comforters ” of Job had to seek the prayers of Job to save them from the wrath their words had kindled (Job XLII. 7, 8).

Grace *teaches* us. The Christian course is a discipline. And the result is a sober, righteous, and godly life on earth, with heart and eye fixed upon a blessed hope above it and beyond it. “ Soberly, righteously, and godly ” ; these words represent the threefold aspect of life—to a man’s own spirit, to his neighbour, and to God. And it is certain that these qualities are not characteristic of the age we live in. Sobriety—where is it to be found in this age of display, and hurry, and greed ?

And this word “ sober ” has so long been run in a special and narrow groove that now it almost refuses to expand to the thought that is here intended. Etymologically, it means possessed of a sound mind ; and this idea always clings to it. It means a habit of mind opposed to extremes, and most of all to levity. He who has been trained in the school of grace is marked by soundness of judgment in all things.

R. A.

THE "COMFORTER"

THE believer is apt to lose sight of the wonderfulness of the things that belong to his "common salvation." These things may be to him as familiar as household words, but the wonder of them should abide. It is very wonderful, for instance, that he should commit his soul's eternal welfare, without the least fear or misgiving, to One whom the unbelieving world holds as dead for nineteen hundred years. It is very wonderful that he should be absolutely certain that he has a vital, individual interest in a tragedy that took place centuries ago. It is very wonderful that he should enjoy communion with the One who was the centre of that tragedy, and that He should be to him a "living, bright reality." It is very wonderful that, apart from the study of evidences, the believer should have the unshakable conviction that the Book called the Bible is the Word of God. It is very wonderful, in short, that he should seek to "walk by faith" and to have his life governed by unseen realities which, before his conversion, seemed to him vague and uncertain, and even utopian and foolish. These are the things which he now lives for; they are to him the REAL things of life. All this, we repeat, is

very wonderful, and would be utterly beyond explanation were we not taught in the Word to attribute it all to the presence and workings of THE HOLY SPIRIT, the One who has created us anew in Christ Jesus.

Our Lord called Him the "Comforter." In His farewell address to His sorrowing disciples He promises them another Comforter, who was to take His place when He had left them. He told them, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you," that is, in the person of the other "Comforter." It was expedient for them that He should go away, for unless He did so the Spirit would not come. The Holy Spirit, then, takes the place on earth of our absent Lord. He is to be to us all that Christ was to His disciples when among them; yes, and more, for the Lord Jesus was restricted, as to His personal presence, by His body, whereas the Holy Spirit knows no such limitations, being present in and with every believer in every part of the world.

The English word "comforter," as it appears to an ordinary twentieth-century reader, conveys a totally inadequate idea of the original, which means "one called to our side to help and energize." 'Tis blessedly true, indeed, that the Spirit does minister consolation to the sorrowing heart, but He does far more. He it is who energizes the "inner man" so that we are enabled to over-

come sin. He is the author of every effectual movement of soul Godward, of all spiritual strength and hope and love, of joy and praise, of every acceptable prayer, of every success in service, of every grace that manifests itself in the life. He is the other Advocate who maketh intercession for the saints according to God, who fights our battles, defeats our enemies. He is the only effectual Teacher of the things of God. What a glorious privilege to be the object of the Divine Spirit's never-failing love, watchful care, and gracious leadings! What holy confidence would be ours in our walk and service if we but trusted the Lord to quicken by the indwelling Spirit the heart's affections, stimulate the powers of the mind, and energize all the faculties of the soul. Let us honour the Holy Spirit more by recognizing His Deity and personality, obeying His leadings and submitting to His teachings. He it is who enables us to abide in Christ, and it is as we are controlled by Him that we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

In the foregoing lines we have merely attempted to remind the reader of some of the things which the Holy Spirit does for and in the believer. What we need is to learn to trust Him practically day by day. He has been well called, let it be said in all reverence, the "Executive of the Godhead." In this dispensation the Spirit is willingly subordinate

to the Son, just as the Son became willingly subordinate to the Father. And these wonderful arrangements on the part of the Persons of the Godhead were all in order to the salvation of wretched sinners. Well may we wonder and adore when we contemplate the marvellous grace of our Triune God.

It is impossible for the Spirit to usurp the place in our thoughts which Christ should have, for we must ever remember that the "Comforter" testifies to the Lord Jesus. Some indeed have become engrossed with what has been termed the "cult of the Spirit," and have become ensnared in errors of doctrine and practice. But while guarding ourselves from this mistake, let us honour the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity by constantly keeping the thought of His gracious operations at the back, so to speak, of our minds. The believer should ever be alive to the presence and energizing and guiding influences of the Holy "Comforter."

"What moved Thee to impart
Thy Spirit from above,
Therewith to fill our heart
With heavenly peace and love?
'Twas love, unbounded love to us,
Moved Thee to give Thy Spirit thus."

E. A.

BACKSLIDING.

WHERE does backsliding begin? Is it when we cease to love prayer and the reading of the Holy Scriptures and the assembling of ourselves with the saints to hear the ministry of the Word?

No, these are but the evidences and not the cause of departure. If a man loses his appetite, goes down in health, gets morbid and cannot sleep, there is a reason for it. These ailments are the sure sign of something wrong. A physician should be seen.

Backsliding begins in the heart, away out of sight. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Forcible words these! Whatever form it assumes it has its spring and rise in the heart. The evil servant says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," before he begins to eat and drink with the drunken (Matt. xxiv. 48).

But do all backsliders stay away from the meetings and eat and drink with the drunken? No, in some cases declension has not gone so far as that, though it may thus end if not arrested by Divine grace and mercy. Grace can certainly arrest it, and has done so thousands of times, as every Christian can testify.

Who then is a backslider? One whose

heart is not centred on Christ and with whom there is but little desire that Christ should be everything.

Meetings are good and, if spiritual, very helpful. But attendance at meetings is one thing and a close walk with God is another.

Christ should have the whole heart. They who know His love both in the past and the present will gladly own that He is worthy of it. What comfort there is in remembering that He never ceases to love His own no matter how low the state into which they may have fallen.

“ His is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.”

There should be therefore no keeping back from Him and no rivalry.

It has been well said that “ nothing is so strong as the link of relationship and nothing so tender as the link of communion.” How much is wrapped up in that little word, “ Our vines have *tender* grapes.” Communion is a tender plant indeed. Therefore it is said, “ Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines ” (Song of Sol. II. 15).

It is the little things that do most mischief to the soul, like the little foxes that spoil the vines. Trifles that seem unimportant in themselves may be the greatest hindrance. Reading

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of a light and fascinating character may be one of the little foxes. Social friendship that appears so apparently harmless may be another, and so is self-indulgence.

Oh, how jealous He is for our love and for our company. Nothing so proves the tenderness and depth of His love. He follows us into our hiding-places so that He may bring us back to Himself. When we are made conscious of having grieved Him and turn to Him again in confession He receives us graciously and without upbraiding. And His grace humbles us to the dust in self-abasement.

Think of God saying to backsliding Israel, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" Think of His asking for the bill of Judah's divorce-ment as the proof that He had put them away! It could never be produced. There was no evidence that God ever turned His back upon them. It was their sins that had produced estrangement. "Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away" (Isaiah L. 1). That was the cause and the only cause. There was no other.

Yet how tenderly He ever pleaded with them to come back to Him and all should be forgiven and forgotten. All their backslidings should be healed and they made to drink into His love in all its warmth and living power (Hosea XIV.).

Human love can endure a great deal and go to great lengths. But no human love is equal to the love of Christ for His own. It is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. What is more to a mother's heart than her own—her own flesh and blood? Can she cease to love her own? Scripture says she may. But He never! "I have graven thee on the palms of My hands." Precious words! And again, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto ME; for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah XLIV. 22). Come back to Me, He says. Do not let your sins stand between you and Me. I have removed them for ever out of My sight in the death of My Son. I will never remember them any more at all. What wonderful grace. Should it not break our hearts?

"And, oh, to find Thee still the same,
'Tis this that humbles us with shame."

P. W.

"Did Christ die for the sin you have not, or for the sin you have? The very sin you are daily finding out in yourself, this is the very sin for which Christ died."

"If you want to be miserable, look within; if you want to be distracted, look around; if you want to be peaceful and happy, look up—look off unto Jesus."

CLING TO THE HELPER.

CLING to the Helper : He who leads
The weary on their way,
And guides from earth's dark lonesome night
To Heaven's eternal day.

Cling to the Helper : He ne'er will fail.
Cast all thy cares aside !
The trouble that o'erweighs thy heart
To this dear Friend confide.

He'll gently smooth thy rugged way,
And soothe thy fainting heart
And, as the sadness dies away,
A song of joy impart.

Cling to the Helper, for He knows
The weight of all thy cares :
And all thy sorrows, all thy woes
In His deep love He shares.

Cling to the Helper, and the gloom
That now o'ershades thy way
Shall be dispelled, as faith grows strong,
And end in cloudless day.

Cling to the Helper, and thy trials
Shall vanish one by one,
Behind the gloomy sorrow-clouds
God's love shines like the sun.

A. G. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SCISSORS.—I Timothy III. 16.—“ Seen of angels.” Does not this mean that “ God manifest in flesh ” in the Person of the Lord Jesus here on earth was an object of angelic contemplation? Just as in and through the Church those exalted, heavenly beings behold the manifold wisdom of God—the Church being thus a lesson book for the angels (Eph. III. 10), so when the Lord Jesus was here, “ God manifest in flesh,” they saw with adoring wonder such a revelation of Him as they had never seen before. For the first time God was manifested in all His ways of grace and love, and angels contemplated Him. Such, we are inclined to believe, is the force of the expression “ seen of angels.” As to Matthew XVIII. 10, “ Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven,” this is explained by Esther I. 14. The seven princes named there “ saw the king’s face,” they sat in his presence and were first in the kingdom. So “ these little ones ” of Matthew XVIII. 10 were not to be despised, for their representatives in heaven were not among the lower order of angelic beings, but among the highest. “ Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.” Finally, the words “ justified in the Spirit ” we take to mean that the whole course of the Lord Jesus here on earth was run in the power of the Spirit. He was scorned, derided, despised by the many, but

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upheld, defended, vindicated, justified by the Spirit.

N. H.—We distinguish between predestination and election. The former has in view what those chosen and called out are marked out for or predestined to—hence in Romans VIII. 29 it is said they are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, and in Ephesians I. 5 to sonship. Predestination is always to blessing, *never* to reprobation and perdition. God's electing grace and man's responsibility are subjects that have given rise to many arguments. Scripture speaks of both and therefore we have to hold *both*, but we must be careful to hold them in their right relation. In speaking to unsaved men we press their responsibility to receive the gospel, while to those who have received it we can tell of electing grace and God's eternal purposes. Yes, in this connection your use of John VI. 37 is very good.

A. H. S.—If any known Christian is desirous of partaking of the Lord's Supper with others it is well that his wish should be made known for the sake of fellowship—a thing to be cherished in these cold days. If some are not present when the matter is mentioned that is no reason for delay, and where brotherly confidence exists no difficulty is raised because of that. "Receiving into fellowship" is a doubtful term, for there is but one fellowship, as we sought to show in our answer to "R. R." in our May issue. The question is discussed in a paper entitled "Scriptural Fellowship in the Breaking of Bread," which appears in the

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May number of *Scripture Truth*. This you may have seen, but in case not we quote the following :

“ There is nothing plainer in Scripture than that the privilege of breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord is the portion of every true disciple of His—of every Christian as such, walking in a godly and upright way. Indeed it might be said to be incumbent on him, so far as circumstances permitted, according to the parting words of the Lord to His disciples : ‘ Do this for a remembrance of Me.’ It would be, therefore, an act of real unrighteousness, both towards Christ Himself, as well as towards the Christian, while professing to honour Him, to refuse to accord to His saints the privilege that He has accorded to them. This is the evil of sectarianism—an evil which it has been truly said is inherent in the fallen heart of man. And be it affirmed again—and noted—that the evil is not merely directed towards the disciples of Christ, but really towards Christ Himself.

“ It will, of course, be understood here that this is not a question of those who, on account of immoral conduct, evil association, fundamentally false doctrine, or such-like things, are rightly under the discipline of the assembly. Scripture is abundantly plain as to sundry causes that render a man defiled, and his company defiling. But where such does not exist, no company has the right to refuse him whom the Lord receives. To do so would be to refuse the commendation of the Lord.”

These words may well be weighed.

A BIBLE READING.

“He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd . . . leaveth the sheep.”—JOHN X. 12.

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”—HEB. XIII. 5.

“Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.”—JOHN XIII. 1.

WILL you, my reader, thoughtfully read the above three passages of Scripture, and say how the statement made in the first and the promise given in the second can be reconciled with the fact announced in the third?

Perhaps you do not quite grasp the significance of my question. Then may I ask you to open your Bible and trace out three short words of three letters each, in the Gospel of John: “His own” and “out”?

I am not raising a question of mere academic interest. I have something to say to you which I think every one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ should know.

Let us begin our Bible reading with John I. 11, 12: “He came unto *His own*.” In a sense all things are His own, for He created them, and for His pleasure they exist. In coming to His own creation He was but exercising the rights of proprietorship.

XXX.

H

Connected with the nation of Israel were things which were *His own* in a special way. The temple, the throne, the sceptre : all these were His by right. And to His own things He came. I add the word "things" because in the original the *first* "His own" in this verse is neuter, and refers to objects such as those I have mentioned.

But the *second* "His own" is masculine, and refers to people. The people that were particularly His own were the nation of Israel. He had freed them from the house of bondage, borne them as on eagle's wings, cared for them as the apple of His eye and loved them with an everlasting love.

But "*His own* received Him not." Those that had been the subjects of such mercy and continual goodness had no room in their hearts for Him to whom they owed it all and who had come to them with richest blessings in His hand. They received Him not.

Not all, however. There were some here and there who, born of God, *did* receive Him, and were thenceforth privileged to enjoy a new and wonderful relationship—that of the children of God.

These individuals, dissociating themselves so emphatically from the nation's rejection of Christ, became *the nucleus of an entirely fresh company who in a still closer and truer way should belong to Him as "His own."*

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The Lord immediately begins to work for the gathering of this company. Two hearts are attracted to Him by the testimony of the Baptist. One of them finds and brings his brother. Jesus Himself finds and calls Philip. Philip finds Nathanael. And thus the work went on.

Passing now to chapter VIII. 59, we read :
 “ Jesus hid Himself, and went OUT.”

The nation’s verdict, voiced by its religious leaders, had been definitely given. “ Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil,” they said in their contemptuous rage. And then they seized the stones that lay around to fling them at the Son of God.

Then Jesus “ went out,” out from the temple and all that it stood for, out from Judaism into which He had come, not as a thief and a robber, but as the Shepherd of the sheep.

Chapter IX. gives us the significant story of a sample case—one of the Shepherd’s sheep. Cured of his blindness, he confesses the power of the One who had thus blessed him. “ And they cast him OUT ” (v. 34). This was the result of a previous agreement to the effect that “ if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put OUT ” (v. 22). There should be no room, no tolerance for the sheep any more than for the Shepherd.

Further light is thrown upon the incident in chapter X. Underneath the malice and violence

of man was the deliberate leading of the Good Shepherd. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them OUT."

Cast out by religious men, the once blind beggar had been really led out by the Shepherd, who would have all *His own* OUT with Himself. Mark this: *with Himself*. For "when He putteth forth His own sheep, *He goeth before them*." If in chapter IX. we have the putting forth of one of the sheep, in the chapter that immediately precedes we have the "going before" of the Shepherd.

So that in our reading of chapter X. we must think of the Shepherd not only as the One to whom the porter had opened, and who had entered into the Jewish sheepfold in grace that was infinite and divine, but as having gone forth from that fold with the determination to have His sheep out from it also.

There are several who have to do, or who seek to have to do, with the sheep. There are the "stranger," "the thieves and robbers," the "hireling," and the "wolf." The "stranger" can do the sheep no harm: they will not follow him. Nor do they hear the "thieves and robbers." The "wolf" (Satan) injures the sheep by scattering them.

The "hireling" has served them, has fed and tended them, but in the hour of stress he fails them. Why? Mark the answer: "*Whose own* the sheep are not."

He is only a hireling : his service to the sheep has never been really disinterested. He "careth not" for them, and so in the time of emergency he leaves them.

But in contrast to the hireling we have the Good Shepherd who *does* care for the sheep, cares for them so much that He will give His very life for them. Whether they be sheep led out from the Jewish fold, or whether they be among the "other sheep . . . which are not of this fold," they are equally dear to the heart of the Shepherd, and are formed by Him into *one flock*. He gives them eternal life, and declares that no conceivable power shall wrest them from His hand, nor from His Father's. And He who thus speaks makes no vain boast. Mightier than the mightiest, He is well able to see that His words stand firm.

But three chapters further on we find that He is actually going to leave them ! He was about to "depart out of this world unto the Father."

Was He then going to act as the hireling, and desert the sheep in the face of the danger that threatened ? The wolf was coming. There was no doubt as to that. The Lord Himself said, "The prince of this world [Satan] cometh" (chap. xiv. 30). The few weak sheep that He had gathered around Himself would be the objects of the special malice of the wolf. Against them would be directed his deadliest

attacks. And yet the Shepherd spoke of leaving them !

“ Ah ! ” says some one, “ but he was Divine, the Eternal Son of God, and He could be with them in a very real way while bodily absent.”

True ; He Himself said, “ I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you.” His abiding presence would be a great reality, but that was not the immediate solution of the problem which He proposed.

If you will take your Bible, and open it at chapter XIII., I will try to show you that what the Lord Jesus proposed was not merely to abide with His disciples in a spiritual way after His departure, but *to have them with Him in heaven in a spiritual way, while they actually remained on earth !* In THIS wonderful way He would show that He was not going to act as a hireling “ whose own the sheep are not,” but as their true Shepherd.

First, the fact of His changeless love is emphasized. Having set His love upon those He delighted to call “ His own,” He would never withdraw it. Amongst them there is Peter, who will deny Him with oaths and curses ; Thomas, who will doubt His word and disbelieve in His resurrection. They will *all* forsake Him in the hour of stress (Matt. XXVI. 56). But will He forsake them ? Never. Will His love wane and wax cold because of their pitiful failure ? Never. Through everything,

and in spite of everything, He will love them "unto the end."

But He is going "out of this world." And just as in the case of that other going out, of which we have spoken, His *going out* from Judaism (VIII. 59), He would have His sheep out with Him, so in *this* going out, He would carry His own, in spirit and affection, to the place whither He went.

As to this He proceeds to enlighten them. He begins to express His deep, tender love to them by an act of lowly service. Peter objects. He little understands the significance of what the Lord is doing, and does not mean to allow his Master to humiliate Himself in thus serving *him*.

But the service which the Lord was rendering to His own had a significance which did not immediately appear. "What I do thou knowest not now," He says, "but thou shalt know hereafter." The full meaning of the act would be manifested in the days of His absence, and be brought to their knowledge by the Holy Spirit.

Peter still objects. Then the Lord utters the memorable words to which I ask your special attention :

"If I wash thee not, thou hast no PART WITH ME."

It was His gracious desire and plan, then, that "His own" should share with Himself

the joy of that place to which He was going, the Father's house. His Father was theirs; the Father's love, finding its infinite pleasure in Him, rested also, in fullest measure, upon them. All that belonged to that holy and blessed relationship was for those poor disciples, His own, His loved ones, to enjoy. Into all that pertained to the place which Christ was about to take, as man, with the Father, they might freely enter. In this way they could have "part with Him," and breathe the very atmosphere of heaven.

But if this is to be so, whether with them or with us, the Lord's gracious service to us is a necessity. Here lies the significance of the feet-washing. He would have us in His hands that He might set us free from everything that would tend to defile us, and that would detain our hearts on earth. The water signifies the Word (see chap. xv. 3), and especially the Word that brings His death before our souls. He Himself applies the Word to our hearts and consciences, reminding us of how He has died here, thus detaching our affections from the world which has rejected and crucified Him, and fixing them upon Himself where He is. In this way we are cleansed from the love of the world, earthly ambitions, and the like, and enabled to enjoy "part with Him."

But if Christ has "His own," the world also has "his own," and in a kind of way loves

them (chap. xv. 19). It is true that the world's love for its own is a fleeting thing, but while it lasts it expresses itself in smiles and favours, popularity and gratified ambition.

Is the Christian to expect these things from the world? Is he to be surprised if he is frowned upon and cold-shouldered, despised and persecuted? No, for he has been chosen out of the world. "*Therefore,*" says the Lord Jesus, "*the world hateth you.*"

The world hated our Lord and Master (xv. 18). The more like Him we are, the more it will hate us.

The effect of this should be to make us resort all the more to that place where we are privileged to have "part with Him," where divine love reigns. If our souls find their happy portion *there*, what characterizes that place of supreme delight will mark us, and we shall *love*—Whom? We shall love God (Rom. viii. 28). We shall love the Lord Jesus (John xiv. 21). We shall love one another (xv. 17). We shall love even our enemies, those that hate us (Luke vi. 27).

And, walking in separation from the world, we shall await, with longing desire, the day when we shall be actually with Him, whose own we are, and whose love we know.

H. P. B.

THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST MAKES FREE.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”—GAL. V. 1.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”—GAL. V. 16.

I SUPPOSE that most of us are acquainted with the circumstances which led to the writing of this letter to the assemblies of Galatia. There is an historical account of it in Acts xv.—a chapter which I venture to suggest should always be read before any one begins to study the Epistle to the Galatians. Turning to it, you will find that certain ones came down from Judea and taught the simple-minded saints in Galatia that unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses they could not be saved. Paul, in speaking of the same class, styles them “false brethren unawares brought in, who came . . . to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Gal. II. 4). They moved in and out among the Galatian assemblies, clothing themselves with all the authority attaching to the city of Jerusalem where the apostles lived, and talking to them, as we may suppose, somewhat like this :

“ Ah ! you have had Paul down here preaching his gospel, and you have received it. But we would have you know and remember that even Paul has some things yet to learn. There are those who were in Christ long before Paul, his seniors in the apostolic office. We have come straight from them, and tell you in their name that unless you submit to Moses and keep the law you will never get to heaven at last.” Thus with good words and fair speeches they gained the ear of these unsuspecting saints and sought to impose upon them the yoke of the law. The Galatians having begun in the Spirit, were now to be made perfect by the flesh (Gal. III. 3). For such teaching the natural heart of man offers a congenial soil. It is so easy to be legal and to fall away from grace. Therefore the Spirit of God led the Apostle Paul to write this epistle to recover those who had fallen into that snare and to guard others who were exposed to the same danger.

Coming now to the two passages that stand at the head of this paper, it will be patent to everybody that before we can stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free we must ourselves be in it. How can we stand fast in liberty if we do not enjoy it ? or how shall a man rejoice in freedom if he be yet a slave ? We therefore ask, What is the liberty in which we have to stand fast ? It may be

described as consisting of three great privileges. *First*, the complete justification of the believer by the grace of God on the principle of faith, and not by works of law (chap. II. 16). *Second*, that the great gift of the Holy Spirit has been bestowed on us not by works of law, but by the hearing of faith (Gal. III. 2). *Third*, that we are sons of God, and no longer regarded as children under age or as servants holding a subordinate place in God's household (chap. IV. 1-7). These three constitute the liberty wherewith Christ makes free and in which we must stand fast.

There are no measures in justification. The oldest saint on earth and the youngest believer in Christ are equally justified. They stand, both of them, on precisely the same platform. In this there can be no advance. And our justification, our clearance from all charge of guilt, is due to the grace of God—His free, unmerited favour. On this ground the greatest sinner on earth may be justified, and the best of men can be justified on no other (Gal. II. 21). Meritoriously, it is by the blood of Christ that we are justified (Gal. III. 13 ; Rom. v. 9). And it is on the principle of faith (Gal. II. 16).

It is of the greatest moment that young Christians, and old ones too, should be clear and decided upon this first point. No human merit—not a shred of it—enters into your justification before God. You owe this great blessing

to His undeserved favour. And it is God Himself who has justified you, and He who knows all your sins is the One who has cleared you from every one of them (Rom. viii. 33). What confidence this gives, what liberty and boldness before Him and before the foe. No doubt the blood of Jesus is, as we have said, the meritorious cause. Apart from that, how could God justify us and maintain His character as the Holy and the Just? And it is in believing the glad tidings that we are justified from all things, as Acts xiii. 39 so plainly and forcibly declares.

Secondly, the Apostle does not question the fact of these Galatian believers having received the promise of the Spirit, he only would learn of them whether this great gift had come to them by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith (Gal. iii. 2). Was it the result of their own labour, their scrupulous observance of "days, and months, and times, and years," or was it a gracious and gratuitous gift following their belief of the gospel? The latter undoubtedly. Of course we carefully distinguish between being born of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit being given as God's gift. To be born of the Spirit is one thing, the Spirit's indwelling is another. Sometimes the question is asked, When do we receive the Spirit? The answer is found in Acts x. 44. It is when the glad tidings of forgiveness of

sins through Christ's name is heard with the hearing of faith that the Holy Spirit is immediately given. It was thus with Cornelius. He had already been born again, for it is said of him that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts x. 2). Such a testimony could not be borne to any one dead in sins. But though born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, he needed to hear that gospel which should bring to him salvation, and in believing it, he was "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). As with him, so with us. Let us remember then that not only have we been born again, forgiven, justified from all things, but our body is also the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now this great gift is not bestowed one day to be withdrawn the next. We may, alas! grieve the Spirit, but we can never grieve Him away. We are sealed unto, or in view of, the day of redemption—the day for which we hope and wait (Eph. iv. 30). "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29).

Thirdly, we believers are not in the place or condition of children under age, supervised by tutors and governors, nor are we merely servants holding an inferior position; we have received the adoption of sons. Such is our avowed standing and relationship. God owns

us as His sons. Therefore it is written, " And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father " (Gal. iv. 6). These three then are the constituent parts of that liberty wherewith Christ makes free and in which we must stand fast.

We can easily imagine some one saying, " Yes, I am quite clear as to all that. No shadow of doubt crosses my mind as to my justification—my being one of God's sons, or to my having received the Holy Spirit. The difficulty I feel is in connection with my everyday life and walk. I want to be different from what I am. I would like my heart to be constantly engaged with the Lord Jesus, to love Him more and to serve Him better. I would fain be a brighter Christian, a burning and shining light, but all my endeavours end in failure, and I am disappointed and discouraged." In all this we can deeply sympathize. We well remember when it was so with ourselves. Fain would we have been like Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word, and like John who leaned on the Saviour's loving breast. But our desires were not fulfilled, and we wondered what the meaning of it all could be. Then we began to fear the Lord Jesus did not love us as we thought He did. How could He go on loving one with so many failures? Surely, we said, our cold heartedness

and lack of devotedness must affect His love toward us. We longed for some one to help us when like that. Perhaps some young Christian is saying as he reads this, "You have just touched the spot. Help me if you can on these lines."

Read, then, the second text at the head of this paper. Read it attentively. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Mark also the verse which follows (Gal. v. 17). Observe the two antagonistic forces—flesh and Spirit—"these are contrary the one to the other." Always and everywhere* contrary. *And both dwell in the Christian.* The Spirit's indwelling does not alter the character of the flesh—that evil principle remains unchanged. And its works are manifest. Look at the number of them and at their awful nature as described in verses 19-21. Such is the flesh and such its works.

But how shall the flesh be kept in check and its works denied? By walking in the Spirit, as our text tells us. There is no other way. What is it then to walk in the Spirit? It is to be under His control and direction, it is to mind His things. In Romans VIII. 5 we read, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." Here are two classes. You, if you are a Christian, belong

to the latter. And it is with "the things of the Spirit" that your heart is to be now engaged. These are the unseen and eternal things on which we fix our earnest gaze (2 Cor. iv. 18). They are the "things which are above, where Christ sitteth"—things which God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Cor. ii. 9). These are the things ministered unto us in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the apostolic epistles of the New Testament. With these the Holy Spirit would occupy our thoughts, and in being thus occupied other and harmful things touch us not. If a mother hears that her child has been knocked down by a motor-car she does not stop to admire beautiful things in shop windows, for a more powerful matter controls her heart and mind. If a babe, when mother's eyes are turned away, seizes a sharp knife by the blade, instead of attempting to take it from the child the mother dangles some pretty object before its eyes and the child in its eagerness to have it drops the knife and the danger is gone. In the same way the Holy Spirit engages us with His things, and especially with Christ Himself in glory. In result the desires of the flesh are not fulfilled, and we grow more like Christ in being occupied with Him.

There is one further word I would add. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ;

only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but *by love serve one another* " (Gal. v. 13). Was such an exhortation needed? Yes, for the flesh can use even Christian liberty to stir up strife. Now, " the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance " (Gal. v. 22, 23), precious qualities which shone in their unclouded beauty in Christ Himself when here below. But the fruit of the Spirit was not to be seen everywhere in the Galatian assemblies. They were not at peace among themselves. It is more than probable they were having heated discussions on points of doctrine introduced by the law teachers from Jerusalem. But even those who were being carried away by law should remember that " all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this ; Thou shalt *love* thy neighbour as thyself " (Gal. v. 14). Biting and devouring one another could only end in their being mutually consumed. Solemn word. Divine love preserves from such withering, blighting conduct. "*By love serve one another.*"

It was on that memorable night when the shadows of the cross were falling fast athwart the path of our blessed Lord that He gathered His own around Him and bade them love one another as He had loved them (John XIII. 34). In the outside world there might be sorrow, persecution, hatred, and death, but within,

in that inner circle of His own, they were to love as He had loved. Have we given earnest heed to that word? Is love to all saints the badge by which we are known as His disciples? Without it the most perfect ecclesiastical order, the richest spiritual gifts, the vastest stores of knowledge are *nothing* (I Cor. XIII). All these might be possessed and boasted of by a Laodicean assembly—"rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing." Christ was outside knocking at a closed door (Rev. III. 17-20).

Let us then stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and let us also walk in the Spirit. And may we not forget the word that bids us by love to serve one another.

Notes of an address taken by A. W. (Revised).

"God never asks us to go on His errands without telling us what to say. If we are living in fellowship with Him He will impress His messages on our minds, and enrich our life with the appropriate utterances. Do any read these words who, like Moses, lack this royal endowment, and whose words fall pointless and dead? Let them offer their lips to speak, not with the wisdom of human words, nor with the grace of human eloquence, but with the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost; and their appeal will not be denied. If only God's glory be our object, God's hand will be put forth to touch our mouth, and He will leave His words there."

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR WORKERS.

IN the issue of *Simple Testimony* for April last there is an article on "Sunday-school Work" with which the writer is in hearty and thorough accord.

The following account of the conversion of a man and his wife will interest and encourage in this connection.

Some seven years ago an article appeared in *Gospel Tidings* entitled "The Miner and the Millionaire." The writer has heard of three definite cases of conversion through this article. The wife mentioned above was one of them.

Her husband was bitterly opposed to his wife's faithful course as a Christian. But little by little her living practical Christianity began to tell upon the husband, who was estimable in his conduct in every way, save in his opposition to the Lord's things.

Some months ago his little girl, who latterly had been allowed to attend a Sunday-school, carried home a magazine entitled *Love and Light*—a four-paged illustrated gospel paper for the children.

The father began to read it. He became interested in an account of a boy who tried to tame a wild grey rabbit. After some time

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spent in feeding and petting it, feeling he had accomplished his object, he placed it with some tame ones on the lawn, and away it bolted into the woods !

The writer of the article went on to explain that what the wild rabbit wanted, in order to become tame, was not feeding and petting, but a change of nature. Then he showed that what the sinner wants is not reformation and improvement, but a *new* nature, and quoted the words of the Lord Himself, "*Ye must be born again.*"

The man turned to his wife, and said, "Do you see this nonsense?" "It is no nonsense," she replied, "it is a question of heaven or hell."

The truth fastened itself upon the man's conscience. This was Lord's day evening. By Monday night he was fairly aroused to the question of his soul's salvation. He went to bed, but not to sleep. Before the morning light broke, he was a new creature in Christ Jesus—saved and happy in the knowledge of salvation.

May this brief account encourage workers—tract distributors, editors, writers, Sunday-school teachers, the praying wives of unconverted husbands, whose *living* tract, whose *voiceless* gospel has proved over and over again a Christian apologetic, which God has used in the conversion of unconverted husbands. Above all, LET US PRAY.

A. J. P.

REDEMPTION.

“When I see the blood.”—EXOD. XII. 13.

I KNEW a person who had, for some years, been deeply anxious about her soul. She longed to know, for certain, that *she* had redemption through the blood of Christ ; even the forgiveness of her sins. She felt that if she died without redemption she was lost for ever. She went from place to place to hear the preaching of the Word. Her anxiety became very great ; yet nothing that she heard gave her peace. She was constantly thinking that she had something to do before she could have redemption. She tried to lay hold of the promises ; but they gave her no relief. She tried to serve God and keep His commandments ; she found she failed at every step. She tried forms and ceremonies ; but all in vain. She then thought she must have stronger faith, and tried to understand, more clearly, the value of the blood of Jesus ; still all was darkness. God would not even have her faith as the price of her redemption. Her heart sank in despair ; she could do no more. It was when she was in that state of self-despair she heard those words, “ When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” The Holy Ghost spake in her soul in that mo-

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ment, and said to her, "It was God who spake these words." In a moment she felt the vast difference betwixt herself seeing the blood of Jesus and God seeing it. She thought, Yes, God sees such value in the blood of Jesus, that He will pass over me ; and the destroyer shall not touch me. From that moment, she believed what God hath said about the blood of Jesus. From that moment, she had peace through the blood of Jesus. Now she knows, with certainty, that she has redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of her sins.

Surely, this one case, out of many thousands that might be told, shows the importance of the subject before us.

Before speaking of these wonderful words, "When I see the blood," etc., let me remind you of the condition of this people, Israel, as described in the previous chapters. They were slaves under Pharaoh, in bitter bondage. "They sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God" (II. 23). God heard and pitied them ; He said, "for I know their sorrows." Yes, such also is the plain fact, man has sold himself, a bond-slave, to Satan. There is no denying it. Oh ! what a cry of misery ascends from this world of sin. How bitter is the slavery of sin, if there were no lake of fire hereafter ; even now, what bitterness and anguish has sin

brought. Every heart knows its own bitterness. God heard their sighs ; and has He not heard yours ?

God is love ! He heard their sighs, He knew their sorrows, and He came to save. The people heard that God had looked upon their affliction (IV. 31), and they desired to go forth and worship Him. Just like the person above, they anxiously desired to go forth and serve God ; but, as it was with her, this only made their burthens the heavier. Their affliction and sorrow were now very great. How often is this the case, when the soul is awakened to thirst after God. Then Satan brings all his force to crush the sin-burthened soul. The next thing, we find the promises of God, in chapter VI., entirely fail to give the least comfort. “ They hearkened not for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.” In the following chapters, to XII., we see, by the conduct of Pharaoh, how loath Satan is to give up his victims.

How many who read these lines will say, “ How like me all this is ! The more I have desired to serve God, the heavier has been my burthen. I have tried to get comfort from the promises ; but all in vain. Still anguish of spirit ; still the burthen of sin ; still uncertain as to *my* interest in Christ.” Poor soul ! if this is your condition, let us now look at this redemption chapter. God grant that this may be the beginning of months to you. Do

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you see, the lamb was slain, and the blood was sprinkled on the door-posts. And do not you see that every soul, young or old, that took refuge in the blood-sprinkled house, *had an interest* in that blood? God said, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are : and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." He did not say, When I see how good ye are ; or, When I see that you deserve My favour ; or, When you have repented enough or believed enough. *No ; the blood is first and uppermost in God's thoughts.* It was His token of love to them, just as and where they were. He did not even say, When ye see the blood ; but, " When I see the blood." Now, I repeat, did any person within that blood-sprinkled house need to ask, How may I know that I have an interest in the blood ? It was most certain he had, on the authority of the word of God. And every soul that simply trusted in what God said about that blood was saved that night.

Now, we all know that redemption from Egypt was a type of redemption through " the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." And, in the very same way, is not the blood of Christ God's token of love to lost, burthened sinners ? Jesus did not die that God might love us ; but because He loved us. " In this was manifested the love of God toward us." " God did so love

the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10).

Mark, it is not what you see, but what God sees, in the blood of Christ. He knows all your sins ; and yet He sees the blood of Christ. He sees that the sufferings and atoning death of His beloved Son justify Him in passing over all your sins, however deep their crimson dye. He says so plainly ; and is righteous in justifying freely every sinner who believes in Him, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii.). Do you say, How am I to know that I have an interest in that atoning blood ? Why, do not you see every Israelite who believed God had an interest in the sprinkled blood ? And if you search the New Testament through, you will find that every sinner who trusted God about that precious blood shed on the cross knew, with the utmost certainty, that *he had* redemption through the blood of Christ. Mark, you have not to trust in a promise. Redemption is no longer a promise, but an accomplished fact—a finished work. If you were dying with thirst, and a person promised to bring you water, you might trust His promise ; but when he *has* brought the water *to you*, you have not then to trust in his promise, but to drink the water. God has fulfilled His promise : He has sent His Son. The

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blood has flowed through His pierced wounds. It is all finished. Peace through that blood is come to you. May God open your heart to receive that peace on the testimony of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead. Oh ! how strange that men should forget this, and go back to the promises, as though God had still to do something to save sinners. It is done. The blood has been freely shed. God sees that blood. I only ask, Have you been brought to take your last refuge in that blood ? Can you say that the blood of Jesus is your only trust ? Then it is most certain that *you* have an everlasting interest in that atoning blood. *You have* redemption through that blood, according to the infinite value that God sees in the death of Christ. Up, then, arise, and away from Egypt ! With girded loins, and staff in hand, as the redeemed of the Lord, away, away from Satan's bonds and Satan's world ! You are no longer your own, but bought with a price—and such a price ! Christ died, the just for the unjust, *to bring you to God*—and to such a God !

C. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. C. N.—There is no sinful habit which can bind us hand and foot and keep us in bondage from which there is no possible deliverance. It would be sad indeed were that the case, and a denial of the salvation of which Christ is the

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Author. He can certainly set us free from the power of sin, even as He has delivered us from the judgment due to our many trespasses. Do you desire deliverance? Is it your sincere and earnest wish to overcome it? We believe from your letter that it is. If so, then we exhort you in moments of temptation to fly away to Christ your Saviour. Let your cry be, "Lord, save me." It cannot be His will that you should remain an abject slave to this evil thing. When He bade the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth He gave, with the command, the power to do so. The Holy Spirit given unto us makes us realize our own weakness that we might wholly depend on the strength of Another. And He will help you and give you the victory if you make Him your refuge and resource.

J. M.—Revelation xx. 8-10.—This passage shows that even in millennial days, when the world will be under the blessed rule of the Son of Man, all who are born then will not be all of them born again. These, when Satan is loosed out of his prison, fall under his delusive influence and rally to his standard. They go against "the beloved city," and are dealt with by God Himself in wrath revealed from heaven. The judgment of the sheep and goats of Matthew xxv. precedes the millennium. The Son of Man comes in His glory with the holy angels with Him, and before "the throne of His glory" all the heathen nations stand. Those who rejoice over the fall of "Babylon the Great" in Revelation xviii.—the kings and merchants of the earth who share in and profit by her sins—will not escape the judgment. They have, as we suppose, their place with the nations of Matthew xxv.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

"It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—ROMANS I. 16.

THE subject of the following narrative was serving a long term of imprisonment in Kingston, Canada. While there, he and another convict formed a plan by which they hoped to escape. One of them, at a suited opportunity, was to strike a blow which would stun their keeper and then they were to flee. The blow was given, but the keeper, instead of being stunned, was killed. For this crime he was sentenced to be hanged. While awaiting his execution the facts here narrated took place.

"I called on him for the first time on Friday, 18th November. He appeared very cheerful, but his ways soon convinced me that he was doing all in his power to excite himself into happy feelings, so as to drown the thought of his impending execution.

"Upon testing him a little as to the *ground* of his hope concerning the life to come, I soon found that he was resting on his thorough repentance, his comparative freedom from evil desires, his great love to God, etc. He thought surely he had made his peace with God since he had so many good things to show.

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“ His *lips* talked about Jesus and His love very nicely. He repeated some of God’s precious promises, but evidently his *heart* was so intensely occupied with self that he could grasp no meaning in those promises.

“ His earnest face, however, and the thoughtful attention he paid to what I said to him, attracted me at once. I remembered how, four years before, I was in the same state—occupied with my humility, my repentance, my faith, my love—and while putting on a cheerful face to make myself believe I possessed that happiness which I had often heard belonged to a man at peace with God, what bitterness and anguish really lay in the depth of my soul ! I remembered the day when, at the climax of misery, some one had pointed me to Romans III., how it had opened heaven to me ; the unutterable deliverance it put me into ; and I longed to have him get into the same place.

“ I told him nothing *he* could do could save him ; neither his repentance, nor his love, nor looking to the work of the Spirit in him, could give him peace with God. ‘ You are lost,’ I said ; ‘ you are dead in trespasses and sins—*condemned already*—and you might as well think that weeping and promising to do better could put away the sentence pronounced against you the other day, as to think your repentance, or your promises, or anything from *you*, can remove the curse of God’s

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eternal law which now hangs over you, as well as over every soul of man who is not saved.'

"I told him the only thing which could meet a 'lost' man's need was salvation. A 'dead' man needed life; and a 'condemned' man needed mercy.

"I declared to him that he was grievously mistaken if he thought he had made *his* peace with God. *He* could never do that. 'What, then, must I do?' said he, in a half-bewildered way. 'Read there,' I said, and my finger pointed to Colossians I. 20: '*And having made peace through the blood of His cross.*' I pointed again to Galatians III. 13, and said, 'Read again here': 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'

"I then besought him to read thoughtfully and prayerfully Romans III., IV., and V.; and commending him to the Lord, who alone I knew could open his blinded eyes, I left him in his lonely cell.

"I did not call again until the following Tuesday, 22nd November. The turnkey at the entrance-door told me that one of the criminals was anxious to see me. Without asking which of the two, I called first on the one occupying the cell nearest the entrance-door, but found him much as before—more occupied with the actual consequences of his crime than with his lost condition before God

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—ready enough to pray and engage in devotional exercises, but completely blind as to the ground of salvation.

I left him, much downcast in my spirit, and full of that dejection which often makes me long to be with Christ when I have set forth a *finished salvation* before sinners, and they answer me, ‘ *I will try to do better* ’ ; and I had well-nigh forgotten the turnkey’s announcement, when Daniel Mann’s cell being opened to me I was soon reminded of it. Scarcely had I taken my seat on the wooden bench beside him when he said to me, ‘ I longed to see you.’

“ ‘ What for ? ’ said I.

“ ‘ Since day-light this morning,’ said he, ‘ I have not been able to *pray* ; I can only find time and room for *praise*.’

“ ‘ How is that ? ’ said I. ‘ What makes you so happy ? ’

“ ‘ You remember,’ said he, ‘ your visit to me last Friday, and the three chapters you told me to read in Romans ? Well, after pondering a good deal on what you had told me, and which sounded so differently from anything I had ever heard, I read them over and over again ; but I seemed to get more and more miserable. All day Sunday was dark and gloomy, and yesterday too. I felt as if I must surely perish. Last night I could not close my eyes a single moment, but I lay on

my couch in misery. Oh, what misery ! Suddenly, while in my despair, my mind was arrested by a part of Romans v., these verses : “ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” O dear, *dear* sir, need I tell you the effect ? I jumped to my feet. I praised God outright. I felt like a man who is already in heaven. I saw why Jesus was on the cross, crying out, “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” I understood what is meant by “ It is finished.” I saw God’s love to me, and I praised, and praised, and praised again. I saw my salvation was not out of anything from me, but out of Christ’s finished work ; so I cried out, “ O glorious thing ! Christ’s work is finished ; yea, *was* finished over eighteen hundred years ago, and I have salvation, I have it, for I *believe His precious Word.*” ’

“ As he spoke, his earnest face, wet with tears, looked to me like the face of an angel. Tears rolled down my face too. I took him in my arms, and could but exclaim, ‘ My brother, my dearest brother, we shall sing together throughout eternity the value of the blood of Jesus.’

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“ Again he said, ‘ How blind I have been ! I never saw till this morning ! Till then my eyes were altogether turned *inward*—looking within to see something that God could be pleased with ; but since early this morning my eyes are turned *outward*—to that which has been done for me. Till this morning I always thought, what I had heard many say, that Christ had done His part, and we must do ours to be saved. What my part was, however, I never could get any one to tell me with certainty, and still less could I get my soul to tell me. I had the Bible, but I did not know where to begin. I was told I must repent, and earnestly and prayerfully I went at it, but never had the certainty I had fully satisfied God. I was told by many to be very earnest in prayer ; and I agonized with God until I could but cry out, “ Lord, if I *must* go to hell, I will go there praying.” I tried every way, but there was no light. Sometimes I tried to make myself believe I was harder to please than God, and comforted myself with the thought that, when I got there, I should find Him much less severe than I thought ; but after all, all was darkness, and the chance of hell for the world to come was not very frightful to me compared with this world. Before my trial I prayed many a time that I might be hanged but not sent back to the Penitentiary. But this morning as I saw my

salvation all *finished*—yes, finished by *the Lord Jesus*—as I saw I was justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, an indescribable peace took hold of me : all was bright. I saw at once I now had the key to the Scriptures—the key to heaven itself. The face of God was now visible to me. I could see Him smiling on me, and I shouted at the top of my voice, " This is the true light that cometh from heaven ! "

" ' Ah ! talk to me now about *my doing my part*, and I can answer, " I have been doing that since I was born, and *here is the sad end of it !* " ' "

" Here I felt in my heart the pang which crossed his own, and I said, ' Yes, you have faithfully finished the work the devil gave you to do ; but hear the word in John xvii. 4 : " I have glorified Thee on earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. " Who said that ? What work was that which the Father gave Him to do, and which He, in anticipation, says He has finished ? ' "

" The pang was gone. His dear face beamed again. The word *finished* was enough to soothe all his sorrows now. It made him laugh with delight every time it was pronounced. We knelt and praised God together for a long while, and I left that the happiest of all places on earth—a condemned criminal's cell."

From " The True Story of Daniel Mann. "

SENT INTO THE WORLD FOR A PURPOSE.

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

JOHN XX. 21.

THESE words of our adorable Lord are full of encouragement for all His disciples in all ages. They speak, first, of definite authority. Christ, we would say it with all reverence, was "a man under authority." Time after time He affirmed that the words which He uttered had been given to Him of His Father to speak ; and the works which He did had been given to Him of His Father to do. When men found fault either with His words or actions He threw the responsibility, as it were, upon the One who had sent Him. Likewise each of us is "a man under authority." And good will it be for us if, when our words or deeds are found fault with, we are always able to throw the responsibility on the Master who sent us, and say in truth, "You are not quarrelling with me, but with Christ, for I am doing what He would have me do."

Again, although the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father, He came willingly. He could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." And the great Apostle to the Gentiles in his turn could say, "The love of Christ constraineth

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us," though a deep sense of his responsibility was ever present with him. "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" God loves a cheerful giver. Our service should be an offering, not a tax.

Our Lord, although sent into the world, was not of it, and never became of it. "Your time is always ready," He said to His brethren. Yes, they were of the world, and being in their own element they could move about freely. But His time was not always ready. He had to wait for the set time of Him who sent Him. And so it is with those sent by the Lord Jesus. They also are not of the world. They are not to govern their lives by the world's spirit and maxims and points of view. They have to obey their marching orders given by their Lord in heaven. But just as Christ enjoyed the peace of the Father in the midst of the world's unrest and opposition, so He bequeathed His own peace to those who sought to represent Him in the same scene of enmity to God and hostility to His ways.

Lastly, our blessed Lord could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." His meat was to do the will of Him who sent Him. And in this respect, too, the servant is to be as his Lord. We are to follow His steps by bearing fruit to God. We have no other business in life than to do the will of Him who

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sent us. The one and only end of our lives is to glorify God.

If the text with which we started grips the life, what abundant moral results it will produce! It will bring about *submission*. We are not our own masters. We are to obey the commands of the One who has sent us. A sent servant goes about his master's business, not his own. If he uses his master's time for his own ends he is guilty of embezzlement. How dare I squander time and talents in self-seeking if the Lord of glory has sent me into the world to serve Him?

Again, what a *privilege* to be the sent servants of the Lord of lords. If Solomon's courtiers and servants were to be envied for the honour that was theirs in serving so wise a king, how much greater is our privilege in doing the bidding of the King of kings!

If Christ has sent me, then His *almighty power is at my back* while I am acting within His instructions. Wonderful thought! He who sends us will not leave us in the lurch. We go not to battle on our own charges or in our own strength. Oh, to trust and go forward, even when we feel nothing but weakness! There is almighty power at the back of the word that bids us stretch out the paralysed hand. If we believe, we shall commit ourselves to action, and thus we shall prove the power of His enabling.

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It has been said that Moses was the most *disinterested* of men. Why? Because he had no other thought than to do the will of Him that sent him. If I can say, "I am doing my Lord's will," what matters it if I am kept in a humble, obscure sphere? I shall not envy the prominent brother. A dewdrop accomplishes the will of God as effectually as a thunderstorm. The little violet glorifies its Maker as much as the tall sunflower! A notable saint of the eighteenth century said that if two angels were sent by God, one to rule a kingdom and the other to sweep a crossing, neither would find fault with his appointed work. The one who swept the crossing would do his business as cheerfully and zealously as the one who ruled a kingdom. Yes, and it will be better for us, in that great day, that we should sweep a crossing, if that be the will of Him who sent us, than rule a kingdom, if that be not His will.

"I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro;
Seeking for some great thing to do
Or secret thing to know."

It gives *peace of mind* and deep satisfaction of soul to realize that we are doing the will of Him who sent us. We are very prone to dictate to the Almighty what we are to do, and we may have to learn by experience what it is to have a broken will—and perhaps a broken

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heart—before we are ready to submit to our Lord's direction as to our services, and to acknowledge that the end of life has been fulfilled if we accomplish His will.

The Lord does not wish the weakest or most obscure of His own to be so much flotsam and jetsam on the ocean of life. For the least of us "nobodies" He has a purpose. Only few can be like the giant liners that forge their way across the Atlantic; but every one of us can resemble the small but busy craft that help to carry on the world's commerce. Our text will prevent us from dissipating our energies in busy idleness, or sinking in the apathy of indifference because we have small gifts and no position. Those who have the smallest talents are in most danger of settling down in a state of lethargy, but the words "The Lord has sent me into the world" sound like a trumpet-blast, awakening us to renewed activity and giving *force and driving-power* to the life. If we are inclined to forget that our labour is not in vain in the Lord, and looking at our own weakness and apparent lack of success, are ready to cry almost in despair, "Who am I?" may we summon up fresh courage by asking ourselves the question, "*Who sent me?*"

E. A.

THE POWER OF THE BIBLE.

(A PERSONAL TESTIMONY.)

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely-given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of GOD by it, to adore His perfections—of Jesus, the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God—to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work, which is ever GOD's, was wrought in me by means of the written Word. He who knows what the value of JESUS is, will know what the Bible will be to such a one. If I have, alas ! failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour, I have never found it fail me. If it has not failed for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity.

“ The Word of the Lord abideth for ever.”

If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it is from thence : as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing

so—none but God could do this, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God, so does the Book that divinely reveals Him come *from* and elevate *to* Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. *Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by.*

I avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. While, of course, allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as GOD'S WORD. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself.

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength, for nearly thirty years, have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the WORD OF GOD. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church, and man himself crumble into non-entity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the Word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we

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are ; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before.

And here I will add, that although it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the wrong-doer, though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in *grace* (blessed be God !) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it ; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach *their* conscience, *they* would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. *Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose keen edge is felt and feared.*

Reader, it speaks of *grace* as well as truth. It speaks of *God's grace* and *love*, who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like *you* and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him NOW ; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud,

without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in such a way, in His love, is perfect joy. The Word will tell *you* the truth concerning *yourself*; but it will tell *you* the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.

Let me add too, my reader, that by far the best means of assuring yourself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the WORD ITSELF.

“The entrance of THY Words giveth light.”

J. N. D.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

OF all the names and titles of the Son of God, none appeals so touchingly to the affections as the name of Jesus. It was the name by which He was known on earth when in tender and compassionate goodness He moved among men. His delight was to go about doing good, relieving every kind of distress, and showing kindness to the unthankful and the evil. He welcomed children to His arms, cared for the bereaved, wept, sorrowed, and suffered.

He was ever the meek and lowly One. His life was one of perfect obedience in every word and deed. Having finished the work the Father gave Him to do, He was “received up in glory.”

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Luke's gospel closes with this same Jesus, whilst in the act of blessing His disciples, being parted from them and carried up into heaven. Then, we are told, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Was this joy of the pure, unselfish character the Lord referred to when He said, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father"? (John XIV. 28.) We know not; but we may well ask ourselves, do we rejoice that Jesus is with the Father? For three-and-thirty years He had been here on earth in humiliation, and now He was going back whence He came, but going back to the Father as Man, having taken part in flesh and blood. The Son of God became the Son of Man, but as such He was alone. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John XII. 24). But He had come that others might share with Him in the joys of the Father's house; such was the purpose of His Father's love.

On the cross He bore the judgment of sinful flesh, and in resurrection He became the Head of a new race—the sheaf of firstfruits—the "Firstborn among many brethren," and having glorified God, He was received up into glory. He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. "Honour and majesty were laid upon Him." All this and much more we

can say He is worthy of, but there is something more than glory ; Psalm xvi. 11 tells us that "fulness of joy" belongs to the presence of the One to whom Jesus went as a blessed Man, and Psalm xxi. 6 speaks of His being made exceedingly glad with the countenance of Him whom the Messiah knew as His Father. Affections, we may surely say, were more to the Lord than distinctions. To be with the Father was His supreme joy as Man. How shall we speak of the Father's delight in receiving back in glory His well-beloved Son ? or tell of the holy joy of that moment when the Son re-entered as Man the glory which He had with the Father before the world was ?

But if He has returned there, it is not His purpose to be in that home alone. Did He not say to His disciples ere He left them, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that *where I am*, there ye may be also" ? We shall be with Him in the home of His Father.

It is, too, that same lowly Jesus who trod this earth, but now glorified, who says, "I Jesus . . . I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." In response "the Spirit and the *bride* say, *Come.*" Why the bride ? Is it not that she stands in heavenly associations, and knows the heavenly character of the Morning Star ? This, then, is our present and immediate prospect. Before Christ shines forth as the Sun in all the splen-

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dour of His kingdom He is known to the Church as the bright and Morning Star, and as such He is the attraction and hope of the bride. He will meet His redeemed ones in the air and conduct them into a circle of joy ineffable. His desire, expressed in John xvii. 24, will have its fulfilment. They will be with Him *where He is*, and behold the glory He had with the Father before the world was. This will be their highest privilege. Many glories He shares with others, but this is His alone.

We rejoice with all our heart that as the Root and Offspring of David He will fill this world with blessing. We delight to know that at the *name of Jesus* every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him as Lord, to God the Father's glory. But there is something inexpressibly sweet in the thought that we shall behold a glory the world will never see.

We may well challenge our hearts as to *our* response to such love. May we learn how to hold the balances of the sanctuary, and on the one side rejoice that we shall first of all go to be with Him and then come forth with that same Jesus to share with Him His royal rights and kingdom glories.

Lord Jesus, come,
And take Thy rightful place
As Son of Man, of all the theme !
Come, Lord, to reign o'er all supreme,
Lord Jesus, come !

H. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. B.—There is nothing in the Holy Scriptures, so far as we know, to encourage us to pray to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has, indeed, His place in the unity of the Godhead, but when the Persons are distinguished as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then prayer is addressed either to the Father or the Son in the power of the Spirit and as led by Him. “Praying in the Holy Ghost” is Jude’s phrase in verse 20 of his epistle, while Paul, in Romans VIII. 26, tells us that “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities . . . and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” So also in Ephesians VI. 18, “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” It is the Spirit then in us—for He indwells the believer—who guides and helps in prayer. Bearing this in mind it is easy to see why prayer should be addressed either to the Father or the Son rather than to the Holy Spirit. In confirmation of what we say we refer you to the apostolic prayers in Ephesians I. and III., and, indeed, everywhere.

ANON.—We do not wonder at your asking, “What is becoming of Protestant England?” when we read the report you kindly sent us from the *Clapham Observer* of June 13. To take farewell of one who professes to be a servant of Christ with a series of songs and dances is bad enough, but it is the least harmful side of it. It is far more serious that he should have been presented with “an Ober-Ammergau crucifix and a pyx” by his

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vicar, with the hope that "whenever he looked at the crucifix and used the pyx he would think kindly of the parish which started him on the road to the priesthood." Now, a pyx, as we know, is a box in which the Romanists keep the host. The acknowledgment of these "beautiful presents," we observe, was quite in keeping with the vicar's remarks, who, in his turn, was asked to remember the other "at the altar when he was saying mass." All this would have been appropriate enough had the chief actors belonged to the Church of Rome, but for members of the "Protestant Church of England" to sink to so low a level tells its own tale. But to inveigh against such practices is not enough, we should seek to show a more excellent way. Now the mass, which is the centre of the Romish system, is destroyed, root and branch, by the great truths unfolded in Hebrews x. There we learn that the offering of the body of Jesus Christ was *once for all*, and that He, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God," thus testifying that His sacrificial work was ended. We are also told that *there is no more offering for sin* and that our sins and iniquities will be remembered no more. Following on these immense facts it is said that we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," and are encouraged to take, in full assurance of faith, the place now given to us as purged worshippers. It is these great things which show the mass to be a needless service, a fable and a dishonour done to Christ and to His finished work. Would to God the truths taught in Hebrews ix. and x. were

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better known! They would deliver from the darkness of Romanism and save any who are in danger of falling under its power. As to "priesthood," Christianity only recognizes the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, exercised now in the heavenly courts on our behalf, and the holy and royal priesthood named in 1 Peter II., and which is formed of all believers. It knows nothing of any other.

L. L. G., Gloucester.—We owe you an apology for not having answered your letter at an earlier date, and beg you to believe that the delay has arisen solely from pressure of work and not from any disinclination to deal with your criticisms. You have written to us frankly, and you invite us to reply with equal candour. We shall take pains to do so. First of all, you deny the possibility of any one possessing eternal life while he is in this mortal body, and you tell us that "Holy Scripture and sound reason" are both on your side. Are you quite sure of that? Is there nothing either in the Gospel of John or in his Epistles to lead us to believe that eternal life, which is the gift of God, is freely bestowed even now upon the believing soul? Is it not written in John III. 36 that "he that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life"? And what does John V. 24 tell us? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment." Now, to poor wayfaring men like ourselves, that seems plain enough. And the statement is prefaced with "verily, verily,"

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so that it is all the more emphatic. Are we not to believe it? Does not "HATH" mean hath? In the mouth of common men it does. What other meaning can *you* give it? Then there is John vi. 47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life." Who said this? The Son of God. Was He mistaken then? Had you been standing by His side, would you have told Him, as you tell us, that no one while in this mortal body could possibly possess eternal life? Would you have given Him the lie? You would hardly have dared to do so.

Will you show us by what means you are able to grind that word "HATH" to powder so as to destroy its force, and by what process its four letters can be made to spell these eight words, "*may have, when the day of judgment comes*"? In our bewilderment we ask again: Does not "HATH" mean hath? As we further ponder the matter, John x. 28 comes into our mind. Let me quote it: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." When do His sheep receive this great gift? "Not in this mortal life," say you. Are you certain of this? Have you ever read the First Epistle of John, chapter v. 11-13? I will transcribe the passage: "And this is the record, that God HATH given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son HATH life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Notice the "HATHS" of those two verses, and particularly notice the object for which this testimony was given, as stated in the following verse: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may

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KNOW that ye have eternal life.” And yet you say we cannot know it, and that we have it not ! This is strange. It places us on the horns of a dilemma. We must either believe Scripture and cast your denials to the dogs, or believe your testimony and cast Scripture there ! Which will be the wiser and better thing to do ? As we ask the question Paul’s words in Romans III. 4 ring in our ear, “ Let God be true, but every man a liar.” To this we say, Amen !

You seem to speak of “ entering the kingdom,” having “ eternal life,” and being “ saved ” as if these were equivalent terms, all meaning the same thing. But it is not so. And then you proceed to quote Mark XIII. 13, “ He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.” And you quote it to show that in no sense can eternal life be enjoyed as a present privilege and blessing, and in no sense can it be said that we are saved now—we must endure to the end. But surely you know that there are different aspects of salvation. Twice over in Ephesians II. the believer is said to be saved. “ By grace ye are saved ” are the precise words in verses 5 and 8. It is the same in 2 Timothy I. 9, “ Who HATH saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.” No believer, then, need be afraid to say he is saved. But in other epistles salvation is spoken of as a future thing, and sometimes as a process, but, thank God, not an uncertain one. For instance, in Romans v. 9 it is said that “ *we shall be saved* ” from wrath through Him. There is a day of wrath coming, but the Christian shall be saved from it. The Saviour,

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through whom he has been justified and reconciled to God, shall save him from wrath when the great storm shall overtake the impenitent. And in the next verse we find the same words, "*we shall be saved* by His life." Yes, He to whom we owe everything is our great Priest in the heavenly courts, able to save to the uttermost, that is, to the very end of their wilderness journey—all who come unto God by Him. Let us not be so foolish as to make these various aspects of salvation wage war against each other to their mutual destruction and our irreparable loss. They are all beautiful in their place. It is but one diamond with many facets, each reflecting the power, the grace, and the glory of God. And these remarks equally apply to eternal life, which is assuredly set forth in Scripture as a *present* blessing, as also one to be enjoyed in its fullness of meaning in days to come.

You also tell us that "we are to work out our salvation with fearing and trembling, because Scripture tells us that we are to be judged according to our works," and in support of this you refer us to Romans II. 6 and Revelation XX. 12, 13. The Philippian saints were, indeed, exhorted to work out *their own* salvation with fear and trembling (chap. II. 12). And we have to do the same. But does that mean we are to work *for* salvation with a view of receiving it at the judgment of the great white throne? You seem to think so. How then does that agree with Ephesians II. 8, 9, where we are distinctly told that it is by grace we are saved: "not of works, lest any man should boast"? How does it fit in with Titus III. 5, which reads thus, "Not by works of righteousness

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which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us " ? Or with 2 Timothy I. 9, " Who hath saved us . . . not according to our works " ? Are you not confounding the working out *our own* salvation with working for salvation ? If salvation be of works, all glory be to those who win it ; but alas, the crown is gone from our Saviour's brow ! Man becomes his own saviour, and instead of his singing " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," he may sing " Worthy am I." Man blows his own trumpet, and sure enough it gives no uncertain sound !

Beware of attaching a hard, narrow, rigid meaning to the word " salvation " wherever you find it. It is a richer word than many think—and it must be understood in each case in relation to the subject treated of. Will any sane man say that the second chapter of Philippians is written to show how sinful men may be saved ? Yet it is in that chapter they were encouraged to work out *their own* salvation with fear and trembling. The Apostle was no longer with them to direct, to guide, to be as a father to them. He was far away, in Rome, and a prisoner there, and now they must fight *their own* battles, they must wage *their own* warfare, and work out *their own* salvation, no matter what foes they had to face or difficulties to overcome. Let them do it with fear and trembling—the very opposite of self-sufficiency. But by no means were they to be discouraged, " For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." God was with them ; nothing from without could deprive them of His presence, they need not then

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despair of being able to work out their own salvation. God would bring them out victorious, though Paul was with them no more.

It is indeed true that "God will render to every man according to his deeds." Romans II. 6; to which you refer us, plainly says so. "To them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life" (R.V.). Here eternal life is placed at the end of the path—it is life as it will be known in brighter days. But who is he who walks in the path that thus leads to life? None but the one who has been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. II. 10). He keeps his eye on the goal and steadfastly pursues his way towards it. "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it . . . the redeemed shall walk there." Yes, there *the redeemed* shall walk and no other. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah XXXV. 8-10).

And do you really think "the redeemed, the ransomed of the Lord," shall stand before the great white throne of Revelation XX. to have it determined whether they shall be eternally saved or not? Will Paul stand there, and the penitent thief who went from his cross to paradise? Shall those who have been justified from their sins be also judged for them? Into what confusion of thought you have fallen, and, forgive us for saying so, into what gross darkness as to the gospel itself!

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There is but one more point we need touch—that is baptism, and the imposition of hands, by which means, you say, we are to receive the Holy Spirit. And you are careful to let us know that “these ordinances are null and void” unless carried out by one “called of God as was Aaron.” That Aaron was called of God to the Jewish priesthood is true enough, but who ever heard of persons being called of God to baptize? If what you say were so, then the baptism of Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas was “null and void,” though the Apostle Paul baptized them (1 Cor. i. 14–16). For he tells us in the next verse that Christ sent him not to baptize, it was no part of his commission. He was not “called of God” to baptize. We should very much like to know who these authorized persons are. Indeed, it is of the greatest moment that we should know them, for you solemnly warn us that if our baptism was not administered by one of these “called” persons, then we are under a delusion in supposing our sins to be forgiven, for they are not. Baptism is therefore the door into all blessing—without it there is no pardon, no salvation, no hope. And it must be by one called of God to baptize. Alas! if this be true, where are we? But we do not hesitate to call it another gospel, which is not another, and in this connection Paul’s awfully solemn words in Galatians i. 6–9 may well be heard and laid to heart.

But we have done. We have sought to answer your criticisms with frankness, as you begged us to do. Weigh what has been said.

“THE WAY OF PEACE.”

“The WAY OF PEACE have they not known.”—ROM. III. 17.

“The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness . . . to guide our feet into THE WAY OF PEACE.”—LUKE I. 78, 79.

“PEACE.” There is a charming sound about the word! When nation has been hurling itself upon nation with clash of arms and roar of cannon; when blood has run like water and the tears of the bereaved have flowed in torrents, how welcome is the news of peace! When the ship that is bearing us across the ocean encounters a gale, and is tossed upon the surface of the deep as if she were a walnut shell; when hope of safety ebbs away and the angry waves seem ready to devour us; how thankfully we hail the first sign of returning calm. And when at last the raging storm is followed by perfect peace, what relief is experienced by those whose hearts had been filled with frantic fears!

If peace in this lesser, mundane sense be so sweet, what shall we say of the peace that has reference to vaster, graver, infinitely more important matters? Is not *this* peace greatly to be desired? Who would not be possessed of a peace that not only lifts one above the worries and anxieties of this present life, but enables one to look forward to the eternal future without a shade of misgiving?

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The gospel speaks of peace in both these aspects. It tells us of the *peace of God*, which in times of stress stands guard over the heart and mind of him who carries everything to God in prayer (Phil. iv. 7). It also declares that *peace with God* as to our relations with Him (He being righteous, and we guilty) is the present portion of those who are "justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1).

The passage quoted from Luke's Gospel at the head of this paper does not distinguish between these two aspects of peace. It treats rather of the *way* by which peace (from whatever standpoint viewed) may be ours.

To the unregenerate sinner, the way of peace is a strange, untrodden road. "The way of peace have they not known." Peace to the wicked is like a foreign plant. It will neither take root nor grow in the soil of his heart. He is truly likened to the restless sea; not as when on a summer day it receives the kisses of the sunbeams upon its smooth and silvery surface, but as when in its wilder moods it rushes to and fro, dashes itself against the rocks, never quiet, never for a moment at rest, angry, turbulent, disappointed at the everlasting futility of its unceasing onslaughts upon the cliffs. Well may the pen of inspiration call it "the troubled sea," and say that the wicked resemble it!

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If there is a *way* of peace, it follows that certain steps must be taken in that way before the goal can be reached. *We* must take some steps in that way ; our feet must be guided into it. But the *first* steps must be taken by other feet than ours. The way must be built and opened, and the goal made possible for sinners to reach, by wisdom and power beyond a mortal's. The first step in the way of peace was taken by

THE MERCY OF GOD.

Here, to change the simile, we find the source of the river of peace. No efforts on our part could ever start that river rolling on its course. “ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us ” (Titus III. 5).

Do you know what *mercy* means ? Nay, do not take your dictionary to hunt up the meaning in its pages. No cut-and-dried definition will help us to understand it. It is that which a convicted sinner feels he needs. With the publican's cry upon his lips, “ God be merciful to me a sinner,” he knows very well what it means. It is the opposite of what he has a right to expect. He is conscious that nothing else will meet his case. He realizes that—

“ Nothing but mercy'll do for me,
Nothing but mercy, full and free.”

And yet, so conscious of his guilt and utter unworthiness is he that the very fact of mercy meeting him causes him astonishment and he sings—

“Depth of mercy ! *Can* there be
Mercy still reserved for me ?”

Let me call your attention to three Bible adjectives that describe His mercy.

First, He is RICH in it (Eph. II. 14). In this country men estimate their wealth by gold. To say a man is rich means that he is the master of thousands of little glittering discs of yellow money. An Arab reckons his riches in terms of cattle, camels, horses. In some parts of Africa a man counts his wealth in cowrie shells, and in certain islands of the far-off Southern Seas he who possesses most human skulls passes as the richest. But in none of these ways does God reckon His riches. True, the gold and silver are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. But His greatest riches are His grace and mercy. “The riches of His grace.” Who will ever fathom the depths or scale the heights of that sublime phrase ? And He is “rich in mercy.” He deals it out with no niggardly hand, in no scanty measure, but with the lavish abundance of a God who delights in it !

Second, His mercy is ABUNDANT (I Peter I. 3), not only in the sense that it is available

for the chief of sinners, but that it blesses him incomparably beyond his highest expectation. God's abundant mercy does not find its satisfaction in the mere meeting of our need, but bestows upon us “an inheritance incorruptible . . . reserved in heaven.”

Third, God's mercy is TENDER (Luke I. 78). He does not fling His gifts at us as you might toss a shilling to a beggar, or send a supply of food to a hungry man. His mercy is tender. That is, it draws near to its objects with terms of endearment, and looks upon them with eyes of compassionate love.

But the mention of God's mercy raises a question of supreme importance. How can His holiness, righteousness, love of truth, intolerance of sin—permit of mercy being so abundantly shown to the guilty? The answer lies in the visit to earth of

THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH

(v. 78).

This, of course, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. His coming was the outcome of God's mercy and the proof of it. The work of atonement which He accomplished provides a channel—the only channel—through which the tides of mercy can flow. In sending His Son to suffer and die for sinners, God “performed” the mercy He had promised to the fathers of Israel (v. 72).

In Christ, then, we have the Key to the gracious ways of God. Every *how* and *why* as to His character, His attributes, His purposes, His actions, find their answer in the Cross of Calvary.

In this manner light has been brought to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. This light is not the light of *promise*, such as was given to those of old ; nor the light of *hope*, as many to-day seem to imagine, but the light of positive knowledge,

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

(v. 77).

As to this matter, there have been and are, as the reader knows, many quibbles raised. It is often stated that “ no one can know for certain that he is saved,” which means, in other language, that there is no such thing as this of which our chapter speaks. But the earnest, inquiring soul can never be satisfied with anything short of positive certainty. The more earnest and sincere he is, the greater will be his misery, until the knowledge of salvation is his.

It is argued, however, that with absolute assurance would come a slackening of zeal, indifference, carelessness of walk. As to this, the late Dr. Ryle used an apt illustration. “ Suppose,” said he, “ two English emigrants set down side by side in New Zealand or

Australia. Give each of them a piece of land to clear and cultivate. Let the portions allotted to them be the same both in quantity and quality. Secure that land to them by every needful legal instrument ; let it be conveyed as freehold to them and their heirs for ever ; let the conveyance be publicly registered and the property made sure to them by every deed and security that man's ingenuity can devise.

“ Suppose, then, that one of them shall set to work to bring his land into cultivation, and labour at it day after day. Suppose, meanwhile, that the other is continually leaving his work and going to the public registry to ask whether the land is really his own, whether there is not some mistake, whether, after all, there is not some flaw in the legal instrument which conveyed it to him. The one shall never doubt his title, but just work diligently on. The other shall hardly ever feel sure of his title, and spend half his time in going to Sydney or Auckland with needless inquiries about it. Which now of these two men will have made most progress in a year's time ? Who will have done the most for his land, got the greatest breadth of soil under tillage, have the best crops to show, and be altogether the most prosperous ? There can only be one reply. Undivided attention will always attain the greatest success.”

This illustration, used by Dr. Ryle to enforce the need of *undivided attention* serves with equal directness to show the desirability of settled assurance. If this is so much to be desired in earthly matters, how much more in connection with eternal things!

But in what direction lies the salvation of which we speak? The godly in Israel were looking for a mighty Deliverer to arise to bring them salvation from the hand of their Gentile oppressors. Not salvation of this kind, nor salvation from any other mere temporal stress, or danger, is announced in the passage of which we are treating. *This* salvation lies in the

REMISSION OF SINS

(v. 77).

For it is our *sins* that exposed us to direct peril. When Paul gave an account of the hardships he endured, he spoke of being "in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren." But he did not add, "in perils by my *sins*." *That* peril had been for ever removed for the chief of sinners, as he calls himself, by the expiatory work of Christ. Were it not so, the peril on account of his sins would have infinitely surpassed in magnitude

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all the others. Every believer can speak with assurance of having been saved from this greatest of all perils. He has received salvation *by the remission of his sins*.

In this way his feet are guided into the way of peace.

What an exquisite chain of golden links : The tender mercy of our God—the visit of the Dayspring from on high—light for them that sit in darkness—the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins—guidance into the way of peace !

But the final link in the chain remains. The result, worked out in practice, is mentioned in verses 74, 75. It is that “ we, being delivered . . . might serve Him without fear, in HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS all the days of our life.”

This is what we speak of as the *temporal* result in contrast to that which is eternal. In eternity the full fruit of the way God’s tender mercy has wrought will be ours to enjoy in perfect holiness and everlasting righteousness. His service will be our delightful occupation throughout those unchanging years. But now, during all the days of our earthly life, it is our high privilege, as a result of His great mercy, to serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

“ *All the days,*” mark, without missing one.

H. P. B.

LOVE THAT CASTS OUT FEAR.

“There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment.”—I JOHN IV. 18.

WHAT sort of fear is this that perfect love casts out ? Is there not a fear that is just and right and that every man ought to have ? Are we not admonished to serve God acceptably “ with reverence and godly fear ” ? Is it not one of the sad evidences of man’s fallen state that “ there is no fear of God before their eyes ” ? What fear, then, is this that perfect love casts out ?

It was fear that led Adam and Eve to hide themselves when they heard the voice of the Lord God whose commandment they had disobeyed. Fear made the hearts of Joseph’s brethren tremble when dear old Jacob died and was buried, and they said one to another, “ Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil that we did unto him ” (Gen. L. 15). Fear too will shake the souls of men in that dark day when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and say to the mountains and rocks, “ Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne,

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and from the wrath of the Lamb " (Rev. vi. 15, 16).

There is another sort of fear—right enough in its time and place—which perfect love casts out. It is the fear felt by a divinely awakened conscience before the redemption work of Christ is known and before the soul is assured of God's forgiveness. Simon, the Galilean fisherman, felt it when he fell down at Jesus' knees and said, " Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord " (Luke v. 8). So did the three thousand, who at Pentecost cried out in dire alarm, " Men, brethren, what shall we do ? " (Acts II. 37). So did the jail-keeper at Philippi when all trembling and afraid he exclaimed, " What must I do to be saved ? " (Acts xvi. 30). This sort of fear is good. Would that it were more largely seen ! But perfect love casts it out to make room for perfect peace.

Does some one say, " Alas ! my love is very far from perfect. Do what I will I never seem to get quite right or to be quite satisfied with myself. I try to fix the mind on God and on good things, but my thoughts are so fickle and wandering. I want to love God and to serve Him as I ought, but I never succeed, and sometimes I am almost in despair. As for perfect love, there is no hope that I shall ever attain to it ? "

Ah, yes ! yours is an old story told by

many others beside yourself. But does it never occur to you that you may be reading the text in the wrong light? Neither *your* love nor that of any other creature can ever be rightly called perfect. There is only One whose love is perfect, and that is God. It is *His* perfect love, not yours, that casts out fear.

And there is but one way in which even God's perfect love can free our hearts from fear. *It must be known and believed.* Without this it will bring no relief even though an angel were to declare it unto us.

Twice over in the chapter from which our text is taken it is said that "*God is love.*" He was always love. He did not become so when the Saviour was made a curse for us and bore the sorrow and the stripes. Before the cross and the manger, before the burning mount and Eden, back far away in the solitudes of eternity, God was—and God was love. But it awaited the day of its manifestation. Now it is revealed in its unclouded beauty—fully, perfectly. Are you willing to listen to the story of it?

We shall find it close at hand, told out in John's simple style and free from all embellishment. Not with excellency of speech or with wisdom of words is it declared. A jewel of rare worth and sparkling beauty may be set with purpose in the plainest setting. So the story of God's love meets the eye and falls on

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the ear in homely words, easy to be understood that the wonderfulness of it might strike us all the more. Let me quote them.

“ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

And lest we should think that the whole case was covered by that great statement, the Apostle makes haste to add :

“ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins ” (1 John IV. 9, 10).

Two things are set before us in these two verses—*life* and *propitiation for our sins*—God’s perfect love being manifested in relation to both.

In the history of our souls the latter is generally apprehended first. For how shall my troubled conscience, or yours either, have rest until it be discharged from the burden of its guilt ? I am a sinner before God, and so are you, and every page of our earthly life is under His eye, and all our secret sins are in the light of His countenance (Ps. xc. 8). What can blot them out of His book ? How shall He, whose justice can never be tarnished by slurring

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over evil, deliver us from the intolerable burden of our sins? Out of this perilous position human wisdom can find no way. Judgment sure and certain is our lot. Sins on the one side so many and great; justice on the other with penalties that must be borne. Who can bear the one and sweep away the other? It is here, wonderful to say, that God intervenes and manifests His love in sending His own Son to be the "propitiation for our sins." Christ has borne our sins in His own body on the tree and thus has put them for ever away (1 Peter II. 24).

"See Him for our transgressions given;
 See the blest Lamb of God from heaven,
 For us, His foes expire;
 Rejoice! rejoice! the tidings hear!
 He bore, that we might never bear,
 The Almighty's righteous ire."

But let us not lose sight of the perfect love that lay behind it all. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." What relief to turn away from our love, so imperfect even when it burns the brightest, and think of God's love to sinful men. He loved us in our ruin, our guilt, our death in trespasses and sins. You may find it hard to believe that He could ever love any so unworthy. But He does, and He tells us that He does. If we ask for proof to confirm our weak and trembling faith He points us to such

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words as these in 1 John iv. 9, 10 and bids us believe them and doubt no more.

What old but specious arguments are still employed to darken the window of the soul and so prevent the light of God's love from shining in. It is plausibly suggested that if we required a pardon or any favour from H.M. King George we should like to have the Queen-mother to intercede for us or some high personage who stands in the favour of the King. So there are the Virgin Mary and the saints whose intercession we should seek ! O what a deceit of Satan to keep God and men apart and to hide from us the knowledge that He Himself loves us and delights in mercy ! How it must grieve Him to have His love thus doubted when His own Son who died for us is the everlasting witness of it. There is "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave Himself a ransom for all " (1 Tim. ii. 5). There is no other, nor is another needed. And this great Mediator is one whom God Himself has given to fill that office. The whole scheme and plan of our salvation has its origin in a love which is broader and deeper than the sea. In coming to God through Jesus our Lord we come to One who loves us, and of whose love the Saviour Himself is the greatest of all proofs.

Nor is that all. There is *life* as well as atonement for sins. "God sent His only

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begotten Son into the world that we might LIVE through Him." Dead indeed we were. Alive to every other thing, but dead to God as the deaf ear is dead to sound, and the blind eye is dead to sight. But we have heard His quickening voice : " The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live " (John v. 25). " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly " (John x. 10). Such are the Saviour's words. And the life He gives is eternal life, and with it new instincts, new desires, new affections, new objects spring up. We know God, His love is believed and the heart is freed from fear and torment. And Christ becomes our life in a second and further sense. Just as we say of some that politics or money-making is their life, so Christ is our life. He is the food of our souls, and eating Him we live by Him (John vi. 57). This is happiness indeed. It is heaven begun below.

Oh ! for a simpler, a more artless, a more childlike faith in the sure testimony of God ! Then would these great and living truths be built into our souls. The joy and comfort and strength of them would be ours, and by them we should live and grow.

COUNSEL TO CONVERTS.

A BIBLE DIALOGUE.

Questions by H. A. MATIER ; Answers by A. J. POLLOCK.

WE will turn to four passages of Scripture which bring before us four points of great practical interest.

1. " Give attendance to reading " (1 Tim. IV. 13).
2. " Pray without ceasing " (1 Thess. v. 17).
3. " I am a companion of all them that fear Thee " (Ps. CXIX. 63).
4. " Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together " (Heb. x. 25).

What are we exhorted to read in the first of these four verses ?

The Apostle Paul in giving this advice to Timothy evidently directed him to the study of the Holy Scriptures. *They* are the fountain head of all true knowledge for the Christian. So the young convert to-day should " give attendance to reading " the Bible. He will also do well to read books that help in the understanding of the Scriptures. Much of the literature of the day is nothing but poison in disguise. It is to be shunned as injurious to the soul.

A gentleman in the East was reading a book,

when a small serpent concealed in the binding stung him fatally. Many a soul has been poisoned fatally, not by something concealed in the binding of a book, but by the pernicious words printed in its open pages. For instance, the infidel teachings of the "Higher Criticism" are a case in point, for they come with great pretensions to piety, and their writers hold high positions in the religious world. Books of this kind should be let alone.

What particular portions of the Bible afford direction for a Christian, and why is it necessary to read it?

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works " (2 Tim. III. 16, 17).

This verse answers your double question. "*All Scripture . . . is profitable,*" and it is necessary to read it for instruction and in order to be furnished unto all good works. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. It is "the sincere milk of the Word" for babes in Christ, and "strong meat" for those who are more mature. I should advise young Christians to begin with the Gospels, but to systematically neglect any part of the Bible would result in great loss. We need it all—Old Testament and New.

What helps have we in the understanding of the Scriptures?

First and foremost, the Holy Spirit. Even the babes in Christ are said to have "an unction from the Holy One," and to "know all things" (1 John II. 20), that is, to have a capacity to receive all truth.

But we may also help one another. If a young Christian meets with some passage that he cannot understand, let him ask some one of greater knowledge than himself. Then again, there are expository books that may be safely recommended to the young convert. But the Bible itself is the best commentary.

Why is the Bible spoken of as a sword?

It is called "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. VI. 17). "The Word of God is quick [living], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. IV. 12). It is because it is a weapon of warfare for the Christian. He cannot "fight the good fight" by means of natural wisdom or powers of argument. In the temptation in the wilderness our Lord foiled Satan by using "the sword of the Spirit." Three times over He quoted from Deuteronomy, and prefaced each quotation by saying, "It is written." We need to know our Bibles to use our sword.

Is there any necessity to pray? Should we pray as a duty, or because of our need?

Prayer is a necessity. It has been called the breath of the soul. The Lord Jesus was marked by prayer. So was the Apostle Paul. So is every devoted Christian.

Duty is a cold word. We might as well buy a mechanical Thibetan praying-wheel if we make prayer a duty. *Duty* leads people to "say prayers" with more or less formality. Need leads us to *pray*.

We are entitled to pray about our everyday needs. God cares for His children on these lines surely. The Apostle Paul could say to the Christians at Philippi, "*My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Phil. iv. 19).

I knew of a striking case. A young lady ran away from home and married a ne'er-do-well man much beneath her socially. The result was that she had to support him. She kept a school and continued this till she was well stricken in years. As she got past work the school dwindled. One bitter December night the last shovelful of coals was put on the fire, and the last crust taken from the shelf. It was a trial of faith—an empty coal cellar, an empty cupboard! The Christian wife said in confidence, "The Lord will provide. I have prayed about it." The unsaved husband spoke bitterly as to their lot, and chid his

wife as to their circumstances. As he spoke, a knock was heard. A lady left an envelope at the door, saying that her mother could not rest till she had sent it. The envelope contained a five-pound note. When the unbelieving husband saw it he burst into tears. The husband and wife, the lady who brought the envelope, and the lady who sent it were all personally known to me.

In prayer we can be assured that God sends the *best* answer He can. Paul prayed thrice for his thorn in the flesh to be removed. But better than granting the petition, God gave the answer, "*My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*" So that he gloried in the thing he besought might be removed.

If your child asked for a razor to play with, would you not in refusing give the very best answer love could give ? And do we not sometimes ask for razors ?

But we should not be selfish and *only* pray for our needs. We can pray for others, the conversion of unsaved relatives, of unsaved neighbours, of the dark benighted heathen in distant lands and for the edification of believers. 1 Timothy II. 1, 2 exhorts us to pray for all men, for kings and all in authority. There is need, indeed, for prayer for ourselves and for the Lord's interests. It is no wonder the Apostle wrote, "*Pray without ceasing.*"

**Your third piece of counsel was as to companionship.
How should we behave towards the *unconverted*?**

When we speak of companionship we refer to *voluntary* associations. We have *involuntary* associations with the unconverted, or else we should have to go out of the world. We may serve an unconverted master, or have unconverted fellow-clerks, or workmen. We have to deal with unconverted tradesmen, and if in business have to seek business with the unconverted.

Our conduct to them should be courteous, kind, affable. There should be no sanctimonious air as if we were better than they.

We should act so as to win their respect for the Master we serve, and if possible to win them for Him.

Those working near us may swear, or tell questionable stories, or seek to tempt us to go their way. To all this there should be a kind, courteous refusal to give their worldly and sinful ways any approval.

I remember many years ago being asked to take a shilling ticket in a raffle to help a sick man. To take a ticket would be to join in gambling. To refuse to help would lay oneself open to the charge of meanness, which would have reflected on Christ. The way out of the difficulty was plain, and it served to teach two lessons—that a Christian would not gamble, and that a Christian was ready to do good to

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all, as Scripture exhorts. I gave some money to the man who was getting up the raffle and asked him to present it to his sick comrade. I only mention this as a practical example of how a Christian should act.

But Scripture is plain that our voluntary associations, those we cultivate for our own pleasure, should be Christian. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James IV. 4). Again: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. VI. 14).

Look at Peter warming himself at the fire in the high priest's palace. Look at Lot in Sodom. Look at Samson with Delilah. Tell me, is not worldly companionship dangerous for a saint of God?

Henry Thorne, a converted actor, who is now an evangelist preaching the gospel, gives the striking testimony that in his unconverted days when any of the theatrical profession were seriously ill and wanted to see a clergyman they always took care to send for one *who did not patronize them*. Comment is needless.

Above all, in the companionship of husband and wife, a Christian man or woman should always choose a Christian partner, and on no account marry an unbeliever. Scripture speaks of marriage as being at our will, but adds for the

Christian, "*only in the Lord*," and 2 Corinthians VI. 14 warns us against the unequal yoke. Samson's case with Delilah is a warning indeed.

How are we to behave towards our unsaved relatives? Does not the Apostle Peter speak of the unconverted husband being won without the Word by the Christian deportment of his wife?

Yes, 1 Peter III. 1 clearly states this. It supposes a couple married as both unconverted. The grace of God comes in and saves the wife. Her husband may refuse to let her present the gospel to him. What is she to do? She is to obey her husband as a dutiful wife and seek to win him by the silent sermon of her life. So with our other unsaved relatives. We have to render them affection and due attention, and seek tactfully to win them for Christ.

This brings us to your fourth point. Will you speak about that?

It is most important for the young convert to steadily attend the gatherings of God's people. Scripture is plain: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. x. 25).

Christians are never intended to be self-sustaining. A dozen embers are fast dying out at the bottom of the grate. Gather them together carefully and presently the fire gathers

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strength, and with a little fresh fuel it becomes bright and cheerful.

And so the more Christians meet together in a right way, according to God's Word and principles, the healthier for them. A sheep separated from the flock is generally a sickly sheep. Scripture expects believers to have fellowship and be helpers of each other's faith.

May the Lord encourage each young convert to earnestly tread the path mapped out for those who follow Him "till He come."

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H. S.—In our issue of November last we published a short paper, entitled "*Hints on Bible Study*." We believe that number is still on sale and if you send three halfpenny stamps to our publisher with the request that it may be sent to you, it will reach you in due course. We are slow to make many suggestions as to *how the Bible should be read* lest you should rely too much on anything we might say, and lest the habit of going to God in prayer for guidance and wisdom as to it be weakened. Bearing this caution in mind, we believe you will find it a great help to take a bird's-eye view occasionally of the book you are reading or are going to read. Romans is a most important Epistle, and it will be well for you to be grounded

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in the great truths it teaches. Read it through sometimes at one sitting, or at least the first eight chapters, and return and read them more closely. In that way you will gain an idea of the scope of the book, you will discern its broad outlines, and get to understand it far better than if you read it piecemeal. *Notes on Romans* by J. N. D. will help you in your study ; it can be had for a few pence at our publishing office. And so with other books of the Bible. But let me earnestly urge you always to end your study with fervent prayer that what you have been considering may be built into your soul by the Holy Spirit. Thus the truth will become food by which you will grow, and you will be saved from mere intellectualism in the things of God—than which nothing is much more dangerous.

As to teaching a little boy to pray : I think you should encourage him to speak to God in his own simple language and about everything that a child's heart might be interested in. You might at first give a little direction to his prayers by suggesting what you know would appeal to him. But teach him that God loves us, listens to our prayers, and delights to hear our voices speaking to Him. Teach him, too, about the gracious Saviour and how much we owe to Him, so that his young lips may learn to praise His name. In all such matters God will surely guide you if you look to Him to do so.

A CONSTANT READER.—The question as to what sort of books young people should read is not so

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easily answered as some might suppose. Never were more books published than now, and access to them is made quite easy by means of public libraries, whose catalogues are being ever added to. We believe that parents and others who have control over young folks should exercise a wise discretion as to the sort of books that are allowed to come into their hands. Novel-reading, as the term is generally understood, is a deplorable habit. In the category of novels we do not include books based on historical facts, for some of these are both interesting and instructive though woven into a story. And then if scholastic work is going to be taken up as a profession, it necessitates a wide course of reading and some knowledge of literature of various kinds. But apart from any such special reason we Christians should have a conscience as to what books we read from choice. The Bible itself is a comprehensive library. Its books of history, poetry, prophecy, etc., written in various styles, and all under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, offer a never-ending field of study and delight. To neglect this best of all books or to give it a secondary place is fatal to all spiritual progress. Any kind of reading that destroys the appetite for God's Word is surely to be dreaded as any one would dread a draught of deadly poison. We would affectionately warn young Christians against it, and entreat them especially to beware of novel-reading—those exciting books which exercise a powerful but evil influence upon the mind, and bring it into abject slavery from which it is hard to get free. They are for the most part full

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of unreality, and give rise to notions which in many cases are extremely harmful.

S. A. T.—The solemn judgments of Matthew xxv. and Revelation xx. give no grounds for supposing that those who go into everlasting punishment will eventually be saved out of it and reach heaven at last. Will they, we may ask, be brought to repentance, to faith in Christ, and receive a new life, or will they go to heaven without these? In such matters the opinions even of the best of men are only *men's* opinions, and therefore of no authority. Our wisdom is to cleave to the Word of God, which will be found to give no support either to the theories of universalists or to those of the annihilationist school. But in speaking of judgment to come we should take care to speak of it according to Scripture. This is not always done, even by Christian men, who sometimes speak of it as if the same measure of judgment would be meted out to all. Such will not be the case. Those who enjoy many privileges are much more responsible than others who have but few, and upon their shoulders the many stripes will fall. Our Lord in Matthew xi. 20-24 plainly tells us so. But these are great matters, too great for our finite understanding. We are safe when resting on the Word of God, and we may be sure that God will justify His ways before men, angels and demons by and by.

THINGS GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER.

“As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”—I PETER I. 15-17.

WE should be careful never to separate the practice of holiness from the doctrines of grace. They go hand in hand and are to be severed, no, not for a moment. This were antinomianism—“turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,” than which nothing is more abhorrent. Indeed, the grace of God which brings us salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. This is stated in a striking passage in Titus II. 11-14. Let us never lose sight of it.

We do well to glory in the fact that it is by grace we are saved—not at the expense of righteousness, but in virtue of it, as the Cross of Christ abundantly declares. And we do well to avow, in the clearest language, that we have no confidence either in our own holiness of life, or in our good works. These things,

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right in their place, are not a contribution on our part to the ransom price of our deliverance. Every shred of the glory of our salvation belongs to Christ alone. But while taking our stand thus on the ground of free grace let us not forget that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is only a delusion to think they will (Heb. xii. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 9-10).

God is holy and He expects His children to be holy also. "Be ye holy; for I am holy." Holiness is a characteristic feature of His family and one of the spots of His children. If needs be He passes them under wise and loving discipline that they might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. xii. 10). He sits as a refiner, watching the process, purging away the dross, so that His image may be reflected more brightly in their life and ways.

But we still have "the flesh" in us, unchanged, not subject to God, and as bad as ever. It is not taken away as some dream. We have, indeed, been created anew in Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit dwells in us, but even this does not change for the better the nature of "the flesh," much less take it away. Thank God we are not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh. Would you know its works? They are described in Galatians v. 19-21. Into any of the evils named there

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“the flesh” would plunge us if it had its way. And sometimes it succeeds. Then Satan triumphs and Christ is wounded and dishonoured. How grievous when a child of God falls into sin! David the king fell into it—at ease upon the housetop “at the time when kings go forth to battle,” and his own soldiers had taken the field against the foe (2 Sam. XI.). Solomon fell into it when in his old age he suffered “outlandish women” to steal away his heart from the God of his fathers (Neh. XIII. 26). Uzziah fell into it when prosperity lifted up his heart with pride and made him forget the commandments of the Lord and the sanctity of the presence of God (2 Chron. XXVI. 16). Peter fell into it when, on being challenged, he swore that he did not know Jesus. So has it been with many others. Oh, the bitter anguish of it when the saint who has thus fallen is awakened out of his sinful dreams! He becomes conscious of his sin, of the dishonour done to the Lord whose name he bears, of the occasion he has given to the ungodly to fling taunts against the profession he once made. God is ready to forgive, but there are sins the scars of which are never wholly taken away on earth, even though the wrong-doer weep bitter tears, as Peter did.

Beware of tampering with sin, beware of allowing your mind to rest on it lest it lure you to destruction. Achan *saw* the wedge of

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gold, the shekels of silver, and the goodly Babylonish garment among the spoils, then he *coveted* them, and then he *took* them, and hid them in his tent. He saw, he coveted, he took. Such were the successive steps in the pathway of ruin. But his sin found him out. There was no escape, and the end—"All Israel stoned him with stones" in the valley of Achor (Joshua VII.).

And there is Samson too. Man of faith though he was, he in an evil hour laid his head in the lap of Delilah and was shorn of the locks of his Nazariteship. In that same hour he lost his strength, though he wist it not, and fell into the hands of the Philistines, who put out his eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, made him grind in the prison-house and brought him forth to make sport for them on their high day. Alas for Samson! How are the mighty fallen! Oh, let us beware of the first step in the slippery paths of sin.

Do these lines meet the eye of one who has sinned—some secret sin, perhaps, unconfessed and unforgiven? I need not ask if you are happy. You cannot be unless your conscience is still in its stupor. If that be so, what a state is yours! But if conscience is aroused—if your sin is like a burning fire shut up in your very bones—if it haunts you day and night, then let me ask, What are you going to do? There is One, whose name I need not mention,

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for you know it well, there is One, I say, whose love for you remains unchanged. He can help you and none other can. Sooner or later you must come back to Him. Let it be *sooner*, that the tender yearnings of His faithful heart may be the sooner satisfied. His door is open, go in and speak to Him about that sin of yours.

And that is what David did when, under the prophetic ministry of Nathan, his eyes were opened to see the enormity of his sin and his conscience was worked into an agony. He went into the secret place of prayer and his broken and contrite heart poured out to God its cries and tears. Read the 51st Psalm—you know it well—nevertheless take up your Bible and read it again, it will do you good. It may be like the lance of the surgeon thrust into the throbbing, burning, festering sore. Ah, it was heart-work with David, as his words plainly show—steeped as they were in penitential grief. Let it be so with you. Keep nothing back. Great as your sin has been His grace is greater. And “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1. 9). Precious words!

And in due time He will restore to you the joy of His salvation—in due time, I say, for His perfect love is blended with wisdom that never errs. Forgiveness always follows con-

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fession, and you may have the comfort of it, but you cannot easily forget the grief you have caused Him who loves you and whose name you bear. Bitter herbs had to be eaten by the Israelites with the lamb roast with fire. But be not afraid. Leave yourself in His hand. There is none so firm, so tender, as His. Who knows, when those lost joys are restored, but what your mouth may be once more opened to teach transgressors His ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto Him ? So said King David, and you may be able to say the same.

It is good for us all to remember that “if we call on the Father”—if we invoke His holy name and are indeed in His family, then are we under His government. He judges according to every man’s work. This is not the final judgment, for into that the believer never enters. From judgment in that sense he has been set free by the atoning work of the Saviour. In such a connection “the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son.” But the Father does judge among His children—encouraging, correcting, rewarding according to His unerring wisdom. And “whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap”—words not to be passed over too lightly. It is an undeviating principle in the ways of God. If a man sows to the flesh, of the flesh he reaps corruption—sorrow, dis-

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tress and other ills. So it was with David. His sin was forgiven, but the sword never departed from his house. So with Solomon—adversary after adversary arose and disturbed the peace of his kingdom. So with Uzziah, he was smitten with leprosy, which clung to him all his after life. But if a man sows to the Spirit, of the Spirit he reaps life everlasting. Blessing after blessing shall flow into his cup, not in the shape of material things perhaps, but blessings such as are given by the Holy Spirit of God. May grace be given to us to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear—not slavish fear, but holy, filial fear that will lead us to watch and pray lest we fall into sin, grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and bring upon ourselves the discipline needed for our correction.

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CHRIST.”

I PETER I. 18, 19.

NOT without awe and trembling, and yet with deep and solemn joy, ought a Christian to speak of the precious blood of Christ. Here is the heart, the inmost sanctuary of our faith. Marvel not, brethren, that this doctrine is at all times, both to wise Greeks and self-righteous Jews, the stumbling-block

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and the rock of offence. But where man's reason can see no wisdom, where the unrenewed mind doubts, cavils, and mocks, the saints of God adore, and expect to adore for ever. Here is indeed the centre of all divine revelations. With increasing clearness this mystery shines through the whole Scripture. Do we not see it in the better sacrifice of Abel? Do we not behold it on the door-posts of Israel, on the memorable night of the passover? Does it not meet us on every page of Leviticus? Do we not hear it in the solemn and emphatic declaration: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"? Does it not shine forth in all the ordinances of the tabernacle? Can we not discover it in the words of Isaiah, when he speaks of Messiah pouring out His life? And in the words of Zechariah, "They shall look unto Me, whom they pierced"? Jesus the Lord declared, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"; and on the last evening said, "This is the new testament in My blood; this is My blood, shed for the remission of sins." In like manner all the apostolic epistles assign peculiar importance as to the death of the Lord, so especially to the shedding of His precious blood; and in the culminating book of Scripture, the Apocalypse, the doctrine is asserted with peculiar solemnity. The beloved disciple ascribes glory

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and honour unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and His Father ; and all the heavenly doxologies ascribe redemption to the blood of Christ ; to the blood they ascribe the righteousness of the saints, as well as their triumph over sin and evil.

On no subject is the apostolic teaching so emphatic, so lucid, so abundant. This truth filled their hearts, and was their central thought. By the blood of Christ we who were afar off were made nigh ; by His blood we are justified ; Christ suffered that He might sanctify us by His blood ; we possess (and that for ever) redemption through His blood ; His blood cleanseth us from all sin, and the Church has been purchased with this precious price (Eph. II. 13 ; Rom. v. 9 ; Heb. XIII. 12 ; Eph. I. 7 ; 1 John I. 7 ; Acts XX. 28 ; Rev. I. 5 ; v. 9, etc.).—*Saphir*.

“ Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary ;
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners—
Shed for me.

“ Precious blood, whose full atonement
Makes us nigh to God !
Precious blood, our song and glory,
Praise and laud ! ”

LIFE AND LIBERTY.

WHEN a man is born again—"born of the Spirit"—a new and divine principle of being is implanted within him, which in its very nature is opposed to the flesh. Our Lord's words in John III. 6 are very clear as to that. By "flesh" is meant that evil principle which has its seat in our fallen nature and remains in every believer, incurably bad, to the end of his earthly days.

The seventh chapter of Romans describes the miserable experiences of one in whom there is conflict between legality and Christ. The law is compared to a husband, so also is Christ. And the apostle shows, very conclusively, that as a woman cannot lawfully have two husbands at the same time, so the believer cannot be under the legal system and under Christ. If she be under the one husband she cannot be under the other.

Now the law commands those who are under it to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and the more upright and earnest they are, the more desirous they become to respond to this command. The man whose experiences are described in Romans VII. is born again and therefore alive, but, like Lazarus, in John XII.,

he is still bound with grave clothes—the grave clothes of legality—and is not standing in the freedom wherewith Christ makes free. He would do good, but evil is present with him. He is told not to covet, and the prohibition arouses the desires it forbids. He does what he hates, and hates what he does. He is unhappy and perplexed; he thought when he was relieved of the load of his sins, and tasted the blessedness of forgiveness, that all now would be right for time and eternity, but he is grievously disappointed. Why? Because he is looking to the wrong husband. He is seeking to answer God's claims by keeping the law, and mourns his lack of love to God and man, and vainly hopes some day to be different. He delights in the law of God after the inward man, but he finds another law in his members warring against the law of his mind.

Is my reader in this state? Many Christians are, and some teachers insist that this is a right state to be in. Have you—have they—forgotten that there is a second husband and that the link with the first husband has been broken by death, so that you can take up the language of Romans VIII., beginning with “no condemnation” and ending with no separation? Christ is the source both of life and liberty. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives present freedom from the law of

sin and death.* The spirit of bondage is exchanged for the spirit of adoption. How is this brought about? First there is the blessed fact that we have died with Christ—"our old man is crucified with Him." "Buried with Him," too, says Romans VI. 3. So that Christ's grave is our grave. Your intelligent language now should be :

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

Thus our history as men in the flesh ended in the cross of Christ. That evil nature called "flesh" has been dealt with in unsparing judgment. Christ was made sin and died under the judgment of God, and you have to reckon what is true of Christ as being true of you. Associated with Him in His death, you are freed from the claims and condemnation of the law. If a man dies in prison the night before the morning fixed for his execution, what more can the law do? You have become dead to the law by the death of Christ. He that is dead is freed from sin, that is sin as a master, and freed from the law as a husband.

Then this bitter experience you are passing through, this discovery of your utter badness is intended to teach you that in you, that is in your flesh, dwells no good thing (Rom.

* This law must not be confounded with the Law of Moses—that legal system from which Christ sets free.

VII. 18). Each one has to learn that lesson for himself. In your extremity you turn your eyes to the second husband—Christ Jesus in glory. Look away to Him and let the language of your heart be :

“Out of myself for help I go,
Thy power alone resolved to know.”

Ah, there is the secret of victory ! You give yourself up as an utter failure, as one completely defeated, and look to Christ alone for deliverance. The law you tried to keep you have not kept, and the flesh you tried to conquer, and keep down, has overcome you at every turn. Now you find that not only have you done a great many wrong things, but you yourself are bad—incurably bad. You are like a man at the bottom of a deep ditch ; the more he struggles the deeper he sinks in the mire. At last, strengthless, he shouts for help, and calls for a deliverer, having lost all hope in his own efforts. It is thus this conflict ends, verse 24 says : “ O wretched man that I am ! *who shall deliver me ?* ” Have you reached that point ? Have you learned that “ the flesh ” is so bad you cannot improve it, or rid yourself of it ? If so, look now, look always to Christ. He is our deliverer in every shape in which we need deliverance.

Romans VII. says, “ With the mind *I myself* serve the law of God, but with *the flesh* the

law of sin. The mind is the same as the "inner man." The flesh our bad, wicked self in which no good dwells.

In the inscrutable ways of God it has pleased Him, for some wise purpose, not to change, or take away, our old nature, whilst giving us an altogether new one ; but He has provided a way of deliverance from its bondage and rule. How ? He directs your gaze from self to Christ Jesus. The One who was dead is alive again. Just as a good husband supports, cherishes, and undertakes for his wife, so Christ is the One upon whom we can ever lean, to whom we can ever turn, and through whom we gain the victory. In Him are power, liberty, deliverance. Lazarus had life when the Lord's quickening voice was heard, he had liberty when the grave clothes were removed. Struggle as he might, his own efforts could not remove them. They must be removed by another. Just so with you, Christ is your liberator. The answer to "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " is, "Christ Jesus our Lord." Cease your struggles, give up your hopes of improvement, look no more inside for goodness, learn—bitter lesson as it is—you are as helpless of yourself to do right now you are converted as you were before ; victory is only in looking to Christ.

H. N.

THE BURDEN BEARER.

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee.”—PSALM LV. 22.

IT would be impossible to name the burdens under which poor, frail humanity is labouring. They are so many, so various, so peculiar, so private, that they could not well be imagined, much less enumerated. To some, the cares and anxieties, the frettings and uneasiness of each hour, are the burden. Others labour under a constitutionally nervous temperament. They start and tremble at the fluttering of a leaf. Their infirmities are a constant weariness to their spirits. Imagination conjures up evils which have no existence, and never may have. These have a perpetual burden to bear. Others are struggling morning, noon, and night, almost in despair, to heal a divided household. Others have continually before them the dread of coming evil, and all spiritual hope is obscured by some mental disease. Others, with pinching poverty at the door, are toiling in the sweat of their brow to sustain a young family, or are often at their wits' end to know where to get the next meal. Others, of the weaker sex—mothers, widows, orphans—struggling with delicate health, overstrained energies, and amid difficulties apparently unsurmountable, to eke out a scanty living. How many a child of God is struggling with pressing domestic

claims, and with but slender means to meet them ! Who can tell the mind's troubled thoughts, its anxious feelings, and painful forebodings ! Oh ! the burdens that press upon multitudes, wearing out the elasticity of the spirit, whitening the locks with care, and making the frail body stoop with premature age ! No eye sees them, no heart sympathizes, no hand is extended to succour. They are known only to Him to whom the secrets of all hearts are open, and from whom nothing is hid. Yet to each and all does the message come, "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.*" The voice of the great burden Bearer sounds in our ears, "Cast your care upon Me ; I care for you." Are you in want of many of the necessities and comforts of life ? "Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things." Are you anxious about many things, not knowing well what to do ? "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God . . . and all these things shall be added unto you." Is the way dark before you, are you brought to a standstill, and is perplexity weaving its network round your feet ? "Who is among you . . . that walketh in darkness and hath no light ? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." "I will lead the blind by a way they knew not ; I will lead them in paths that they have not known." Are you suffer-

ing from the unkindness of the world? Have fond smiles and greetings given way to alien looks and estranged affection? "The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed: a refuge in times of trouble." Are temptations sore, and trials bitter? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Are you dreading the future, big with some approaching disaster that threatens to overwhelm you? "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Oh, what precious promises to sustain the soul under all circumstances! Then, tried and tempest-tossed child of God, stay thy soul upon them. Prove the faithfulness of God's word by trusting it. None ever yet did so and were disappointed. What if your way is rough and your sky dark—still stay yourself on God's everlasting word. Fresh trials will bring with them fresh strength. New difficulties will bring with them new grace to help you. Lay every burden at His feet. He will give you strength to bear it. He sees every perplexity. His eye follows you in all your troubles. There is no phase in your history that is not marked out and ordered for you by His love. And you shall yet see that it has been so. Then trust that precious Saviour. Hold on your way with confidence in His word. "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.*"

F. W.

A WORD OF COUNSEL.

“And the Lord said, *Simon, Simon*, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.”
—LUKE XXII. 31.

IS it not ever Satan's aim to make the Christian dishonour Christ, and if he succeeds in this he troubles about little else? It is not so much *you* that he thinks of in tempting to sin as it is to bring, through you, some discredit on your Master. Bitter experience may teach us wholesome lessons, but surely it is better if we learn them by taking heed to the way in which others, stronger than ourselves, have fallen.

Simon Peter was no mere admirer of the Lord Jesus Christ. He really loved his Master, far, far more, I suppose, than you or I do, and when he said, “Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death,” I doubt not he meant it from the depth of his heart. Somehow, I believe there are many who would be ready to lay down their life for Christ's sake if the necessity arose, who nevertheless are tripped up by Satan in some of the—shall I say?—smaller details of life. “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” Peter had to learn this, and so must we. Let us not in any wise think lightly of

Peter's downfall, but rather take heed *lest* we fall into a similar sin. Such examples are given in God's holy Word for our admonition, that we may avoid the snares into which others fell.

The Lord knew Peter's weakness and He tells him that before the cock should crow he would deny Him thrice. What! Peter do this—never! “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I,” is the bold answer of Peter as given in one of the other Gospels. Therefore when the Lord Jesus is brought into the high priest's house, Peter is not going to leave the One he loves so much without a brave attempt to witness what is going to happen. So he follows, though it be afar off. He would fulfil his promise and stand by his Master through thick and thin. By and by he is seen sitting down in the hall watching what is going on. A woman notices him as he sits by that fire, and taking a thoroughly good look at him, much perhaps to Peter's consternation, she suddenly says to those around, “This man was also with Him.” Without a moment's hesitation the answer comes from Peter's lips, “Woman, I know Him not.” What! Is it possible that this is the man whose words betokened such affection for his Master but a few hours previously? Yes, it is no other. A little while after another comes along and seeing Peter says to him, “Thou art also of

them.” “And Peter said, Man, I am not.” Is it not sad to see one whose love for his Master cannot be disputed so repeatedly and deliberately denying Him? If such was the case with Peter, how much more is it possible for us to do the same thing?

Thus does Satan succeed in making one sin lead to another, until it becomes more and more difficult to retrace one's steps and to make a confession of one's sin. Nor would it be possible if the Lord were not to come in and by His gracious dealings with us melt our hearts, as He did in Peter's case.

Just about an hour later another confidently affirms that Peter has been previously associated with Jesus. Peter passionately exclaims that he does not know what the man is saying. But while he is yet speaking the cock crows; and then,—does the Lord sternly rebuke Peter for his sin? No, not a word of reproach, although the Lord must have felt the denials most keenly. He turns round and gives one look at poor Peter, and that look brought back all that the Lord had said to him. “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

How often have I pictured to myself that scene! More so perhaps because I know that I am so likely to do the same. Those hot tears must have rolled down Peter's cheeks as *never* before. “He wept *bitterly*.” Could any tears have blotted out the mischief, I believe Peter's

would. But it was too late, he had *already committed* the sin which had been farthest from his mind, and it could not now be undone.

The subsequent announcement that the "Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," plainly shows that the Lord fully forgave Peter (Luke XXIV. 34).

Dear Christian, let this instance serve as a word of counsel and warning to you and me. Let us not trust to our own hearts, for "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. XXVIII. 26). Rather let us be ever and continuously trusting to the One who will never fail; and we can only do this by keeping close to His side all through the day. Let us remember the word, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest *he* fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

But *supposing* you do sin, as Peter did. Doubtless you will have to suffer on account of your sin, for whatsoever you sow, that will you reap; but never forget that Jesus will not treat you harshly, but rather will He be grieved. His love remains the same toward you. We change, He changes not. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. XIII. 8).

His is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
True and faithful, strong as death.

L. A. A.

SPIRITUAL JOYS.

NOTHING is more lacking to-day amongst God's people than true spiritual joy. When the Spirit of God exhorts us to " Rejoice in the Lord always," He means that we should always rejoice. And if we do not it is clear the fault is ours. Weakness in walk, testimony, service, and worship, is the sure result. " The joy of the Lord is your strength " (Neh. VIII. 10).

There is no greater hindrance to spiritual joy than seeking it by legal obedience. Legality sticks to us, and it is the hardest thing to be free from. Legal people live by rule—even a good rule sometimes. They anxiously ask, " What would Jesus do," under certain circumstances?—a very excellent rule where it can be applied; but, alas! we are often found in circumstances where our Master would never be. Such people are very circumspect, and strenuous in their efforts to do the will of the Lord, but there seems to be but little sunshine in their lives.

If we could in the simplest faith receive it into our hearts that we are loved by the Lord Jesus as deeply and truly as He was loved of the Father, what joy would be ours!

Joy is spontaneous: it springs up without

effort and flows from the knowledge of the unchanging love of Christ. Under all circumstances His love remains the same. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, not even our feebleness and our failures. Look at the case of Peter, who denied his Master with oaths and curses. What could test the constancy of His love more than such a denial? Yet that love remained unchanged. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John xv. 9, 10).

It is marvellous to think how much is contained in what our blessed Lord here says. The only measure of His love to us is that of the Father's love to Him, which is immeasurable.

We are called to the obedience of Christ, and if we walk in that obedient pathway, no cloud ever comes in to dim our joy. He obeyed as a *delight*, and if we abide under the influence of His love, we shall obey in the same manner. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God."

If in the exercise of our own will we leave the path of obedience, we cannot escape a troubled conscience, and we are hindered from turning to the Lord for the support we need. If we feel

that there is something between us and Him, we are not free in our spirits to turn to Him. What weak creatures we prove ourselves to be, when we seek to do anything without the consciousness of His support !

We cannot count on the Lord's support unless we are consciously walking in the pathway of His will. " Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full " (John xvi. 24). Asking implies the sense of need, and need makes us dependent. Dependence is the confession that we have no power in ourselves. So we have to learn the truth of what the Lord says. " Without Me ye can do nothing " (John xv. 5).

In *dependence* we get more enjoyment of His love. We then prove that the power of His love is sufficient for us. His love it is that brings Himself near to us. When Paul says, " The Lord stood with me and strengthened me," we are not to suppose that the Lord came down from heaven and stood beside Paul personally, when he stood before Cæsar's judgment seat. In the sense of his own insufficiency to go through the ordeal he had to face he turned to the Lord and trusted Him, and the Lord conveyed such a sense of His love and sympathy into Paul's heart by the Spirit, that he was bold in witnessing for the truth for which he was prepared to lay down his life.

Walking in obedience and dependence always leads to practical separation from the world. The Lord Jesus said of His own, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The measure of our separation from it is distinctly measured by His own. What a measure !

This separation is according to the place He has now taken in heavenly glory for our sakes. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth." "Our citizenship is in heaven." We belong to that place, and so we are strangers here, as the Lord Himself was a stranger.

The Cross of Christ has made a complete break with the world for those who truly love Him. When our hearts come under the power of the One who silently suffered the agonies of that shameful tree, as the result of His faithful witness, we are led to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

"He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. I. 4). When we allow worldly principles to govern us, we give the direct denial to the purpose of the love that was displayed there for our deliverance. In the same measure we prove ourselves untrue to the One we profess to love.

He has gone to heaven, and in going there has opened up another world to our vision, of which He is the centre and undivided attraction. If we follow Him in spirit to that world of heavenly glory, we shall lose taste for the best things this evil world has to offer. As the vision of glory fills us we shall say, "I do count them but rubbish that I may have Christ for my gain."

To love one's natural life—that is, to go in for the enjoyment of the natural side of things to the exclusion of the heavenly—is to lose the enjoyment of what Scripture calls life. "He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me" (John XII. 25, 26). Following Him in the path of His rejection means death to all here. But the compensation of His love, and the joy consequent upon such a path, is the truest and greatest blessing. "These things have I spoken in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves" (John XVII. 13).

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 !

P. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. S. G.—We do indeed fervently pray that the joy of God's salvation may be speedily restored to you. But you do not say how you lost it. We can only, therefore, draw a bow at a venture in the hope that some arrow may hit the mark.

The joy of salvation may be missed through not seeing that *the Word of the Lord must always be the resting-place of faith*. Too many lean on their feelings and experiences. When these are bright, then they rejoice, but when dull their joy dies down like a fire upon the hearth, till not a spark remains. Now the Word of the Lord that speaks to us of the Saviour, of His finished work, of forgiveness of sins, and of our acceptance "in the Beloved" never alters. It is like the rock against which the angry sea dashes its waves in vain. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures is a fact which nothing can shake (1 Cor. xv. 3). It is also a fact that all who believe in Him are justified from all things, and that the sheep of Christ shall never perish (Acts XIII. 39; John x. 28). No unbelief on our part can make these facts cease to be facts. But the moment we disbelieve or doubt them the comfort, the joy they yield is gone. It is by faith we stand. Is this your case? If so the joy of salvation may soon be yours again. Fix your eye on those passages of Holy Scripture which we have quoted, and as you read them say to yourself, "Oh, how true they are!" Say it the second and third time. Yes, they are true. It is the Word of God which lives and abides for ever.

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The joy of salvation may be lost *from physical causes*. Some sufferers are often depressed, their sky is never blue. These are greatly to be pitied. We would earnestly entreat all such to look away from themselves—to look up into the opened heavens and see Jesus there. We have in Him a living Saviour whose love is tender and unchanging, and whom we may well trust to strengthen, to uphold, and to bring us safely through. He is able to save for evermore. In having our thoughts engaged with Him we get lifted out of our weaknesses and they cease to absorb our mind. We forget ourselves and our imperfections in thinking of Him. If this is your case, then read “The Burden-Bearer” in our present issue.

The joy of salvation may be lost *through carelessness of walk and habitual grieving of the Holy Spirit*. Nothing is more fragile, more easily broken than the link of communion with God. It is the high privilege of the believer to be called unto fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ—impossible, save for one born again, cleansed from his sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, and indwelt by the Spirit. When the believer thus walks the joy of the great salvation fills his heart. But if he does not walk with God the joy is lost. He may not doubt that he is a child of God, though conscience and the Holy Spirit will chide him for being a naughty one. The only right course for such is pointed out in our paper entitled “Things which God hath joined together,” which please read. If our remarks do not meet your case, then kindly write again.

SELF-JUDGMENT.

THERE are few exercises more valuable or healthful for the Christian than self-judgment. I do not mean by this the unhappy practice of looking in upon oneself for evidences of life and security in Christ. This is terrible work to be at. To be looking at a worthless self, instead of at a risen Christ, is as deplorable an occupation as we can well conceive. The idea that many Christians seem to entertain, in reference to what is called self-examination, is truly depressing. They look upon it as an exercise which may end in their discovering that they are not Christians at all. This, I repeat it, is most terrible work.

No doubt it is well for those who have been building upon a sandy foundation, to have their eyes opened to see the dangerous delusion. It is well for such as have been complacently wrapping themselves up in pharisaic robes, to have those robes stripped off. It is well for those who have been sleeping in a house on fire, to be roused from their slumbers. It is well for such as have been walking, blindfold, to the brink of some frightful precipice, to have the bandage removed from their eyes, so that they may see their danger and retreat. No intelligent and well-regulated mind would think of calling in question the

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rightness of all this. But then, fully admitting the above, the question of true self-judgment remains wholly untouched. The Christian is never once taught, in the Word of God, to examine himself with the idea of finding out that he is not a Christian. The very reverse is the case, as I shall endeavour to show.

There are two passages in the New Testament which are sadly misinterpreted. The first is in reference to the Lord's supper: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. XI. 28, 29). Now, it is usual to apply the term "unworthily" in this passage to *persons* doing the act, whereas it really refers to the *manner* of doing it. The apostle never thought of calling in question the Christianity of the Corinthians; nay, in the opening address of his epistle he looks at them as "the church of God which is in Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" (or saints by calling). How could he use this language, in the first chapter, and, in the eleventh chapter, call in question the worthiness of these saints to take their seat at the Lord's supper? Impossible. He looked upon them as saints, and as such he exhorted them to celebrate the Lord's supper in a worthy manner. The question of any but

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true Christians being there is never raised ; so that it is utterly impossible that the word "unworthily" could apply to *persons*. Its application is entirely to the *manner*. The persons were worthy, but their manner was not ; and they were called, as saints, to judge themselves as to their *ways*, else the Lord might judge them in their *persons*, as was already the case. In a word, it was as true Christians they were called to judge themselves. If they were in doubt as to that, they were utterly unable to judge anything. I never think of setting my child to judge as to whether he is my child or not ; but I expect him to judge himself as to his habits, else, if he do not, I may have to do, by chastening, what he ought to do by self-judgment. It is because I look upon him as my child, that I will not allow him to sit at my table with soiled garments and disorderly manners.

The second passage occurs in 2 Corinthians XIII. : " Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me . . . examine yourselves " (*vv.* 3-5). The rest of the passage is parenthetical. The real point is this. The apostle appeals to the Corinthians themselves as the clear proof of the reality of his apostleship—that Christ had spoken in him—that his commission was from heaven. He looked upon them as true Christians, notwithstanding all their confusion ; but, inasmuch as they were seals to his ministry,

that ministry must be divine, and hence they ought not to listen to the false apostles who were speaking against him. Their Christianity and his apostleship were so intimately connected, that to question the one was to question the other. It is therefore plain that the apostle did not call upon the Corinthians to examine themselves with any such idea as that the examination might issue in the sad discovery that they were not Christians at all. Quite the reverse. In truth, it is as if I were to produce a real watch to a person, and say, "Since you seek a proof that the man who made this is a watchmaker, examine it."

Thus, then, it seems plain that neither of the above passages affords any warrant for that kind of self-examination for which some contend, which is really based on a system of doubts and fears, and has no warrant whatever in the Word of God. The self-judgment to which I would call the reader's attention is a totally different thing. It is a sacred Christian exercise, of the most salutary character. It is based upon the most unclouded confidence as to our salvation and acceptance in Christ. The Christian is called to judge himself, *because he is*, and not *to see if he be* a Christian. This makes all the difference. Were I to examine self for a thousand years, I should never find it to be aught else than a worthless, ruined, vile thing—a thing which God has

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set aside, and which I am called to reckon as "dead." How could I ever expect to get any comfortable evidences by such an examination? Impossible. The Christian's evidences are not to be found in his ruined self, but in God's risen Christ ; and the more he can get done with the former and occupied with the latter, the happier and holier he will be. The Christian judges himself, judges his ways, judges his habits, judges his thoughts, words and actions because he believes he is a Christian, not because he doubts it. It is as knowing and enjoying the eternal stability of God's grace, the divine efficacy of the blood of Jesus, the all-prevailing power of His advocacy, the unalterable authority of the Word, the divine security of the very feeblest of Christ's sheep—it is as entering, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, into these priceless realities, that the true believer judges himself. The human idea of self-examination is founded on unbelief. The divine idea of self-judgment is founded upon confidence.

But let us never forget that we are called to judge ourselves. If we lose sight of this, nature will soon get ahead of us, and we shall make sorry work of it. The most devoted Christians have a mass of things which need to be judged, and if they are not habitually judged they will assuredly cut out abundance of bitter work for them. If there be irritability, or levity,

pride or vanity, natural indolence or natural impetuosity, we must, as Christians, judge and subdue that thing. That which is abidingly judged will never get upon the conscience. Self-judgment keeps all our matters right and square ; but if nature be not judged, there is no knowing how, when or where it may break out, and produce keen anguish of soul, and bring gross dishonour upon the Lord's name. The most grievous cases of failure and declension may be traced to the neglect of self-judgment in little things. There are three distinct stages of judgment, namely, self-judgment, church judgment, and divine judgment. If a man judges himself, the assembly is kept clear. If he fail to do so, evil will break out in some shape or form, and then the assembly is involved ; and if the assembly fail to judge the evil, then God must deal with the assembly. If Achan had judged the covetous thought, the assembly would not have become involved (Joshua VII.). If the Corinthians had judged themselves in secret, the Lord would not have had to judge the assembly in public (1 Cor. XI. 30-32).

All this is deeply practical and soul-subduing. May all the Lord's people learn to walk in the cloudless sunshine of His favour, in the holy enjoyment of their relationship, and in the habitual exercise of a spirit of self-judgment !

T. N. O.

THREE "I WILLS."

IS there not a need in these days that we should encourage ourselves in the Lord? There is so much unrest on every hand, so much uncertainty, and many things which tend to make us anxious and afraid. We need, therefore, to betake ourselves to the precious promises of God—so sure and certain—to keep ourselves in the sunshine of His unchanging and eternal love, and to look out for the coming of the Lord. With this end in view let us look at two or three of the "*I wills*" in the Gospel of John.

The Lord Jesus, knowing that His earthly mission was drawing to its close, comforts the hearts of His sorrowing disciples by telling them that He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house. "And," said He, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). What a cheering "*I will*" is this! The Saviour is coming—there is no doubt about it. His "*I will*" is faithful and true. What a stay it must have been to the disciples, even as it ought to be to us. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). Oh, let us believe it!

And He is coming for us *Himself*. Angels will be His servants to gather the elect of Israel from the four winds of heaven when God's purposes begin to ripen for their restoration to their own land, but not so when the heavenly saints are to be "caught up." The Lord Himself shall come and call them away. It is He who has been to the cross for them, to bear their sins, that those sins might be put for ever out of God's sight. So when the moment arrives for His church to be translated to heaven, it will be "the Lord Himself" who will carry out that crowning act of grace (1 Thess. iv. 16).

But there is another "*I will*" at which we must look. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16). If the Lord was leaving them in a hostile world they should have the abiding presence, support, and comfort of the Holy Spirit—that other Comforter—the third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity. And what should be His office in relation to themselves? "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John xvi. 14). How happy for them to be thus endowed with the presence of the Holy Spirit, who should bring to their remembrance whatsoever their Lord and Master had said to them and would also show them things to come. He, too, would

be their power for service and lead them into all truth. But this great gift depended on the Saviour's going away and on His being glorified in heaven (John VII. 39). Till then the Spirit could not come, but when He had finished the work of redemption and had taken His seat on high, then the Holy Ghost was given. It is He who makes known to us the glories of Christ and leads our hearts to contemplate Him in the glory of God.

There is yet another "*I will*" of which I would say a few words. It speaks to us of the personal love of the Saviour. "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John XIV. 21). This is the love of complacency—the love that He makes known to him who possesses and keeps His commandments. Precious privilege of the obedient heart! And then there is that transcendingly beautiful word in John xv. 9, "*As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you.*" Think of the "*as*" and the "*so.*" What intensity of love is here! No thought can fathom it—deep as the soundless sea! Oh, it is wonderful that the love wherewith the Father loved the Son is the measure of His love to us. We are loved *as* He is loved! How our hearts need to be enlarged to better take it in! And shall anything ever be able to separate us from His love? Let the Apostle Paul answer in Romans VIII. 35-39. I cannot do better than quote

his triumphant words : " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." With that grand climax we may well close, not, however, without expressing the fervent hope that both reader and writer alike may increasingly know that love " which passeth knowledge " (Eph. III. 19).

A. W.

CHRIST AND THE BIBLE.

IT is not for us to explain Christ, it is Christ who explains God to us ; He is the interpreter, or rather the revealer, of the Father. " No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him " (John I. 18). And so He is called " the Word." The title " Word of God " is used both of the living and written Word, and this suggests certain resemblances between Christ and the Bible.

We have, first of all, certain verbal resemblances. "I am the *Bread* of Life," said the Saviour, "if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever" (John VI. 35, 51); "Man shall not live by *bread* alone, but by every word of God," was spoken by Him of the written Word (Luke IV. 4). Again He said, "I am the *Light* of the world" (John VIII. 12); and we put alongside of this the words of the Psalmist, "Thy word is a *light* unto my path" (Ps. CXIX. 105). The living Word "is *able also to save* them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. VII. 25); and we are exhorted to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is *able to save* your souls" (James I. 21). Many other verbal resemblances might be traced out between the living and written Word.

Further, Christ and the Bible are both *divine* and *human*. In what a remarkable manner do the deity and humanity of our Lord display themselves at Sychar's well, where the Son of Man, wearied with His journey, asks for a drink of water from the woman, and afterwards offers her living water! And how human are the love stories of the Bible, of Boaz and Ruth, of Jacob and Rachel! At the same time what wondrous and unfathomable revelations are contained in such a book as the Epistle to the Ephesians!

The living and written Word resemble each other in that while both are *Jewish*, both are *universal*. Our Lord was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the royal line ; but He is the Saviour of the world. The Bible, on its human side, is an Eastern book, written in the East by Jewish penmen, and having an intensely Jewish outlook ; while at the same time its message is universal in its application.

Lastly, the *Holy Spirit* is needed to understand both the Person and the book. " No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost " (1 Cor. xii. 3) ; and the same Interpreter is necessary to enable us to understand the spiritual messages of the Bible (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The Bible is the book of the Christ. He is its centre and circumference, its heart, its life, its glory (Luke xxiv. 27). Take Christ from the Bible and what have you left ? All through the Old Testament our attention is drawn to a coming King and a coming Sacrifice. In promise and prophecy and picture we are pointed to a coming One, whose sufferings and death and subsequent glory are in certain parts depicted with minute detail (1 Peter i. 11). When we reach the Gospels we see that the coming One has come ; we are face to face with the wondrous Person of the Christ of God. Passing on to the Acts, we behold the power of the same Person

exhibited in and through His disciples on earth. The Book of the Acts might fittingly be called "the Acts of the Risen and Glorified Saviour, by the Holy Spirit through His servants." In the Epistles we have, among other glorious things, our Lord's precepts, while the Apocalypse gives us the programme of events that will take place at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What does Christ say about the Bible? He stretches one arm, as it were, over the whole of the Old Testament, and sets upon it the seal of His divine authority. Speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures, He said, "They are they which testify of Me" (John v. 39). And again, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me." With these Scriptures He confuted His opponents. To these He appeals in proof of His Messiahship. And He takes up those Old Testament miracles which are calculated to arouse criticism and even ridicule—the Flood, Jonah and the whale, Lot's wife—and He reaffirms them as matters of fact (Luke xvii. 27, 32; Matt. xii. 40).

And He stretches His other arm over the whole of the New Testament when He promises that further teaching to His disciples which they were not in a position to receive until His death and resurrection and the coming of the great Interpreter, the Spirit of Truth, who was

to lead them into all the truth (John xvi. 12, 13).

It is the Son of God Himself who again and again declares Himself to be co-equal with the Father (John x. 30) ; it is He who underscores His atoning death (Matt. xxvi. 28) ; and it is He who affirms so emphatically the awful truth of eternal punishment (Matt. xxv. 46).

In short, Christ sets His seal upon all that the prophets have spoken, so that the question, " Do I believe the Bible ? " resolves itself into the question, " Do I believe *Christ* ? " Christ and the Bible stand or fall together. The living Word and the written Word testify to each other. Said Martin Luther, " There is only one Person, and only one Book." Blessed is he who rests his soul upon the Person and the Book. Nothing can touch him.

Proofs are in great demand to-day. Men say they will not accept that for which they have no evidence. Honest doubt is not to be rebuked. Nathanael was an honest doubter. " Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? " he asked. But he was open to conviction ; he was ready to receive the truth ; and after his interview with the Saviour, it was he who gave expression to the bold confession, " Thou art the Son of God " (John i. 49). Christ did not call for a blind, unreasonable faith. He said,

“ If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not ” (John x. 37).

The Bible proves itself. Think of its unique position in the world, its miraculous preservation, its fertilizing effect on the mind of man, its wonderful moral power over the lives of those who receive its teachings. It bears its own credentials, it authenticates itself. It reveals God and makes known man, and unfolds the wondrous plan of redemption in the person and work of the God-Man.

But to the believer the strongest proof that the Bible is God's Book is the fact that he possesses the key to the Book—Christ Himself. The believer does not accept the Bible as the Word of God on the authority of any man or church or council. God Himself has given him the assurance that it is His Book. It is in the Bible and in the Bible alone that the converted man finds the explanation of the change through which he has passed. By believing on Christ he has the key to the Book. The truths of the Bible are bound up with the experiences of his new life. He might as well deny his very existence as deny that the Bible is God's Word. His conviction of the inspiration and authority of the written Word is unshakable, for he has a personal knowledge of its theme and life and glory—Jesus Christ Himself.

E. A.

THE ALTAR AND THE ARK.

WE hear and read of many altars, but only of one ark, and surely the ark is greater than the altar, great as this may be. The reason is simple, the ark speaks of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the expression of the glory of the Godhead and of perfect untainted humanity as seen in Him ; while the altar tells of the atoning work of our blessed Lord. The altar is the way of man's approach to God, the ark speaks of God coming out in blessing to man.

The main feature of all idolatrous worship was the altar. The Greeks and the Romans had their altars, as the Mohammedan, the Buddhist have theirs. All tell the same story. Man felt his distance and his need, and he thought he had an angry God to satisfy, whom he would appease with a gift. But the God revealed in the Holy Scriptures came out in grace, and divine righteousness was satisfied in the ark and its mercy-seat on which the blood was sprinkled and where God could be just and the justifier of the ungodly (Rom. III. 25, 26).

All centres in the person of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, very God and very man, the eternal Son, ever with the Father, but ever God, who became man. " From the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of

Thy youth " (Ps. cx. 3) is the poetic language of the Psalmist as he tells out the glories of the person of Him who was the Wisdom of Proverbs viii. He it is who could say to Job (chap. xxxviii. 4), "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

The Apostle John could in distinct and positive terms write of Him as being in the beginning, the Word who was with God and was God, who created and sustained all things, who was the Life and Light of men, who became flesh and tabernacled among men, displaying His glory as that of an only begotten with the Father, and yet full of grace and truth for men (John i. 1-14).

We would seek for the blessing and profit of our souls to trace a little of the divine testimony concerning the ark.

In Exodus xxv. 10 and 11 we read, "They shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it."

It was made of shittim wood, the hard wood of the desert, which is said to have been a kind of acacia or camel-thorn (*giraffa*), and is translated in the Septuagint "*incorruptible*"—a type of the perfect, impervious and impeccable humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though truly with all the feelings and sympathies of a real man, yet he stood out in glorious contrast to all other men, for He had no sin in Him, nor sin upon Him. He was that holy thing born of the virgin. He could be neither seduced by the temptations of Satan, nor corrupted by the world, nor defiled by contact with evil. He stood ever alone, the unique Man uncorrupted and incorruptible, and thus the shittim wood became a fitting emblem of His pure, spotless and incorruptible humanity.

It was overlaid with pure gold both within and without. This speaks of Him in His divine character as Son of God, great and glorious.

He was Jehovah's fellow (Zech. XIII. 7). He was the daysman (Job IX. 33) who could lay His hand on the throne of God and on the guilty sinner. He could combine in His blessed person not only all the beauties of untainted humanity, but all the divine attributes. Infinite, eternal, unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. The shittim wood and the pure gold alike tell of Him who could on the one hand

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be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and on the other be able to exert all His Godhead power on our behalf.

But what did the ark contain? We read in Hebrews IX. 4 that there were in it "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

The two tables of the law written by the finger of God gave expression to the righteous demands of God on man, and which were met and satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ alone. These tables thus witness to Him who kept and magnified the law and made it honourable (Isa. XLII. 21). He who thus complied with its demands in every detail had it written within His heart.

The golden pot of manna speaks of Him as God's provision for the wilderness journey. The manna was the daily food of God's redeemed people in a dry and parched desert where no supplies could be obtained, to sustain a moving company of 600,000 men besides women and children. He was truly that manna as He Himself announced, "I am the Bread of Life." He was that living Bread from heaven which if a man eat he shall live for ever (John VI. 48-58).

"There on the hidden bread
Of Christ—once humbled here—
God's treasured store—for ever fed,
His love my soul shall cheer."

Lastly, we have Aaron's rod that budded (Num. xvii. 8-11)—that priestly rod of power that once more typified Him in His present service, sustaining His own by the exercise of His love, in their place of communion with God amidst all the murmurings of the wilderness.

But the ark had a covering or lid. God's holy vessel of testimony must be preserved and protected from the eye of the profane. This covering was the mercy-seat made also of pure gold with two cherubims of glory (Heb. ix. 5) overshadowing the mercy-seat,—emblems of God's administrative dealings, whether in judgment or grace. Once more we are directed to Him who is the true mercy-seat or propitiatory.

In Exodus xxv. 17-21 we have the ark described; in Exodus xxvii. 6-9 we have it made; and in Exodus xxv. 22 we have God's glorious proclamation concerning it, "*There* will I meet thee, and *there* I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony."

Thus He tells us that the ark with its mercy-seat was God's centre from which He could speak to His people and deal with them in grace on the ground of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Time and space do not permit of our tracing the ark during its successive movements

through the wilderness, and the land, as God's guiding power. From Sinai to Shiloh, by way of Gilgal and Shechem, or from Shiloh to its final resting-place on Mount Moriah through the turbulent scenes of Aphek, Ashdod, Ekron, Bethshemesh and Kirjath-jearim, and the happier scenes of Obed-Edom, we may follow its wondrous passage. But we would seek to dwell a little upon its repose in the temple on earth and its final re-appearance in the temple of God in heaven.

The bringing of the ark into Solomon's temple to the place preserved for it is described in almost identical terms in 1 Kings VIII. and 2 Chronicles V. The wilderness journey was over; the people were in the land, and now the Lord's habitation had been built at Jerusalem. All the vessels of the temple were of new construction, but one only came from the tabernacle, and that was the ark, which once more was to be the divine centre. In the seventh month, at the Feast of Tabernacles, which spoke of millennial glory and blessing, the ark was placed in its final resting-place in the temple, figure indeed of the final repose of the people of God. Christ once more, and ever still, is the centre, joy and delight of His people and of wondering worlds.

Twice is the fact pressed upon us in these scriptures that there was nothing in the ark but the two tables of stone. The golden

pot of manna and Aaron's rod which budded were not there.

In Revelation II. 17 we have the hidden manna promised to the overcomer. Christ had been known in the wilderness as the One upon whom we have daily fed, and communion with Him has been the support of our souls. But all shall be changed in the future day. He shall be no longer secret or hidden, but shall be displayed in manifested glory to an expectant and enraptured creation. We too shall see Him as He is, and be like Him in the glory of that kingdom. Faith shall be changed to sight, and thus the pot of manna which typified His presence here in lowly and sustaining grace shall be no longer seen, for we shall be with Him, and like Him, too.

Aaron's rod, which budded and brought forth fruit, typifying the strength and beauty, life and power of Him who in resurrection is the great Priest of His people, will then be no longer needed. All the murmurings of the wilderness will be over, and all that called forth testimony against rebellion have passed away. Our enraptured souls shall exult for ever in the presence of Him whose love shall give rise to eternal songs of praise and glory to His name.

But captivity overtook the king and the kingdom, and Jehoiakim found himself in the hands of the Chaldeans, and the vessels of the

Lord's house or temple in the treasure house of the strange gods (Dan. i. 2).

Not so God's ark, constructed in the wilderness, preserved in the tabernacle and temple, it disappears from human view during the times of the Gentiles. Two temples follow that of Solomon—Zerubbabel's (Ezra vi.) and Herod's (John ii. 20), but neither of these contained the ark. God had raised it above the floods of Gentile supremacy and corruption, till at last we find a door open in heaven (Rev. iv. 1), and the Lamb slain receiving power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing (Rev. v.): "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament" (Rev. xi. 19). This witness of God, that had ever proclaimed the glories of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is now seen in its true place in the temple above, still testifying of Him who is God's centre, the Sun and Soul of the universe, and yet God manifest in flesh.

Shall not our wondering souls delight for ever in Him there, who once in richest grace stooped that He might pick us up from the mire of sin and give us a place with Himself in glory, and make us partakers of the honours of His throne? Do we not know and own the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?

C. S. R.

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C. G.—We hardly suppose that any who favour household baptism would dream of baptizing a set of unruly lads of the age you name, solely because they were the sons of believing parents. If such lads were brought by the grace of God to know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, they might well be baptized on their own confession of faith in Christ.

H. M.—Ephesians 1.—We see no ground for saying that the first twelve verses of this chapter are addressed particularly to Jewish believers. In verses 12 and 13 we do find the “*we*” and “*ye*,” and it is more than probable the “*we*” does refer to believing Israelites, of whom Paul was one. They had pre-trusted in the Christ ere the day of His manifestation, when the nation of Israel shall receive Him and be blessed. While that day tarries there is “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. XI. 5). If this be so, the “*ye*” of Ephesians I. 13 would be Gentile believers. As to Galatians VI. 6, it simply enjoins that those who are taught in the Word are not to be unmindful of the temporal needs of those who teach. The same principle may be seen in Romans XV. 27 and in 1 Corinthians IX.

R. W.—1 Peter IV. 17, 18.—You will recollect that in chapter I. 17 we are reminded that God our Father judges according to every man’s work—judges His children—always in perfect love, but in discipline that ever has their good in view. God

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deals with us as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. XII. 9). So here judgment begins at the house of God—with those who call on His name, who take the place of being His children, and who are therefore required to be holy, for He is holy. See Ezekiel IX. 6, and note that judgment was to begin at His sanctuary. It assuredly is not final judgment, though that must necessarily be the end of those who obey not the gospel of God.

As to verse 18, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" the following explanation will help you. "It is evidently not redemption or justification that is here intended, nor the communication of life; those whom the apostle addresses were in possession of them. To our apostle '*salvation*' is not only the present enjoyment of the salvation of the soul, but the full deliverance of the faithful, which will take place at the coming of Christ in glory. All the temptations are contemplated, all the trials, all the dangers through which the Christian will pass in reaching the end of his career. All the power of God is requisite, directed by divine wisdom, guiding and sustaining faith, to carry the Christian safely through the wilderness, where Satan employs all the resources of his subtlety to make him perish. The power of God

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will accomplish it ; but, from the human point of view, the difficulties are almost insurmountable. Now if the righteous were saved with difficulty, what would become of the sinner and the ungodly ? To join them would not be the way to escape these difficulties. In suffering as a Christian, there was but one thing to do—to commit oneself to Him who watched over the judgment He was executing.” God is faithful, and He will bring His people safely through.

To answer your last question on 1 John II. 28 will not require many words. The “ we ” refers to the apostle and not to those to whom he wrote. He was the workman and they, so to speak, his work. Let them abide in Him, and they would be proof against the wiles of those who would lead them astray. And so in the day of manifestation—when Christ should come, and every man’s work be tried and made manifest, the apostle would not be ashamed before his Lord and Master. His work would abide and he would receive his reward (1 Cor. III. 14).

QUESTIONER.—We believe the wilful sin of Hebrews X. 26 to be apostasy from Christ, in other words, the deliberate abandonment of the Christian faith. Against this the apostle warns them in piercing accents, telling them that if they turned away from the one great sacrifice for sins, of which he had spoken, and in which they professed to trust, there was no other. It was vain to go back to the sacrifices offered under the law—these could never take away sins; moreover, to go back to them was, in fact, to

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tread under foot the Son of God, to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and to do despite to the Spirit of grace. Such was the wilful sin. It was wilful in that ignorance could not be pleaded, seeing they had received the knowledge of the truth—an intellectual knowledge, of course, for no one having a saving knowledge of it would be guilty of this sin. Christ's sheep shall never perish. They are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation.

The repeated sinning of which you speak would not bring the individual within the scope of this passage. Other scriptures deal with his case. A sinful habit grows stronger by indulgence, and the unhappy victim becomes its slave. Not altogether its willing slave, perhaps, for conscience is still awake, and makes its voice heard. But the habit *must* be subdued, for "God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. IV. 7), and we know from Galatians V. 19-21 that those who practise evil things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In our own strength it may be hopeless. We try and try again, only to find that we have no strength to overcome. But Romans VI. 14 says that "sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Sin is there regarded as a monarch exercising dominion over his subjects. But the Christian has been delivered from his yoke, in that he has died with Christ. And now he is under the benignant sway of grace. Has grace made no provision to make this freedom from the dominion of sin a reality ? It has indeed. We are entitled to say to sin, " You are my master no

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longer. I am free from your slavery and belong to Another who has vanquished you." And in saying so we turn from him and flee away to Christ, feeling that we have no strength against sin. He is our rock, our fortress, our high tower, and we cast ourselves wholly upon Him in this our time of weakness and need.

"His arm the victory gaineth
O'er every hateful foe."

We cry aloud: "Lord Jesus, we belong to Thee. Thou hast bought us with a great price, and given to us the Holy Spirit of God. Now, Lord, keep us, for we have no strength. Do Thou fight our battle and put the foe to flight." Nor will He fail the soul that thus trusts in Him.

As to the case of Esau in Hebrews XII. 16, 17, he sold his birthright to escape temporary pressure, and so might these Hebrews, if yielding to temptation and to escape persecution, they gave up all that Christianity bestows, both now and in days to come. No tears availed to make Isaac repent of the blessing he had pronounced upon Jacob, the younger son. Let them heed the warning.

Have you read a little booklet called *Victory over Sin*? If not, get it, it can be had from our Publishers for one penny and postage. It may help you. If we have not answered your questions as fully as you desire, let us hear from you again. It will be a great pleasure to be of the least help.

CALENDAR FUND.

Several postal orders for this fund have reached us from kind contributors which we would have acknowledged direct had we had their names and addresses. Will they please accept our very hearty thanks.

THE PAST AND PRESENT.

MANY there are who seem to live in the past. They can tell you thrilling tales of wonderful deeds done in the days of their early life. There were giants in those days ! Mind and memory cling to those scenes of bygone years and find their favourite theme in the powers and prowess of the personages who lived and laboured then.

Macaulay, in his *Armada*, bespeaks the attention of the lovers of their country as he sings of "*the thrice famous deeds she wrought in ancient days.*" So with those to whom I refer. They are never happy unless they are exalting the past at the expense of the present. Their language somewhat resembles the Psalmist's, when he says : " We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old " (Ps. XLIV. 1).

But David was a man of faith. He knew that Moses' God of yesterday was his God of to-day. He believed that victory belonged as much to the present as to the past. So his Psalm continues : " Thou art my King, O God : command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies : through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us."

XXX.

N

Now *faith* does not view the past through rose-coloured spectacles ! She derives comfort and courage from her knowledge of what God has been to His people of old, but she is well aware that no miller can grind his corn with water that has gone by. She therefore lays hold of her *present* resources and uses them in view of present emergencies.

Faith thrives in an atmosphere of conflict. Is the enemy calling up his reserves, and marshalling his phalanxes in battle array ? Faith thinks of her great Leader, arms herself with God-given weapons, and rushes to victory !

Do discouragements multiply ? Faith borrows the wings of the eagle and soars above them into the blue of heaven.

Does the love of many wax cold ? Faith cleaves to Him whose love is as true, and warm, and faithful as ever it was, and finds herself strong in the knowledge of that love.

To faith, the present is big with golden opportunities. She knows the " Lord God Almighty which was, and IS " (Rev. iv. 8). She understands that this is a day of good tidings, the day of the great things of God. Christ is seated at the right hand of majesty and power. The Holy Ghost is on earth, dwelling in and with the people of God. The Scriptures lie open like a sure and infallible chart. The enemy is a defeated one, bruised

beneath the heel of the mighty Victor. And all that *is* forms but a prelude to that which is to come. The golden present is the ante-chamber to the glorious future. The joys and privileges of to-day will soon be merged in the unspeakable bliss of the eternal to-morrow.

If our eyes look backward let it be with deep thanksgiving. Let us recall with gratitude the mercies and deliverances of the past. But let us not fix our gaze in that direction. Let us look up, and understand what Christ can be to His loved ones to-day. The love that expressed itself so tenderly at Calvary is upon us at this moment. Think what that means ! It is a love that will never give us anything but the very best. Let us then, with happy hearts, not only tune our praise in the words of our grand old Authorized Version, "To Him that *loved* us," but in the more correct utterance of the Revised rendering, "To Him that *loves* us !" (Rev. i. 5).

"What in Thy love possess I not ?

My star by night, my sun by day ;
My spring of life, when parched with drought,
My wine to cheer, my bread to stay,
My strength, my shield, my safe abode,
My robe before the throne of God !"

H. P. B.

THE FOLLY OF UNBELIEF.

WAS Moses quite right in sending the twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan? Had we only the thirteenth of Numbers to guide us we should say undoubtedly he was. Its opening verses seem to place the point beyond dispute, for there we read that "Moses by the commandment of the Lord sent them." But when we turn to Moses' account of the matter in Deuteronomy 1. 22 we see that the thought of sending men to search out the land originated with the people. They asked Moses to send them, and it pleased him well. So they were sent.

Why should the people have wished the land to be searched? Had not God spoken of it as a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey? Did they doubt it? And had they forgotten that God had promised to bring them in? Was it not unbelief and the fears that flow from it that prompted them to ask Moses to send the spies?

However that may be, it put them to the test. The twelve men finished their appointed task and returned with their report. It was a good land, said they, "flowing with milk and honey." But that added nothing to their present stock of knowledge. And then they learned for the first time that the men of the

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land were taller than themselves—that their cities were walled up to heaven, and the spies had seen the giants there! And now what would the people do?

It would have been infinitely better had they not known this. Better if they had waited till they had to meet the foe, strong in the faith that however tall and mighty, God would give them the victory over them. But now their eye saw the foe before they had to meet him, and the cities with their towering walls made their hearts melt, so that they sighed and wept and groaned all through the live-long night! *14.1*

Is it not always so when we are not content to let the morrow take care for the things of itself? “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” We know this and yet we constantly forget it. We peer into the future—we try to find out what the morrow or the next day may bring. And then our timid faithless hearts beget a thousand fears. We see nothing but giants and cities walled up to heaven and feel that we are but grasshoppers. Then God is forgotten, His past deliverances are not remembered, unbelief holds her dark and dismal carnival, and our craven hearts shiver *fast* and shake, as if our God were like the gods *of the* of the heathen—unable to deliver!

But among the twelve were two men of faith—Caleb and Joshua. They sought to still the people and said, “Let us go up at

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once and possess it ; for we are well able to overcome it." Brave words and true ! Nevertheless they were not believed. The only answer the people gave was this : " Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt ! or would God we had died in this wilderness. . . . Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt " (chap. xiv. 2, 3). Who would have supposed that the sending of the spies would have led to this ? What an exposure of their hearts ! How little they had learned to trust in God, to believe in His faithfulness and saving power. It looks as if God had no place at all in their thoughts. Had He utterly forsaken them, cast them off and left them to fight their own battles ? If so there would be some show of reason in what they said. But such was not the case. And when again those men of faith faced the multitude and said, " The people of the land are bread for us . . . the Lord is with us : fear them not," the whole congregation bade stone them with stones !

What a warning against unbelief, What an example of the evil and folly of not moving along with God, step by step, never doubting that we shall ever find God's grace sufficient, no matter what we have to face on the morrow. Sufficient unto the day are its battles and its burdens, its sorrows and its cares. Strength for to-day we may expect, strength for the morrow when to-morrow comes, but not

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before. What if we have to fight with giants, what if the cities be walled up to heaven and we are but grasshoppers? Is not God for us? Is He a grasshopper? Is there anything too hard for Him who has made heaven and earth? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Let us chide our needless fears and trust in the living God.

And God took them at their word. Had they said, "Would God we had died in this wilderness"? In the wilderness they should die. All the men, from twenty years old and upward, who had murmured against the Lord, their carcasses should fall in the wilderness. For forty years they should wander in the desert till death had claimed them every one. But Caleb and Joshua and the little ones of those unbelieving men who had said their children should be a prey—these would God bring into the land which their fathers had despised (chap. XIV. 28-31). Such are the just ways of God, such His holy government.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. X. 11). Why should we fall into their sin? Why should we limit God, as if His ear could ever grow heavy that it could not hear, and His arm be shortened that it could not save? He has brought us hitherto.

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Blessed be the Lord, there hath not failed one word of all His good promise (1 Kings VIII. 56). Let us then trust Him for days to come. But let it be one day at a time, and let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus when He said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth. . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof " (Matt. VI. 32-4).

"So for to-morrow and its need
I do not pray ;
But keep me, guide me, hold me, Lord—
Just for to-day."

ON THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

A CORRESPONDENT, "H. F. H.," writes to inquire how far instrumental music is justified in the worship of God in this Christian era. We think it well to let him state his query in his own words, followed by our answer. This is what he says :

There are three Greek words for "SING" in the New Testament.

First : "Humneo," which seems to have the meaning of singing on solemn occasions, when the heart rises above its griefs, in faith

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and triumph to God. It is the word used when the Lord and His disciples sang a hymn (Matt. xxvi. 30), and when Paul and Silas sang in the prison. It is also used in Hebrews II. of the Lord singing in the midst of the assembly.

Second : " Ado " (to sing an ode), which seems to convey the idea of fixed and normal joy finding expression in song. This word is used in Ephesians v. and Colossians III. of singing and making melody in the heart. Also in Revelation xiv. 3, etc.

Third : " Psallo," which Dr. Young, in his Analytical Concordance, translates, " To sing praise *with a musical instrument.*" This word is used in James v. 13 : " Is any merry ? Let him sing psalms."

But it is also used in 1 Corinthians XIV. 15 : " I will sing with the spirit," etc.

Here lies the question : If this word " psallo " is the word used for singing in the assembly as in 1 Corinthians XIV., does it not justify the use of musical instruments in worship on such occasions ?

H. F. H.'s quotation from Dr. Young as to *psallo* seems to confine too much the use of the verb and its kindred substantive " psalm " to the etymological sense of it. It was first the touching of the harp or other stringed instrument with the finger, next the instrument itself, and last of all the song sung

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with such accompaniment. It is in the last meaning it is used by the Septuagint, and the writers of Christian times; though when we come to the New Testament the instrumental accompaniment disappears in the character of what was sung. In James v. 13 it is the verb "sing-psalms," and in Ephesians v. 19, the same word is translated "making melody," with the added "in your heart," showing that no instrument is in question, any more than in 1 Corinthians xiv. 15, where the resort to musical accompaniment could not be entertained (see v. 26). We only find it again in Romans xv. 9: "I will sing unto Thy name." The substantive is used of the Old Testament collection of Psalms in Luke xx. 42; xxiv. 44; Acts i. 20, and to one of them in Acts xiii. 33. Though the Psalms of the Old Testament can hardly be intended in the passages in Ephesians and Colossians, where the definite article is not used, they would help as to the character of what would find expression under the full light of Christianity.

As to the second word in these passages, "hymns," it was of the essence of it in classical use that it should be in praise of a god, or hero thereby deified. Thus it must always be more or less of a direct address of praise and glory to God, such as that of Mary and Zacharias in Luke i. In Matthew xxvi. 30 it is the verb, and has been often supposed to

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refer to the paschal Psalms CXIII.—CXVII. and Psalm CXXXVI., though not so defined in either passage. It occurs again in Acts XVI. 25, when Paul and Silas “sang praise” to God; and in Hebrews II. 12, where the Lord, in the midst of the assembly, leads up its praise to God.

The last word of the passages in Ephesians 19, and Colossians III. 16, *ōdē*, from *ado*, “to sing,” is much more general as of any kind of song, hence needing to be defined as in both cases of Paul’s use of it by “spiritual.” It is the only word of the three known to Revelation (v. 9; XIV. 3, and xv. 3). It might include both the other “psalms” and “hymns,” though capable of being applied to a much wider range of poetic utterance.

Though we may not be able to trace very accurately the distinction between the words, the use of them as shown by all the passages in which each occurs may help us as to the varied expression of the joy with which the Spirit of God would fill us. Those who would enter more fully into the distinction may find help from *New Testament Synonyms*, by Archbishop Trench (§ LXXVIII.).

J. A. T.

HALLELUJAH!

PSALM XXII. 22-31 ; CL. 6 ; REV. V. 9-14.

IT is impossible for the intelligent creature, placed originally in happy relationship with God, to find permanent satisfaction in anything beneath him, whatever resources may be apparently at his disposal. This is why man in his fallen condition has hunger in his heart, which nothing seems able to appease. The world proposes to cure this painful malady, but the very number of its panaceas witnesses against its proud pretensions, and those who have tried them bitterly complain that they have spent their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not. Solomon asks, "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?" And he supplies the answer: "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." And he adds, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. xxiii. 29-32). And wine is but a figure of the best of earthly joys, which never satisfy, and are only vanity and vexation of spirit.

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It was never intended, we repeat it, that man should find his enjoyment in the things beneath him. The streams of earth are not able to yield happiness to a heart that is formed to find its delight in God Himself. The Lord says to the woman at the well of Sychar, " Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life " (John IV. 13, 14). God has no thought of leaving his poor deceived creature forever in this dry and thirsty land. He has sent His Son to lead the heart of the wanderer back to the Fountain of life and satisfaction.

But this satisfaction lies in the knowledge of God, as He has been revealed in Jesus, who was here seeking the lost. Only in that which He came to bestow could true satisfaction be found. He was here making the Father known, that man might be brought, not only to find every need of his heart met by this wonderful revelation, but that he might become a worshipper of that Father in spirit and in truth. And for this He not only came into this world, but laid down His life.

And the Father was seeking worshippers, those who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. He wanted His poor creature to know

Him in His true character, so that he might no longer be under the power of darkness, but in the light, where only life and satisfaction of soul are found ; and that he might be there with his cup of happiness full to the brim and his heart flowing over in praise and worship.

In Psalm xxii. 3 the Lord is said to dwell in the praises of Israel. He dwells in the midst of a people who have all their joy in Himself. Also, the Psalmist says, " I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs " (Ps. lxix. 30, 31). The Lord delights in the happiness of His people, and that happiness is expressed in a song, which sets forth His excellencies, as they are known by those who stand in the light in which He has made Himself known in Christ. But as it is in redemption God comes to light, so the first song we get in Scripture is the song of Moses and the children of Israel on the wilderness banks of the Red Sea. And you will find that their song is but a celebration of the triumph of Jehovah over the might of the enemy, and of the confidence of the people in Him as their Deliverer. He must be known to be praised, for His praise is simply the setting forth, as I have said, of His excellencies, and those excellencies come into view in the work of redemption. Hence until He is manifested

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as the Redeemer of a people we have no singing in Scripture.

But it is only in Jesus and in the redemption wrought by Him that God has been perfectly declared, therefore it is only by Him that we come to praise in all its perfection. When heard "from the horns of the unicorns" (Ps. xxii.), He says, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren : in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." As delivered from the miry clay of death, and as having His feet planted upon the unshakable rock of resurrection, He declares the Father's name to His disciples, saying to them, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father ; and unto My God, and your God." Then the "new song" that has thus been put into His mouth He sings in the midst of His own. We follow in that song.

He says, as it were, "I will let My disciples know what Thou art and I will make known Thy name to them. In the way in which I know Thee they shall know Thee." We are in His life, and in His relationship to the Father. All that we had done and all that we were, as in the flesh, gone for ever from before God, and with the cry of "Abba, Father" on our lips we gather around the Son and follow in His song of salvation. Therefore between His singing and ours there is no jarring note. We are with Him on His side of death and judg-

ment, and in the sunlight of the Father's love, and "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John IV. 17).

But in Psalm xxii. the circle widens to the whole assembly of Israel in the day of His glory. He says, "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation." All Israel shall yet join in His song of praise. And again, we read, "They shall praise the Lord that seek Him"; and "All the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." The whole world shall take up the strain, and every soul shall celebrate the virtues of the Lord in deathless song.

But not only shall the earth resound with His praises, but heaven itself shall not be silent in that day. The last five Psalms anticipate this day of Israel's redemption, and of the gladness of the heart of the whole creation. And there in Psalm cxlvi. from the heights above to the depths beneath redeemed creation is summoned to join together in His praise. These Psalms are called "Hallelujah Psalms," because they all begin with the word "Hallelujah," and end with the same. They are called to praise Him :

FROM THE HEAVENS:—In the heights, all His angels, all His hosts, sun, moon, stars of light, heavens of heavens, waters above the heavens.

FROM THE EARTH:—Sea monsters, deeps,

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fire, hail, snow, vapours, stormy wind, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, cedars, beasts, cattle, creeping things, flying fowl, kings of the earth, all people, princes, all judges of the earth, young men, maidens, old men, children. Let them praise the name of the Lord : for His name alone is excellent ; His glory is above the earth and heaven. Then in Psalm CL. we have every manner of musical instrument taken up for His service, and the subject closes with a call to “everything *that hath breath*” to praise the Lord : HALLELUJAH !

In that day the Devil will be bound in the Abyss. Now he has almost unlimited control over the elements of nature, and though God is above all, and overrules Satan’s activities for His own glory and for the good of His people, nevertheless the forces of nature do not always set forth, in a public way, the true character of God. Antichrist will bring fire down from heaven, and by the power of the Devil will do great signs and wonders ; but in that day of which the Psalm speaks everything will move only at the command of God, and therefore will set forth His praises. When the Lord was here in humiliation He had to rebuke the winds and the sea (Matt. VIII. 26), but in this day which shall be so full of His praises there will be no occasion for His rebuke, for the stormy winds shall fulfil His will, like everything else (Ps. CXLVIII. 8). All

the forces of nature will wait upon His word, and will move only to do His pleasure, so that heaven and earth will unite in the praises of the Lord.

A vision of this glorious day was accorded to John in Patmos, and we have the record of that vision in Revelation v. The book of divine counsel was in the hand of Him who sits on the throne, and the question was raised as to who had power to give effect to all that was written therein. None but the One who at all cost to Himself had accomplished redemption could do this. The Lamb who stood in the midst of the throne and of the living creatures and elders was the only One who could take the Book and open the seals. But when He does so the song begins. The living creatures and the elders declare Him, because He is Redeemer, to be worthy to take the Book and to open the seven seals thereof.

And John says, " I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and

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all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever." What is this but the fulfilment of Psalm CXLVIII.? I may say it is the fulfilment of all those five "Hallelujah" Psalms.

What a day that will be, when everything in heaven and earth shall be headed up in Christ ! When no jarring note shall be heard in the whole creation ! When the Father's kingdom shall have come, and His will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven ! When the heavenly Jerusalem, radiant with the glory of God, shall descend from heaven, and to the earth, so long afflicted by the presence and power of sin, shall bring life, and healing, and health ! When the Father shall receive the worship He seeks, and when the Son shall be honoured as the Father is honoured ! When the name of Jesus shall be excellent in all the earth, and the vast universe—redeemed creation—shall, like a well-tuned instrument, peal forth the praises of the Father and the Son !

His praise has already begun in the Church. Let us therefore with our whole hearts offer to Him continually this acceptable sacrifice.
HALLELUJAH !

J. B——d.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. S.—You want to know whether we consider the publications of *The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Brooklyn, N.Y.*, good reading for young men. We answer with an emphatic No. They are as full of poison as an egg is full of meat.

The agents who circulate their tracts and books are busy men. They go from house to house and leave their printed matter at every door. And the reader is plausibly invited to write for a further supply. Should he be foolish enough to do so, he is likely to be caught in their snare and to fall under the malign influence of "Pastor Russell's" teaching.

Some time ago a Christian young lady wrote to ask us a similar question. She sent us a parcel of *Watch Tower* books, given to her, so she said, by a friend of hers—"a very clever man"—to whose persuasive words she was inclined to lend her ear. Our reply is too long for insertion in these columns, but we will give the gist of it. This is what we said:

"It does not require much spiritual discernment to detect the antichristian nature of the *Watch Tower* and *Millennial Dawn* literature which you have sent for our examination. That the friend who gave you these books is 'a very clever man' we are not anxious to deny. Very clever men have ever been the bane of the Church. The Lord bids us 'beware of men.' We shall do well to heed His warning, and beware especially of 'very clever' men.

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“ We pass over the subordinate errors of these books—such as the annihilation of the wicked, the exclusion of the Saviour’s sufferings from His atonement, and a host of others, every one of which is grave indeed. We pass over them to concentrate your attention on the gravest sin of all—*the denial of the deity of ‘ the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father ’ and the degradation of that Blessed One to the status and being of a creature.* Where can your heart have been that you should have lent an ear to this deadly dishonour done to Christ? Are *you* content to regard your Saviour only as ‘ the chiefest of all God’s creatures ’? Do you like to be told that He was promised, as a reward for His faith in God and His obedience to the divine will, that He should be exalted to the chief place of power and given to possess inherent life—a creature still, though now attained to the divine degree—immortality? *That is how these books speak of Christ.* Can you listen to it without feelings of indignation, loathing, and scorn?

“ Let me place before you the witness of the Holy Scriptures to the deity of the Lord Jesus. ‘ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ’ (John 1. 1). Ponder this simple but sublime statement: ‘ *In the beginning was the Word.* ’ Let your thoughts carry you back—far away into the remote recesses of eternity, till weary of wing they can go no farther—the Word was there. His eternal Being is thus declared. ‘ *And the Word was with God* ’—in personality therefore distinct. ‘ *And the Word was God.* ’ His deity is here solemnly affirmed. If asked to

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explain it, I cannot. I am but a creature with creature limitations, and the infinite and eternal are beyond me. But this revelation of the eternal Word, made in terms of exquisite simplicity, transparent as a pane of glass, our inmost heart adoringly receives. Nor is this all. 'All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made' (John i. 3). He was the Maker of all, and angels, principalities, and powers in the heavenlies are but the creatures of His Almighty hand. With this Colossians i. 16 agrees, telling us, moreover, that all things were created FOR Him as well as by Him. FOR HIM, remark: for His pleasure they are and were created. Could this be said of any creature, however exalted? Were ALL THINGS in heaven and earth created for a creature's glory and pleasure? If so, what is there left for God?

"Look at the testimony of John XII., where Isaiah VI. is quoted, and after the quotation the following comment: 'These things said Esaias when he saw His glory, and spake of Him.' Whose glory? The glory of the One in the midst of Israel, clothed with the lowly vesture of humanity, on whom they believed not! He was none other than the Lord of Hosts of Isaiah VI., whose glory filled the wide earth, and before whose throne the Seraphim veiled their faces as they cried one to another, 'Holy, holy, holy' is He.

"Again, who is it that speaks in Isaiah LI., saying, 'Wherefore when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer?' Who is it that rebukes the sea and it dries up, who makes the rivers a wilderness,

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who clothes the heavens with blackness and makes sackcloth their covering? Who is it but the One who goes on to say, 'The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned,' who gave His back to the smiters, and hid not His face from shame and spitting?

"Who, let me ask once more, is the 'Child born' and the 'Son given,' whose name shall be called 'Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace'? (Isa. ix. 6). Who is the Man, owned as Jehovah's fellow, against whom the sword of divine judgment awoke—who, I ask, is He? (Zech. xiii. 7). *Is all this predicated of a creature*, who, however high his name, can never be more than that?

"And He is called 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. i. 15). ALL THINGS are upheld by the word of His power (Heb. i. 3). 'By Him ALL THINGS consist' (Col. i. 17). The vast universe, with its myriads of worlds, stands compact together, formed and kept by Him. He is the 'Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last' (Rev. xxii. 13). Of Himself He said, 'Before Abraham was, I AM' (John viii. 58), the eternal, self-existent One, who before incarnation was 'IN THE FORM OF GOD' (Phil. ii. 6), and shared divine glory with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5). And, 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. ii. 9). *It is thus that Holy Scripture speaks of that blessed and glorious Being whom 'The Watch Tower' and 'Millennial Dawn' daringly and blasphemously degrade to the platform of a creature.*

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"Can you join hands with those who thus conspire to cast your Saviour down from His excellency? Does your innermost soul consent to all this teaching which takes the crown of deity from off His brow, and calls upon Him to come down to the standing ground of a creature? Does not your conscience, enlightened, we trust, by the Word and Spirit of God, recoil from such an unholy fellowship? Turn from it, we beseech you, and ask the Lord to forgive you for ever having listened to such doctrines even for a moment.

"Other things are found in these books on which much could be said—the wild vagaries of the lawless mind of man, but we leave them alone. According to your wish we return the books. Burn them; the fire is their fit place."

To this extract we need add nothing. It is a marvel to us how any one calling himself a Christian can read *The Watch Tower* literature or give a place to its books on his shelves. Many, ignorant of their contents, have been induced to buy them by those who hawk them about from house to house. To all such we would earnestly say, *Burn them*. Never mind their beautiful binding or how much they cost, cast them into the fire at once.

C. E. W.—Your question we shall hope to answer next month. But the foregoing will show you what we think of the *Millennial Dawn* publications. Do not be disturbed by their predictions, and remember the words of Isaiah xxvi. 3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."